



Enter the Temple of Sound Healing with Dr Robert March

Sound Healing

An Exclusive Interview with Deva Premal and Miten - Her exploration from Osho to Bhagavan and Amma

Interview by Maya

Deva Premal and Miten's music is an expression of love and devotion through song and chant. The couple have been living and playing together since 1991 when they met in Poona, India, at the ashram of the enlightened mystic, Osho. Since then they have released a string of acclaimed CDs and name Eckhart Tolle, Brandon Bays and rock star Cher among their admirers. The openness and honesty with which they share their lives and their music has touched the hearts of thousands of seekers throughout the world. "Our music is born out of meditation and a celebration of life. It's not a matter of entertaining people, it's our spiritual practice." says Miten. In early 2005 they visited the Oneness University and participated in the 21-day process. Darshan with Baghavan... While in a private Darshan with Shri Bhagavan they were told that the most powerful way for them to share the benediction of Deeksha is through their concerts and voice celebrations. Their mission is to fill the world with the 'divine name.

QUESTIONS FOR DEVA PREMAL

Q: For the readers who may not know you, would you please share with us a little about yourself?

DP: I'm 35 years old, born in Germany. I have been a vegetarian since birth and was born to the sound of my father chanting the Gayatri mantra. Through my childhood I chanted the Gayatri as a bedtime song.

Since the age of 11 I have spent my life under the guidance of my spiritual master Osho. When I was 20 I met Miten, my partner in life and music at Osho's ashram in Pune, India and through him I discovered the gift of music, using my voice in Concert song and chant. At the age of 28 I released my first CD entitled The Essence, and since then have released three more: Love Is Space, Embrace, and Dakshina, and three in partnership with Miten: Satsang, More Than Music, and Songs for the Inner Lover.



One of the most significant moments in my life was being invited to a private audience with HH The Dalai Lama where Miten and I sang for him.

Q: From a very young age you happily chanted and meditated due to your family upbringing. What did you love about it when you were a little girl?

DP: I have to admit that I didn't actually "chant and meditate happily" when I was growing up.

Basically, I just simply went along with whatever my parents gave me - fortunately for me, it was something worthwhile.

It was something normal to me, although I have to say there were also many moments when I would have rather been like my school friends...leading a more conventional way of life.

We never even had a TV!

As a child I didn't really get the meaning of what we were doing - singing the Gayatri Mantra every evening, chanting the Bhagavad Gita, reciting the 'Ten Bulls of Zen' before every meal - but their teachings, and the Eastern way of looking at life and death influenced me deeply.

For instance, I was brought up with an awareness that we are not the body.....ever since I can remember I heard my parents refer to 'leaving the body' as opposed to someone having 'died'.

Q: Can you share with us some of the mystical experiences you have had during those tender years?

DP: I can't honestly say that I had any during my early childhood years!!

My own conscious spiritual quest really began when I was 10 years old, which is when I first started being attracted to Christianity. I wanted to be baptised - which (surprisingly enough, for me!) was totally fine with my parents.

That phase ended when I was introduced to the work of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh



I began doing his active meditations with the Osho (as he is now known) community that was around at that time in my home town, and almost immediately wanted to become his disciple.

My parents, who had introduced me Osho, consented and eventually I became "Deva Premal" a name given to me by Osho when I was 11 years old.

It was quite a shift - wearing red clothes and a mala to school!

But, I didn't have a problem with it, and my friends at school never even seemed to notice.

Q: Being spiritually sensitive and aware, how significant is divine guidance in your life? Do you feel that spirit has guided you to this moment in your life and is working through you, particularly through your singing?

DP: Definitely...the grace that Osho has showered on me for the last 24 years has been immense.

He brought me into the present moment...a gift I couldn't possibly have imagined.

I call it 'Osho', someone else would call it 'spirit'...ultimately it's all the same.

Q: Most people at some stage of their lives have felt deep spiritual emptiness and spiritual abandonment, have you felt such things? If yes, how did you handle those times?

DP: Never had times like that ...maybe because I was so young when I came to my master.

His community, which spans the globe has been my home, my support and my playground.

I have always felt guided by him to the next step on my journey.

Q: How would you define enlightenment? What does it mean for you?

DP: Enlightenment to me, means a state of Oneness, where there exists no identification with the ego...no split in myself, no struggle within...When there is love, there is love, when there is anger there is anger, and both feelings are equally blissful and none better or worse than the other.

Judgement is suspended, and acceptance of 'what is' becomes the reality.

