

# Merriam Park NEIGHBORS FOR PEACE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Neighbors to Raise Spirits, Funds with May 10<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Benefit Concert

**St. Paul, MN – May 2, 2003** – Having emerged from their St. Paul homes to promote alternatives to war, three Neighbors for Peace organizations will bring the spirit of peacemaking to the concert halls May 10<sup>th</sup> for some joyful noise in the name of humanitarian relief. Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace, Hamline-Midway Neighbors for Peace, and Macalester-Groveland Neighbors for Peace are hosting the concert on Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 p.m. at the O'Shaughnessy Educational Center at the University of St. Thomas. A \$15.00 donation is requested, with proceeds benefiting Doctors Without Borders, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the American Refugee Committee.

The concert is the uplifting response to the neighbors' and musicians' shared grief for the crisis unfolding in Iraq. "What is most important to me about all of this is that tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens—many of them children—have been injured, displaced, or are in desperate need of help," states nationally-acclaimed folk guitarist, Peter Lang. "I think when you have children things like this tear at your heart because you know how terrible this would be were it your children. The fact is that they are all your children. It is a small thing to be able to join together with other musicians in a performance. However, it is a great thing to be able to direct that creative energy toward helping a people in need."

The event is part of the neighbors' larger commitment to continue to work for peace well beyond the end of actual bombing. "The people of Iraq have been through a lot in the last thirty years and in the last thirty days," says folk musician Pop Wagner. "Their journey to true freedom is far from over."

Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace co-founder, Anne Benson, agrees. "So many of us are heartsick right now. It's hard to know how to help the people of Iraq, when they need basic support more than ever. The benefit concert will be a simple way to lend the hand we so want to extend to them, and hopefully rekindle our own spirits so we can persevere. We may be in this for the long haul, but we're in it together."

Pop Wagner, whose guitar and fiddle music have been heard on such national programs as *A Prairie Home Companion*, is a Merriam Park Neighbor himself. "Music is the language that transcends barriers. It's the perfect form to raise funds for humanitarian aid to Iraq." Helping to coordinate the event, Wagner has arranged "a rich collaboration of artists from our teeming local music community."

The performance lineup, in addition to Peter Lang and Pop Wagner, will include Bill Hinkley and Judy Larson, Dessert Rhythm, the former JoAnna Papas (now JoAnna James), Salamat Music, Light from Heaven (formerly the New International Trio), Ross Sutter, and Karen Lyu of Global Jazz fame. Wagner hints that the eclectic blend will include a sing-along version of "Allelujah, the Great Storm is Over" by Bob Franke, in dedication to the future of the Iraqi people. "Please join us for what promises to be an evening to remember."

If you would like to help but cannot attend, please send a donation made out to "Merriam Park Peace Project" to: Merriam Park Peace Project, c/o Krista Menzel, 1923 Ashland Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104.

For more information, visit the Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace web site at [www.mpeace.org](http://www.mpeace.org) or contact:

Anne Benson  
Phone: (651) 647-0580  
E-mail: [anne@mpeace.org](mailto:anne@mpeace.org)

Rachel Goligoski  
Phone: (651) 644-0025  
E-mail: [rachel@mpeace.org](mailto:rachel@mpeace.org)

Krista Menzel  
Phone: (651) 641-7592  
E-mail: [krista@mpeace.org](mailto:krista@mpeace.org)

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# Neighbors Lend a Hand

## A Benefit Concert for Humanitarian Aid in Iraq

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**8:00 p.m., Saturday, May 10, 2003**

**O'Shaughnessy Education Center**

**University of St. Thomas, St. Paul Campus**

Come together for an evening of music to heal our spirits and raise much-needed funds for Doctors Without Borders, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the American Refugee Committee to provide humanitarian aid in Iraq.

### Scheduled Performers

- Light from Heaven (formerly New International Trio)
- Dessert Rhythm
- Bill Hinkley and Judy Larson
- JoAnna James (formerly JoAnna Papas)
- Peter Lang
- Karen Lyu from Global Jazz
- Salamat Music
- Ross Sutter
- Pop Wagner

A \$15.00 donation is requested, but give as much (or as little) as you can. Checks should be made payable to *Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace*.

Sponsored by Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace, Hamline-Midway Neighbors for Peace, and Macalester-Groveland Neighbors for Peace.

For more information, call Krista at (651) 641-7592, e-mail [concert@mppeace.org](mailto:concert@mppeace.org), or visit the Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace web site:



<http://www.mpppeace.org/events/concert.htm>