

*the American Harp Journal*  
Official Publication of The American Harp Society, Inc.

# on the lighter side



A compendium of contemporary articles from *The American Harp Journal*, 1979 to 1994, about the pioneers of jazz and pop harp, and topics for the gigging harpist.



*AHS is grateful to Cheryl Cunningham for creating this compilation as part of the celebration of our jazz and pop legacy at the 45<sup>th</sup> AHS National Conference June 16-19, 2024, Orlando, FL.*

## FORWARD

Emily Laurance, Editor, *American Harp Journal*

As editor of the American Harp Journal, I'm proud to share with you some of our past coverage of harpists doing important work in the jazz, popular, and commercial music spheres. The collected articles that follow first appeared in a special AHJ section of the Winter 1979 issue, edited by the late Carrol McLaughlin, called "On the Lighter Side." Many thanks to Cheryl Cunningham for compiling them into this single volume for the 2024 National Conference, "That's Entertainment!"

Historically, harps are not the stereotypical instruments of jazz, r&b, rock, country, pop, or hip hop. But McLaughlin, an award-winning innovator at the harp, understood how much current popular styles can expand creative possibilities for dedicated musicians—and also how much harps (all kinds of harps!) can enrich popular music. She recognized, too, that the advent of the recording and radio industries at the turn of the twentieth century was a sea change that gradually brought down traditional cultural hierarchies of the professional music world. The digital revolution and our own social media age have only hastened the flattening of these hierarchical categories. These developments have broadened all of our musical worlds.

In 2024 the idea of harpists working outside the "classical" sphere is no longer novel, as witnessed by recent coverage in the mainstream press of harpists doing extraordinary things in all styles of music. In recent years outlets such as the New York Times and Pitchfork Magazine have run profiles of some of these innovative artists, including Madison Calley, Marilu Donovan, Nailah Hunter, Mary Lattimore, Joanna Newsom, Zeena Parkins, Lara Somogyi, and Brandee Younger. But we also remember the many figures from the twentieth century that first blazed a trail for harpists in commercial and popular music. And remember Dr. McLaughlin's timeless advice for anyone looking to widen their musical palette: Listen! And Practice!



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# on the lighter side

by Carrol McLaughlin

*Editor's note:* Carrol McLaughlin, who will serve as editor of this new column devoted to news of the jazz, popular, and commercial studio worlds, requires little introduction. She is an exceptionally well-rounded young musician, having served in various orchestras in her native Canada and in the United States, presented numerous solo recitals, including a professional debut program in New York in 1978, and won many honors and competitions, including that of the First International Jazz Harp Festival. She has worked professionally in many areas of the "lighter" musical world, and expects to complete her Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Arizona this spring. Part one of the column consists of Ms. McLaughlin's survey of the field at this time; part two is a report of the Second Summer Festival of Pop Music for Harp.

## Infinite Perspectives

When the technology of communication developed into mass media in the 20th century, professional music began an incredible expanding process. The influence of radio, television, records, and motion pictures enlarged the job potential of the professional harpist far beyond the stereotypical black-robed orchestral performer.

As innovative harpists broaden their involvement in the many areas of professional music, new audiences are continually being created. Harpists performing classical music can be heard in such well-known establishments as the Playboy Club, New York, and the Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles.

The harp is extremely adaptive to popular music, and many companies such as the Hyatt Hotels feature pop harpists in their restaurants and lounges. Two of the first places in California to introduce harp entertainment were the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, featuring a harpist performing both as soloist and with a dance orchestra, as early as 1946, and the Warehouse Restaurant in Los Angeles, which still features a harpist in its lounge. Another of the many examples of a harpist performing in a popular setting is in the Dunes Hotel, Las Vegas. Others can be heard in many restaurants, coffee houses, country clubs, and in virtually every conceivable setting. Before beginning a job in the field of popular music, most of those involved agree that 150-200 pieces should be included in a person's repertoire. Consider playing three sets of 45 minutes each, without repeating any pieces, several days in a row. To develop materials, it is quite comfortable to take piano arrangements and make adjustments to facilitate playing them on the harp. Many pop harpists read the melody line of a tune and arrange

their own accompaniment and embellishments from the chord symbols printed on most music or by ear. There are also many harp arrangements of popular pieces which are published and available.

Jazz on the harp requires a special blend of technical and harmonic mastery of the instrument, plus an understanding and feel for the music. One of the first recognized harpists to perform jazz was Casper Reardon, who performed with such jazz artists as Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington. (See this Journal, winter, 1974.)

After gaining technical expertise on the instrument, the harpist must use imagination to seek out further help. Most colleges and universities have a jazz arranger on their faculty, or a pianist proficient in jazz and popular music. These people are usually approachable, and many ideas which work on piano can be easily adapted for harp. A large number of colleges and universities offer courses and degrees in jazz-related areas. Private business, too, plays its part; the Salvi Harp Company has sponsored two summer workshops in pop music for the harp, with leading professional harpists acting as faculty and advisors.

One of the most financially rewarding areas of music is that of the recording studios, where film soundtracks, commercial jingles, television music, and records are produced. The two largest centers of studio work in the United States are New York and Los Angeles. Most of the music recorded is done by a relatively limited number of harpists, known by the music contractors to be reliable and precise in this demanding work. "Time is money" is very appropriate to the studio situation, where often only one "take" is made. The money involved with equipment, technical and musical personnel does not allow time for a harpist to set wrong pedals!

In the areas mentioned, as in classical music, the professional harpist must feel proud of his or her art, and perform on the highest artistic level possible. The absolute essentials to any performing career include a good technique and facility on the instrument. For this, it is agreed that a firm classical background is essential. In the recording industry, fast and accurate sight reading is imperative.

Two basic concepts which have a gigantic effect on the success of any musical endeavor are: to Listen! and Practice! Non-classical music, particularly jazz and folk, began in the aural tradition. If you hear something you like, try it on the harp. The more music a person hears, the more ideas he will have to draw on for creativity. Of paramount importance is the discipline, hard work, and determination which goes with any single aspect of professional music



## THE SECOND SUMMER FESTIVAL OF POP MUSIC FOR THE HARP

Many interesting and innovative workshops and a fine competition took place in Santa Barbara, California, this summer. Under the auspices of the Salvi Harp Company and the outstanding direction of Suzanne Balderston, the Second Summer Festival of Pop Music for Harp was a tremendous success.

From 24-30 June, seventy-five harpists from around the United States attended classes and workshops conducted by a sixteen-member artists' panel which included Michael Amorosi, Kippy Lou Brinkman, Stella Castellucci, John Escosa, Eleanor Fell, DeWayne Fulton, Gerald Goodman, Harvi Griffin, Corky Hale, Daphne Hellman, Susan and Steve Kurek, Verlye Mills, Jack Nebergall, Alfredo Ortiz, and this writer.

Each day of the festival found the participants involved in workshops in which the panel members offered their expertise on such topics as theory, harp arranging, electronic enhancement, and improvisation. The evenings were enriched by praiseworthy concerts performed by members of the panel and special guests.

Included in the opening night concert was the premiere of "Fantazzia," a work by Allan Rae, which was commissioned especially for the festival. At the same concert, Verlye Mills was presented an award for her outstanding contributions to the professional harp world.

Another of the highlights of the festival was the pop competition. During the first stage, each competitor was required to perform three of her or his own arrangements; in the second stage, the finalists were required to perform four more. Awards were given to the following harpists: Stephanie Pelz, Boston, First Place; Deborah Hensen-Conant, Oakland, Second Place; a Third Place tie was awarded to Chris Chalifour of Anchorage, and nine-year-old Paul Stickney of Mesa, Arizona.

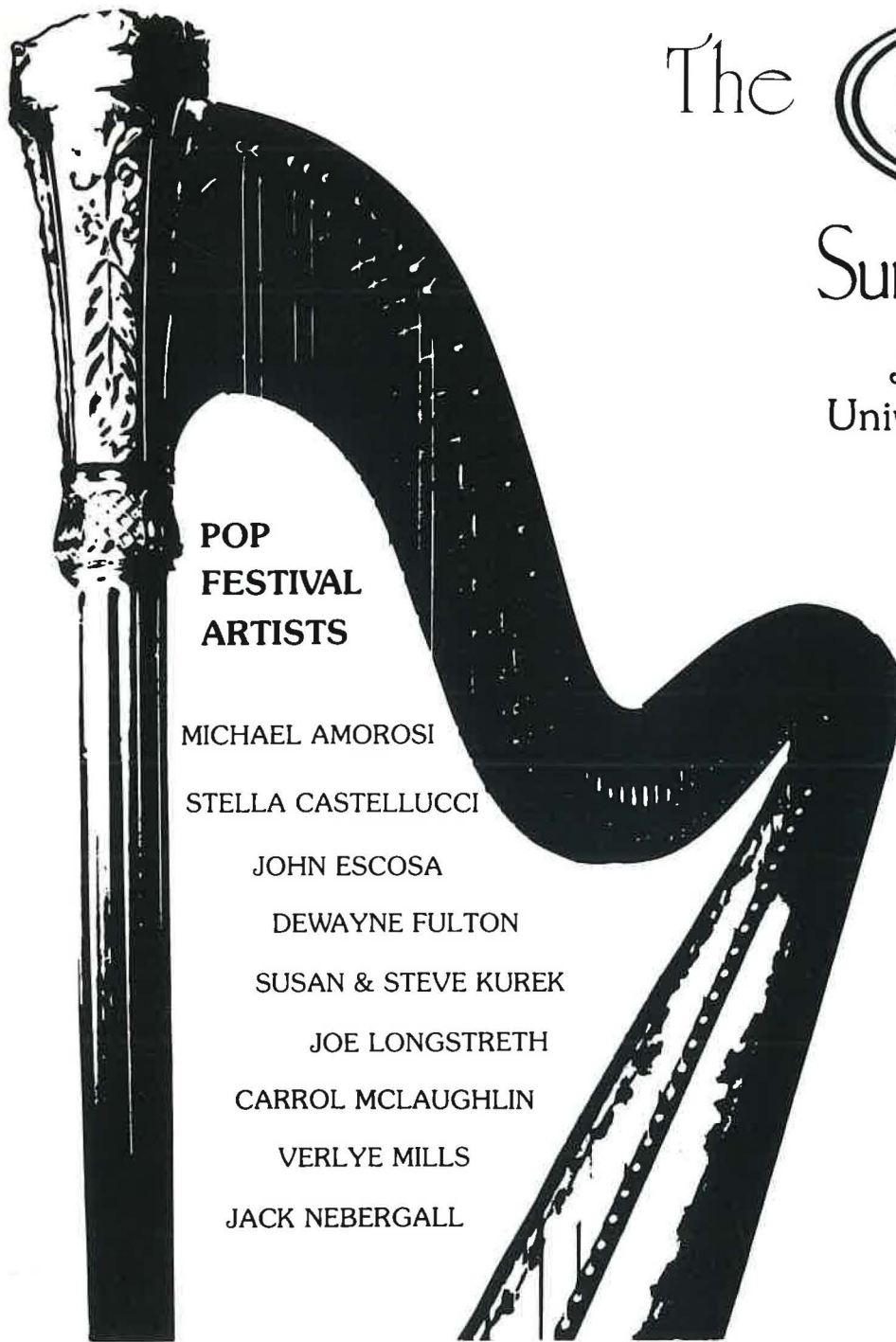
Plans for next summer do not include a competition although there will be a concurrent festival of chamber music in addition to the pop festival. These two festivals will run from 6-19 July 1980. Outstanding harpists and other prominent musicians from both popular and classical fields will act as coaches and instructors. In residence for next summer's classical program will be, among others, harpists Suzanne Balderston, Eileen Malone, Dorothy Remsen, and violinist Walter Trampler. Michael Amorosi, John Escosa, and others will be concentrating on pop and jazz. There will also be a jazz pianist, string quartet, and woodwind quintet to provide festival participants the opportunity to perform with accompaniment and



*Stephanie Pelz*

in chamber groups. Because of the expanded dimensions of the 1980 program, the next pop competition has been scheduled for 1981.

As it was last year, this summer's festival was again a great success. Representatives of the Salvi Harp Company, including Victor Salvi, here from Italy, were most generous in lending their time and assistance to all those who were privileged to attend this worthwhile event.



The



## Summer Festival

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VERLYE MILLS

JACK NEBERGALL

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Two Conferences, one of Jazz and Pop Music for Harp, the other of Chamber Music for Harp, will be held concurrently. However, events will be scheduled so that participants can attend workshops, lectures, coaching sessions, open rehearsals and recitals of both should they so desire.

*For Information Contact*

**INTERNATIONAL HARP CORPORATION**

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# on the lighter side

## Gail Laughton, Jazz Harpist

by Carrol McLaughlin

When Cary Grant played a harp solo in the movie, "The Bishop's Wife," he appeared to have an amazing aptitude for the instrument. But while it was Cary Grant sitting at the harp, the fingers and the music belonged to Gail Laughton, one of the truly gifted figures of the harp world.



