

**Sri Chinmoy Peace Concert
at the United Nations**



**Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium
11 May 1993**

**DEDICATION OF THE PEACE CONCERT
BY SRI CHINMOY**

Today's Peace Concert I am most devotedly dedicating to President Premadasa, who was the absolutely genuine peace-lover and oneness-dreamer here on earth. I am now invoking his soul to bless us. We are sailing with him in the same boat towards the Golden Shore, the Shore that is inundated with peace, peace, peace.

Now I am making a most humble request to my most esteemed friend, our dear Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, to say a few words about his beloved President Premadasa.



of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, to say a few words about his beloved President Premadasa.



**SOULFUL TRIBUTE
BY H.E. DR. STANLEY KALPAGE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF SRI LANKA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mahaguru Sri Chinmoy, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I consider it a great privilege to be here today, along with the staff of my Mission, at this programme of inspiring music and meditation for peace. Mahaguru Sri Chinmoy has asked me to say a few words about my late president, President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Once again, I am deeply honoured that he has asked me to do this at this concert, which he has dedicated to the memory of my late president, for I know how highly and in what great esteem President Premadasa held Sri Chinmoy. They had the highest regard for each other. They met not so long ago in January 1990, when Sri Chinmoy visited Sri Lanka. He met with the President at his home, Sucharita.

It was only a week or so before he died that I sent President Premadasa some pictures of that memorable occasion that Mahaguru Sri

BY H. H. STANLEY, JR., CE



Chinmoy had given me when I visited him in Queens a few weeks ago. President Premadasa would have seen those pictures and read what I had written to him just a few days before he died.

President Premadasa was a remarkable person. He was only 68 years old when he died. He had spent 43 years, at least, in public life. He came here to the United Nations on three separate occasions: 1980, 1985 and 1987. In 1980 when he came here, he shared with the international community the programme that he had for building houses for the homeless in Sri Lanka. It started with 100,000 houses; he increased it to a million. Then he was on his one and a half million housing programme. Having shared that programme and his experience, he asked the international community to declare 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. When the United Nations General Assembly met that year, they formulated a strategy for providing houses to people all over the world so that by the year 2,000 the housing shortage would have been greatly eased.

Mr. Premadasa, whom I knew very well, having worked with him over the years, was an extremely gifted speaker. In Sinhalese, which

Chamney had given me when I visited him in Queens a few weeks ago. President Pirmadasa would have seen those pictures and read what I had written to him just a few days before he died. President Pirmadasa was a remarkable



the world so that by the year 2000 the housing shortage would have been greatly eased. Mr. Pirmadasa, whom I know very well, having worked with him over the years, was an extremely gifted speaker. In Sinhalese, which

was his native tongue, he had no equal in Sri Lanka. Even in English, which he learned later on—as indeed he learned many things by himself—he was able to express himself clearly and to convey whatever message he had with clarity and conviction.

But the remarkable thing about him was that he was not a man of words alone, for he put into practice what he spoke. For him, example was better than precept. He was a very simple man; he lived a very simple life: getting up at 4:00 in the morning and working until midnight. I know that because whenever I wanted to speak to him, I called him at 5:15 in the morning in Sri Lanka, and he has never, never failed to pick up the phone if he was there.

In fact, the morning of his passing away, the first of May, I was in Amman, Jordan, on a mission for the United Nations. At 3:30 Amman time, 6:00 in Sri Lanka—I was a bit late that day, but I took the phone and called the President and he answered the phone. Six hours later he was dead.

But before he died, he did a lot for our people. He has given them homes. He has tried to alleviate poverty; his programme is well

known throughout the world. His industrialisation programmes and his village project programmes were all designed to help the ordinary people. He did so much for his country.

Above all, as Mahaguru Sri Chinmoy has said, he yearned for peace, because with peace in our land, he would have been able to achieve much more. It is peace that we require now in Sri Lanka. We have had strife and violence for more than a decade. The aftermath of his death has seen a peaceful transition. His very close comrade, his friend, Prime Minister Wijetunga, has assumed the office of President. Another very able, loyal and young lieutenant of his, former leader of the House of Parliament, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe is Prime Minister. The transition has been extremely peaceful, and we hope that this will be the beginning of a peacefully united Sri Lanka.

I am extremely grateful to you, Sri Chinmoy, for dedicating this concert to President Premadasa, who as you said was a man of peace. May the blessings that are showered on our country as a result of this usher in that peace, for which he yearned and for which we all long. Thank you.





