



*"Art is the blossoming of the soul" (F. Delius)*

During the war in Iraq, a woman in Manhattan stood at the intersection of two streets with a sign saying: "I am against the war." People would stop and engage in a conversation with her; they would agree with her or challenge her on her views, but an exchange was born. She said: "I could be across town, in my office, making money. But it is important for me to do this. This is the only thing I can do, stand here with my sign and my convictions and talk to people if they want to talk." As a result of this simple act, she was interviewed by CNN and her message was broadcast around the world.

The war in Iraq is officially over but the concept of war is forever present. What can we do? Can we make a difference? How can we switch the focus of conflict resolution from that of military force and violence to that of day-to-day peace efforts? This war has ended, but the suffering goes on.

As artists, I believe we can make a difference. We can give a voice for Peace, Awareness and Healing. Standing on a stage and sharing our gifts always takes courage but tonight it might even take greater courage. Tonight the songs are about how we relate to War and Peace, how we experience the sadness, cruelty and despair of war and how we are still willing to live and believe that our world can still hold wonders. Living in our world requires us to hold the tension between opposites: to witness violence around the globe and to be able to find peace in the beauty of a starry night.

*Peace is all around us in the world and in nature... the blue sky, the sunshine, the eyes of a baby... and within us—in our bodies and spirits. Once we learn to touch this peace, we will be healed and transformed. It is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of practice. We need only to find ways to bring our body and mind back to the present moment so we can touch what is refreshing, healing, and wondrous. (Thich Nhat Hanh)*

Tonight let us experience the soothing and healing powers of the Arts. Let us celebrate the indomitable human spirit in its desire for peace and humanity.

This concert is dedicated to the end of violence whether it is in countries devastated by war, in our homes, or in our own hearts.

Thank you for being here tonight ~ Elisabeth Pomès