Gail Laughton

Laughton started playing harp in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where his father made harps and his mother taught the instrument. A child prodigy, Gail toured Panama and Cuba in the 1920s, playing with his family's orchestra. When he was sixteen, he became harpist with the Oklahoma City Symphony. About the same time, he became interested in jazz music. Laughton developed his own "swing" style by listening to jazz and experimenting with certain "licks" and pedal slides on his harp. Laughton's first experience in live radio broadcasting came in 1939, when he became staff harpist with Eliot Roosevelt's Texas State Network, in Fort Worth, Texas. Laughton had his own weekly half-hour show featuring classical harp music, in addition to playing twenty broadcasts with the Texas State Network Orchestra. When

Laughton was featured as soloist with the orchestra, he would first play his jazz tune for the staff orchestrator, who would write out parts for the orchestra to back Laughton's solo.

In 1941 Laughton moved to the West Coast. The manager of the Lyon & Healy harp salon in Los Angeles heard him play, and was so impressed that he made arrangements for Laughton to meet Harpo Marx.

Laughton has vivid memories of his first meeting with Harpo, Harpo's wife Susan, and their son Bill, who is now a composer and musician in Hollywood. At the time Laughton met Harpo, the Marx Brothers' movie, "The Big Store," was already in production. Laughton coached Harpo on one of Laughton's own jazz arrangements for the harp solo in that film. Laughton and Harpo worked together for several years, collaborating on other films. Through Harpo, Laughton met many Los Angeles producers, including Jack Warner of Warner Brothers.

In California, Laughton's career was particularly supported by Sir Charles and Lady Mendl, and by Barbara Hutton, who was then married to Cary Grant. Many musical evenings were organized in-



Photo inscribed to Laughton from Harpo Marx.



cluding jam sessions with musicians such as Duke Ellington, Spike Jones, and Mickey Rooney. After attending one such session, Cole Porter wrote a piece for Laughton entitled "Jazz Nocturne for Harp." Duke Ellington also wrote an original composition for Laughton, which Ellington often played at the jam sessions but would never write out on paper. Laughton recalls being a "precocious brat," locking Duke Ellington in the bathroom one evening and not allowing him to leave until the piece was written out on manuscript paper slipped under the bathroom door.

In 1942, Laughton enlisted in the Air Force. This took him away from his instrument for a while, but he was eventually transferred to the Air Force's Radio Production Unit of the West Coast. This talented group was comprised of many of the top musicians from the Los Angeles area, including studio musicians and recording stars. The calibre of this group was such that it was estimated that in peacetime it would have cost \$50,000 per hour to hire the orchestra.



*Army Sergeant, 1943.*

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Laughton has been associated with innumerable radio, television, and movie productions. He was featured on NBC's nationwide broadcast, "Al Pearce and His Gang," and worked often with such people as Dimitri Tiomkin of Independent Producers Corporation, and Max Steiner of Warner Brothers. When Warner Brothers hired Laughton in 1948, they were convinced he could do the work of two other harpists. If a part absolutely demanded two harps, Laughton included his sister, harpist Charlotte Laughton, who now teaches and performs in southern California.

Gail Laughton cut his first record, an all-jazz harp solo album for RCA Victor in 1942. This record, no longer available, included many Ellington tunes, and featured Spike Jones on drums. Two classical recordings of Laughton are presently available. They are Volume 5 of an *Anthology of Paul Hindemith*, with Laughton performing the Hindemith Sonata; and *Harps at the Ancient Temples*, a suite of eleven of his own uniquely beautiful compositions.

Following a special performance of Laughton's in Los Angeles, which included both classical and jazz music, Artur Rubinstein said that Gail Laughton "transcends his instrument." Laughton's contribution to the harp world in performance, composition, and his unique grasp of the harp in the jazz idiom, have made him a respected and cherished member of the harp community.



## The Amazing Dorothy Remsen

by Carrol McLaughlin

This article is the first of a series about personalities in the studio, jazz, and popular fields. In beginning with Dorothy Remsen, we recognize not only an outstanding professional, but also a fine person whose selfless contributions to the American Harp Society are without number. —Ed.

Dorothy Remsen's first view of a harp was, prophetically, in a studio of WTIC, Hartford, where she was playing xylophone in a children's concert. Her accompanist for that performance was her grandmother, a Vaudeville theater organist who had always wanted to play harp.

Mildred Godfrey Hall, the studio harpist in Hartford, became Dorothy's first teacher. The lessons continued for four years, until graduation from high school at the age of 16.

Dorothy attended The Eastman School of Music, and was the first harp major to graduate under Eileen Malone. Her early professional experience included playing with the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Minneapolis Symphony. At this time Dorothy's husband, also a graduate of Eastman, held a chair in trumpet with the Los Angeles Philharmonic which required a move to Los Angeles. Dorothy performed extensively



Dorothy Remsen

there in chamber music and orchestral concerts as well as in solo recitals. She played for many years with the Monday Evening Concert Series of contemporary music, working with such artists as Stravinsky and Boulez. Her first studio job was *Water Birds*, a Walt Disney wildlife adventure. Dorothy has



At work in a recording studio.





*Dorothy Remsen performing on two harps with different tunings.*

been working at Disney ever since, and is now one of the top studio and free-lance harpists in the United States.

The Disney studio was one of the first "independent", or non-contract companies; traditionally, studios contracted a full orchestra for a year's work and each studio had a harpist. Eventually contract orchestras were eliminated, and now musicians are hired for each service.

The major studios in Los Angeles include Paramount, Fox, MGM, Universal, Warner Brothers, Columbia, and Disney. Musicians are hired through a contractor: they may be called anytime from three weeks to one day before a job. Often the same musicians will work together as first choices on the contractor's lists.

Music is the last thing to be added to a motion picture, so there is always a deadline. The composers may have as little as two days to write the music before it has to be recorded. Copyists work day and night to supply the parts, and are incredibly accurate in their work. The composer is usually the leader or conductor, and parts are often predictable because of the composer's style. Besides movies, there are also television programs, records, and commercials produced in Los Angeles.

Dorothy says she can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times she has felt pressured in the studios. She finds the working atmosphere pleasant and relaxed. Fellow players are very supportive, and all are superlative musicians. After an important solo part, studio players often applaud their fellow performers.

Dorothy recalls one experience in a Los Angeles studio: there had been an all-day call, with an "end-

less thick book" of parts. After the first hour, no time was left to rehearse the parts before the actual recording. On the last cue of the day there was a tremendous harp solo. Dorothy recalls getting into the solo with everything "going great", only to discover that the copyist had not aligned the treble and bass parts, so the right hand part appeared at a different place than the left hand part! Other favorite moments of studio experience include walking into a recording session of the second movement of the Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto without any prior warning or rehearsal time, and a part written for two harps, tuned in two keys, which Dorothy played simultaneously.

In addition to her demanding professional career Dorothy has for the past five years been Office Manager for the American Harp Society. The position originated with Dorothy's appointment, and the majority of all correspondence to the American Harp Society goes through Dorothy's home office.

She loves all her work—AHS business or playing harp—and manages everything with the competence, sincerity and charm which radiates to all who meet her. To be successful in the studio world one must be an excellent musician and a "marvelous sight reader." When asked about mistakes, Dorothy replied with typical candor, "Well you just don't make many."

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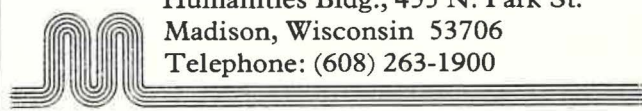


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# on the lighter side

## Verlye Mills

by Carrol McLaughlin



*Verlye Mills*

The vivacious and dynamic Verlye Mills has for many years been an acknowledged master of her art. Considered one of the top studio harpists in Los Angeles, her exceptional talents with rhythm harp, improvisation and arranging have set her apart from other harpists.

Verlye's love of rhythm and the jazz idiom started very early in her career. While she was harpist with the Cleveland Orchestra in the 1930's she had her own dance band, "Verlye Mills and Her Boyfriends." John Royal, the manager of the radio station on which Verlye's band played, became instrumental to Verlye's career when he became the head of NBC in New York. Royal introduced Verlye to Fred Waring, who made her solo harpist with his famous band, then playing in the Roxy Theatre in New York.

Verlye remembers well being the only woman in Fred Waring's seventy-piece ensemble. One of her major re-

sponsibilities in this band and groups such as Richard Himber's Orchestra was to "fill" between pieces while modulating from one key to the key of the next piece. Verlye's natural love of rhythm again made her work exceptional; she would do the fills with strong rhythms and quotes from the pieces, an art greatly appreciated by her fellow musicians.

Verlye's ability to play by ear also was a great asset to her. She was one of the main musicians in many "5-a-week" radio and television shows which aired live five days each week. Often the only instruments used for this were organ and harp or harp and percussion, or, on shows such as the "Faith Baldwin Show," harp alone. It was



*A childhood portrait*

necessary to have at hand many harp "cues," or to be able to improvise at a second's notice. At one point in New York, Verlye was appearing on four different radio programs, as well as playing solos with radio and television orchestras, such as "Fred Allen," "Hit Parade," "Show Boat," and "Arthur Murray."

It was on the "Phil Spitalny" show that Verlye met her future husband, saxophone player Arnold Brillhart. Other musicians who played with them on that show included Jimmy Dorsey, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, and Benny Goodman. Arnold Brillhart, whom Verlye married in New York, was the creator of the renowned Brillhart saxophone mouthpieces.

In the 1950's, Verlye Mills and her family moved to the Los Angeles area. For eleven years Verlye played regularly for the "Carol Burnett Show," working with composers and arrangers such as Harry Zimmerman and Peter Matz.

One of the outstanding elements of Verlye's playing is a very precise, strong technique. Her major teacher was Enrico Tramonti, Chicago harpist and teacher of Joseph and Edward Vito. Verlye's mother was a piano instructor, and was very supportive of Verlye's career. At the early age of twelve, Verlye was concerto soloist with the Chicago Symphony performing the *Fantaisie* of Dubois.

In earlier years Verlye had travelled with her mother to France, intending to study with Tournier at the Paris Conservatoire. When Tournier was found to be away from France, Verlye spent nine months studying with Marcel Grandjany at Fountainebleau. She also was the recipient of

a scholarship to the Curtis Institute and studied for a short time with Carlos Salzedo.

Many elements of Verlye's technique come from experience in professional situations. She is extremely conscious of muffling the strings after playing, because of many years of working with radio microphones which pick up extra string vibrations. In order to muffle the left hand notes, Verlye replaces the fingers directly back onto the strings to muffle the individual sound. While reading music, Verlye seldom marks in pedal changes, and has all the glissandos memorized so she can play them at sight.

Verlye's present work in Los Angeles includes Gospel recordings (often with a chord chart given, over which she improvises), television, motion pictures, and records. In 1981 she will appear in several recitals, one with harpist Toni Robinson, featuring works of Harry Zimmerman, and in duo-harp recitals with Stella Castellucci.

Verlye Mills has written three books: *New Harmony For Harp*, co-authored with Harry Zimmerman, *Rhythm For Harp*, co-authored with Stella Castellucci, and *Harp With A Beat*. Her solo record albums include: *Harp Virtuoso Verlye Mills*, *Harp With A Beat*, *The Two Harps of Verlye Mills*, *The Two Sides of Verlye Mills*, and *Verlye Mills Plays Harp With The Big Band Beat*.

In a review of one of her records, a Los Angeles paper stated, very accurately "Miss Mills is a true artist; her interpretive talents . . . are matched only by her flair for sparkling technique and her dazzling method of presentation."



Verlye Mills with a group during the days in New York.



# on the lighter side

## Amplification of the Harp

by Carrol McLaughlin

There are a growing number of harpists performing in clubs, restaurants, and even on the concert stage who are using amplification to enhance the sound of the harp. Advantages of using an amplification system include: control over the volume of the instrument, allowing it to be heard even in a noisy setting; less strain on the harpist's fingers and muscles since the sound is projected with electronic help; an opportunity for creative use of electronic effects; and control over the exact sound the performer wants.

Amplification has become a very exact science, yet the basic principles are not complicated. Any harpist can master the basics of a sound system which is portable, easy to operate, and tailored to his own needs.

