

CELTIC CONCERT FOR PEACE

21st September, 2025

St Patrick's Anglican Church, Mt. Lawley



~ INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE ~

<https://internationaldayofpeace.org/>

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-peace>

International Day of Peace ("Peace Day") was established by the UN in 1981, providing "a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to Peace above all differences and to contribute to building a Culture of Peace." Communities and individuals are encourage to engage in activities that 'spark conversations about the need for understanding, non-violence, and disarmament.'

~ MUSICIANS WITHOUT BORDERS ~

<https://www.musicianswithoutborders.org/>

Musicians Without Borders is an international a peacekeeping initiative which collaborates with musicians and other organisations to 'bring music to people and places affected by war, armed conflict, and displacement.' They have a number of active projects across Jordan, El Salvadore, Palestine, Africa, Rwanda, and the Western Balkans.

~ AMÁRACH CELTIC MUSIC ~

<https://www.amarachcelticmusic.com>

Amárach is a Perth-based, Celtic-inspired folk band, comprised of both folk- and classically-trained musicians. "Amárach" means "tomorrow" in the Irish language, reflecting our aim to shepherd the beauty and mysticism of traditional Celtic music into the modern, Australian folk scene. **We believe that music has the power to create human connection, strengthen empathy and facilitate positive socio-cultural change.**

For our Celtic Concert for Peace, we have selected a program that reaches across time and cultural divide, from ancient traditional melodies to modern songs. We hope this concert inspires the community to look beyond differences, to recognise our shared humanity, and to practice a culture of peace within our everyday lives.

AMÁRACH: CELTIC CONCERT FOR PEACE

Program Notes

~ SET 1 ~

THE FOGGY DEW

The lyrics to this tune were written by **Father Charles O'Neill** after the 1916 Easter Rebellion, honouring the Irish republicans who carried out an armed insurrection against British rule in Ireland. At the time, many Irish men were fighting for the British in WWI. The “foggy dew” symbolises the obscurity and tragedy surrounding those who died for a foreign empire, instead of fighting for the freedom of their own country.

THE CROW ON THE CRADLE

This protest song was written in 1950's by the English poet, musician and pacifist, **Sydney Carter**. The lyrics and nursery-style melody juxtapose the innocence of children with the violence of war. The ominous symbolism of the Crow perched on the baby's cradle represents the terrible fate that awaits children born into the Cold War, and reminds us that our actions can have dire consequences for the next generation. 'The Crow on the Cradle' was revived by folk trio Lady Maisery for their 2012 album *Mayday*.

BRIAN BORU'S MARCH / THE BATTLE OF AUGHHRIM

This instrumental set pairs two **Irish traditional** tunes whose titles reference significant historical battles in Ireland. According to legend, *Brian Boru's March* was played by bards for three days at the grave of High King Brian Boru, who was killed in the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. *The Battle of Aughrim* occurred in 1691 between the followers of the Catholic King James (Jacobites) and the Protestant King William of Orange (Williamites). It is still considered 'the bloodiest battle ever fought on Irish soil.'

THE FIELDS OF GLORY

'The Fields of Glory' is a contemporary song by **The High Kings** about Irish football, praising masculine bravado, loyalty and fighting spirit. But might these reinforced values contribute to the frequent outbreaks of violence witnessed between rival football clubs and fans? Might the attitudes and beliefs that lead men into war mirror that of the sporting field? With these questions in mind, we slightly altered the original lyrics of 'The Fields of Glory' to challenge the rigidity of “them-versus-us” thinking that can lead to dehumanisation and violence.

MACCRIMMON'S LAMENT

This beautiful Scottish Air/Pibroch (pipe song) was written in 1745 by the famous piper **Donald Ban MacCrimmon** as a premonition of his own death upon leaving for the Battle of Culloden during the Jacobite Uprising. MacCrimmon indeed never returned; he was killed during the Rout of Moy (a Government attempt to capture Prince Charles Edward Stuart).

THE PARTING OF FRIENDS

This **traditional Irish** air is derived from an ancient melody collected by Irish harpist Edward Bunting in the late 18th century. Though generally played at the end of banquets or festivals to signal departure, it was also used for occasions of death or prolonged separation. Bunting said the tune was widely thought to have been 'composed while the Irish groaned under the oppression of the Danes and were forced to conceal themselves in caverns and other sequestered places.'

