



P.O. Box 25353, London, ON N6C 6B1
Information: 519-471-8654
www.canadian-celtic-choir.org

**For Immediate Release:
March 26, 2007**

The Canadian Celtic Choir is honoured to accept an invitation to sing on Easter Weekend at the National War Memorial in Ottawa to mark the 90th Anniversary of the Canadian Victory at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

After two successful self-produced concerts (2005, 2006) to pay tribute to our Veterans and Troops, the **Canadian Celtic Choir** has received and accepted an invitation to sing at special ceremonies on Sunday, April 8th (Vimy Vigil) and Monday, April 9th (Ceremony of Remembrance) to be held at The National War Memorial in Ottawa.

On April 9th, tens of thousands of people will gather in France and in Canada to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Canadians captured Vimy Ridge 90 years ago in a fight for peace, freedom and hope. The Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge is thought to have been a key turning point in shaping Canada as a nation. On the 90th anniversary, we will remember what Canadians achieved - a feat that others thought was impossible. About 65,000 Canadian troops - one-tenth of the force - died on the battlefields of Europe during the war and about 170,000 were wounded.

Choir Director Dan Surman was understandably moved by the invitation to sing at the National War Memorial, *"It is an honour to participate in this historic event. We have performed many of these pieces to pay tribute to our soldiers, past and present, at concerts in and around London, Ontario. Therefore, in Ottawa we will be singing them from the heart."*

On Monday, April 9th CBC Radio and Television will be broadcasting this special commemorative service from the Cenotaph at the National War Memorial (located at Confederation Square, corner of Elgin and Wellington streets, Ottawa). The CBC's guest commentator is Major George Pearce (retired). More information is available on the Veterans Affairs Canada website (www.vac-acc.gc.ca).

The ties to the Great War are personal for Canadian Celtic Choir member Eric Duggan whose uncle Victor "Lloyd" Clemett (b. Dec. 10, 1899) was one of the last surviving Canadian veterans of World War 1. Mr. Clemett died on February 21, 2007 in Toronto at the age of 107. At age 16, Clemett enlisted in 1916 after telling the army he was 18 - the official enlistment age. He was sent to England after just three weeks of training and later stationed in France.

"With the passing of Mr. Clemett, another link to Canada's proud military history has been severed. All Canadians, no matter where they live, must continue to remember that the sacrifices of Mr. Clemett and his comrades helped shape the strong, prosperous and democratic nation we enjoy today," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in a statement.

Choir President Mr. Justice John F. McGarry proudly commented, "*The Canadian Celtic Choir is honoured to have been asked by Veterans Affairs Canada to participate in the 90th Anniversary of Vimy in Ottawa. It will be a very special opportunity for our choir to share in saluting the Canadian heroes of the past.*"

The Canadian Celtic Choir which was founded in London (Ontario), to sing, celebrate, and promote Celtic music, recently celebrated its 10th Anniversary. The choir's founders, **Dan Surman** (Choir Director) and **Margo Surman** (Associate Director and soprano soloist) have consistently sought out the meaningful, moving and spirit raising songs of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the Canadian Maritimes for the choir's repertoire and interspersed carefully chosen selections from Europe and North America. The result is a rich and evolving body of work that links technical mastery with emotive impact to bring new dimension to the character and characters of traditional Celtic music.

The Canadian Celtic Choir has been featured at many festivals and concert halls throughout Ontario. Recently the choir opened for the acclaimed tenor John McDermott, and for the Irish Descendants at the Owen Sound Celtic Festival. Other past appearances of note were: Canada Summer Games, Windsor Celtic Festival (2x), Goderich Celtic Festival (2x), Home County Folk Festival, Canterbury Folk Festival, Fergus Highland Games. The choir has accepted an invitation to perform several concerts in and around Maui, Hawaii in March 2008.

The Canadian Celtic Choir's recordings 'We Rise Again' and 'Christmas Remembered' are available at over 400 retail outlets in Canada through Landwash Distribution (www.landwashdistribution.com) of St. John's, Newfoundland which specializes in Atlantic Canadian artists, such as The Barra MacNeils, John Allan Cameron, Rita MacNeil and Natalie MacMaster. Landwash views the work of the Canadian Celtic Choir as a natural fit with their focus on musical heritage.

CD Baby of Portland Oregon (www.cdbaby.com) is handling the on-line sales for both of the choir's CD releases. CD Baby works exclusively with independent artists and, since their founding in 1997, has distributed nearly 3,000,000 CDs.

Peter Garland, broadcaster and a b'y from St. John's, calls the Choir "*shockin' good*" and says if you could fit them in a Newfoundland kitchen, "*you'd have some time*".