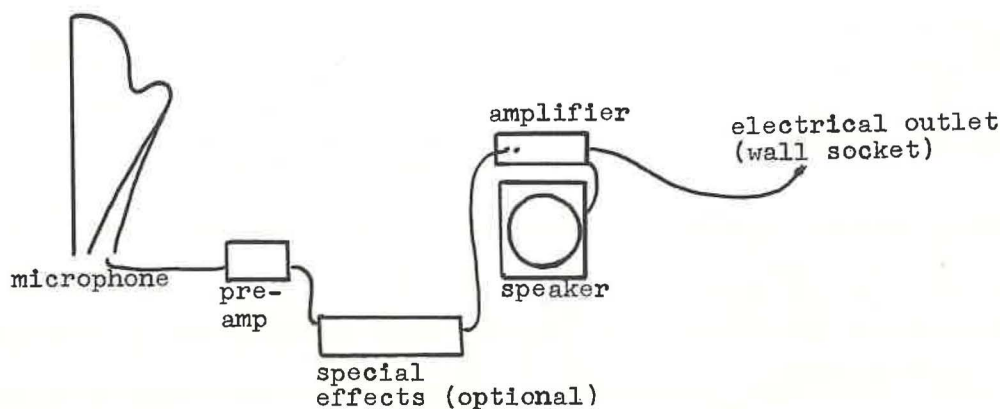
Parts of a basic sound system include the *microphone*, "a device that changes sound energy to electrical energy," a *pre-amplifier*, which boosts the electrical impulse coming from the microphone, an *amplifier*, which further amplifies the minute electrical signals to "drive" the loudspeaker, and the *speaker* itself, which resembles a microphone in reverse—it changes electrical impulses back into sound. If any devices are to be used to alter the sound, such as for special effects, these would be placed between the pre-amplifier and the amplifier.

Perhaps the most important part of a system is the microphone or sensing device that first picks up the sound made by the harp. The principle of a microphone is most easily understood by examining an ordinary telephone receiver, which contains the oldest type of microphone, the *carbon microphone*. This microphone consists of a metal diaphragm placed against a cup containing loosely packed carbon granules. Sound vibrations strike the diaphragm, causing pressure on the granules, producing an alternating electrical current which travels out along the telephone cable. Commercial broadcasting and recording companies often use a high quality *dynamic microphone*. This microphone depends on magnetism for the conversion of sound energy to electrical energy. A wire or thin metallic ribbon is suspended between poles of a permanent magnet. Sound

causes the diaphragm to vibrate, moving the coil back and forth between the poles and producing an electrical current.

While any fine-quality microphone can be used with the harp, several companies have developed microphones or other sensing devices specifically for use with the instrument. These include BARCUS-BERRY, SOUNDSIGHT, and VOICE OF THE HARP.

The BARCUS-BERRY company, with its head office at 5381 Productive Drive, Huntington Beach, California, 92649, has been producing a specialized "musical instrument *transducer*" since the mid 1960s. Transducers used on musical instruments are attached directly to the instrument and receive sound energy from direct contact with the body of the instrument. The BARCUS-BERRY transducers employ piezoelectrical material to convert sound to electrical current. Piezoelectric material, pronounced "pī-ē'-zo-electric" (or "pē'-zo-electric" by some), refers to crystals of a particular structure which change their shape when deformed by external stress, such as a sound wave. It comes from the word "piezein," to press: thus, electricity due to pressure. The BARCUS-BERRY system uses two transducers, one for the treble and one for the bass. The two transducers are attached to the braces of the harp, inside the sound cavity, by a small amount of Mastik, a sticky, audially transparent material. It is important that the transducers be attached only at their two ends. The sound travels up into the transducer at one end, crosses to the other side and back to the harp, affecting the piezoelectric crystals as it passes through. The electrical impulse is then sent through a connecting cable to a BARCUS-BERRY pre-amp which has controls for volume and gain. The pre-amp is powered by a small battery inside. It processes the high impedance signal to be compatible with almost any amplifier. The transducers and pre-amp are available through most music stores for \$242.50, the suggested price.





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*The Barcus-Berry transducers and preamplifier*

The VOICE OF THE HARP was created by harpist Lloyd Lindroth. This system uses two round contact transducers, each about 3½ inches in diameter. Each transducer contains a diaphragm, a heavy magnet and a copper-wound coil. The two transducers are semi-permanently attached to the inside of the sounding board of the harp. A stereo plug connects these transducers to a special pre-amp (which does not contain a battery) which converts the low impedance signal to the level needed for most amplifiers. It is important that the impedance level (generally termed "high" or "low"), or the "amount of resistance to the movement of an audio signal that exists in any audio system" be the same in all parts of the sound system. The pre-amplifier which comes with these harp systems makes the impedance level acceptable to most amplifiers. The VOICE OF THE HARP is available through Contemporary Entertainment Consultants, 8530 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California, 90211. The transducers and pre-amp for a concert harp sell for \$545.00 and should be professionally installed.

The SOUNDSIGHT MICRO-MIC is a small *condenser microphone* which fits onto a miniature microphone stand attached to the back of the harp. It picks up sound from the air inside the sounding cavity of the harp. Condenser microphones were originally developed for the television industry and pick up sound from one direction only (uni-directional). The MICRO-MIC contains a very thin sheet of Mylar stretched on a hoop and magnetically charged. A second stationary plate is also magnetically charged. As sound waves come in they force one plate to move, resulting in an alternating voltage as the like charges repel. The signal from the microphone is then passed through a pre-amp which sits by the harpist on the floor and has a circular dial for volume which can be adjusted by foot.



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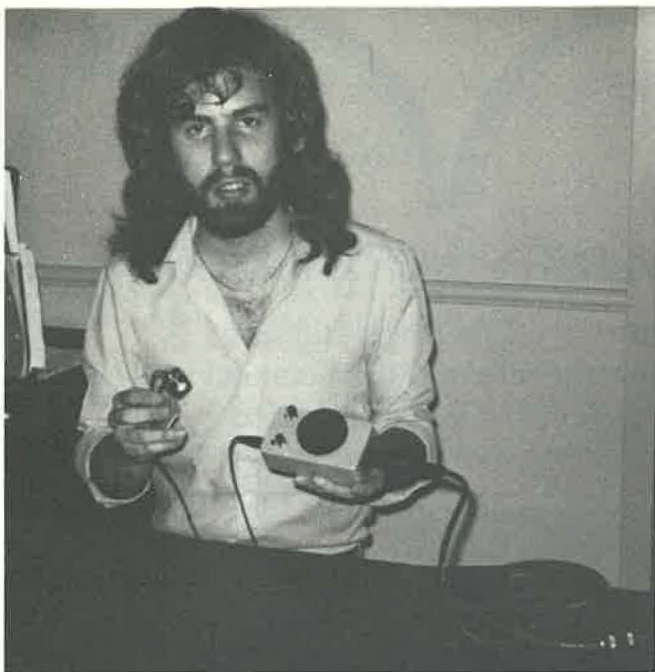
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*Steve Ambrose holding the SoundSight Micro-Mic and preamplifier*

This microphone was designed by Steven Ambrose and is available from SOUNDSIGHT, 5927 Franklin Avenue, Suite 1, Hollywood, California, 90028. The microphone and pre-amp cost \$350.00.

To get the optimum sound from any system, it is best to have a separate amplifier and one or two speakers. Easier to transport and cheaper is the amplifier/speaker combi-

nation made for electric guitars, the amplifier and speaker being contained in one unit. When choosing an amplifier it is important to see that there are at least three tone controls, one each for bass, middle, and treble. These are used to adjust the sound according to the acoustical properties of each room or setting. A room with carpeting and heavy drapes will need more "high" frequencies than one with hardwood floors and stark walls which reflect the sound. A speaker should have enough power to serve the individual purpose. A 30 to 60 watt system would be adequate for casual jobs, and is easily portable. For large rooms or a noisy setting, larger systems would be recommended, perhaps of 100 watts. (If a dynamic or condenser microphone is used, the speakers must be pointed away from it or the mike will pick up its own sound, resulting in feedback.) It is also possible to utilize the in-house system of a hotel or restaurant, plugging into it from the pre-amp.

Just as each person has his own preference in instruments, each sound system will hold special appeal according to individual taste. It is advisable to try as many systems as possible until the exact sound is found that best suits one. Amplification should be regarded as a tool for the harpist, to be used to increase the creative possibilities of the harp.

As a service we have provided addresses where readers may write for further information on the products discussed: this does not constitute an endorsement of the systems by the American Harp Society, Inc. In making any large purchase, it is wise to seek professional advice.

—Ed.



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# on the lighter side

## Pop Harpist De Wayne Fulton

by Carrol McLaughlin

De Wayne Fulton is one of the best-known names in the harp world. His work in the popular harp field has brought the harp to thousands of people who have, through his efforts, become fans of the instrument.

One of the major goals of Fulton's life has been to help the harp gain acceptance as a solo instrument. He has performed for the past twelve years at the Warehouse Restaurant in Marina Del Rey, California, and also does many harp concerts each year, either solo recitals or with a singer. Fulton is a faculty member of the Salvi Summer Festival of Pop and Jazz Harp, and he is involved in recording solo harp albums on his own label.

Fulton believes a strong technical background is imperative for any harpist interested in the pop field: his own classical background confirms this. Fulton began study of the harp with Kajetan Attl, first harpist with the San Francisco Symphony, when Fulton was in high school. Two years later he heard harpist Edward Vito perform with the NBC Orchestra under the direction of Toscanini, an experience that inspired him to study with Vito; he made arrangements to spend one year in New York, studying with Vito and attending classes at The Juilliard School. Later studies took him to Vienna, Austria, where he studied with Hubert Jelinek at the Academy of Music. Fulton graduated from the Academy with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1955.

Fulton's first professional experience came while he was in Austria. He was asked to play with the Vienna Philharmonic and the State Opera as second harp to Jelinek. Only men were allowed in the orchestra at that time, and because Fulton was Jelinek's only male student, he was allowed to take the position of second harp when Jelinek's older brother retired from that position. Also while in Vienna, Fulton made his first record, an album of popular music with Gretta Keller, a well-known European chanteuse.

After completing his studies, Fulton became first harpist with the Istanbul Symphony and taught harp for three years at the Istanbul Conservatory. Fulton also performed with a flutist and toured throughout Anatolia and Turkey. Many unconventional ways of moving the harp had to be devised, including the use of camels, broken-down jeeps, and strapping the harp to the back of a Turkish porter!

In 1958 Fulton auditioned for Von Karajan in Germany and received the honor of being appointed first harpist with the Berlin Philharmonic. He was the first American to be accepted into the orchestra.

One year later he was offered the position of first harpist with the Honolulu Symphony, and it was there that Fulton became involved with the harp in the field of popular music. He met the entertainment director of the Sheraton Hotel Corporation, who was opening a new restaurant in Waikiki Beach called the Captain's Galley.



*De Wayne Fulton*

Fulton had heard several people play pop harp, including his one-time teacher Edward Vito (although they had worked together only on classical material) and Jack Nebergall who was performing in San Francisco. Fulton himself had very little experience in the field at that time, and recalls knowing only three pieces when he was first hired at the Captain's Galley. He began by playing *September Song*, *The Third Man Theme*, and *Ebb Tide* over and over again. He steadily increased his repertoire, using a knowledge of chords that he had learned earlier on the piano, and asking pop pianists and arrangers for new ideas to use on the harp.





*With Nicanor Zabaleta at a master class given by Zabaleta at Sienna, Italy*

In 1964 Fulton traveled to Japan to play for three months at the Palace Hotel in Tokyo. While in Japan he made many special appearances, including performances for NKH television and the American Embassy in Japan. Fulton's tour was so successful that he returned three years in a row to perform in Japan.



*Fulton on board ship between Istanbul and Genoa, on his way to the newly-opened Salvi factory where he purchased the first Salvi concert grand harp to be built*

One of the secrets of Fulton's popular success is his large number of harp recordings. His first solo pop harp album, made in Hawaii, was called *The Harp Wears a Lei*. While in Japan, Fulton recorded a total of five albums with Japan Columbia. In 1966 he established his own label and began to produce his own records, which are on sale at clubs or concert halls where he performs. He has recorded a total of sixteen albums, of which seven solo albums and two recorded with singers are still available.



*Posing for a travel advertisement*

De Wayne Fulton now resides in California, and, performs five nights a week at the Warehouse Restaurant in Marina Del Rey (adjacent to Los Angeles). The owner of the Warehouse, Burt Hixson, had first heard Fulton perform in Hawaii. Hixson designed the lounge of his restaurant in California to be a showcase for the harp, specifically to highlight the talents of De Wayne Fulton. The lounge features a large amplification system which Fulton designed, using Barcus-Berry transducers on the harp. During the course of his experimentation with amplified harp sound, Fulton has used phase shifters, tremolo, reverb, and other kinds of electronic devices.

The work of De Wayne Fulton at the Warehouse Restaurant has stimulated much interest in the harp through the exposure of audiences to the beauties of harp playing, and through the establishment of new jobs for other harpists by restaurant and hotel owners who have observed his success. Fulton has been extraordinarily successful at what he calls his "missionary work," to bring the harp to popular acceptance as a solo instrument.



