

Soul Food

The Luminous Hearts of Women



March 2020

The Luminous Hearts of Women:

This program is dedicated to the principle of the equality of women and men in recognition of International Women's Day which is celebrated on the 8th March.


Program

 **Fine Tuned Quartet**

01. Baha'i Prayer
02. Bahá'í Writings
03. Jewish Writings
04. Christian Writings
05. Muslim Writings
06. Bahá'í Writings

 **Fine Tuned Quartet**

07. Lynn Santa Lucia
08. Bahá'í Writings
09. Sikh Writings
10. Hindu Writings
11. Dedicated to Women
12. Bahá'í Writings
13. William Wadsworth
14. Barbara Zanotti

 **Fine Tuned Quartet**

15. E.A.C. Gladwin
16. Little Black Boy
17. Martha Parravano
18. Bahá'í Writings Quartet
19. My Mother
20. Paula Rinehart
21. Bahá'í Writings

 **Fine Tuned Quartet**

*Dignity before God depends, not on sex,
but on purity and luminosity of heart.*

'Abdu'l-Bahá



**Under the Southern Skies by Damien Halloran & Maria Millward,
arranged by Glenda Lloyd
Fine Tuned Quartet**

1. Prayer

Magnified be Thy name, O Lord my God!

Behold Thou mine eye expectant to gaze on the wonders of Thy mercy, and mine ear longing to hearken unto Thy sweet melodies, and my heart yearning for the living waters of Thy knowledge. Thou seest Thy handmaiden, O my God, standing before the habitation of Thy mercy, and calling upon Thee by Thy name which Thou hast chosen above all other names and set up over all that are in heaven and on earth. Send down upon her the breaths of Thy mercy, that she may be carried away wholly from herself, and be drawn entirely towards the seat which, resplendent with the glory of Thy face, sheddeth afar the radiance of Thy sovereignty, and is established as Thy throne. Potent art Thou to do what Thou wilt. No God is there beside Thee, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

Cast not out, I entreat Thee, O my Lord, them that have sought Thee, and turn not away such as have directed their steps towards Thee, and deprive not of Thy grace all that love Thee. Thou art He, O my Lord, Who hath called Himself the God of Mercy, the Most Compassionate. Have mercy, then, upon Thy handmaiden who hath sought Thy shelter, and set her face towards Thee.

Thou art, verily, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

~ Bahá'í Writings

2. If the mother is educated then her children will be well taught. When the mother is wise, then will the children be led into the path of wisdom. If the mother be religious she will show her children how they should love God. If the mother is moral she guides her little ones into the ways of uprightness.

It is clear therefore that the future generation depends on the mothers of today. Is not this a vital responsibility for the woman? Does she not require every possible advantage to equip her for such a task?

Therefore, surely, God is not pleased that so important an instrument as woman should suffer from want of training in order to attain the perfections desirable and necessary for her great life's work! Divine Justice demands that the rights of both sexes should be equally respected since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of Heaven. Dignity before God depends, not on sex, but on purity and luminosity of heart. Human virtues belong equally to all!

~ Bahá'í Writings

Through the effulgent rays of divine illumination the capacity of woman has become so awakened and manifest in this age that equality of man and woman is an established fact.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

3. A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still night; with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed in fine household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

-Proverbs 31: 0-29

4. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians: 3 – 28, NIV

***Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.***

Proverbs 31

5. A man came to the Prophet Muhammad and asked:

"O Messenger of God, who is the person
who has the greatest right on me
with regard to kindness and attention?"

He replied, "Your mother." "Then who?"

He replied, "Your mother." "Then who?"

He replied, "Your mother." "Then who?"

He replied, "Your father".

~Sayings of Muhammad

6. Ere long the days shall come when the men addressing the women, shall say: "Blessed are ye! Blessed are ye! Verily ye are worthy of every gift. Verily ye deserve to adorn your heads with the crown of everlasting glory, because in sciences and arts, in virtues and perfections ye shall become equal to man, and as regards tenderness of heart and the abundance of mercy and sympathy ye are superior."

~'Abdu'l-Bahá Paris Talks

***Until the reality of equality between man and woman
is fully established and attained,
the highest social development of mankind is not possible.***

'Abdu'l-Bahá



Mr Sandman by Pat Ballard - arranged by Bertha Bradley

Fine Tuned Quartet

7. **Mahapajapati Gotama (c.500s-400sBC)**

Gotami was the first woman to be ordained by Buddha and join the Sangha (Buddhist group of disciples). The aunt of the Buddha, Gotami had to work hard to convince him that women should be accepted into the Sangha, asking him three times before he agreed. The Buddha laid down a set of rules for holy women and Gotami established the order of nuns, Bhikkuni – making Buddhism the first religion to create an active role for women.