Music samples and more information on the Canadian Celtic Choir can be found at www.canadian-celtic-choir.org

For more information contact:

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Program Details

Sunday, April 8

Vimy Vigil

7:20 - 8:00 pm

Canadian Celtic Choir will sing a selection of the following pieces depending on the time available:

Vimy (words and music, Steve Ritchie; arr. Dan Surman) - Soloist: Vince Gray

Danny Boy (words and music, Fred E. Weatherly; arr. by Carl Strommen)

Homeward Bound (words and music, Marta Keen; arr. by Jay Althouse)

Soldier Boy (Words and Music by John Rutter)

Brother James' Air (a sung version of the 23rd Psalm; arr. by Gordon Jacob)

Monday, April 9

Ceremony of Remembrance

11:30 am - Assembling of guests and dignitaries

11:53 am - O Canada

11:55 am - Governor General's speech

12:00 pm - Last post, etc

12:15 pm - Laying of Memorial Wreaths

Canadian Celtic Choir will sing a selection of the following pieces depending on time available during the laying of the wreaths:

For the Fallen (music, M. Sammes; text, L. Binyon)

Prayer of the Children (written by K. Bestor; arr. A. Klouse)

We Rise Again (written by L. Dubinsky; arr. by L. Adams) - Soloist: Margo Surman

Soldier Boy (Words and Music by John Rutter)

12:26 pm - Benediction

12:31 pm - God Save the Queen

Biography



The Canadian Celtic Choir is London-based and the majority of our members are London residents. The Choir has provided the city of London and surrounding communities with high quality choral music for more than 10 years and has built a solid reputation as one of the most in demand choirs in this area.

The Canadian Celtic Choir was founded in March 1996 by Dan and Margo Surman and a small group of musicians seeking to sing and promote Celtic choral music and culture in Southwestern Ontario - and eventually to tour across Canada and the world. Originally known as the Celtic Silurian Choristers, the choir renamed itself the Canadian Celtic Choir in September 1999.

Our repertoire features music from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and the Maritimes. Some of the music we sing is traditional and some relatively modern. Included too, is a variety of other music from Europe and North America, songs that are sung for their beauty and inspiration.

Also, we perform several original arrangements of Canadian folk songs written by our Musical Director Dan Surman. Additionally, we have been privileged to receive original arrangements from prominent British musician John Renbourn, and Canadian composer Tom Leighton.

We have performed at the opening of the new Wolf Performance Hall (London, Ontario), the Canada Summer Games, Windsor Celtic Festival, Goderich Celtic Festival, Owen Sound Celtic Festival, Fergus Highland Games, Canterbury Folk Festival (Ingersoll), Fieldcote Summer Music Series (Ancaster) and several times with Orchestra London.

We have also performed at a number of prominent London locations including St. Paul's Cathedral, Museum London, Metropolitan United Church, First St. Andrew's United Church, Covent Garden Market, Galleria London, and the Great Hall at the University of Western Ontario.

From summer music festivals to black tie benefits, our self-produced concerts, our production of John Rutter's *Wind in the Willows* (twice), and our CD releases, *Here's To Song* (2001), *Christmas Remembered* (2004), and our third CD *We Rise Again* (2007), the Canadian Celtic Choir is fulfilling its musical mission.

Dan Surman, BFA, BEd - Music Director

Dan Surman has worked extensively as a tenor soloist, church organist and community choir director. For nine years, he was the musical director of the Canadian Welsh Singers, leading them on a very successful British tour in 1995. Mr. Surman was instrumental in the founding of the Canadian Celtic Choir. He is a graduate of York University and an Ontario public school teacher and music specialist for the past twenty years. He is presently with the Thames Valley District School Board.

Margo Surman - Associate Music Director / Soprano Soloist

A soloist and voice teacher, Margo Surman studied at the University of Toronto Opera School, The Royal Conservatory of Music, and the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Music. She gained acclaim as a soloist in Britain, and performed as guest soloist for the Melencryddan Male Voice Choir during its successful tour of Canada and the United States in 1996. Margo's vocal skill and role as producer/director of the Tapestry Musical Theatre Company (founded in 1986) continue to bring her recognition locally and internationally.

The Canadian Celtic Choir is a registered non-profit organization based in London, Ontario.



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Musical Director - Dan Surman, BFA, BEd

Associate Musical Director/Soprano Soloist - Margo Surman

Accompanists

Heather Reid, Angus Sinclair, Grace Yip (LOA)

Choir Members

Sopranos

Debbie Awde, Bonnie Black, Liz Brearley, Carlyn Chapman,
Kate Collins-Thompson, Gloria Ellis, Patricia England, Ardith Heller,
Mary-lyn Hopper, Carmen Lamond, Barbara LePage-Margison,
Laurie McKellar, Sheila McSwiggan, Judy O'Brien, Alice Power,
Mary Randall, Holly Reid, Elaine Smitham, Joan Turner, Elizabeth Wass, Cathy Woodburn

Altos

Cathie Banks, Mary Ellen Duggan, Donna Forward,
Margaret Kellow, Jenny Newton, Joyce Orchard, Jillian Todd,
Wendy Whyte, Barbara Whelan, Jean Willadsen

Tenors

Barry Dodd, Jim Fitzpatrick, S. Vince Gray,
Roger Jolliffe, Rob McGuire, James Saynor,
Lenore Stoyles, Edna Vokes

Baritones/Basses

Ed Beck, Daniel Castillo, Ian Davies, Eric Duggan,
Ron Hicks, Doug Hoskin, Marshall Mangan, Barry Margison,
John F. McGarry, Ron McLagan, Ted Misek

Board of Directors

President: Mr. Justice John F. McGarry
Past President: Jim Fitzpatrick
Vice President: Holly Reid
Musical Director: Dan Surman
Registrar/Membership: Donna Forward
Secretary: Mary Ellen Duggan
Treasurer: Roger Jolliffe
Promotions: Ian Davies
Fundraising: Patricia England
Librarians: Marshall Mangan, Jenny Newton
Social: Elizabeth Wass
Steward: Barry Margison
Tour and Transport: tba
Wardrobe: Edna Vokes