# on the lighter side

## Jazz Harpist Dorothy Ashby

by Carrol McLaughlin

Dorothy Ashby plays jazz harp because she loves it. Though jazz is her speciality, she does not consider herself solely a "jazz harpist." "In the time people spend labeling things," she says, "they could be perfecting them. I wanted to be good at what I liked—I loved jazz, and did it!"

Playing jazz on the harp followed a natural progression for Dorothy. At a young age she began learning chords on the piano from her father who was a jazz guitarist. Dorothy still considers jazz chords and their alterations her specialty, recalling those first lessons and her feeling of, "Ah, that's for me!"

Dorothy's roots go back to Detroit where she grew up a few blocks from the site of the 1967 riots. In the depression days, Dorothy's father made his living by traveling the Midwest with a five-man jazz group. He later left music to work as a truck driver because it offered a more secure living. Though the family was poor, Dorothy recalls that "artistic priorities were the highest priorities of their lives."

Dorothy was able to attend Cass Technical High School in Detroit, and later Wayne State University. She majored in Music Education, with piano as her applied instrument. In Detroit she had a lot of professional experience as a pianist working part-time for the Parks and Recreation Department, touring schools, and sight-reading for tap and ballet classes. She was the piano accompanist for the best vocal studio in town, a job which allowed her to become aware of good musical literature. Dorothy also played jazz jobs with her father on guitar and her brother playing flute and saxophone.

Dorothy completed all but the final segment of her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. She began the "practice teaching" portion of the course, and it took her two weeks to decide that she hated it. She "stuck it out" for a year and then quit. She then worked as a single pianist in clubs in Detroit, and only later obtained a harp and began to work with a bass player and drummer.

Her groups were quite successful and played regularly in Detroit clubs such as the Garfield Lounge and Café Gourmet. They also did special tours to Canada, Bermuda, and the East Coast. Dorothy calls these years the "Golden Age of Jazz in Detroit." Often the players in her group were recognized by the big names in jazz and moved to New York to play with musicians such as Miles Davis and George Shearing. Dorothy's first big break came when the Count Basie band came to Detroit where Dorothy was playing in a club. Frank Wess, flute-and-sax man with the Basie band, asked Dorothy to come to New York and cut a record.

The record was "Jazz Harpist Dorothy Ashby," recorded in 1957 with Frank Wess, flute, and three other New York musicians. They only had one day in the studio,



Dorothy Ashby

with no time to rehearse or make cuts. Dorothy had written down the chord changes for the bass player, plus any special breaks. The tunes included *Stella by Starlight* and four original compositions by Dorothy. The record made her almost instantly famous. She received letters from Europe, from people everywhere who loved her music; she even received mail from soldiers in the Korean War who had heard her record.

Dorothy's second album was also recorded with Frank Wess in New York. She remembers driving 22 hours through a snowstorm to New York, after which she recorded immediately. After the session she drove straight back to Detroit because she had a job. This album was first called "Hip Harp," then re-released by Prestige Records as "The Best of Dorothy Ashby." After this, the record dates "just began to come." Her numerous other records include "The Fantastic Jazz Harp of Dorothy Ashby" and "Soft Winds/The Swinging Harp of Dorothy Ashby," both recorded in New York. In Chicago she recorded "The Rubaiyat of Dorothy Ashby," "Dorothy Ashby," "Dorothy's Harp," and "Dorothy Ashby Afro-Harping."

It was George Shearing's manager who first arranged Dorothy's dates to play with such greats as Louis Armstrong. She also worked with Lionel Hampton in New York, Woody Herman in Detroit, Duke Ellington in Washington and Detroit, Dizzy Gillespie, and many others.

In 1973 Dorothy moved to Los Angeles with her husband, John, who is a writer and artist. She works regularly in the recording industry, and has recorded with such artists as Stevie Wonder, Johnny Mathis, Stanley Turrentine, Dionne Warwick, and the group "Earth, Wind, and Fire." She performs occasionally at jazz clubs in the Los Angeles area. She also teaches, and derives great pleasure

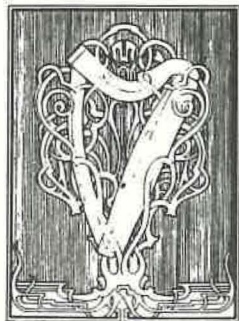


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from "disseminating information to those who want it or appreciate it." Dorothy enjoys playing her music for her colleagues. She says, "Gratification is knowing that those who know and appreciate my music think it's great and invaluable. This to me is success."

"Jazz is the music of Black America," Dorothy feels. "You are more apt to be superior in it if you are black and understand the musical heredity: polyrhythms, polyphonic melodies, and the complexities of these rhythms and melodies—with their creative and spontaneous nature—that have been passed on through generations." Yet jazz is not a form closed to other people. "If you spend enough time understanding what's going on, you can become good at it." Jazz has its own rigorous discipline. It has more chords and more complex rhythms than, for example, rock music. "The beauty and discipline of jazz," Dorothy says, "is being able to create a certain amount of music within a certain amount of musical time, and there are infinite possibilities."

As Dorothy's friend Louis Armstrong said, "It ain't whatcha do, it's the way what'cha do it." And Dorothy *really* does it!



*Publicity photo of Dorothy Ashby used by John Levy,  
one of her first managers*

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# on the lighter side



Harpo Marx

## Harpo Marx

by Carrol McLaughlin

"His trademark was his harp, which he played well, and his silence, which was funnier, sweeter and more eloquent than most comedians' noisiest chatter." This quote, from page one of the *New York Times*, 29 September 1964, captures the essence of the great Harpo Marx.

Harpo loved the harp, and practiced faithfully three hours per day—even after retiring. He also played the clarinet and the piano, often incorporating those instruments into his act. Harpo's repertoire on the harp included Salzedo's *Chanson dans la Nuit*, Zabel's *La Source* and Ravel's *Introduction et Allegro*.

Because Harpo did not read music, he was never able to play the *Introduction et Allegro* with orchestra. He had learned the piece by ear—with certain rhythmic liberties. Harpo also had a large repertoire of popular and jazz music, learned by ear or written out especially for Harpo by his son, Bill.

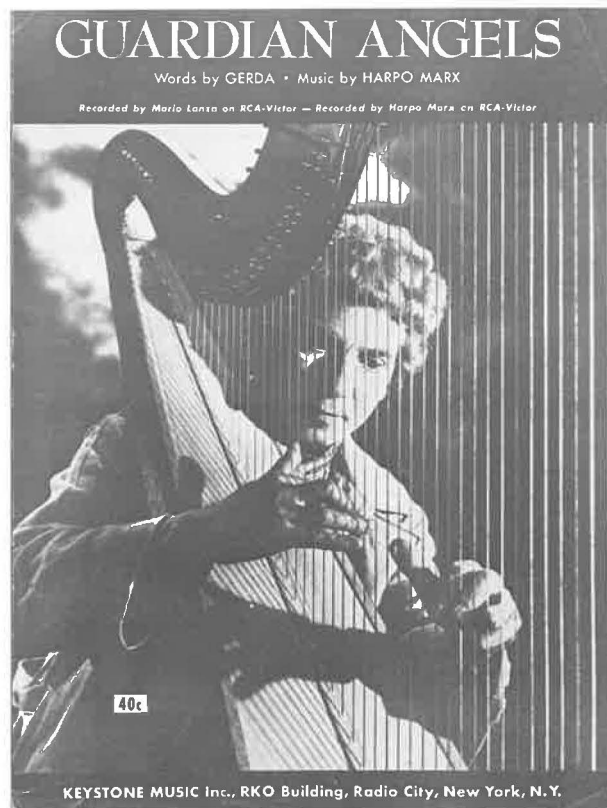
Bill, a Los Angeles composer who has recently written a concerto for harp and orchestra, devised a special method of notation for his father. He would write out the letter names of the notes of a piece Harpo wanted to learn. If the melody rose, Bill would place the letter higher on the page. Each note of a left-hand chord would be spelled out. Harpo and Bill collaborated on Harpo's two solo harp albums, *Harpo In Hi-Fi* (1957) and *Harpo at Work* (1959), both released by Mercury Records.

SUMMER/1983

Harpo's first accomplishment on the harp was to play "oom-chunk-chunks" in accompaniment to the Four Nightingales, the name of one of the Marx Brothers' early singing groups. The harp he started on had belonged to his grandmother, who had played harp on the German Vaudeville circuit while touring with her husband, a ventriloquist.

In his autobiography, *Harpo Speaks*, Harpo recalls that he spent the first two years playing with the harp on his left shoulder: the mistake was discovered when he saw a picture of an angel playing a harp in a department store window. Harpo subsequently studied with the late Mildred Dilling, whom he considered his closest friend in the harp world. He was also greatly influenced by swing harpist Gail Laughton.

One of the first big successes of the Marx Brothers was *I'll Say She Is* at the Casino Theatre in New York in 1924. The show was reviewed by the famous Alexander Woollcott, who became Harpo's closest friend. He began his



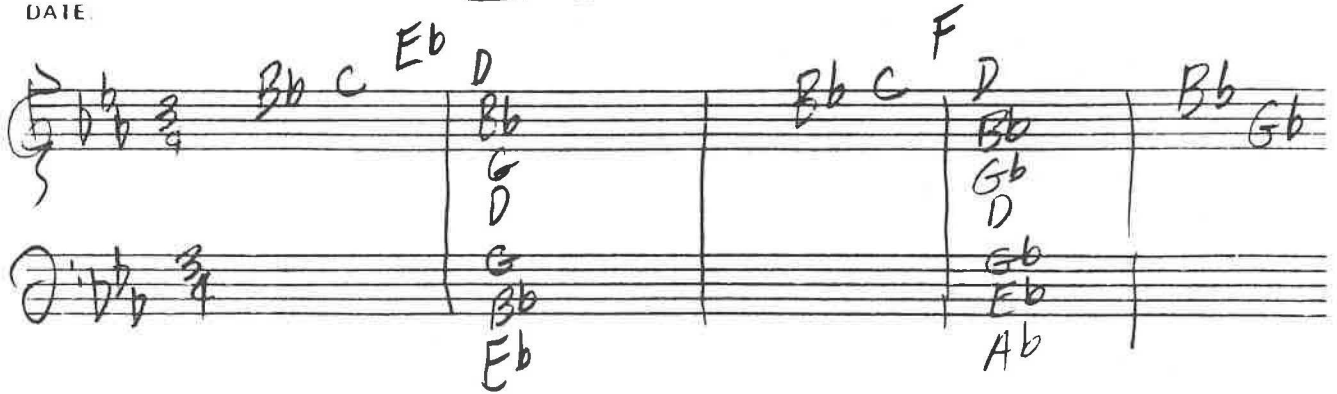
The cover of Harpo's song which was recorded by Mario Lanza and by himself

review with the headline, "Harpo Marx and Some Brothers . . .," and was particularly impressed by "that sly, un-

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## TENDERLY



An example of music Harpo could "read," prepared by his son Bill

expected, magnificent comic among the Marxes, who is recorded somewhere on a birth certificate as Adolph, but who is known to the adoring two-a-day as Harpo Marx."

Harpo also performed on his own, and concertized throughout the world. In 1933, he was the first American to perform behind what we call now the Iron Curtain. In Moscow the critics wrote that he received "an unprecedented standing ovation, lasting ten minutes." As Harpo was leaving Russia, he was asked by the American Ambassador to smuggle some papers out of the country. Harpo did so, with the information taped to his right leg. He states, in *Harpo Speaks*, that he was so conscious of his

burden that he began walking with a limp. In 1949, Harpo and Chico toured the British Vaudeville Circuit, a trip highlighted by a Command Performance before the Queen of England at the London Palladium.

Harpo also made numerous concert appearances throughout the United States. During World War II, he and his harp spent four years entertaining on the G.I. circuit. After the Marx Brothers completed their motion picture careers, Harpo remained in the public eye, appearing as the guest star on the television shows of Red Skelton, Lucille Ball, Donald O'Connor and Ed Sullivan. He also gave benefit concerts for orchestras, appearing as the conductor Arturo Harponini, conducting Haydn's *Toy Symphony*. After his death, Harpo's two harps were given to the Rubin Academies in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Despite his great fame, Harpo was a humble man. His son Bill relates that each time Harpo sat down at the harp on stage, he felt a cold chill go down his spine. Harpo would say to himself, "Oh, my God! I have to play for all these people. Hey, wait a minute! I'm up here and they're down there. If there's someone out there who should be up here, let *him* come up and play the harp. But if someone were out there who should be here, he would be here. But he's not! *I* am. I guess I'll play the harp."

