# Miten Sings

From a rock to a heart place.

by Sam Slovick

"It was a time of innocence, a time when you could sense the possibility that life has no boundaries," is how singer-songwriter Miten spoke about the era in which he emerged as an artist on the scene, in 1960s England. In the '70s and '80s he toured with Fleetwood Mac, Hall and Oats, Lou Reed and Ry Cooder.

e found his endeavor to play the musical mainstream rendered a void in his heart. "You'd recognize me as a young singer-songwriter guy, living in London, part of all that very early folk scene, as far back as the '60s," he reconnoiters the past with a detached indifference: "I made a couple of records on Decca (records) on London in the U.S....kind of a Simon and Garfunkel thing."

He saw himself as a small piece of a larger traditional folk scene in the U.K. But he felt as though he was observing life from outside. "It's a big canvas," he says, referring to the larger scene. "When I stood beside the big singer-songwriters...Neil Young and Joni Mitchell and Jackson Browne, it was obvious I wasn't gong to be there."

"I thought, something's going on. Why am I not part of it? It burnt me out. I left my marriage. I was disillusioned in my 20s, looking for something real," he says.

#### Enter the rebel mystic Osho:

The pieces came together as the essence of divine chaos offered an explanation. Miten's sister showed up one day wearing orange

robes and left a copy of a book by Rashneesh...No Water No Moon...a book on

"It blew my mind. As soon as I read that book I knew. There was one story that got me, the story of a Zen nun who became en-

lightened when the bucket of water reflected in the full moon broke. She became enlightened because she spent her life living the reflection. The music I was writing was reflecting the life I wasn't living."

He left London, his manager and label and walked into Osho's world. "I sold my guitars, stopped playing music and worked in the kitchen for a couple of years. I didn't have to write to justify my life."

When he played and sang again it came from an expression of deep gratitude that someone had saved his life, "I experienced the celebration and meditation as the two wings of the bird of life. I wanted to give thanks in any way I could," he remembers. In Osho's ashram in Pune he was given the responsibility for organizing and playing the music with other musicians for the nightly meditation ceremonies.

What were they like? "Two thousand people in the Buddha hall," he remembers. "Whatever Osho wanted that night. Sometimes wild music...sometimes meditation... it was a great lesson for being creative in the moment. It erased any ego that was there. Playing for a totally different reason...not to be noticed. Tabla, bansuri, tanpura...it would morph into a kind of more western set-up:

bass, drums, keyboard, ecstatic chanting... singing devotional songs to Osho. We did it in English, not Sanskrit kirtan...mainly, not

exclusively. Some Sanskrit, Sufi and Sihk... he would open the door to all these different paths."

#### Enter Deva:

"I would notice a really nice-looking blonde girl dancing with her back to us...we were all in white robes," Miten describes German mantra superstar singer Deva Premal.

When they finally met, he had the reluctant 20-year-old sing in the meditations as an apprenticeship. "I wanted to nourish that part of her," he recalls. And he did just that. Now Miten and Deva Premal accompanied by bansuri master Manose are decidedly one of the biggest mantra singing acts around. Their non stop-touring schedule is mind-numbing. "One song we got: love is the only prayer, our life it really is that, we get so much nourishment, that's why we can do it. A big part is to receive the love. We're nourished by it."

Deva and Miten share the stage when they perform. It's a 50/50 synergistic endeavor where their chemistry is captivating. "I support her in opening people's hearts. It's our spiritual connection," he says. Deva's voice is

in the forefront with Miten's voice and guitar in supporting roles.

"Whenever we sing it's like tantra with clothes. It's beyond the mind and being and body. When you're making love to your beloved it's beyond this mind and body." he says. It's energetic, it's physical, it's musical. I know; I listen to Miten and Deva's CDs constantly. But apparently I'm not the only one

Miten raves about it: "It's one of those organic songs that was around Osho for years. I feel like it's mine...It's about when we sang it would be about focusing on Osho; he was such a vast ocean poetically. It's a song in gratitude to the feminine energy to the mother Earth. The ocean is the mother of all life on Earth. Men sing it to celebrate their own inner femininity. The women sing hallelui-

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There was one story that got me, a story of a Zen nun who became enlightened when the bucket of water reflected in the full moon broke. She became enlightened because she spent her life living the reflection.

who feels the pull of the love show. Every time I catch one of their performances, I'm lucky to find a spot to set my cushion down. This union that was born of an unfettered sensual explosion in Pune has emerged as an unremitting crystalline love salvo as live performance.

One of the high points of their show is Miten's rendition of the classic "So Much Magnificence," sung in rounds among the men and women in attendance. ah... thank you for everything that brought me into a room of guys singing "So Much Magnificence" to me. No matter what happened look where we are, were the blessed ones."

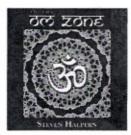
#### The future:

"We just finished a new album, Soul in Wonder; it's a collection of some of my songs, and some mantra. We got Joan Armatrading, John Martin's band...we recorded it in London." devapremalmiten.com

Deva Premal, Miten and Manose are touring in Southern California. Oct. 3 in Santa Barbara; Oct. 6 Loyola Marymount University; Oct. 7 Workshop in Los Angeles. Devapremalmiten.com

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