



# DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

## PRESSRELEASE

---

### **For Immediate Release**

**Date:** March 16, 2011

**Contact:** Ben Allaway, 515-720-1038  
benlmnop@aol.com.

### **Bishop names “Heaven and Earth” concert a centennial event**

Bishop Richard Pates has added “Heaven & Earth: Mass on the Celtic Journey” musical performance to the list of events occurring this spring in celebration of the Diocese of Des Moines’ 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The performance includes music, narration and dance. It will be held April 2 at 7:30 p.m. at First Christian Church, 25<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue in Des Moines.

Local conductor/composer Ben Allaway conceived of the work based on his love for the traditional folk music of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, and the text of the Ordinary of the Latin Mass.

"Most of the great composers wrote at least one Mass," he said. "Over my career I have engaged with these wonderful texts set by Monteverdi, Palestrina, Stravinski, Mozart, Bach, and many others. Now that I am past 50 years of age, I felt ready to do my setting of this text."

Allaway has combined the already daunting task of setting the text of the Mass with the telling of stories of Celtic people from Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as some who immigrated to America. St. Patrick figures prominently in *Credo: St. Patrick's Breastplate* and *Pacem: Find Love*.

"I think of the Mass as God's way of connecting with us and showing us how to be in relationship with him. Each section of the Mass addresses different realities of the human condition," Allaway said.

(more)

“Heaven & Earth” musical performance...add 1

"The *Kyrie* acknowledges our vulnerability and our need for God's mercy. What is a human story that demonstrates that? In my work, it is a story of a young farmer in Ireland who is raising a family, prospering, and then dies suddenly, leaving his wife with three children and a farm to tend. *Kyrie eleison. Lord, have mercy.*"

Bishop Pates said: “The production of Ben Allaway’s ‘Heaven and Earth’ gives every evidence of integrating deeply felt themes of liturgically based music with real-life experiences, especially from the Celtic perspective. It promises to provide an inspiring and worthwhile evening.”

Famed Northern Ireland troubadour Tommy Sands and band join forces with the 200-voice Celtic Mass Choir, conducted by Allaway, for the Des Moines performance. A touring company including Sands and special guest Kevin Conneff of The Chieftains will then take the work to Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Bangor, Wales in June.

Iowa Public Television will film the live concerts to create a two-hour special of the world premiere and UK tour. Tickets for the Des Moines performance are \$15 in advance, \$17 at the door, and \$10 for students, available at [MidwesTix.com](http://MidwesTix.com), [DMVAE.com](http://DMVAE.com), or the First Christian Church office at 25th Street & University Avenue. Tickets the day of the show will be available at 6 p.m. The door will open at 6:30 p.m. Seating is general admission. The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and The Celtic Music Association are co-sponsoring the concert.

Touring Ireland and Wales sound exciting? You are invited to come along with Tommy Sands, Kevin Conneff and Ben Allaway, either as a singer or a supporter. The tour is June 15-22. Information is available at [BenAllaway.com](http://BenAllaway.com).

*The Diocese of Des Moines is comprised of 83 parishes in 23 counties of central and southwest Iowa.*