Harpo's insights and unique talent for genuine self-expression touched those who knew him. He believed, "I would rather see a burlesque comic give 100% to an audience than watch a famous star give any less." By giving 100% throughout his life, Harpo—and his harp—touched millions of people. When Harpo retired, Red Skelton wrote:

There will never be another poetic figure, with your humanistic concern, whose philosophy is laughter. A kindly sort, without belittling his fellow man. You didn't have to speak—each gesture is sheer elocution. Your very presence proved "Silence is Golden."

#### Editor's Note

I should like to express our appreciation to Bill Marx who gave generously of his time to assist the author in the preparation of this article.



The artist with an attentive listener





# on the lighter side

## Jack Nebergall

by Carrol McLaughlin



*Jack Nebergall at the Hyatt Embarcadero, San Francisco*

Jack Nebergall has been a musician since he was four years old, when he used to perform violin solos, accompanied by his brother at the piano. His family loved music. Jack's grandfather was an old-time fiddler in Albany, Oregon, where Jack grew up. Although he spent fourteen years studying the violin, Jack always wanted to play the harp. He believes his fascination with the instrument may have started in depression times when Marx Brothers comedies were so popular.

Jack's father was the stage manager at a vaudeville theatre. One of his tasks was to carry a Lindeman harp on and off stage for performer Davis Lienneger. Years later, Jack bought that harp for \$400.00 and began taking harp lessons.

Though Jack is now well-known as a performer of ballads and popular music with lush-sounding jazz-like harmonies, his early training was in classical harp literature.

His first harp teacher in Oregon was Doris Calkins. [Mrs. Calkins is the mother of Sally Maxwell—Ed.] In 1944 he moved to San Francisco to study with Kajetan Attl, a Czechoslovakian harpist who was the principal harpist with the San Francisco Symphony, and who had taught many fine harpists including Doris Calkins. Jack studied with Attl for five years, and it was during this time that he also "landed" his first job playing harp with a dance band.

For three nights a week, Jack would play with a 10-piece band under the direction of Dick Foy at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. Jack had some written-out harp parts but most often he played from chord charts; he also played harp solos during the intermissions.

Jack received on-the-job training in working with a dance band, in reading chords, and in doing radio work from Barbara Schwartzman and Alice Dillon Stevens. He could



*At the age of seven*



*Jack with his first harp*



*Performing in Hawaii*

take any melody or tune and, mostly by ear, come up with an arrangement of it on the harp.

Nebergall was staff harpist for CBS Radio from 1953–56, when the staff orchestra was dissolved. He performed often with the dance band of Ray Hackett, who had been the musical director for CBS Radio. In 1956, Jack accompanied such soloists as Nat “King” Cole and Ethel Merman at the Republican Convention, working with conductor-arranger Jack Fischer.

Jack has performed at numerous well-known restaurants in the San Francisco area, including Romanoff’s on Knob Hill for two years, Paoli’s for two years and La Strada for eight years. He never uses music, but plays everything by ear. When asked about his repertoire, Jack states, “I just always knew tunes. When I was a kid I used to play with a local group—I used to get up and play jazz on the fiddle at beer halls, dance halls, whenever.”

In 1966 and 1967 Jack performed in Hawaii at the Captain’s Galley for his friend De Wayne Fulton. In 1975 Jack began performing at a hotel in San Francisco which is now well-known for its presentation of the harp, the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero. Jack began as a soloist in the lobby, playing for two years in the afternoon from noon to 4:00 p.m. He was then asked to join Danny Yale and the Regency Strings. The Regency Strings accompanied Jack to the 1980 American Harp Society Convention in Portland

and were the featured artists at the final banquet. (Jack had also been invited to perform solo pop and jazz harp music before the banquet at the Harp Conference in Oakland.) The group has also performed with Jack at the Salvi Summer Pop and Jazz Festivals. They now work with Jack at the Embarcadero Hyatt, 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., Thursday thru Saturday.

Our artist has cut two records, the first with Danny Yale and The Regency Strings; the second was a solo album entitled *Ain’t Misbehavin’*.

Jack considers himself a ballad-style harpist. His favorite music includes such standards as, “The Shadow of Your Smile,” “I Can’t Get Started With You,” “The Boy Next Door,” and “A Time for Love.” He believes it is important for a harpist to project personal ease to an audience.

The form of arrangement for harp preferred by Jack includes the establishment of the melody, followed by an improvised 8-16 bars, a statement of the bridge, then a return to opening material and “finishing” (or re-stating) the piece. Jack urges harpists, “listen to yourself and do not forget that the public always wants to hear a clear melody line.” Jack admits he “just sort of has a feeling for it . . . a feeling for the rhythm.”

Jack’s “feeling for it” has set him apart as a very special artist, touching many with the “serenity of the Jack Nebergall style.”





# on the lighter side

## The Classic Jazz of Mimi Allen

by Carol McLaughlin



*A recent portrait by Robert Bruce Williams*

The music of Mimi Allen encompasses the best of both worlds: the free thinking of jazz and the discipline of classical music.

Mimi's early training was with her mother who was a concert pianist. She performed in her first piano concert when she was but three years old, and from an early age met outstanding musicians who visited her home.

When she was small, everyone knew that "Mimi would play the harp." Her first harp was given to her when she was fourteen years old. The harp had belonged to a nun, and had been stored in an attic for thirty years. The harp, a Lyon & Healy style 22, arrived one day in the back of a pick-up truck, a gift from a relative of the nun.

When Mimi was fifteen years old she received a scholarship to attend Stephens College in her native Missouri where she studied with the great pianist Isidor Philipp (who had also been a teacher of Mimi's mother). It was at the college that Mimi first heard Carlos Salzedo perform. A year after entering, Mimi traveled with her harp teachers, Ruth Dean (Clark) and Eleanor Mellinger, to Camden, Maine, to study with Salzedo. She was told by Mr. Salzedo that "when she was ready" he would give her a scholarship to study with him in New York. At age eighteen, when she had completed a Bachelor of Music Degree at Stephens, Mimi moved to New York to study harp on the promised scholarship with Carlos Salzedo, and, at the same time, to continue piano lessons on scholarship with Isidor Philipp.

Mimi views Salzedo as a "great, great teacher." She remembers vividly receiving a telephone call from Salzedo when she was a student of his in New York. He told her

that Marjorie Call was ill and that Mimi had only two weeks to learn all the music for a concert tour with the Salzedo Concert Ensemble. Mimi had previously worked on duo-harp material with Ruth Cobb but had never before performed with an ensemble such as this. She recalls its being "trial by fire!" The ensemble consisted of two harps, flute, and cello, with Salzedo playing first harp.

The Concert Ensemble was under the management of Columbia Artists, and toured throughout Canada and the United States in addition to a two-week tour of Cuba. Other tours to Mexico and Italy had been contracted, but had to be cancelled when Salzedo experienced ill health.

Though Mimi remembers Salzedo with great warmth, she admits she was "scared to death of him." Each day on tour with him was like an extended lesson. He was concerned with teaching her to "walk with dignity, talk with dignity, project my voice, and even to speak French!" He had very strict rules which had to be followed. Each member of the ensemble (all women except Salzedo) had to have concert attire approved by him. He particularly wished vibrant colors on stage, and no black or white was allowed. Mimi remained with the ensemble for four years, then moved back to Sikeston, Missouri, with her husband, whom she had met in New York.

Mimi Allen's first introduction to improvisation came from Salzedo. He would go to the piano and play a piece first in the style of Debussy, then in a contrasting style. Mimi would echo the style and rhythmic variations on either piano or harp. An earlier student of Salzedo's, Casper Reardon, influenced Mimi greatly by his recordings of jazz music on the harp.



*Mimi Allen at age three*





*A publicity picture for a CBS educational "special"*

Mimi's own jazz career really started when she moved back to Missouri and started taping her own music and listening to playbacks of it—a process she found "fascinating." She played one of these recordings for a representative of Columbia Artists, who was very impressed with it and introduced her to Owen Bradley, Vice-President of Decca Records. Through that contract came Mimi's first two solo recordings, "Strings of My Heart" and "There Goes My Harp." These included pieces such as "Tenderly," "Begin the Beguine," and "The Continental."

Mimi later had a disagreement with Decca over the recording of a rock-and-roll harp album—a project Mimi

considered to be in very bad taste. She broke contract with Decca and returned to studio work in St. Louis and Memphis, combined with television work for CBS in St. Louis.

One series of TV specials, the CBS *Montages*, featured Mimi performing both classical and jazz harp. The final show of the series was a George Gershwin special on which Mimi played her own arrangements of his pieces. Marcel Grandjany saw this show and immediately invited Mimi to perform these pieces at the first American Harp Society Conference to be held in New York. Mimi agreed—after requiring a written confirmation that it was Gershwin that Mr. Grandjany wanted!

Many of Mimi's Gershwin arrangements can be heard on her record, *Mimi Allen Plays Gershwin*, available from Virtuosity Record Co., Memphis, and the harp companies. None of her arrangements is taken from written music. They are all done by ear, with Mimi playing what she *hears* should be there.

Mimi considers her music "classic jazz." She incorporates the rhythms and patterns of the classics with the harmonies and other elements of jazz. She says, "Why throw your classics away—use them!" Mimi believes that you can't play jazz without a strong technical background, and she is a "stickler for technique" with her many students. She is preparing a new record featuring classic jazz, which will include such pieces as "Jamaican Rhumba" and "Summertime Two."

Years after Mimi had completed her studies in New York with Salzedo, she was recording for Decca in Nashville and ran into Salzedo, who was performing as soloist with the Nashville Symphony. She told her mentor that she was performing jazz and that she really loved it, adding, "it's a real challenge."

Salzedo responded, "As long as you do it in good taste, I will be pleased. But you have to work at it, Mimi!" Mimi says with a smile, "And I've been working at it ever since!"

#### **Editor's Note**

*Ms. Allen would like to make clear that she is still teaching and performing classical music as well as jazz.*



*The Salzedo Ensemble on tour in 1947—explaining the many uses of harp trunks*



# on the lighter side

## The Jazz Harp of Adele Girard

by Carol McLaughlin

Few harpists can claim to have sat in on jam sessions with greats like Frank Sinatra and Duke Ellington, had followers like Henry Fonda, John Wayne, and "Jimmy" Stewart, and even performed a tap dance routine with Woody Herman. Adele Girard has worked with the best in the world of jazz. She is completely at home in the world of swing, improvisation and "taking choruses."

To speak with Adele is to hear remembrances of how Fats Waller continually blew cigar smoke in her face when they performed in night clubs together—or how Joe Bushkin, the famous jazz pianist, used to yell to Adele to "stifle the harp" after playing chords. Because of the influence of these great musicians, Adele has developed her own unique style of jazz harp.

Though jazz has become her special love, Adele came from a New England family which was greatly involved in the world of classical music. Adele's mother was an opera singer and concert pianist, and her father was a violinist and conductor. When Adele was 15, her father took her to meet Alice Mikus, the harpist in his orchestra, the WBZ Springfield (MA) Broadcasting Symphony. Adele up to that time more interested in sports than music, was fascinated by the harp and began lessons with Miss Mikus. She combined both loves of her life by cross-country skiing to the Mikus residence each day to practice.

Adele learned to read music by sneaking into her father's study and sight-reading his many vaudeville and silent movie cues and themes. She remembers that her father was always upset that his music had been touched, no matter how carefully Adele returned it. After four months of practice, Adele had mastered two pieces on the harp



Adele Girard and Joe Marsala. This photo was used on a recording they made together: Joe Marsala and His Orchestra, Featuring Adele Girard.



Performing in Tullio's Restaurant, Palm Desert, CA

and won her first job, earning \$75.00 playing those two pieces for a P.T.A. meeting. It was also the first time Adele had experienced a broken string—it happened just before she started to play.

In 1934, Adele graduated from high school and took a job in Chicago as a singer with Harry Soznick's big band. Upon hearing that Adele played the harp, Harry rented a harp from Lyon & Healy and Adele sat in with the orchestra.

While in Chicago, Adele also performed as harpist for CBS radio. She was a member of a three-piece ensemble which often did "standby" work: if anything happened to the program being transmitted, the musicians would immediately start playing to fill in time until the problem was corrected. Adele remembers this as being very boring work. One day Billy Mills, the conductor of the radio station, arrived in the studio unexpectedly and found Adele and her two string players standing on their heads. Adele recalls that Mr. Mills did not find the situation quite as humorous as the musicians did.

After one year with CBS, Adele moved to New York City and performed with the Dick Stabile band at the Lincoln Hotel. Another New York group with which Adele performed was "The Three T's," composed of Jack Teagarden (trombone), Charlie Teagarden (trumpet), and Frank Trombauer (alto saxophone). Adele remembers these musicians as "the best jazz players in the business." Jazz harpist Caspar Reardon had been performing with the Three T's before Adele joined the group, but had moved on to play in *I Married an Angel* on Broadway.

