Georgian Triangle Lifelong Learning Institute

Human Emigration And Music

Session 4, 2022 – The History of the Celtic migration, their musical instruments and the creative results

This presentation looks at who the Celts. were, where they came from, and what made their culture, and especially their music so distinctive. We will also spotlight Canadian artist, Loreena McKennitt and her Celtic blend of East and West as well as her performance at the Alhambra Palace in Granada.

The Celts were the first European people north of the Alps to rise from anonymity. What made their culture so distinctive?

From 800 B.C., as a proud, vibrant, richly imaginative warrior people they swept ruthlessly across Europe, even defeating the Romans. The ancient Greeks called them “Keltoi" and honoured them as one of the great barbarian races.

In 400 B.C. Celtic tribes from Anatolia (Turkey) and the Middle East migrated across Europe. They were being driven west by the Romans, who were now more experienced in warfare, when earlier battles had been won by the Celts who were more militant and physically bigger. There is still some mystery as to how the British Isles became Celtic. One theory is that they emigrated with new arrivals from Asia Minor.

We explore the migration and use of instruments such as the harp, bodrun, Kanoun, Cretan Lyra, Hurdy-gurdy and Irish pipes and in the development of a distinctive Gaelic sound. We explore the development of the Celtic language and the gifts they brought to civilization.

We spotlight Loreena McKennitt and watch a few clips from her concert *Nights at the Alhambra.*

Suggested viewing on Youtube

1. <https://youtu.be/w39y4kY-WCg> Loreena McKennitt discussing her carreer 17.54

2. <https://youtu.be/a8HNFJs6gWI> The full concert of Nights from the Alhambra 1:42:22

3. <https://youtu.be/5RmTBqyv8Qk> “Memory of Herbie Macleod” by Jerry Holland (audio only)