



Finding silence in the song: The music of Deva Premal and Miten has been used in yoga classes for years, but recently their albums have been topping the New Age music charts.

Hear their uplifting sound

The only Central Coast appearance of Deva Premal and Miten will be on Sept. 21 at 7:30 p.m. at the Clark Center in Arroyo Grande when they'll be blending a cappella singing, lush harmonies, acoustic guitar, and Indian instruments. For tickets, call the box office at 489-4444.

Music opens the soul

The sounds of Deva Premal and Miten relax and transcend

BY CRAIG SHAFER

Yoga instructors and meditation fans were among the first to popularize the music of Deva Premal and Miten. Now the New Age music crowd is helping swell auditoriums to hear the world-touring duo. The pair has traveled the globe for the past 15 years holding concerts and workshops across Europe, Asia, and America. On World Peace Day, Sept. 21, the duo will bring its spiritual and calming sounds to the Clark Center in Arroyo Grande.

Thanks to the Internet, the *Sun* was able to catch up with the world travelers as they make their way to the Central Coast.

SUN: Would you say your is music overtly spiritual?

MITEN AND DEVA: No!

SUN: But it comes from your spirituality?

MITEN AND DEVA: Yes!

SUN: Expound on your philosophy:

Everybody with a voice can sing, and everyone with a breath in their body can experience their divinity?

MITEN AND DEVA: Means everyone has the means to transcend their mind/body mechanism and merge with God. The voice is one of many vehicles to access this reality.

Our nourishment and life's work is to create gatherings around the planet where people can come together in celebration and meditation.

SUN: It sounds like your concerts are spiritual, at least for some.

MITEN AND DEVA: I guess so! Our music is our spiritual practice. It nourishes, sustains, and inspires us. It's as if it doesn't "belong" to us.

We don't "perform" in concerts. We invite the audience to participate. In this way, the barriers between "performer" and audience disappear. You could call this spiritual.

SUN: Does that make it less accessible for those without spiritual intent?

MITEN AND DEVA: Maybe. I don't know anyone who lives without spiritual intent, so I couldn't say. Our audiences are made of people who have been through life, taken a few knocks here and there, braved a few lonely nights, fallen in and out of love, and [are] doing their best to make sense of this existence. Probably pretty much the same as anyone else.

SUN: Is it true you never really planned on a successful musical career?

MITEN AND DEVA: No. We were playing in meditation centers for a few people. Like I said, it's our spiritual practice. One day we looked up and the room was full. Next time we'd come by, they'd booked a bigger room. Next time, it was a church. Next time, a theater.

SUN: Why don't you want your audience to applaud your performance?

MITEN AND DEVA: It's not that we don't want. It's more an invitation to try something different. It's like giving the people the night

off, you know? Just relax and drop the idea you have to clap. Drop the idea you have to do *anything* for the next couple of hours. Then something magical can happen—silence!

It's so beautiful and not at all scary, as some people may believe. It's more nourishing than the sound of hands clapping together, which actually, scientifically, destroys whatever healing vibrations the music itself creates.

SUN: My guess is you wouldn't appreciate it to be used as background music.

MITEN AND DEVA: Right! It's not what you'd call entertainment music, I guess.

People "use" our music. Like, they use it for childbirth, or to play for their loved ones who are in the dying process, really very sacred moments like making love, massage sessions, tantra sessions. But I also hear many people use it in the cars. No road rage with mantras!

SUN: I read where you were told by a priest that if people could hear your music, there would be peace on earth. Do you believe music has extraordinary power?

MITEN AND DEVA: Oh, yes, of course. It is the voice of God. It's the universal language, the doorway to the divine. It says everything that no words can say. It speaks of the heart.

SUN: I'd think you'd want to take your music to parts of the world that are seriously in trouble with wars, famine, and sickness and make a difference in those people's lives. Any plans of the sort?

MITEN AND DEVA: Good question. I guess we will go when someone invites us. As for war zones, I don't think you have to look very far to see most of us are at some kind of internal war with ourselves, in one way or another. Some inner conflict always exists.

MUSIC *from page 22*

I can say that mantras help to heal that space and bring us to a place of inner peace. Of course, the "outside world" continues in its natural state, duality, so there's always darkness and light. The mantras have helped me to deal with life from a more compassionate standpoint.

We feel there are many different ways to contribute to peace and healing in the planet. For instance, we subscribe to a tree planting program that balances out the production of carbon dioxide emissions, which are caused by our CD production and air travel. We raised over \$10,000 through our web site for the tsunami victims. We play benefit concerts for friends in need. But so far we haven't traveled to any war zones yet.

than they need mantras.

SUN: What's the power of your mantra?

MITEN AND DEVA: Love, compassion, understanding.

SUN: With a few albums behind you, do you approach an album project differently now?

MITEN AND DEVA: Not really. It's the same people we always played for, it's just that there's more of them now! Our intention is to create music that soothes without being somnambulistic, that uplifts without resorting to excitement, that inspires the opening of the heart. ○

Arts Editor Craig Shafer would rather have interviewed Deva and Miten face to face on the Greek island where he was able to contact them

ARTS BRIEFS

It's concert music season

The 2006-2007 concert season begins Sept. 23 for the Santa Maria Philharmonic Society. The opening performance, under the direction of maestro John Farrer, features Richard Wagner's "Reinzi Overture," Sergei Prokofiev's "Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26," and Antonin Dvorak's "Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95."

Philharmonic concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. and are held at the Grace Baptist Church, at the corner of corner of McCoy Lane and College Drive.

The featured piano soloist for the Prokofiev concerto is Joe Feghali, a Van Cliburn Competition gold medal winner.

For more information, call the Philharmonic Society office at 925-0412.

Arts Briefs is compiled by Arts Editor Craig Shafer. Information should be sent to the