~Lynn Santa Lucia

8. If thou seekest to be intoxicated with the Cup of the Most Mighty Gift, cut thyself from the world and be quit of self and desire. Exert thyself night and day until spiritual powers may penetrate thy heart and soul. Abandon the body and the material, until the merciful powers may become manifest; because not until the soil is become pure will it develop through the heavenly bounty; not until the heart is purified, will the radiance of the Sun of Truth shine therein. I beg of God that thou wilt day by day increase the purity of thy heart, and cheerfulness of thy soul, the light of thy insight and the search for Truth.

~'Abd'ul-Bahá

***When your words are sweet and filled with the power of truth,
you are an enlightened being with the heart of an angel.***

Roger Cole

9. **Women and Sikhi**

The One has no gender and neither does our soul. In fact, all of us (men and women) are described as brides to the One, our true Soul Partner.

The Gurus taught that women and men are equal. Women and men pray together and sit equally. Women can work, lead congregations and be preachers. The first Sikh was a woman and the Gurus themselves appointed women preachers to spread Sikhi.

Interestingly, as Sikh first names are related to the Soul's purpose, they are not gender specific. Thus, Sikhs have a surname of either Singh for men or Kaur for women. Both of these are royal surnames. Kaur remains Kaur their whole life, regardless of marriage.

~From Top 10 Questions about Sikhi, p. 7

10. Sweet be the glances we exchange,
Our faces showing true concord.
Enshrine me in your heart and let
One spirit dwell within us.
I wrap around you this my robe
Which came to me from Manu,
So that you may be wholly mine
And never seek another.

~Hindu Scriptures: Atharva Veda 7:36-7

***I am He, you are She;
I am Song, you are Verse,
I am Heaven, you are Earth.
Hindu Writings***

11. **Dedicated to all Women**

A little boy asked his mother, "Why are you crying?" "Because I'm a woman," she told him.

"I don't understand," he said. His Mom just hugged him and said, "And you never will."

Later the little boy asked his father, "Why does mother seem to cry for no reason?"

"All women cry for no reason," was all his dad could say.

The little boy grew up and became a man, still wondering why women cry. Finally he put in a call to God. When God got on the phone, he asked, "God, why do women cry so easily?"

God said, "When I made the woman she had to be special.

I made her shoulders strong enough to carry the weight of the world, yet gentle enough to give comfort.

I gave her an inner strength to endure childbirth and the rejection that many times comes from her children.

I gave her a hardness that allows her to keep going when everyone else gives up, and take care of her family through sickness and fatigue without complaining.

I gave her the sensitivity to love her children under any and all circumstances, even when her child has hurt her very badly.

I gave her strength to carry her husband through his faults and fashioned her from his rib to protect his heart.

I gave her wisdom to know that a good husband never hurts his wife, but sometimes tests her strengths and her resolve to stand beside him unfalteringly.

And finally, I gave her a tear to shed. This is hers exclusively to use whenever it is needed."

"You see my son," said God, "the beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears, the figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair.

The beauty of a woman must be seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart - the place where love resides."

12. The status of woman in former times was exceedingly deplorable, for it was the belief of the Orient that it was best for woman to be ignorant. It was considered preferable that she should not know reading or writing in order that she might not be informed of events in the world. Woman was considered to be created for rearing children and attending to the duties of the household. If she pursued educational courses, it was deemed contrary to chastity; hence women were made prisoners of the household. The houses did not even have windows opening upon the outside world. Bahá'u'lláh destroyed these ideas and proclaimed the equality of man and woman. He made woman respected by commanding that all women be educated, that there be no difference in the education of the two sexes and that man and woman share the same rights. In the estimation of God there is no distinction of sex. One whose thought is pure, whose education is superior, whose scientific attainments are greater, whose deeds of philanthropy excel, be that one man or woman, white or coloured, is entitled to full rights and recognition; there is no differentiation whatsoever.

~The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912, p. 166)

A strong woman understands that the gifts such as logic, decisiveness, and strength are just as feminine as intuition and emotional connection. She values and uses all her gifts.