I'm still working on it!!

Q: Is enlightenment something that you thought about and naturally moved towards?

DP: Always.

Q: What inspired or compelled you do the 21-day process at Oneness University?

DP: I received Deeksha from Lisa and Pasquo and it was so strong that I knew immediately that I had to go. At that point I had absolutely no idea what the process would look like, what the ashram would be like, who Amma and Bhagavan even were!

It was a completely spontaneous and intuitive decision...and four weeks later, after 5 years absence, Miten and I found ourselves back in India.

Q: When you got there what were your first impressions?



DP: I loved everything about it...on a practical level I was happy to find a clean and comfortable ashram with great food Pragyanandji - dasa, and our guide in the process prepared with loving care. I felt very comfortable and very welcomed by everyone, especially Pragyanandji, who was our guide through the process.

I also loved the location of the ashram - to be in such beautiful and pristine natural surroundings was a complete gift.

No phone access, no email connection, no pollution - noise or otherwise - and the smiling eyes of the dasa's...



Q: What was your first impression or experience upon meeting Bhagavan and Amma?

DP: I felt deep love and respect for Bhagavan and in the private darshan experienced him as a caring friend as well as the divine light he is.

When I first saw Amma in darshan I was a little taken aback by the apparent sternness of her countenance, but that totally disappeared when I saw her in the private darshan where I saw her as innocent, childlike and absolutely loving and motherly.

Q: Would you share with us a significant experience that you have had during your 21-day retreat?

DP: The most significant thing for me was an experience of exactly what living in enlightenment feels like.

Until then I knew all the 'right' words because I had heard them for so many years. The way I described enlightenment in your other question is exactly what I felt like at a certain point during the process.

I had often heard Osho - and many other masters - say that it is totally 'ordinary' and finally I came to understand what they meant: every moment is lived to the fullest whatever it brings...that's ordinary and at the same time it is the most extra-ordinary since it seems so difficult to live like that.

The way this breakthrough happened for me was an intense moment of anger, where it became so extreme I felt it would kill me. I literally simply became anger - this time without wanting to justify it or rationalize it away - and before I knew it everything turned into bliss...and after the experience, as I said earlier, all other emotional states, even uncomfortable ones like shame and fear, were blissfully experienced.

Q: Do you feel that your life has changed or been enhanced in any way since the retreat?

DP: I am experiencing more synchronicities in my daily life, and the sense of being taken care of. My existence has deepened and strengthened.

Q: Moving on to your soul touching and beautiful music. Could you please share with us a little about your current musical path, why you choose to sing sacred chants and what it does for you personally?

DP: It just comes naturally. What I love most is bringing people together to sing with each other and to enjoy the benediction that it brings.

Actually it is my spiritual path rather than my musical path.

I see myself as much as a spiritual facilitator as I do a musician.

Q: Bhagavan often speaks about the importance of healthy relationships. When you and Miten sing together there is a wonderful balance of male and female energies. Do you feel that your music has the potential to heal personal relationships and transform dysfunctional families?

DP: From the emails and the personal feedback that we receive, it would appear so. We hear that our music has a healing power for many people.

Often Miten and I are often in tears, reading the messages as they come through.

We both feel humbled and at the same time, inspired by them.

We have actually watched an extended family grow around the music - no 'us and them', but a real life sangha where friends and lovers come together to celebrate life in all its many dimensions.

No matter what state our life may be in at a certain time, the music will always lift us beyond those states into a space of 'Oneness'.

Q: Do you feel that your music has changed in any way since the 21-day process?

DP: No, not really. Music is a constant flow....

Q: How do you incorporate deekshas into your concerts?

DP: Music is our Deeksha.

We sing it, just as we always have done.

Q: Do you tell the audience that they will be receiving deekshas? If so, what do you tell them?

DP: No need to. Sometimes too much information can be a stone in the road.

Sacredness, Godliness, has many names and we don't like to confuse anyone with conceptual ideas.

We simply sing.

Whatever happens, happens.

Some people see Jesus, others see light beings...some see Amma and Bhagavan, and some see Osho... as Miten's song says - All is Welcome here-

We neither hide, nor broadcast, our connection to Osho and in the same way, our connection to Amma & Bhagavan remains our personal affair.

We share the fruits freely and generously and if someone is interested where our roots are, we are happy to share with them.

In our longer holiday groups we have started to incorporate hands-on Deeksha sessions, in which we tell the group about it. I also totally enjoy that.

Q: What are some common experiences people report having during your concerts?