When the Three T's went on the road, Adele remained in New York and joined the band of clarinetist Joe Marsala. They performed at a famed jazz club, the Hickory House on 52nd Street, New York, for 10 years. In 1937 Adele and Joe Marsala were married. Joe's band was famous in New York, and many great musicians played with them. Some working in town, such as Dizzy Gillespie (who was playing across the street), used to sit in with the band regularly.

Joe Marsala was the first bandleader to integrate a black musician into a white band by including Henry "Red" Allen on trumpet. Adele recalls an engagement at the Wal-





*Performing with Tommy Dorsey. Frank Sinatra was also engaged with the orchestra in the picture.*

dorf-Astoria in New York: as the band was setting up, the hotel management said the black trumpet player could not perform in their hotel. Joe's answer was, "If he can't play, none of us will play," and instructed the band to pack up. The management, faced with no band for the night, reconsidered, and *all* of Joe's band played the job.

Adele was also the star of her own television show for NBC, entitled *Easy Does It*. Adele "did everything" on the program, from roller skating to singing and playing the harp. Adele enjoyed the challenge as she had always loved the stage. However, the schedule was grueling, with rehearsals each morning and five shows per week, aired

live at 6:30 p.m. After her show Adele would go to sit in with Joe Marsala, who had his own television show with CBS.

The wonderful jazz music of Adele Girard has been heard in many cities in the U.S. During the war she performed U.S.O. tours with outstanding entertainers such as Martha Raye. She has performed as soloist at Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas; the Polynesia in Seattle; and the Warehouse Restaurant in Los Angeles, to name a few. Adele is at present living in Palm Desert, California, and plays regularly at Tullio's Restaurant, where she has performed as jazz soloist for the past two years.

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# on the lighter side

## Andreas Vollenweider

by Carrol McLaughlin

In May 1985, 6200 people crowded into the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles to hear a *harpist*—Andreas Vollenweider (pronounced “Fole-en-veye-der”). Months earlier, on his US début tour, the Swiss-born musician had played to sold-out houses in New York, Dallas, Philadelphia, and San Francisco; in Europe, 188 of his last 189 concerts had been sold out.

Andreas Vollenweider does not play the harp with a traditional technique! On his right hand he uses long, artificially strengthened fingernails. As a protection heavy tape is wrapped around the second and third fingers of his left hand. Neither is Vollenweider’s instrument traditional: when asked to describe the harp he plays, Vollenweider smiled and said, “Well, it was originally a Salvi Daphne.” There are many modifications. He has designed an amplification system with a microphone for each string; he has also attached a dampening mechanism which he operates with his left knee. To achieve special sounds, Vollenweider has made some of his own strings out of materials such as silk, but on the rest of the harp, however, he uses nylon strings because of their durability when played with the nails.

Vollenweider performs on several instruments, making modifications to all of them. He plays a flute incorporating extra holes covered with fish skin to get a Chinese or Jap-



Andreas Vollenweider (photo by C. B. Holt)



Vollenweider displays the famous fingernails during his interview with Carrol McLaughlin (photo by C. B. Holt)



anese effect. He also plays piano, guitar, saxophone, and koto.

Vollenweider began playing a small Irish harp seven years ago, but soon became dissatisfied with its range and advanced to the pedal harp. He has never taken harp lessons, but did study some music with his father. He remembers asking a harpist friend in Switzerland to give him some pointers several years ago, but recalls that the experience was unsuccessful because he had played his own way too long. He believes strongly in following one's own path, stating, "The profit in going your own way is much, much bigger than to follow a given path. But you must be strong and defend your ideas—you can't switch back and forth, doing it your way, then someone else's way."

Vollenweider, now 31 years old, has been touring in Europe for thirteen years, and has written music for theater and motion pictures. When he is composing for records or concert, he thinks of himself as a storybook writer, using the instruments to make a soundtrack.

In concert, his ensemble includes gongs, tympani and mallet instruments, keyboards, guitar, wind instruments (including flute and saxophone), and harp. The music constantly evolves as the five persons in the group improvise together. Vollenweider believes in composing "not from the head, but from the heart . . . so it flows." He also requires that members of the audience become involved and use their imaginations to complete the picture he is presenting.

CBS has released three albums by Vollenweider: *Behind the Gardens—Behind the Wall—Under the Tree*. . . , *Caverna Magica*, and *White Winds*. The sales on these records have already reached nearly 2,000,000.

Vollenweider feels quite close to the harp and hopes that many people will become involved with it. "We were told 2000 years ago to see through the eyes of a child and to be children still. The harp can help us in this, with its



*The Swiss harpist at work (photo by Darryl Pitt; courtesy of CBS Records)*

innocence. If people would listen, there would be a lot of love. We should try it!"

When asked how he felt about his success and the extensive touring, he replied, "I don't like the travelling, but I *like* the playing!"

\*\*\*\*\*

## On the Cover . . .

Jack Nebergall, San Francisco harpist and art collector, decided he wanted a miniature of one of his favorite harps. That decision made, he was left only with the choice of executant. He immediately called on his uncle, Bob Ferguson, of Albany, Oregon.

Ferguson, now retired, had followed his natural aptitudes and interests in art and design into a career in the designing of retail stores, banks, and offices up and down the West Coast. He developed an interest in materials and textures during his studies through high school, Oregon State University, and Chouinard Art Institute, and then carried this sense of materials into his day-to-day work. In addition to his professional work, Ferguson pursued fine arts in various forms as an avocation; now retired, he can devote all of his time to artistic pursuits.

Ferguson's studio and workshop in Albany is in a converted sheep barn. It is a spacious, well lighted area filled with the tools and materials of a devoted craftsman. The studio is known as a *Bottega*, a 15th century term originating in Florence, Italy, during the High Renaissance. It

simply means a workshop for the creation of aesthetically pleasing objects.

Ferguson is no stranger to the world of music. In his younger years he played in bands and orchestras—on wind instruments mostly—and acquired some training on the cello.

The creation of the miniature harp, pictured on the cover, was approached from the standpoint of the development of a piece of art while remaining true to the model itself. Its total height is 18 1/16 inches—one quarter scale of the concert grand harp it represents.

The project which commenced in 1982 required scale drawings of the original harp and its details; photographs from every possible angle, both close-up and full, were taken.

Research was carried out on harp construction and components. Dale Barco, distinguished harp specialist, was consulted for further information. Barco kindly supplied materials used in authentic harp construction to carry the concept through in the finished miniature.



# on the lighter side

## Corky Hale

by Lynne Aspnes

On a typically rainy and dismal New York evening the small restaurant near Lincoln Center is filled to capacity with soggy New Yorkers. Despite the grim weather there is the distinct aura of electricity among the diners, most of whom know each other and are passing among the tables laughing and exchanging anecdotes. An hour after the floor show was scheduled to begin, musicians casually amble towards the center of the room. The Maître d' makes a brief introduction and the focus of the electrical energy shifts out to center stage. For the next hour and a half we are mesmerized, infused with a delightful warmth by the effervescent, irrepressible, and incandescent talent that is Corky Hale. For slightly more than thirty years this ambulatory bundle of energy has been living the American Dream—doing what she loves to do and getting paid for it. For Corky Hale her life more than faintly resembles a Hollywood movie script—one she might well have viewed while fitting in a sound track.

For Corky Hale, born Merrilyn Hecht in Freeport, Illinois, there was no road to stardom. "I've never had the burning desire to be a *star*, but I've always known what I wanted to do, and I've been able to do it—I've been extremely lucky that way." During her first summer in California, friends introduced Corky to Harpo Marx. She performed and Mr. Marx replied, "Young lady, I'm going to make you a star." In typical fashion Corky replied, "Oh Mr. Marx, that's not what I want to do at all. What I really want to do is play with orchestras in the studios, and play with David Rose's orchestra." "He called me ungrateful, my friends hustled me out and that's the last I ever saw of Harpo Marx." Corky Hale was seventeen years old.

The pathways to personal and artistic fulfillment began early for Corky.

I started piano when I was three years old. I picked out "Happy Birthday" or something, and my mother said maybe we should give this kid piano lessons. I hated practicing, and I hated taking lessons. I would go and hide when the piano teacher came because I really didn't want to practice. Because I had perfect pitch I could mimic whatever the piano teacher played, so each week I would play what she had demonstrated the week before and she thought I had been practicing like crazy. I was an obnoxious child prodigy by the time I was seven, and so my parents started dragging me to the Chicago Conservatory—130 miles away. I saw a woman playing the harp at the Conservatory one day and I was a child prodigy (right?), so I threw a tantrum and my father, to shut me up, bought me a little harp. The piano teacher at the Conservatory taught me how to read, and then I started playing everything on the harp. It was always the same, piano and harp. I would make up chords to go with songs I heard on the radio, then try them on the piano and then on the harp.



*Corky Hale*



*Corky's first harp recital at the age of eight*

At the Conservatory the harp instructor wisely determined that her young pupil would benefit from weekly supervision, and she suggested a teacher in Rockford, considerably closer to the Hecht home. Corky combined harp lessons with trips to the synagogue in her weekly visits to Kathleen De Long. ("My parents decided I needed to know I was Jewish, and there was no synagogue in Freeport.")





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With David Rose on the set of the Red Skelton Show,  
CBS TV (1953)

Throughout her childhood she continued always with the harp and piano. In junior high she added flute and piccolo to be able to play in the school band, and later on, the cello. For five summers, from ages 9 to 14, Corky attended the Interlochen Arts Academy. "It was a major influence, though I was always in trouble—I never did what people wanted me to do." She adds:

Music was my way of communicating and getting attention, even if I didn't consciously try. I remember when I was seven years old, my parents and I were vacationing at a resort in Florida. One afternoon I was picking out tunes at the poolside piano and band-leader Horace Heidt (Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights) heard me. "You play great, kid," he said, and that night he found a cute little jacket like the rest of the band wore, and sat me down at the piano. It was the first time I ever sat in with a band, and I was seven years old.

At Interlochen Corky played harp in the orchestras and sat in with bands on piano. During the school year she played in musical shows, with dance bands, for the Rotary and ladies' church luncheons, always using both instruments. As her senior year in high school, Corky attended an accelerated program at Stephens College in Springfield, Missouri. She spent hours at the University of Missouri, Stephens' brother school, working on its musical shows and making arrangements for the jazz band. Her essentially classical orientation was evolving into an emphasis on jazz and popular idioms.

When I graduated from Stephens I told my father I wanted to go to Hollywood. My parents thought it was a crazy idea. Fortunately I eventually got my way by agreeing to enroll in the UCLA summer school program, and living in a school dorm. After I'd been there about a week or two, someone heard me play and said he knew someone on the production staff of the TV show that Freddy Martin had. He helped me load up the harp and took me to the studio for an audition.

Freddy Martin put Corky on the show that week and for the rest of the summer she took no more classes at

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UCLA. In September a reluctant Corky returned to the Midwest where she spent the school year at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Wisconsin. She was miserable. In June she cajoled her parents, once again, into allowing her to return to Hollywood via UCLA. "It was something of a joke because I never attended one class. I began working right away. One job after another rolled in, beginning with an offer to work with David Rose on the Red Skelton TV show." Corky was now eighteen years old.

The Corky Hale Hollywood years read like a *Who's Who of American Jazz*. She played, and sang, with the Harry James, Jerry Gray, and Ray Anthony bands; she was featured on live remote broadcasts with Freddy Martin's band from the Cocoanut Grove. ("Corky" was a nickname acquired during the Interlochen years. "Hale" was the result of a spontaneous decision by the announcer of Martin's show: "Now from the lovely Cocoanut Grove in Hollywood we present the music of Freddy Martin and his lovely vocalist Corky Hale!") She worked on TV and radio with David Rose, Martin, and Liberace; she accompanied Mel Torme in a New York tour, and Billie Holliday in Las Vegas and Los Angeles. In the 60s, after owning and operating a clothing store in Los Angeles and surviving a failed marriage, she gave in to wanderlust. She spent three years in Rome, ending up with a weekly TV show, "Tiempo de Jazz;" two more years in Hollywood; took tours to London, and, finally, made a move to New York City. There she joined with Tony Martin for a brief stint as his pianist, and then it was back to Hollywood. Upon returning to New York, Corky quickly established herself in the

commercial field, working in the studio and on tour with such figures as James Brown, Judy Collins, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Melissa Manchester and Barbra Streisand. She also met and subsequently married song writer extraordinaire Mike Stoller (with partner Jerry Leiber, composer of such legendary tunes as "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," "There Goes My Baby," and "On Broadway").

On her career so far:

There's no formula. I don't know what to say when harpists ask me to teach them to do what I do—it's taken me a lifetime to come this far, and there's always more to learn. Playing the piano is invaluable. I've been playing the piano forever, and I was always sitting in with bands. You just have to *DO IT*.