Nancy Rathburn

13. **She Was A Phantom of Delight**

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament:
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay, To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death:
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly plann'd
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

~ William Wordsworth

14. Women are the bearers of life-loving energy. Ours is the task of deepening that passion for life and separating from all that threatens life, all that diminishes life; becoming who we are as women; telling/living the truth of our lives; shifting the weight of the world.
~Barbara Zanotti

***Women are the carriers of life.
We hold the fruit of our loving beneath our hearts.
Jeannine Parvati Baker***



**Embraceable You - George Gershwin & Ira Gershwin
arranged by Kirby Shaw
Fine Tuned Quartet**

15. O God
Who has been from the dawn of Time,
With compassionate understanding see this form of mine.
Give me pride in womanhood,
The feminine and all it brings:
Of joy in creation of beautiful things.

Give us all awareness of the power of the mind.
The will we use in prayer and gentle Thought..
The power of Love
That lies within all nations, skin, tints, creeds,
Yet moves the violets, tall trees and the stars,
We sense unending in the great streams of Light
Enwrapping our fair mother-earth
With ties of sisterhood
In your great Name.
~Eric Gladwin

16. **The Little Black Boy**

..My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day.
She took me on my lap and kiss`ed me,
And, pointing to the east, began to say:

'Look on the rising sun, - there God does live,
And gives us His light, and gives His heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in noonday.

'And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love....'

~William Blake

A beautiful woman delights the eye;

A wise woman, the understanding;

A pure one, the soul.

Minna Antrim

17. Consider a small child sitting on his mother's lap while she reads him a picture book. The picture book opens to a width that effectively places the child at the centre of a closed circle - that of mother's body, arms, and the picture book... That circle, so private and intimate, is a place apart from the demands and stresses of daily life, a sanctuary in and from which the child can explore the many worlds offered in picture books. Despite all of our society's technological advances, it still just takes one child, one book, and one reader, to create this unique space, to work this everyday magic.

~ Martha Parravano

Having a soft heart in a cruel world is courage, not weakness.
Katherine Henson

18.strive to show in the human world that women are most capable and efficient, that their hearts are more tender and susceptible than the hearts of men, that they are more philanthropic and responsive toward the needy and suffering, that they are inflexibly opposed to war and are lovers of peace. Strive that the ideal of international peace may become realized through the efforts of womankind, for man is more inclined to war than woman, and a real evidence of woman's superiority will be her service and efficiency in the establishment of universal peace.
~Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 284

Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world
Hillary Clinton

19. **My Mother**

is pure radiance.
she is the sun
I can touch
and kiss
and hold
without
getting burnt.
~Sanober Khan

20. When you taste a measure of being able to love and enjoy the people in your life, without having to have any particular response from them, you are tasting bliss. You can move out into life, and you don't have to have your parking ticket stamped by human approval to do it.
~Paula Rinehart, Strong Women, Soft Hearts.

***The task of organizing human happiness
needs the active cooperation of man and woman.
It cannot be relegated to one half of the world.
Lillian Wald***

21. In the Dispensation of Bahá'ú'lláh, women are advancing side by side with men. There is no area or instance where they will lag behind: they have equal rights with men, and will enter, in the future, into all branches of the administration of society. Such will be their elevation that, in every area of endeavour, they will occupy the highest levels in the human world. Rest thou assured. Look not upon their present state. In future, the world of womankind will shine with lustrous brilliance, for such is the will and purpose of Bahá'ú'lláh. At the time of elections the right to vote is the inalienable right of women, and the entrance of women into all human departments is an irrefutable and incontrovertible question. No soul can retard or prevent it.

~From a Tablet to an individual believer - translated from the Persian, published in Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris in 1911-1912, pp.

182-183

. ...the new age will be an age less masculine and more permeated with the feminine ideals...an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced.

Ábdu'l-Bahá



**And So It Goes- Billy Joel,
arranged by Kirby Shaw
Fine Tuned Quartet**

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Please join us for refreshments

We extend our warmest appreciation to the performers who have so generously contributed to our program.

Our Musicians this month:

Fine Tuned Quartet:

Jan Lovegrove	- Tenor
Olga Kraus	- Lead
Jane Norris	- Baritone
Linda Britts	- Bass

Soul Food

Soul Food is an open community event hosted on the first Sunday of each month and whose purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and our communities with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society. Set in the tranquil setting of the Baha'i Centre of Learning, it provides an occasion to be inspired and reflect on uplifting themes with our neighbours. Our programs feature live music, audio-visual pieces and readings from various authors, sources and Faiths - indigenous, ancient and modern- from all over the world.

