

SOULFOOD  
reflective moments

Sunday 18th May, 11am

Radford Auditorium,  
Art Gallery of South Australia

reconciliation  
*walking together*

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Free Entry All Welcome

A banquet of inspirational readings and music from various Faiths and philosophies:  
indigenous, ancient and modern, to feed the mind and nurture the soul.

## *Opening Presentation*

# COLOUR ME HUMAN

Scratch beneath the skin  
of every struggle  
and feel at the heart of it all  
a love of life  
of humanity  
the roots  
of the tree of progress  
—*Heather Robertson*

Thence did arise, to fill this world,  
the races of mankind...  
Yea! knowing Me the source of all,  
by Me all creatures wrought...  
And, all for the love of them, within their  
darkened souls I dwell,  
And, with bright rays of wisdom's lamp,  
their ignorance dispel.  
—*The Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter X*

Learn from the past.  
Learn from the sadnesses,  
The disappointments,  
The tears,  
The successes,  
The joys.  
And release them all.  
Do not carry them  
In your mind  
And in your heart  
Instead  
See anew.  
Feel anew.  
Create wonders.  
— *Clear Water*

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.  
—*Romans 12:17, from the Bible*

Let no one deceive another,  
Let no one despise another in any situation,  
Let no one, from antipathy or hatred, wish evil to anyone,  
Just as a mother, with her own life, protects her only son from hurt,  
So within yourself foster a limitless concern for every living creature.  
Display a heart of boundless love for all the world  
In all its height and depth and broad extent,  
Love unrestrained, without hate or enmity.  
Then as you stand or walk, sit or lie, until overcome by drowsiness,  
Devote your mind entirely to this; it is known as living here life divine.  
—*Buddhist Enlightenment*

Look up, my people,  
The dawn is breaking,  
The world is waking  
To a new bright day  
Where none defame us,  
No restriction tame us,  
No color shame us,  
No sneer dismay.  
—*A Song of Hope by Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal*

The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of different race and color from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality but, rather, be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity and rejoice to be among them... There are no whites and blacks before God. All colors are one, and that is the color of servitude to God. Scent and color are not important. The heart is important. If the heart is pure, white or black or any color makes no difference. God does not look at colors; He looks at the hearts. He whose heart is pure is better. He whose character is better is more pleasing... In the realm of existence colors are of no importance.  
— *Abdu'l-Baha, from the Baha'i Writings*

## *Musical Reflection*

# EBONY & IVORY

*Washington DC in 1912 was segregated. African-Americans and Caucasians did not socialize together. To do otherwise would result in at the very least social ostracism and sometimes violence.*

During the visit of Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'llah, to America in the early 1900's, he was invited to speak to universities, churches and synagogues, numerous conferences and societies. He was a figure of interest to the press who followed his travels and quoted from his talks regularly.

When he was in Washington, D.C. the Chargé d'affaires of the Persian Legation and his wife had arranged a luncheon in his honor. Their guest list included Explorer Admiral Peary, inventor Alexander Graham Bell, the Turkish ambassador, along with a number of prominent politicians and socialites, as well as a number of Baha'is. Abdu'l-Baha had invited Louis Gregory to visit him in the morning of the day of the luncheon. Louis Gregory was a young black lawyer who had become a Baha'i in 1909. Gregory was surprised at the time scheduled for the visit, as although he had not been invited by the Chargé d'affaires, he knew of the luncheon plans. He arrived on time for his meeting with Abdu'l-Bahá. Their conference seemed to go on and on—as if indeed Abdu'l-Bahá might be prolonging it deliberately.

Eventually the butler announced that luncheon was being served. 'Abdu'l-Bahá led the way, the invited guests following closely behind. Mr. Gregory was perplexed: should he leave or wait for the Master to return? Mr. Gregory slipped away because it wasn't acceptable for Blacks to dine with Whites, especially in such distinguished company.

The guests were seated when suddenly the honored Guest rose, looked around and then asked in English, "Where is My friend, Mr. Gregory?" adding "My friend, Mr. Gregory, must lunch with Me!" Now the Chargé d'affaires hastened after him. A few minutes later, Mr. Gregory, the son of a slave, was escorted into the elegant dining room by the host.

Abdu'l-Baha rearranged the place setting at His right, the seat of honor, of course—ignoring utterly the delicate laws of protocol—and the luncheon started only after Mr. Gregory had been seated.

Then, in a most natural manner, as if nothing at all unusual had happened in the capital that day in 1912, with tact and humor, 'Abdu'l-Baha electrified the already startled guests by talking about the unity of mankind.

— *from the Baha'i writings*

Black mother you are beautiful  
your skin black like a crow in a tree.  
Black mother you've a warm gentle heart  
like the spirits that walked upon this place  
Created in the Dreamtime.  
We know you have feelings deep inside  
like the woman doing body painting  
ready for dance.

Black mother you're beautiful like the kangaroos  
who carry and feed joeys in their pouch.

Oh! what more can I say except this—

Is there a part

which I owe you

Or perhaps a sentimental path

Making us lifelong friends?

— *Rosemary Plummer, Central Australian aboriginal poem*

A human being is a part of the whole that we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for only the few people nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature.

