



United Nations Association of Australia
60th Anniversary Conference

WE THE PEOPLES

ANU Law Theatre
Saturday 13 August 2005



a chorus of women

*Open the doors of the chambers of your hearts
Open your minds to our song
We sing for peace through the power of love
Hear the wisdom of women, hear our song*

LAMENT

In 1945

In 1945
Remember the dying
Remember the crying
Remember the sighing, the sorrow
The longing that sobs for renewal and peace
The hope that sobs in the Earth and the wind

Earth's Sorrow

In 1945
When the wells of the deep were soaks of blood
When the song of the Earth was a cry of lament
When the round moon wept in the dreams of our mothers
Longing and hope were conceived in our hearts

In 1945
Blood where the water of life should stream
Bones where the laughter of children should sound
Black land scorched where green should grow
And the people whispered up love songs

In 1945
After the terror and grief
After the hatred and strife
After the blood and the red sky of battle
Out in the streets cried the kind voice of wisdom.

1945: The Voice of Wisdom

*While the chambers of your hearts are open
With longing for peace and freedom
Gather the peoples' chorus
Listen to love's sorrow and hope.*

Our mothers and sisters heard this voice
Our mothers and sisters sounded this voice
Our fathers and brothers heard this voice
Our fathers and brothers sounded this voice

While the chambers of their hearts were open
With longing for peace and freedom
They heard love's sorrow and hope
And gathered the nations with one accord

To sing up the law of renewal
To sing up the deep songs of freedom and peace
Before the curtain of silence was closed
Closed on the nightmares of war

The Song of Wisdom

Oh sing up the kind voice of wisdom
Oh sing up the songs of renewal.
Whisper love's sorrow and hope
Echo the call to peace
Follow the yearning for children's laughter and harmony
Gather the people
Gather all nations together
Sing of the songs of renewal
Sing up the kind voice of wisdom

words and music: Glenda Cloughley

Renewing the lament

In 1945, with a wise voice born of experiencing the horror and madness, they said:
“Never again!”

But the curtain of silence was closed. The nightmares of war were forgotten. Australia and other Western nations have participated in many wars since the cataclysm ended 60 years ago.

Many cries of lament have sounded since then. When the clouds gathered again with words of terror and war-making, our lament arose too. On 18th March 2003, the day our government announced that Australia was going to participate in the war on Iraq, 150 women joined together in Parliament House to express our sorrow and grief at the suffering that would follow.

Lament

Open the doors of the chambers of your hearts
Open your minds to our song
We sing for peace through the power of love
Hear the wisdom of women, hear our song

Weep for our sisters in danger
Weep for our brothers and children
Sound the cries of grief and despair
Sound the lament for the dead

words: Glenda Cloughley, music: Judy Clingan

WE THE PEOPLES

The voice of the Chorus

Since that beginning, A Chorus of Women has been an ongoing group of about 20 with a challenging and busy schedule! We are singing with the voice of the people – the same voice that 60 years ago called into life the United Nations.

After the horrors of World War II there was a recognition that peace with justice was the only sustainable option for humankind. The wisdom of women has been recognised by the UN in resolution 1325. It is our duty to keep singing up life and love in a voice that will never consent to our children, our men, our families, being damaged in wars.

We celebrate this 60th Anniversary, first with the United Nations Charter, ratified on 24th October 1945, followed by some of the important milestones of the UN since that time.

We the Peoples of the United Nations

We the peoples of the United Nations – determine:

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind

Determine

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small

Determine

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained

Determine

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom

Determine

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours

Determine

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security

Determine

to ensure that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest

Determine

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples

*This is our Charter,
This is our promise,
We the peoples of the United Nations.*

*We the peoples of the United Nations
So many voices sounding together – this is our song*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted, 10th December 1948

This is our song

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons approved,
12th June 1968

This is our song

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based
on Religion or Belief adopted,
25th November 1981

This is our song

World Summit on the Rights of the Child convened, 2nd September 1990

This is our song

The "Earth Summit", held in Rio de Janeiro leading to a plan of action for sustainable
development, 31st January 1992

This is our song

Security Council Resolution 1325 passed, addressing the impact of war on women, and
women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace, 31st October 2000

This is our song

*We the peoples
So many different nations singing for peace
Standing united we will be heard.*

words: Christine Hansen, adapted from UN Charter and
milestones of the UN
music: Johanna McBride

Renewing the Voice of the Peoples

Back in 1945 we said "Never again!"

But during the rule of the Khmer Rouge, 2 million Cambodians died of starvation, by torture or execution and the landscape was filled with landmines.

We vowed to each other "Never again!"

But the men and boys of Srebrenica were slaughtered in a 'safe haven for refugees' when UN peacekeepers abandoned them.

We swore to ourselves "Never again!"

But we failed to act during the ethnic cleansing campaign in Rwanda and blood ran in the cities and villages.

We shouted together "Never again!"

But food meant for the starving Somalians was seized by local warlords and the people perished as we watched.

Even now, as we despair at these disasters, the people of Dafur cry out from the Sudan for our help. Do we hear them?

After the dark age of apartheid the people of South Africa said "Never again!" They determined that an end to violence had to be found. They determined to stop the rule of revenge.

During the healing and reconciliation process, Archbishop Desmond Tutu offered us the Zulu word Ubuntu. Ubuntu: "I am who I am because of you" as well as "We are who we are because of each other".

We, the peoples of the United Nations, every one of us, must do everything in our power to hold this truth.

Ubuntu

I am who I am because of you

We are who we are because of each other

Ubuntu.

Johanna McBride

Musical Direction: Judy Clingan and Johanna McBride

Vocal Solo: Judy Clingan

Script and program sequence: Glenda Cloughley, Christine Hansen, Johanna McBride, Meg Rigby

Who We Are

A Chorus of Women came into being when 150 women filled the Australian Parliament with the song "Lament" on 18 March 2003, the day Australia's intention to invade Iraq was announced.

We have been singing ever since. Like the ancient Greek chorus on which we model ourselves, we have commented on the events of our time. We try to listen to the wise course and seek to activate integrity and compassion in our communities.

Our presentations incorporate story, drama, dance and the visual arts to complement the songs. The material is original and responds to the issues that concern us.

Based in Canberra, A Chorus of Women has taken productions to Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Bulgaria, and has participated in a number of local festivals.

A Chorus of Women is an open group. We welcome singers and all who share our mission. A number of women have joined us especially for today's occasion. We rehearse each Sunday afternoon and meet on Wednesday evenings for conversation guided by our wish to recover the original meaning of philosophy, 'love of wisdom.'

A Chorus of Women at the 60th Anniversary of the UN

Margaret Bearlin, Zahira Bullock, Judy Clingan, Glenda Cloughley,
Christina Cornioley, Cordelia Dalton, Fay D'Elmaine, Liz Done,
Deborah Edwards, Ester Gaia, Anne Gardner, Bronwyn Goss, Julia Green, Christine Hansen,
Sue Hoffmann, Susanne Hollett, Marilyn Jenkins,
Regina Mackenzie, Johanna McBride, Lyn McClure, Janie McGough,
Judy McPherson, Lois McRae, Alison Meretini, Cedar Newton, Susan Nicholls, Julie Nikolaidis,
Jill Parliament, Marlene Quincey, Meg Rigby, June Staunton,
Judy Swanson, Veronica Wensing, Angela Young

Stay in Touch

chorusofwomen@incanberra.com.au

www.chorusofwomen.org

or phone Jill on 6257 7711

or Johanna on 0402 050 885