

WIHW 2021 REPORT: *Love Songs for Our Neighbours*, Sunday 28th February.

Why we created the event:

During the COVID pandemic in 2020, members of The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne and many religious organisations in our State of Victoria, delivered food to people in need and learned new ways of connecting and supporting our communities, online, with messages of hope and inspiration. Physical illness, deaths, mental illness, loss of employment, financial difficulties, separation between families and friends, and a myriad of other problems have been experienced in our local and global communities and may well continue until the pandemic is over. While practical help is needed, music, especially sacred music, can help us connect virtually and transcend some of the darkness we experience.

Celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week 2021

We were inspired to create a sacred music concert, *Love Songs for Our Neighbours* bringing together musicians and vocalists from diverse religious and spiritual traditions to offer songs of love of God and songs of love for our neighbours, both local and global neighbours, sacred music that transcends and unites, as a gift of love, bringing joy to our souls and strengthening our spirits as we move through the pandemic in 2021.

Musicians and vocalists in our time Zone were invited to participate in a Zoom meeting following the concert, *Conversations with Musicians*. The Forum was led by Dr Kim Cunio, School of Music, Australian National University.

What we did

Musicians and vocalists from nine religious and spiritual traditions were invited to contribute pre-recorded performances of a song/s of Love of God or Love of the Good, edited and compiled into one video. Speaking between songs was kept to a minimum by most performers introducing themselves.

The 60-minute concert was followed by *Conversations with Musicians* for 30 minutes. Five musicians, plus the organiser of the concert, talked about sacred music and what makes it sacred. The video of the concert was premiered on YouTube for people who had registered and then made public for viewing at any time on The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne YouTube Channel. Our partner, The Parliament of the World's Religions, has the video on their website.

Media Links

Love Songs for Our Neighbours: Video on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/tEiW2rQKsNU>

Impact of event

Nearly 600 people have watched the event and now, a week later, some religious and spiritual organisations are forwarding the link to their wider communities. Comments received through emails and phone calls have echoed the way the sacred music of diverse traditions, for 'Love of God' can connect us to neighbours locally and globally and help us transcend the darkness we might be facing, bringing joy to our souls and strengthening our spirits.

Website and Social Media

The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne website: www.interfaithcentre.org.au

The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne Facebook

Helen Summers Facebook

WhatsApp Groups

Faith Communities Council of Victoria website and Newsletter: www.faithvictoria.org.au

The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne Newsletters.

Parliament of the World's Religions Facebook

Letter: Testimonial Murshida Nuria Daly.