



Voices Together Concert

A Benefit for the “Ordinary People” of Iraq

For Immediate Release

NEW YORK CITY — In a community effort to provide direct aid to thousands of Iraqi citizens injured in the continuing war, a benefit concert—**Voices Together**—will feature performances by more than eight musicians at Peter Norton Symphony Space on January 28.

The concert, to begin at 8 p.m., will provide direct support to **The Global Medical Relief Fund**, an extraordinary group that has brought hope and help to children injured in the war, and **Life USA**, a grass roots organization that offers humanitarian services to a wide range of Iraqi citizens.

Performers so far include Christine Lavin, Modern Man, Karlus Trapp, Sam Leopold, Roger Barlett, and David Ippolito, who is also artistic director of the event. The concert is being presented by Sid Bernstein, the legendary promoter who first brought the Beatles to Carnegie Hall and Shea Stadium in the mid 1960s.

“The concert is going to be a night of purpose, goodness, smiles, togetherness, laughter, some tears....but most of all—wonderful music,” said Ippolito, who is also known for over a decade of performances as “That Guitar Man” in Central Park. “Unlike many charities and major benefits, every nickel of the proceeds from every ticket bought is going directly to the people who are helping out the ordinary civilians caught in the nightmare in Iraq.”

The **Voices Together** project was formed by a small group of ordinary people to get as much direct help as possible to the wounded civilians—the ordinary people whose lives are being torn apart every day by the war in Iraq. All production costs for the concert have been underwritten by private contributions, allowing all money raised from the benefit to go directly to the beneficiaries.

In organizing the event, it became apparent that too many Americans see the turmoil in Iraq as too complex, too political, or too remote. Images of the war are often sanitized or censored. For many, the extent of the injury and death involving American troops is hard enough to comprehend, let alone the injuries to Iraqi civilians.

However, the concert organizers felt that out-of-sight should not be out-of-mind. The huge number of civilian losses in this war—no matter how they occur—should be seen as a threat to lasting peace in the world and the responsibility of all decent people.

The concert, said Ippolito, will offer real and specific means for Americans to provide help to injured civilians in need in Iraq, especially children. “This concert will provide a way for ordinary Americans to do extraordinary things, to know they are helping those who are most in need, and in doing so show a compassionate face of America.”

Tickets are priced at \$50, \$75, and \$100 and can be ordered by phone at (212) 864-5400 or through the online box office at www.symphonyspace.org.

For additional information, visit <http://www.voicestogether.org> or contact David Ippolito at david@voicestogether.org.

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The Voices Together Concert Benefits:

The Global Medical Relief Fund

(<http://www.globmed.org>)

Since 1997, the GMRF has brought hope and help to children who are missing or have lost use of their limbs, have been severely burned, or are otherwise damaged due to the atrocities of war, national disaster or illness.

Not only do these children gain immeasurably from the organization, both physically and mentally, but they also stand as ambassadors for the United States, reflecting American generosity, ingenuity, freedom and opportunity.

The GMRF reaches out both locally and worldwide in search of children in

desperate need, with little or no resources to better their condition. The organization prepares necessary travel documents for both child and guardian, and arranges transportation to the United States, where candidates are fitted with prosthetic limbs and receive medical and/or surgical care. The GMRF also provides the patient and his or her guardian room and board for the duration of convalescence.

Those at the GMRF feel that it is our obligation as human beings to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to answering those tiny voices around the world whose faint cries call out for our help.

LIFE USA

(<http://www.lifeusa.org/>)

Life For Relief and Development (LIFE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering regardless of race, color, religion or cultural background. This global organization strives to offer humanitarian services including health, education, social and economic services to victims of hunger, natural disasters, wars and other catastrophes.

Since its inception, LIFE has had a special commitment to the welfare and well being of the people of Iraq. The group was originally founded in 1992 in response to the humanitarian crisis that had been created by the first Gulf War.

Since then, LIFE has provided over \$30 million in humanitarian aid to Iraq, impacting the lives of approximately 13 million Iraqis by implementing diverse humanitarian projects in the fields of health, education, community development, water and sanitation, and social programs.

One of LIFE's critical endeavors is its Orphan Assistance Program. This program supports hundreds of children and provides them with basic necessities including food, clothing, health care, education, school supplies and daily living expenses.

For as little as \$35 per month, a donor may help improve the life of a child. Parallel to this, the Orphan General Fund is a program dedicated to supporting orphanages.