DP: Wow...so many! Take a look at the comments on our website!

Q: You have some Australian concerts coming up. For the people who have not attended any of your concerts and wish to go to one, what can they expect?

DP: An evening of sacred devotion, chanting, silence, heart opening songs and a healthy dose of tears!

Q: You and Miten also run deeksha retreats in Australia, could you tell us about them?

DP: The weekend will be an opportunity to connect to grace through the power of chant, Sufi and circle dances, meditations, communion with Nature, Osho quotes, and of course, deeksha events.



Q: Do you consider Australia as your home away from home? What do you love about Australia?

DP: In fact we spend more time in Australia than anywhere else! Those two or three months are the longest we stay anywhere at one time during the year.

So we feel very much at home there...although the constant travelling has taught us the joy of being 'at home' wherever we are!

QUESTIONS FOR MITEN

Q: For the readers who may not know you, would you please share with us a little about yourself?

M: I was born in England, spent most of my early years in London.

My earliest memory is of hearing my mother sing and play piano in the pub where we lived.

I am 58 years old - 23 years older than Deva (!) - and I travelled the world as a professional musician for many years before meeting Osho, in 1980, which is when my search ended - or begun, depending on how you look at it.

For the past 15 years Deva and I have shared the healing power of the voice through sacred song and chant.

Q: At the beginning of your musical career you played and toured with rock bands such as Fleetwood Mac and Lou Reed. What was the turning point in your life that put you on the spiritual path?

M: I left the music business in 1980 because I felt spiritually depleted.

I was looking for something more substantial than sex, drugs and rock'n roll, and I found it with Osho, after reading one of his books (No Water No Moon) on Zen - it was he who healed me and taught me meditation.

What I do with Deva is not what you'd call a career...it is our spiritual practice. It was never for financial gain.



Q: How did you and Deva Premal meet? What inspired you about her?

M: We met in Osho's ashram in Poona in 1991.

She was bright, intelligent and beautiful, and studying shiatsu and other forms of body work - reflexology and cranio sacral therapy. She was actually looking for a model for a session she was about to give - she spontaneously offered it to me and we became friends.

Even though there is a considerable age difference between us, it was clear to me that she was as mature – or more so! – than myself.

She had been meditating through her childhood and was obviously an old soul.

At the time I was responsible for the evening meditation music in the ashram and began encouraging her to sing and play keyboards in the group.

She had received music tuition from her mother, who is a classical musician, so she responded well.

Later, after we'd been friends for about a year we left for Europe to give voice workshops, which we called 'From Song into Silence'.

Later, after three CD releases (Strength of a Rose, Global Heart Native Soul, Trusting the Silence) we recorded her singing the Gayatri Mantra – and the rest, as they say, is history.

Q: You and Deva Premal seem to me like two sides of the same coin. Do you sometimes get the feeling that the divine has purposely put you together for the upliftment of humanity?

M: I guess so...

What is happening is far bigger than the two of us.

Q: At what point in your relationship did you and Deva Premal decide to sing and record sacred chants? What was the turning point?

M: We'd always sung sacred chants but up to The Essence we'd never focused on her recording them.

So I guess you could say the turning point was The Essence.

As soon as we heard her singing those mantras we knew something special was happening.

We had no idea about the yoga world or any other kind of 'market' for the chants though – it wasn't a commercial venture we were engaged in, not at all.

We thought we were making the CD for a few friends to use in their massage sessions!

Q: For the readers who are not familiar with chanting could you explain the significance and benefits of mantras?

M: Mantra is a scientific process, discovered and developed about 5000 years ago.

Basically, it is a series of sounds which, when put together in a certain sequence and repeated, have a profound effect on the mind/body organism.

In our case, we create music that helps the western mind adjust to, and to accept and enjoy those sounds.

Q: How has your life personally been enriched by chanting sacred mantras?

M: Well, I seem to have been destined to a life that supports my creativity.

Sacred chants – meeting Osho – meeting Deva – it's all a divine plan in which I have had very little say.

I travel the world with my beloved, meeting beautiful people, singing together, meditating together – and am even financially supported in the process!

The first mantra I chanted was in 1980 - I haven't had a bad day since! Although that's not to say life hasn't offered its challenges - just that being with Osho, I was given tools to deal with life's little ups and downs.

Q: What inspired or compelled you to do the 21-day process at Oneness University?

M: Deva did a one day workshop with Lisa and Pasquo in Byron, and I told her, if you feel good with it we can go to India and continue the process there.

