



# The Elijah Interfaith Institute



## **Music to promote world harmony and peace**

### **Celebrating UN Peace Week in West Bengal, India**

An initiative of a Kolkata-based Youth Movement called Prantakatha ([www.prantakathaindia.org](http://www.prantakathaindia.org)) under the guidance of Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Headquartered at Belur Math, West Bengal, and a Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of World Religious Leaders of Elijah Interfaith Institute

**Songs from various religious and secular traditions of India promoting tolerance, harmony and peace, recognizing music as a unifying force and a sweet language of the heart**

**Dates: 8, 9 and 10 February 2013**

**Venue: Nicco Park, Kolkata, West Bengal, India**

### **The Concept:**

With nearly a decade of experiences of directly preventing violence of various forms and with focus on youth, Prantakatha realised violence to be more of a cultural issue than economic, religious or otherwise. With it's experiences of dealing with violence at a very base form like girl child trafficking, gender injustices of various forms, Prantakatha came to an understanding that violence is a cultural conduit of intolerance and bigotry. Therefore fight against violence also needs spreading of an alternative culture of tolerance, of peace and of harmony. Interestingly, India as a country has a vast treasure of cultures of tolerance, of peace, of harmony. Most of it's treasures have been preserved for ages through India's secular music. Traditions like Baul, Sufi, songs of Kabir are some of the flag bearers of this tradition. Adding to that, Music internationally have proved it's role in defying violence by uniting people in the most non violent and peaceful way. Be it Chaitanya dev's "kirtan" uniting community against caste based violence or Rabindranath Tagore's songs uniting people of India against British Imperialism, always music played a pivotal role.

Keeping this background of music in mind, under the guidance of Swami Atmapriyanand Vice Chancellor of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur Math and a Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of World Religious Leaders of Elijah Interfaith Institute, Prantakatha is holding a 3 day long Prayers of Hope under the thematic of Music Against Violence.

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## **Activities:**

In these 3 days singers and musicians will join the youth from different parts of Bengal in singing, playing and listening to various prayer songs from religious groups and also secular folk traditions of India. Through this festival, the youngsters will pledge to promote harmony and peace in the world and fight against intolerance and violence, recognizing music, the language of the heart as a potent means to promotion of world peace and harmony.