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## LIVING SONGS 3: MACHIK CANADA BENEFIT CONCERT & DINNER IN TORONTO

The third "Living Songs" Toronto benefit concert and dinner (and fourth fundraising event) was held on Saturday 7 November, 2009 at the Music Gallery in Toronto, Canada.

The first two benefit concert dinners, "Living Songs, Sacred Spaces," were held in March 2004 and May 2005 respectively, and helped contribute nearly \$4000.00 to build water projects in Chungba Valley, which now bring fresh drinking water to the students and faculty at the Chungba Schools from a mountain spring source.

This year, several artists representing the music traditions of various cultures (Tibetan, Balinese, Korean, Balkan, Kurdish) gave generously of their time and shared their energy and artistic skills for an audience of about 150 at "Living Songs 3, Benefit Concert-Dinner.



The artists included ethnomusicologists from the University of Toronto, Professor James Kippen and Professor Annette Sanger who, together with Albert Wong and John Carnes, set the tone for the evening with three beautiful short pieces performed by their Balinese *gendèr wayang* ensemble, Seka Rat Nadi (sekaratnadi.com). Professor Rob Simms from York University, whose mellifluous playing made the Kurdish lute (*tanbur*) sound like a small orchestra, began the second half of the concert. Organized by the Toronto contingent of Machik Canada, the evening was a terrific blend of delights for the senses, with a benefit concert and dinner served with a warmth and generous spirit. Billed as a concert and dinner, it satisfied both, with terrific food and wonderful performances by artists of various cultures.



Appleby College participants from the 2009 Machik Summer Enrichment Program attended in school uniforms along with faculty members. Their positive presence lent a terrific air of collaboration and school spirit to the evening. Rob McGuinness, Head of Global Education, spoke followed by Brendan Samson, who introduced senior student Nangsal Lama. Nangsal spoke eloquently and personally about her experiences while visiting Tibet for the first time, and participating in the Machik SEP in Chengdu with 53 Tibetan students and over 20 other volunteers from Canada, USA, and Tibetans and Chinese.

The evening's flow was conceived as a Prairie Home Companion after NPR's Garrison Keillor. Tashi Rabgey, Machik's co-founder and Strategic Director from Washington DC, spoke about about current conditions and education, followed by the Jengyi Korean drumming ensemble (jengyi.com) who amplified her message - still hanging in the church air - with a thrilling performance of syncopated vibrations through an ensemble of five young artists. Jeff Cupchik and Maxine Crook were MCs, and kept the evening alive with reminders of the purpose of the fundraiser and the work of engagement in building communities.

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Perhaps most unique about the evening were the performances of different genres and styles of Tibetan song and dance. Amchok Gonpo, a Tibetan recording artist who makes his home in Toronto, sang two hauntingly beautiful songs while accompanying himself on the Tibetan folk lute (*dranyen*). His sensitivity in timbre provided a rousing performance that was a delight for all. A group of five elder Tibetan performing artists, experts in the traditional folk dances of West Tibet, all originally from Nepal and India, performed dances with elaborate steps. Pencho Rabgey, together with his student of many years, Jeff Cupchik, performed the seven branch offering practice as sung according to Machik Labdron's Chod, a tradition of compassionate sacrifice begun by the namesake of our organization.

The director of Potala Tibetan Dance Troupe, Tsering Rabgey, sang a beautiful solo, Che Norsong. She was then joined by fellow Potala members Thupten Kalsang and Mingmar Tsering to close the evening by leading two "circle dances" (*kor she*), in which the whole audience and volunteers participated.

Thanks to all who participated and to the organizing committee composed of the following: Bhuti, KC Choong, Maxine Crook, Jeff Cupchik, Dechen, Pasang Lhamo, Tenzing Jigme, Bhutita Karpoche, Lobsang Nyima, Ken & Teresa Lee, Tsering & Pencho Rabgey, Dale Sutton, Sonam Chokey Champa, Thupten Champa, and Jamyang (Sheppard Centre).

Stay tuned for next year's concert! The program for this year's concert can also be found [here](#).