Soul Food was initiated by the Bahá'í community in Adelaide and now occurs in places around Australia and as far afield as Botswana, Africa. It is also proudly supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Original programs are available for free download from www.soulfood.com.au/tas/

***Soul Food - First Sunday of each month.
Venue: Bahá'í Centre of Learning, Hobart
Time: 3.00pm – 4pm***

Another exciting program held every Tuesday afternoon
12.30pm – 1.30pm in the
Tranquility Room is a short Devotional designed to lift up
our spirits and so is called:

"Lunchtime Lift"

We would love to share this with YOU.

Study Circles

The Bahá'í Community is offering a series of life-changing circles of study. The purpose of Bahá'í study circles is to provide participants with the knowledge, spiritual insights and skills to enable them to contribute to the betterment of society, starting with their own neighbourhood. This is done through systematic study of a sequence of courses based on the Bahá'í Writings using the courses of the Ruhi Institute. The first in the sequence of books is called Reflections on the Life of the Spirit. It examines spiritual matters such as prayer, meditation, life and death and the development of the soul. Study circles are held all around Australia and are open to all. You are invited to take inspiration from the Bahá'í teachings, benefitting from whatever gems of wisdom and knowledge will help you to address the challenges you face. Study circles are held in an uplifting environment conducive to spiritual empowerment of individuals, who come to see themselves as active agents of their own learning. The role of the study circle facilitator is not to impart knowledge, but to assist discussion. Study Circles feature participatory learning, involving discussions with others and the use of the arts. For inquiries or more information please email: Sandhya Keenoo sandhya.keenoo@gmail.com ☎044850728

Children's classes in the Neighbourhood

Regular children's classes are held in communities around Tasmania and provide moral, spiritual and virtues-based training essential in nurturing the inner capacities of children. The classes aim to build a strong moral framework which will assist children to achieve excellence in material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life. For inquiries or more information please call Jennifer's mobile 📞0404352042

*"Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green;
they will grow up in whatever way you train them.
Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals,
so that once they come of age,
they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world..."*
from the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith

Junior Youth Groups

Developed for youth between the ages of 12 and 15, these programs are designed to empower and equip young people with the knowledge and concepts that will encourage the expression of their personal potential, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become agents of change - for themselves and their communities. Through engagement in service initiatives, artistic and extracurricular activities they foster a sense of world citizenship and a lifelong commitment to serve humanity. Those in their early adolescent years possess altruism, a sense of justice, eagerness to learn about the universe, and a desire to contribute to the construction of a better world. The program helps them form a strong moral identity and empowers them to contribute to the well-being of their communities and the world at large. By developing their spiritual qualities (virtues), their intellectual capabilities and their capacities for service to society, the participants come to see that they can become agents of positive change in the world. The program adopts a participatory mode of learning where the facilitator and participants learn from each other. Groups of participants engage in activities such as artistic expression, discussion, drama, cooperative games, study of literature, story telling and acts of community service. The junior youth program explores themes from a Baha'i perspective, but is not a formal religious education program. It is open to all, subject to parental approval. Junior youth groups meet on a regular basis and there is no written homework.

All program facilitators are certified under the Baha'i Child Protection Policy, which includes a mandatory police check. Parents are welcome to meet with the facilitators to learn about the program. For enquiries or more information please call Niloufar Pepperell 0412899498 or email snshahzadi@gmail.com

Join us

for the next Soul Food program –

“The Tree of Divine Guidance”

April 5th 3pm

Upcoming Dates and Titles for Soul Food 2020:

April 5 th	The Tree of Divine Guidance
May 3 rd ,	Family - the Foundational Bond
June 7 th ,	The Sacred Earth
July 5 th ,	A Kindly and Radiant Heart
August 2 nd	The Power of Words
September 6 th ,	Unfurling the Banners of Peace
October 4 th ,	The Ornament of Justice and Fairness
November 1 st ,	Polishing the Gems – the education of children
December 6 th	The Joy of Giving

All Soul Food programs are available for free download from
www.soulfood.com.au/tas

The Baha'i Faith is an independent world religion, the main principles of which are:

- The Oneness of God
- The oneness of humankind
- The independent investigation of truth
- The essential harmony between science and religion
- Equality of men and women
- Elimination of prejudice of all kind
- Universal compulsory education
- Spiritual solution to economic problems
- A universal auxiliary language
- Universal peace upheld by a world federation

Baha'is strive to put into practice, in their own lives and to the betterment of others, the spiritual and practical teachings of their Faith.

In the Baha'i Faith belief must be expressed in deeds – service to others is service to God.

You can find out more about the Bahá'ís and their world embracing vision at
www.bahai.org.au or feel free to call 03 6234 7654 for more information.