

In 1985 I created this, my first recording, in a studio located in a barn in southern Ontario. I remember spending a glorious week in July, arising each morning on a farm, walking over to the barn and tracking the songs while gazing out on fields of sunflowers. The songs on this recording reflect my growing interest in traditional Irish music as well as my involvement in theatre and film. Indeed, I persuaded a couple of my colleagues from these fields to join me on a few tracks on this recording.

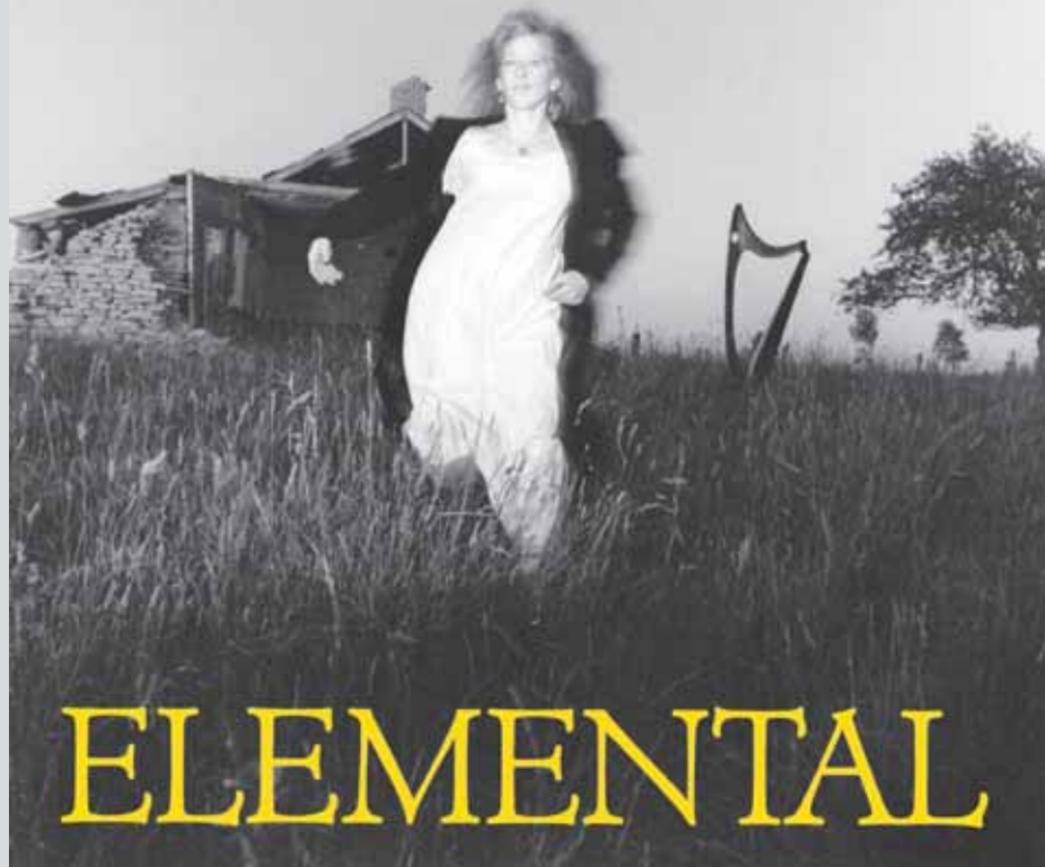
Like many around the world, I was drawn to the infectious nature of Celtic music. Having been introduced to it around 1978, I was keen to explore further . . . its history, its culture, its people. I travelled to England and Ireland several times, and took a course in Irish history before I acquired the courage to make my own musical move. Later in 1991 I would travel to Venice to attend the most extensive exhibition yet on Celtic artefacts and, as a result, this 2500 year stretch of Celtic history would become my creative springboard .

From this footing, I struck off on my own musical tangents and explorations, and in so doing, this - along with the recordings to follow - would become testaments of times of discovery and of self education; tracks in the sand, as it were. There has been no map nor destination. The journey has been fuelled by an insatiable curiosity and a passion for the music, the people and the history. Just a journey. I hope it is one you will enjoy taking as well.