— *Albert Einstein*

Difference of race and color is like the variegated beauty of flowers in a garden... Baha'u'llah hath said that the various races of humankind lend a composite harmony and beauty of color to the whole. Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden, even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement between them.

— *Abdu'l-Baha, from the Baha'i Writings*

## *Musical Reflection*

# RECONCILIATION

## peace from within and without

Those who care for the future of the human race may well ponder this advice. ‘If long cherished ideals and time honored institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines. Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.’

Despite the obvious shortcomings of the United Nations, the more than two score declarations and conventions adopted by that organisation, even where governments have not been enthusiastic in their commitment, have given ordinary people a sense of a new lease of life. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the similar measures concerned with eliminating all forms of discrimination based on race, sex or religious belief; upholding the rights of the child; protecting all persons against being subjected to torture; eradicating hunger and malnutrition; using scientific and technological progress in the interest of peace and the benefit of mankind – all such measures, if courageously enforced and expanded, will advance the day when the spectre of war will have lost its power to dominate international relations. There is no need to stress the significance of the issues addressed by these declarations and conventions. However, a few such issues, because of their immediate relevance to establishing world peace, deserve additional comment.

Racism, one of the most baneful and persistent evils, is a major barrier to peace. Its practice perpetrates too outrageous a violation of the dignity of human beings to be countenanced under any pretext. Racism retards the unfoldment of the boundless potentialities of its victims, corrupts its perpetrators, and blights human progress. Recognition of the oneness of mankind, implemented by appropriate legal measures, must be universally upheld if this problem is to be overcome.

There are spiritual principles, or what some call human values, by which solutions can be found for every social problem. Any well-intentioned group can in a general sense devise practical solutions to its problems, but good intentions and practical knowledge are usually not enough. The essential merit of spiritual principle is that it not only presents a perspective which harmonizes with that which is imminent in human nature, it also induces an attitude, a dynamic, a will, an aspiration which facilitate the discovery and implementation of practical measures.

We join with all who are the victims of aggression, all who yearn for an end to conflict and contention, all whose devotion to principles of peace and world order promotes the ennobling purposes for which humanity was called into being by an all-loving Creator.

Let men and women, youth and children everywhere recognize the eternal merit of this imperative action for all peoples and lift up their voices in willing assent. Indeed, let it be this generation that inaugurates this glorious stage in the evolution of social life on the planet.

—*Excerpt from 'The Peace Message', from the Baha'i writings*

*Musical Reflection*

# RECONCILIATION

## through peace & justice

Reconciliation should be accompanied by justice, otherwise it will not last. While we all hope for peace it shouldn't be peace at any cost but peace based on principle, on justice.

— *Corazon Aquino*

At the dawn of this millennium, tribal peoples of the world still echo the voices of their Elders as they encourage us to respect each other. In their timeless wisdom lie the seed of hope and the promise of tomorrow yet to come.

— *Tribal Wisdom*

Seek for mankind that of which you are desirous for yourself, that you may be a believer; Treat well as a neighbour the one who lives near you, that you may be a Muslim. That which you want for yourself seek for mankind. The most righteous of men is the one who is glad that men should have what is pleasing to himself, and who dislikes for them what is for him disagreeable. Whatever you abhor for yourself, abhor it also for others, and whatever you desire for yourself desire also for others.

— *Attributed to Muhammad, Sukhanan-i-Muhammad*

I have no message to give except this: that there is no deliverance for any people on this earth or for all the people of this earth except through truth and nonviolence in every walk of life without any exceptions. Non violence is the greatest force humanity has been endowed with. Truth is the only goal humanity has. For God is none other than Truth.

I believe that the religion of non violence springs from the fact that the advancement of one promotes the advancement of all, and the fall of one implies the fall of all. We have therefore been enjoined to show compassion to every living being. The way of peace is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness. Truthful people cannot long remain violent.

— *Mohandas K. Gandhi*

So intensely hath the glory of Divine Unity penetrated souls and hearts that all are now bound one to another with heavenly ties, and all are even as a single heart, a single soul. Wherefore reflections of the spirit and impressions of the Divine are now mirrored clear and sharp in the deep heart's core. I beg of God to strengthen these spiritual bonds as day followeth day, and make this mystic oneness to shine ever more brightly, until at last all shall be as troops marshalled together . . . within the sheltering shade of the Word of God; that they may strive with all their might until universal fellowship, close and warm, and unalloyed love, and spiritual relationships, will connect all the hearts in the world.

Let all your striving be for this, to become the source of life and immortality, and peace and comfort and joy, to every human soul, whether one known to you or a stranger, one opposed to you or on your side. Look ye not upon the purity or impurity of his nature: look ye upon the all-embracing mercy of the Lord, the light of Whose grace hath embosomed the whole earth and all who dwell thereon, and in the plenitude of Whose bounty are immersed both the wise and the ignorant. Stranger and friend alike are seated at the table of His favour. Even as the believer, the denier who turneth away from God doth at the same time cup his hands and drink from the sea of His bestowals.

— *Abdu'l-Baha, from the Baha'i Writings*

*Musical Finale*

*join us* for the next program

**Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 11am**  
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