On her life with Mike Stoller:

You must realize that Mike means more to me than anything there is—and therefore I miss tons of work and am not as busy as I could be because we are gone so much. We are always together, but we don't work together! We have extremely different ways of doing things—we make each other crazy.

On her training as a harpist:

I played all the styles, right from the start—classical, popular, jazz—I would learn something on the piano and then try it on the harp. There's no magic. Harpists should listen to and perform as wide a variety of musical styles as possible. And, don't dismiss something just because you've never heard it done—be the first.

And with a mischievous grin and a shrug Corky Hale does just that.



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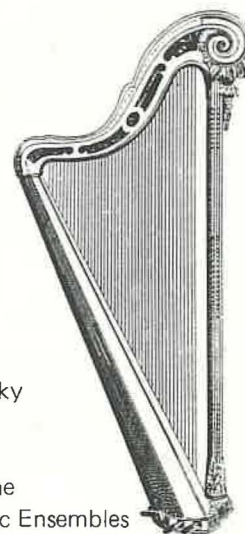
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# on the lighter side

## Eleanor Fell

by Carol McLaughlin

When Eleanor Fell was ten years old, the New York Metropolitan Opera Company toured through her home town of Bloomington, Indiana. The harpist with the orchestra, Reinhardt Elster, played pieces for Eleanor such as the jazz standard "Lady Be Good," a type of music she had never before heard on the harp. This inspired the child, who grew to love both opera and popular music on the instrument. Reinhardt gave her his arrangement of "Donkey Serenade," her first popular piece, which served her well in the years to come.

Eleanor was raised in a musical family. Her mother was a professional violinist, and sat with her every day as she practiced the harp. Eleanor's father, a businessman, played the "fiddle," and the two performed in Bloomington, as Eleanor accompanied him by reading from sheet music. Her uncle, Academy Award-winning composer Harry Sukman, also influenced her in later years to enter commercial work.

Eleanor's first harp teacher was Margaret White, with whom she received her Bachelor of Music Degree from Indiana University. Other teachers later included Mildred Dilling and Nicanor Zabaleta, and she spent several summers in Camden, Maine, where she studied with Alice Chalifoux. It was with Miss Chalifoux that Eleanor refined her technique and developed a graceful and thorough style of presentation that she has used both in classical and popular performances and which has been appreciated by audiences internationally.

While at the University, Eleanor gained experience by performing in opera and with orchestras, as well as by playing with artists such as Henry Mancini and Johnny Mathis when they toured through Bloomington. Following graduation, Eleanor held the position of first harpist with the Santa Fe Opera, the North Carolina Orchestra, and the El Paso Symphony, and also taught at the Interlochen Arts Academy.

In 1972 she received an invitation from the Hotel Ivoire in the Ivory Coast of West Africa, asking if she would like to play harp in the hotel's exclusive restaurant. She would have room and board in the hotel and would perform three hours per night, six nights a week.

This was a drastic change from the orchestra performing Eleanor had been doing, but she packed up her harp, her black orchestral gowns, and her music (all classical except for the "Donkey Serenade" arrangement by Reinhardt Elster) and flew to Africa.

The first night on the job a customer requested "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" and Eleanor realized she was not going to be able to play her classical repertoire three hours each night. It was impossible to buy sheet music and the only option was to write out on manuscript paper, by ear, simple arrangements of the pieces people wanted to hear. She recalls that "out of necessity, since I



*Eleanor Fell*



*Practicing with son Scott, then eight months old, in attendance (Courtesy Photo Communications)*

was in Africa for eight months!—the creativity started to flow." Every day she would learn two or three new arrangements, always gaining ideas from the people who came into the restaurant. She remembers enjoying the process—she was doing something new, worthwhile, interesting, and loving it.

While in Africa, Eleanor began writing letters to food-and-beverage managers of Hilton and Inter-Continental





*The family ensemble during Eleanor's childhood*



*In "working clothes" aboard the S. S. Rotterdam*

hotels around the world. She says, "I must have written over two hundred letters—and only received one solid reply. It was from the Zurich Hilton, and I took it." From Zurich Eleanor went on to perform in Hanover, Cologne, Berlin, and also Tokyo, Japan. In 1976 she performed on

the S.S. Rotterdam's Around-the-World Music Festival Cruise.

When Eleanor returned to the United States she began performing at the prestigious Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Center in New York. She appeared on the *Today* television show, her picture was on the front of *Where* magazine, her engagements were frequently mentioned in the newspapers, and there was a poster displayed on Fifth Avenue highlighting her name. She also appeared at the St. Regis, Americana, and Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

In 1977 Eleanor and her husband, Lee Caulfield, whom she had met in Africa, established the Vanderbilt Music Company selling gut harp strings which were made in Great Britain. The company has now expanded and Eleanor, in addition to working with the business, is writing harp arrangements to share with other harpists. Six of these appear in the Salvi Pop series, and she has several semi-classical arrangements published through Boston Editions including "Opera Themes," "Symphony Themes," and "Rachmaninoff: Themes from the Second Piano Concerto."

Eleanor has also shared her knowledge in numerous workshops and presentations. In 1977 she was the featured artist at the final banquet of the American Harp Society Conference in Boston. She has given presentations at Juilliard, Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, University of Colorado, plus others at several American Harp Society Conferences, and in 1985 at the World Harp Congress in Israel. Eleanor also has been a faculty member of several Salvi International Pop and Jazz Festivals and was a member of the first Lyon & Healy Eastern Pop Festival.

Eleanor puts the same enthusiasm and love for what she is doing into her arranging and presentations that she felt when she was creating her first pop repertoire in Africa. It is a magical enthusiasm that affects all who know her. "I feel a psychological high from sharing what I know," says Eleanor, "and giving back what I have learned. When I share with someone it comes back a thousand-fold."

# on the lighter side

## The Angel of Hellman's Angels

by Carrol McLaughlin

Not many harpists can boast of having performed in Sri Lanka (six times!), Calcutta, Hong Kong, Madras, Mysore, and in the New York Subways. The harpist who can is the ingenious Daphne Hellman who, as a soloist or with her jazz ensemble, *Hellman's Angels*, has taken the harp far, both geographically and in her music.

Daphne's beginning on the harp came through classical music. Her mother, a pianist, had heard Mildred Dilling play, and when Daphne was 12, bought her a gold harp. Daphne began lessons with Mildred Dilling, then went abroad to study with Henriette Renié in France.

When she was 16, Daphne stopped playing the harp for several years to give full attention to drama school. Later in her life, she was in a hotel in Haiti, and "heard wonderful music coming through the walls in the hotel." The musician was Nicanor Zabaleta, who was delayed between planes on a concert tour. Daphne's love of the harp was rekindled, and she returned to New York and studied with several harp teachers, including Carlos Salzedo, Mario De Stefano, and Marcel Grandjany, whom she loved because "he knew what you needed, and didn't try to remake your playing."

Daphne started her performing career in a famous New York cabaret, the Reuban Bleu. Jazz harpist Caspar Reardon had been performing at the club, and when he left, Daphne auditioned for Julius Monk, the cabaret's impresario and entrepreneur. Julius Monk was also a well-known jazz piano player, and he accompanied Daphne as she sang "Rum and Coca-Cola." Daphne performed off and on at the Reuban Bleu for twelve years, often sharing the bill with artists such as Billie Holiday.

At this time Daphne also began performing solo classical concerts for the Community Concerts Association. She recalls particularly performances at the Universities of Kansas and Minnesota, and school tours on which she performed three concerts per day. Daphne has always had a passion for Country and Western music, and remembers singing songs not particularly suitable for school children.

In the 1950s, Daphne's manager, Eastman Boomer, suggested that she form a group. Boomer, who also managed Erroll Garner and Anna Russell, helped organize Hellman's Angels. The name "Hellman" was borrowed from Daphne's husband, who was a well-known writer with the New Yorker. Daphne recalls, "we borrowed his name and the bookings doubled."

Hellman's Angels, consisting of harp, bass, and guitar, first performed overseas in Australia, giving lunchtime concerts in universities. In 1968, the group performed at much larger halls throughout India, including Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras. In 1987 Daphne will again return to India, this marking her seventh concert tour of that country.



*Hellman's Angels at the Village Gate, 1986*



*Daphne Hellman and her group on tour of Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Australia in 1971*



Daphne has taken a total of five tours of Australia. She has also performed at many fascinating hotels, ranging from the Savoy in Finland to the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong. Daphne admits, "Actually, I'm a big hustler about jobs." In 1970 Daphne travelled to Viet Nam to work as a photographer's assistant with *Time* magazine, and while there organized a tour for the following year.

In Ireland, Daphne performed on the streets as a Busker. She started out playing on a ferry boat, expanded her experience to a hotel in Wexford where she played for room and board, and graduated to playing on Grafton Street, the center of shopping in Dublin, with a guitar case lying open to collect tips. Back in her native New York, Daphne made New York history in 1986, carting her harp down miles of escalators to perform in the subways.

Daphne also loves to play in Central Park, but these are not by any means her only New York appearances. For the past eighteen years, Daphne has been a regular performer at the Village Gate, where she appears with Hellman's Angels. She has upcoming concerts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and performs several days per week at Kitty O'Shea's restaurant.

Daphne's eyes sparkle when she speaks of the music she loves. She has worked with major jazz artists, and greatly respects their accomplishments. She personally loves to play country, and has a repertoire that includes boogie woogie, jazz, country, and classical music. Her thoughts on performing: "In the first place, not to worry, not to play so fast—to enjoy what you are playing and doing, and realize that what you're doing has worth. Don't worry about the mistakes—in the second place, it's too late!"

## on the cover

### An Ancient Angular Harp

by Roslyn Rensch Erbes

This angular harp of twenty-one strings, now on exhibition in the Louvre, Paris, was discovered in an Egyptian tomb. While its exact age is uncertain, it is one of the oldest examples (if not *the* oldest) of a form of harp found in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian art representations as early as the second millennium B.C. Composed of a large soundchest or soundbox, and a pole-like bar which serves as a string arm or neck, the instrument, like most ancient harps, lacks a column or fore-pillar.

As evident in the cover photograph, the usual manner of holding this type of angular harp was with the soundchest in a vertical position above the string arm. However some relief carvings, particularly those from the Assyrian palaces of the 9th–7th centuries B.C., include representations of musicians playing similar harps held with the soundchest in a horizontal position. In these examples the harp was held so that the string arm was farthest from the musician's body and the arm often terminated in the carving of a human hand which (thus) pointed heavenward. The strings of horizontally-held angular harps were usually played with a pair of slender, baton-like sticks (plectrums); however, the strings of vertically-held angular harps were most often plucked by the musician's fingers (including the thumbs).

The Louvre angular harp is the best preserved of the known examples of this instrument. The sides of its wooden soundchest are still enclosed in the green leather, part of which also forms the instrument's "soundboard." The harp strings, attached to a wooden

suspension-rod which extends the length of the soundchest (on the underside of the leather "soundboard"), are sewn through the leather. At their lower end these strings are wrapped around the pole-like string arm. The tassel-ended cords which appear as extensions of the harp strings are functional, as well as decorative, since they apparently facilitated the tuning of the strings. The wooden soundchest of the Louvre harp measures about 41 inches (104 cm.) in height; the cylindrical string arm is set at an 85 degree angle. While the scale to which the harp strings were tuned is not certain, the length of the instrument's longest string is four times the length of its shortest string.

When the angular harp was first exhibited in Europe, the instrument was placed with the soundchest *below* the string arm, since, to European eyes, this seemed the normal position for a harp. Even as erudite a scholar as Curt Sachs, in his *Real-Lexikon der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1913), published a drawing showing the instrument in this manner. However holding the harp with the string arm uppermost caused the tassels to hang down among the strings, thus interfering with their vibrations. Subsequent attention to the ancient art monuments which included representations of angular harps provided musicologists with the harp position clue: when the instrument was placed with the soundchest *above* the string arm, the tassels no longer interfered with the vibrating strings. In addition, the harp was more easily carried and played by a walking or dancing musician.

# on the lighter side

## Stella Castellucci

by Carrol McLaughlin

Stella Castellucci is no stranger to the world of jazz music; her love for it began when she was four years old. When she was a child, she had a teenage aunt living next door who played piano, and Stella would sit for hours, listening to her aunt practicing the latest popular music. On the weekends they would go to *matinée* performances at local theaters, Stella particularly enjoying the musicals of such artists as Rita Hayworth and Betty Grable. Because of these experiences, she grew up with all the great standards in her mind, and she was able to play them all “by ear,” or by memory, first on the piano and later on the harp.

Stella began piano lessons at age five. Her father was

course in four-part choral writing from a friend of her father who had studied at St. Cecilia's Academy in Rome, Antonio Cafarella.