- Loreena McKennitt, 2004

QRCD101R

LOREENA MCKENNITT



ELEMENTAL

BLACKSMITH 3:20

Music and lyric: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

A blacksmith courted me
Nine months and better
He fairly won my heart
Wrote me a letter
With his hammer in his hand
He looked quite clever
And if I was with my love
I'd live forever.

But where is my love gone
With his cheeks like roses
And his good black billycock on
Decked round with primroses
I'm afraid the scorching sun
Will shine and burn his beauty
And if I was with my love
I'd do my duty.

Strange news is come to town
Strange news is carried
Strange news flies up and down
That my love is married.
I wish them both much joy
Though they can't bear me
And may God reward him well
For the slighting of me.

Don't you remember when
You lay beside me
And you said you'd marry me
And not deny me
If I said I'd marry you
It was only for to try you
So bring your witness love
And I'll not deny you.

No witness have I none
Save God Almighty

And may he reward you well
For the slighting of me.

Her lips grew pale and wan
It made a poor heart tremble
To think she loved a one
And he proved deceitful.

A blacksmith courted me
Nine months and better
He fairly won my heart
Wrote me a letter
With his hammer in his hand
He looked quite clever
And if I was with my love
I'd live forever.

SHE MOVED THROUGH THE FAIR 4:05

Music: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt
Lyric: Padraic Collum

My love said to me:
"My mother won't mind
And me father won't slight you
For your lack of kind".
Then she stepped away from me
And this she did say:
"It will not be long, love,
Till our wedding day."

She stepped away from me
And she moved through the fair
And fondly I watched her
Move here and move there
And she went her way homeward
With one star awake
As the swans in the evening
Move over the lake.

The people were saying
No two e'er were wed
But one has a sorrow
That never was said
And she smiled as she passed me
With her goods and her gear
And that was the last
That I saw of my dear.

I dreamed it last night
That my true love came in
So softly she entered
Her feet made no din
She came close beside me
And this she did say:
"It will not be long, love,
Till our wedding day."

STOLEN CHILD 5:05

Music: Loreena McKennitt
Lyric: W.B. Yeats

Where dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water-rats
There we've hid our faery vats
Full of berries
And of reddest stolen cherries

CHORUS
Come away, O human child
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand
For the world's more full of weeping
Than you can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim grey sands with light

By far off furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night
Weaving olden dances
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles
Whilst the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.

CHORUS

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star
We seek for slumbering trout
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams

CHORUS

Away with us he's going
The solemn-eyed
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal chest.

CHORUS

For he comes, the human child
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand
For the world's more full of weeping
Than you can understand.

THE LARK IN THE CLEAR AIR 2:06

Music: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

CARRIGHFERGUS 3:24

Music and lyric: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

*I wish I was in Carrighfergus
Only for nights in Ballygrant
I would swim over the deepest ocean
Only for nights in Ballygrant.*

*But the sea is wide, and I can't swim over
Neither have I wings to fly
If I could find me a handsome boatman
To ferry me over to my love and die.*

*Now in Kilkenny, it is reported
They've marble stones there as black as ink
With gold and silver I would transport her
But I'll sing no more now, till I get a drink*

*I'm drunk today, but I'm seldom sober
A handsome rover from town to town
Ah, but I am sick now, my days are over
Come all you young lads and lay me down.*

*I wish I was in Carrighfergus
Only for nights in Ballygrant.*

KELLSWATER 5:19

Music and lyric: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

*Here's a health to you bonny Kellswater
Where you get all the pleasures of life
Where you get all the fishing and fowling
And a bonny wee lass for your wife.*

*Oh it's down where yon waters run muddy
I'm afraid they will never run clear
And it's when I begin for to study
My mind is on him that's not here.*

*And it's this one and that one may court him
But if any one gets him but me
It's early and late I will curse them
The parting lovely Willy from me.*

*Oh a father he calls on his daughter
Two choices I'll give unto thee
Would you rather see Willie's ship a'sailing
See him hung like a dog on yonder tree.*

*Oh father, dear father, I love him
I can no longer hide it from thee
Through an acre of fire I would travel
Along with the lovely Willie to be.*