THE IOLAIRE (THE EAGLE) / EILEAN FRAOICH (HEATHER ISLAND)

Composed by **Iain MacDonald**, *The Iolaire* depicts a real-life tragedy. On January 1, 1919, the Admiralty steam yacht *HMY Iolaire* was returning home with the 283 surviving Great War veterans of Lewis Island (Scottish Outer Hebrides). As the yacht entered Stornoway Harbor, a heavy storm raged, causing The Iolaire to crash into the rocks of Holm Point (known as 'The Beasts of Holm'). The ship was torn apart and most of the veterans drowned, their bodies found washed ashore along with the Christmas presents they had bought in France to bring their families and loved ones.

Eilean Fraoich (Heather Island), written by **William MacKenzie**, is a song widely recognised and sung by the people of the Isle of Lewis, and is sometimes referred to as the island's 'anthem'.

EXHILE

This haunting Celtic New Age song appeared on **Enya's** 1988 album, *Watermark*. The lyrics are based on the anti-war poetry of Wilfred Owen, and evoke themes of loss and longing. The ocean is also a central image, symbolising a great journey.

FATE SONG/THE FOGGY DEW

This modern arrangement by **Alicia A. Lewis** appears on her 2008 album *Along With My Love I'll Go*. Lewis' original 'Fate Song' melody is combined with a waltz-like version of the Irish traditional 'Foggy Dew'.

~ SET 1 ~

THE SUMMER BEFORE THE WAR

This nostalgic song was written by **Huw Williams** and included on the Fairport Convention 1988 album *Red and Gold*. The original lyrics reflect describe one final idyllic summer – youthful, carefree and innocent – before the outbreak of the First World War. The version for solo guitar (performed today by Wilbur Grantham) was arranged by **Stephen Wake**.

SOLDIER, POET KING

‘Soldier, Poet, King’ is a song by the American folk-rock duo **The Oh Hellos**, released in 2015 on their album *Dear Wormwood*. The song has significant internet fame through the social media platform TikTok. The song is often interpreted in different ways, with some people relating to religious elements in the lyrics, and others recognising a protagonist breaking away from an abusive power, thereby achieving rebirth.

THE IRISH RESISTANCE SET

Arranged by our violinist **Elise Rosenberg**, this medley combines three tunes associated with Irish military history and the country’s fight for independence. *Oró, Sé do Bheatha ’Bhaile* (*You are Welcome Home*) is best known as a rebel song sung by Irish volunteers during the Easter Uprising of 1916. *O’Neill’s March* refers to Owen Roe O’Neill, a commander who played a significant role in the Irish Confederate Wars (civil conflict between Ireland, Scotland and England in the 1600s). Lastly, *Southwind* is said to be based on the folktale of a ghost ship bringing home the souls of Irish soldiers killed while serving in foreign armies (known as ‘Wild Geese’).

A MOMENT IN TIME

This original ballad was written by Amárach band member **John Ralph**. In John’s words:

I wrote ‘A Moment in Time’ as an homage to my Mother and Grandmother, one of whom lost a father and the other a husband during WWII. Their story made me reflect more generally on how most songs about war focus on the men who gave their lives, while little is written about the women who had to carry on and survive. This song I hope goes some way to correcting that.

JOHNNY I HARDLEY KNEW YE

Likely written in the early 19th century, this Irish anti-war song protested the recruitment of Irishmen by the British army, particularly in the Kandyan Wars in Sri Lanka. The lyrics describes a woman's reunion with her disfigured former lover, highlighting the horrific cost of war

AND THE BAND PLAYED WALTZING MATILDA

This well-known anti-war folk song was written by Scottish-born Australian singer-songwriter **Eric Bogle** in 1971. Though the lyrics describe the devastating consequences of WWI, it was written as a protest against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Bogle has said that he wrote the song after witnessing an Anzac Day march where he felt that the horrors of war were being ignored or romanticized.

SCARBOROUGH FAIR/CANTICLE

Simon & Garfunkel combined the traditional English ballad 'Scarborough Fair' with lyrics from an anti-war song written by Simon. The two sets of lyrics interweave to create a striking interplay between concepts of love, longing and war.

ZOMBIE

Zombie is a powerful protest anthem by the Irish alternative rock band **The Cranberries**. It was written in response to the 1993 IRA bomb in Warrington, England, that killed two children, Jonathan Ball and Tim Parry. The song condemns the violence of the Troubles and expresses outrage over the loss of innocent lives, using the metaphor of 'zombies' to represent mindless, destructive behaviour in conflict. 'Zombie' became a chart-topper in several countries, and became an Irish stadium anthem.

MEN OF ERIN

'Men of Erin' is a popular acapella song by **The Elders**, a Celtic folk band from Missouri. It is a song of remembrance, faith, and love, offering solace to those who are grieving. It also celebrates the resilience of the Irish people.

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