She was surprised to hear it, although we'd actually been talking about returning to India as we hadn't been there since 1999.

When she came back I asked her, 'Well, are we going...?' - and she said, with that big smile of hers, 'Yes!'

That was it.

I didn't know anything about Amma and Bhagavan before arriving at the Oneness University.

Q: When you got there what were your first impressions?

M: I knew I was in the right place.

Q: What was your first impression or experience upon meeting Bhagavan and Amma?

M: Amma's amazing grace and beautiful smile, and Bhagavan's warm welcome to us - when we walked into his room, he said, "What a beautiful couple!!"

Also, the most important factor was to see my connection with my own master Osho, wasn't compromised - in any way. He was with me through the whole process - how could he not be? and in fact, I was encouraged to include him all the way.

Q: Has that impression changed?

M: No.

Q: Would you share with us one significant experience that you have had during your 21-day retreat?

M: I didn't come looking for miracles, but they occurred in different ways - like a physical healing that I experienced through Amma's grace, for instance.

I'd been carrying a pain in my left side - spleen maybe - anyway, I'd had x-rays prior to coming and the doctors could find nothing.

Amma is a healer - I asked her to take a way the pain, and that night I had a vision of three hands scraping away this black stuff from inside my body.

I took it that the three hands belonged to Osho, Amma and Bhagavan - my holy trinity!

The next day the pain had gone.

Q: Here's another experience, involving Bhagavan:

M: Deva spoke earlier of her breakthrough to the enlightened space through anger.

Her anger was triggered through me playing my guitar directly after a Deeksha, and not, as usual, meditating - which was our general procedure.

In her 'meditation', with eyes closed, she heard me playing, and felt I was being disrespectful and not committed to the process.

In actual fact, what had happened was that I found myself responding to the teaching we had just received, in which Bhagavan had stated very clearly, that he could only help us if we were in a total state of non-doing.

I took this teaching back to our room, and instead of 'doing' meditation, or 'doing' watching the breath, as I had been, I responded to what was beyond this 'doing'....

Which, in my case, was to witness the body doing whatever it wanted to do - I found myself playing my guitar. (...actually, respecting Deva's space, I had taken the guitar out onto the balcony, as far out of ear-shot as possible).

By not 'doing' the thing I was engaged in, I suddenly entered a space of no-mind. I was simply responding to the moment. I wasn't even choosing to play my guitar - it wasn't a 'doing' at all - it is what the mystics call 'choice-less awareness'. 'Miten' had disappeared and music had arisen.

I could've responded to Bhagavan's teaching in a million different ways, of course - I could've gone for a walk - but instead of 'doing' a walk, I would have been the walking itself, for instance.

(Dancing, I would've become the dance, as we used to sing in Music group).

In this case, I had become the music...'I' had disappeared into music.

This, breakthrough was a direct result of Bhagavan's teaching.

Q: Has Bhagavan personally commented or given you direction regarding your music?

M: He just told us to continue giving Deeksha through music.



Q: As a world traveller, how significant is Bhagavan and Amma's presence on this planet at this time?

M: Amma and Bhagavan of course have a very important role to play - as do we all.

The planet is in a terrible state, with over population, the rapid depletion of natural resources, global warming, pollution, ice caps melting, bird flu, destruction of wildlife, ...you name it... but I remind myself it's all God's will, so I trust whatever is happening is somehow for the good.

Amma and Bhagavan are harbingers of light, and God has brought them to us at a very important time in history.

Whether spirituality can save the physical disintegration of the planet, I personally doubt - we've been told enough times by scientists that the damage we have done is irreparable - but I have no doubt that spiritual enlightenment can help humanity to deal with drastic situations in a joyful, loving and conscious way... and to do our best to be of service in times of severe stress, which seem to be on the horizon.

Q: What do you love about Australia? What Australian habit or mannerism, have you adopted that is commented upon when you are in another country?

M: I don't really know much about Australia actually - we usually hang out in Byron Bay...which is not what you'd call typically Australian.

But I can say that Australia is the only place I've ever been where the beauty of the nature has overwhelmed me to the point of tears.

I took that as a sign and applied for immigration!

Whether Deva and I ever settle down anywhere, who knows... but if we do, it'll probably be in the hills above Byron Bay, where kids and wallabies run free and the sound of a car is a talking point.



Dear Deva Premal and Miten, I am grateful to you both for your time and love given in answering these questions. I look forward to experiencing your concerts.

Love Maya