*Oh hard was the heartbreak I'm finding
She took from her full heart's delight
May the chains of old Ireland come find them
And softly their pillows at night.*

*Oh yonder there's a ship on the ocean
And she does not know which way to steer
From the east and the west she's a'blowing
She reminds me of the charms of my dear.*

*Oh it's yonder my Willie will be coming
He said he'd be here in the spring
And it's down by yon green shades I'll meet him
And among wild roses we'll sing.*

*For a gold ring he placed on my finger
Saying love bear this in your mind
If ever I sail from old Ireland
You'll mind I'll not leave you behind.*

*Here's a health to you bonny Kellswater
Where you get all the pleasures of life
Where you get all the fishing and fowling
And a bonny wee lass for your wife.*

BANKS OF CLAUDY 5:37

Music and lyric: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

*As I walked out one morning
All in the month of May
Down by a flowery garden
I carelessly did stray*

*I overheard a young maid
In sorrow did complain
All for her absent lover
Who ploughs the raging main.*

*I boldly stepped up to her
And put her in surprise
I know she did not know me
I being in disguise.*

*I says, "Me charming creature
My joy, my heart's delight,
How far have you to travel
This dark and dreary night?"*

*"I'm in search of a faithless young man
Johnny is his name
And along the banks of Claudy
I'm told he does remain."*

*"This is the banks of Claudy,
Fair maid, where you stand
But don't depend on Johnny
For he's a false young man.*

*"Oh, don't depend on Johnny
For he'll not meet you here
But tarry with me in yon green woods
No danger need you fear.*

*"Oh, it's six long weeks or better
Since Johnny left the shore
He's crossing the wild ocean
Where the foam and the billows roar.*

*"He's crossing the wild ocean
For honour and for fame
But this I've heard, the ship was wrecked
All on the coast of Spain."*

*Oh it's when she heard this dreadful news
She flew into despair
By the wringing of her milk-white hands
And the tearing of her hair.*

*Saying, "If Johnny he is drowned
No man on earth I'll take
But through lonesome groves and valleys
I'll wander for his sake."*

*Oh it's when he saw her loyalty
No longer could he stand
He flew into her arms saying,
"Betsy, I'm the man."*

*Saying, "Betsy, I'm the young man
The cause of all your pain
But since we've met on Claudy banks
We'll never part again."*

COME BY THE HILLS 3:05

Music and lyric: Traditional, arranged and adapted by Loreena McKennitt

*Come by the hills to the land
where fancy is free
And stand where the peaks meet the sky
and the rocks reach the sea
Where the rivers run clear and the bracken
is gold in the sun
And cares of tomorrow must wait
till this day is done.*

*Come by the hills to the land
where life is a song
And sing while the birds fill the air
with their joy all day long*

Where the trees sway in time, and even
the wind sings in tune
And cares of tomorrow must wait
till this day is done.

Come by the hills to the land
where fancy is free
And stand where the peaks meet the sky
and the rocks reach the sea
Where the rivers run clear and the bracken
is gold in the sun
And cares of tomorrow must wait
till this day is done.

LULLABY 4:26

Music: Loreena McKennitt

Lyric: William Blake

Song composed for the 1983 Stratford Festival production
of BLAKE by Elliott Hayes

O for a voice like thunder, and a tongue
To drown the throat of war! - When the senses
Are shaken, and the soul is driven to madness
Who can stand? When the souls of the oppressed
Fight in the troubled air that rages, who can stand?
When the whirlwind of fury comes from the
Throne of God, when the frowns of his countenance
Drive the nations together, who can stand?
When Sin claps his broad wings over the battle,
And sails rejoicing in the flood of Death;
When souls are torn to everlasting fire,
And fiends of Hell rejoice upon the stain.
O who can stand? O who hath caused this?
O who can answer at the throne of God?
The Kings and Nobles of the Land have done it!
Hear it not, Heaven, thy Ministers have done it!



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Loreena McKennitt Vocals, troubadour harp,
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Douglas Campbell Recitation on Lullaby
George Greer Acoustic bass on Stolen Child
Pat Mullin Cello on Stolen Child, The Lark In
The Clear Air, Lullaby
Cedric Smith Guitar and vocals on Carrighfergus
and Kellswater.

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