Stella credits her ability to arrange for the harp to her study of theory and harmony with her father and, especially, her study of four-part choral writing. These studies made her very aware of “clean voicings” on the harp, or the “sifting of chords,” so that the notes that are really important were there, and everything else was eliminated. Stella believes, “This process, relative to jazz and all modern arranging, is extremely important.”

One year after Stella graduated from high school she became the harpist with the American Broadcasting Company's Staff Radio Orchestra. The job included six days of broadcasting per week, including playing cue music for dramatic shows, accompanying guest artists, and broadcasts with the orchestra—all live. Stella had the oppor-



*Stella Castellucci at Trump's Restaurant, Beverly Hills, California*

the bass trombonist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and he often took her to symphony concerts. Stella remembers being fascinated by the harp in the orchestra, and would watch the harpist constantly. When she was eleven years old, Stella's father, who had been teaching her solfège, allowed her to begin lessons on the harp.

Stella's first harp instructor was Aida Mulieri Dagort, harpist with the Warner Brothers and Paramount studio orchestras. Her main studies on harp were with Alfred Kastner, and she worked with him until his death, after which she completed her studies with Ann Mason Stockton. Stella also studied with Joseph Zuintilli and Mary Jane Mayhew Barton. She attended the Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, where she took a private four-year

tunity to work with such artists as Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore, Tony Martin, and Judy Garland.

Stella began freelancing in the motion picture and recording studios in 1951, and in June of 1953 received a telephone call from Pete Condoli, who had been a trumpet player in the ABC staff orchestra with her. Pete said, “I'm at Peggy Lee's. She's opening a show in a week and wants to add harp—come on over, bring your harp and sit in!” Stella has vivid memories of that first “session” with Peggy Lee's jazz group. She remembers, “I just listened to Peggy and the group go through their material and eventually sat in and hung my ear out, as we say in jazz. You're not reading music, you're *making* music. Even though I had never played in a jazz group, a great part of my life since





*Stella in high school*



*Publicity shot for Peggy Lee with Stella and her harp in the background*

age four had been spent listening to and loving jazz and popular music of all kinds. I had stored in my memory an entire world of standards. Knowing the tunes and the changes (harmonic structure) of the songs made fitting in with Peggy's group relatively comfortable for me." Stella was asked to join the group at that first rehearsal, and toured as harpist with the jazz sextet for eight years.

In 1963 Stella began performing in restaurants in Los Angeles, as well as continuing to work in the studios. In her years of working in the recording industry, she has performed with numerous artists, including Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Barbara Streisand.

In 1968, Stella made the acquaintance of harpist Verlye Mills, who heard her playing with a jazz trio, and who asked Stella to become her partner. The two harpists performed many harp recitals together, including a performance at the 1974 American Harp Society Conference in Minnesota. They co-authored a book, entitled *Rhythm for Harp*, and gave a jazz harp workshop for 22 harpists at Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles.

Stella began notating her arrangements in 1978, and has published eight of them in the Salvi Pop Series. In 1983, Stella completed *An Approach to Jazz and Popular Music for Harp*, which is an outstanding, comprehensive book that includes 39 jazz arrangements, studies, and études, as well as biographies of jazz singers and instrumentalists, including harpists.

She is currently freelancing in Los Angeles, and performs five afternoons per week at Trump's Restaurant in West Hollywood. When asked about outstanding moments in her career, Stella recalled an event which happened early in her association with Peggy Lee. In her words, "It was the closing concert of the 1953 Hollywood Bowl Summer

Season, and Peggy Lee was the soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. There we were, Peggy and her sextet on front stage center, with the Orchestra in place behind us. That concert will always be the most meaningful event of my career. There was my father, in his place as bass trombonist in the brass section of the Orchestra. What a privileged experience to be on the same stage with him, he in a symphonic orchestra and I in a jazz group!"

As this article is being written, Stella is preparing to travel to Vienna to participate in the World Harp Congress, performing on a concert featuring outstanding popular and jazz harpists from around the world. Once again the knowledge of, and love for, jazz and popular music which began when she was four years old will be brought forth and shared with her fellow musicians.

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# on the lighter side

## Harvi Griffin

by Carrol McLaughlin

When Harvi Griffin was growing up in Detroit, he had a longstanding “friendly competition” with a girl from his family church. Harvi had played the piano since he was four and a half, and when his friend, Barbera Ivory, was accepted to Cass Technical High School to study harp, Harvi decided that studying harp was what he wanted as well.

However, it was not as easy an endeavor as one might think. In 1955, the harp department at Cass Tech, under the direction of Velma Froude, consisted of 34 students, all women. In the 50 years that harp had been taught at the school, a man had never been accepted into the program. Harvi fought for two years to be allowed to study harp, and finally was able to begin lessons in his senior year. Working with Velma Froude Harvi remembers as a “wonderful experience,” and says it was at this time that he “found his niche in life.”

When Harvi graduated from high school, he enrolled for a Bachelor's Degree at Michigan State University, continuing with Velma Froude. He still recalls some difficult moments from that period. After one year at Michigan State, Harvi had become frustrated with his studies and had shipped his rented harp back to Chicago. Three weeks later, Ms. Froude asked Harvi if he missed the harp. When he replied, “yes”, she informed him that she had intercepted the harp at the train station, paid the rental charges on it, and that he should go to the station and pick it up!

At the University, Harvi had difficulty convincing the faculty that a black male harpist could be successful as a soloist. He won his argument and remained in harp performance instead of the recommended music education degree program. Harvi also studied speech and drama, which he feels was extremely worthwhile, since “drama is 90% of playing music.”

After graduating from Michigan State University, Harvi attended Mannes College of Music for one and a half years (studying with Lucile Lawrence) and spent one summer at Eastman working with Eileen Malone.

Harvi's study of popular and jazz music had begun early in his harp education. He recalls that Velma Froude said, “You are a musical snob—music is music! When you leave me I will have you equipped to do it all!” Ms. Froude had gained her experience in the popular and jazz fields while performing with a nine-member women's ensemble in the 1930s. Among the nine women, the members played 45 different instruments and performed all types of music; Ms. Froude played harp and wrote arrangements.

Harvi began playing pop and jazz professionally while he was at the University. He performed at the White House as the featured soloist with the U.S. Army



Harvi Griffin

Band, and was a guest performer for the Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg during her state visit to the United States. Harvi gave the opening performance at the Century Park Sheraton Hotel in Manila, where he worked for eleven months, and in Detroit performed for 23 months at the Hotel Ponchartraine, as well as giving appearances at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

Each year Harvi tours for eleven months, performing approximately 100 concerts yearly, many given in universities and colleges. In January and February of 1986, he gave 34 concerts in seven and a half weeks, and in the space of five months drove 28,000 miles, transporting his harp in the back of his van. He has made a number of records, including *Harvi plus 3*, with bass, drums, and guitar; *The Harp and Voice of Harvi Griffin*; *The Two Sides of Harvi Griffin*, a two-record collection of classical and pop/jazz selections; *Phase 3*; and *The Other Side*, recorded in 1986.

Among the many fans of Harvi Griffin is the teacher Harvi refers to as an “inspiration and catalyst,” Velma Froude. In her words, “I am very proud of Harvi and his outstanding arrangements for the harp. I told him a long time ago that he had so much to offer, not only to himself, but to so many who would listen to him. He is quite remarkable—but he works hard, too!”



# on the lighter side

## Deborah Henson-Conant

by John Escosa

Jazz is a word which has yet to be clearly defined. However, it seems to this writer that the most concise definition would be: on-the-spot improvisation by musicians who rely solely on a given melodic line and/or a series of chord progressions played over a strong rhythmic pattern.

Deborah Henson-Conant is undoubtedly a true example of the jazz artist on her chosen instrument. She amply demonstrated this at the AHS conference in Pittsburgh (1987) and continues to do so here in the United States and in Europe.

Apparently she came from a fairly musical family, at least on her mother's side. Her mother and aunt trained as opera and art song singers. Her aunt is currently performing on Broadway. Her mother (who gave Deborah her first musical training) wrote music, some of which Deborah now performs. As an education device, her mother would sing such tunes as "Misty," "Girl from Ipanema," "Meditation," "Corcovado," etc., and expect Deborah to accompany her on the piano *and* harmonize vocally.

At a very early age she was exposed to the Chico Hamilton Quintet and Ken Nordine (jazz-wordist). As an adult she became intensely aware of such great jazz artists as Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Corky Hale, Dorothy Ashby, David Snell—the list is endless.

She took harp lessons from a number of teachers around the country (her family seems to have moved a lot) but didn't care much about practicing.

From here to near the end of this article there will be direct quotes from the replies to written questions. They demonstrate clearly why Deborah Henson-Conant is who and what she is today: a consummate artist in the field of jazz.

"It wasn't until I started studying harp with Linda Wood that I felt ready to learn about the joys of practicing—and I do not say that facetiously. I have since discovered a sense of well-being which can come to me through a sort of meditative approach to practicing. As far as teaching in general goes, now that I am myself a teacher I feel sure of what I started to suspect early on: that a teacher only has a few very important principles to pass on, and that a good teacher spends her/his time repeating the same advice over and over or working to try to find a way to make that simple advice clear to each student through analogy or some other device. I also discovered that while one teacher may not be able to get through to me, another teacher can sometimes provide insight. Then there'll be that moment when I say—'Oh, *that's* what she meant!' I encourage my students to experience other teachers or other instructional opportunities (such as master classes).



Deborah Henson-Conant

I have found that some of the greatest musical teaching I have ever received was from non-musicians! I had a physical education teacher at the College of Marin who told me things about physical movement that I think of often and which affect my playing immensely: concepts about work and rest, finding the glide in any physical activity, about the importance of follow-through.

I've also learned an incredible amount about playing and performing from the martial art that I study: Aikido. As a jazz player, the concepts of partnership, leadership and following in Aikido are deeply relevant to what I do. The levels of partnership in jazz playing are great: there is a partnership between the player and the instrument, among the players and one another, and between the group and the audience. The most basic Aikido concept of blending energies rather than fighting them is also relevant to jazz playing.

Jazz for me is in many ways an opportunity to be creative *within the moment*. For one thing, as a jazz performer I am *there* at that time when 'it' happens—with the audience—and that is breathtaking! Being in front of a loving, attentive audience is like basking in the sun. All their force—their intention—comes right in. I can feel how they *want* to be pleased—they're ready and willing, they want me to do well, and they're putting a lot of energy into that.

As a jazz player, it's not so important to 'learn the notes' since there aren't any notes to learn in particular (except for the tune), but one must learn the piece—



*In action with the trio*



*Deborah works with a participant in a recent master class*

which is more like formal analysis than anything else. The piece has to be chewed up, torn apart, danced around with, lived with, shoved into a washer a few times and kept under my pillow. I want to be intimate with it, not simply cordial.

When I get on stage I try to feel as relaxed as I can. Regardless of whether I'm doing a concert for 600 people or if I'm playing background music, I try to think that what I am doing is the greatest opportunity of my life. I look for as much enjoyment and as much fun as I can. When I'm working alone, I think a good deal about playing *each note*, not skipping over any of them,

giving each its due, about playing as clearly as I can, and I experiment (if I get bored) by trying to transpose tunes to different keys, or I see how long I can improvise on some tune or other—can I play 'All the Things You Are' for twenty minutes? I've certainly tried!"

I asked Deborah to give some advice to the potential jazz performer.

"Learn to read chord charts. Learn to know how to grab for the chords you want, and *in particular*, learn what pedals you need. I hope to have a workbook out at some point that can help people with this. Learn the major and minor chords based on each scale name and



practice playing them out of order.

Work with other people, get a bass player to work with you if you can, even if you have to pay him/her to come to your house once a week for two or three hours. Jazz, for me, is about playing with other people. Or get a drum machine! (I hate having said that—I am morally against them, but if you think of them as sophisticated metronomes, for practice, *not* for performance, they are wonderful tools.) For that matter, a metronome is a great jazz tool.

Having a strong sense of rhythm is essential to jazz. Making note mistakes is insignificant. Losing the beat, dropping it or adding beats unintentionally is indefensible.

Corky Hale (with whom I've been studying lately) has given me a greater sense than I've ever had of the importance of stating the melody of a jazz tune clearly. Her philosophy (in which I believe strongly) is that the more clearly and cleanly it is stated, the stronger the foundation for 'leaping off.' This has been terribly important to me, especially of late. I find that jazz students (I include myself) get so fascinated with improvisation that they start doing it before they've presented what they're improvising *on*. It's like launching into a complicated definition before you've given the word.

Learn the harmonic structure of the piece and internalize what I call the 'harmonic road-map.' What I mean by that is: play through the 'changes' (chord

changes) so many times in so many different ways (block chords—arpeggios—leaping chords—etc.) that your body actually *moves* through the harmonic changes at the proper time intervals.

Play with other people—that is the most important thing. Keep doing it. Relax. Try even playing with other harpists or with *any* instrumentalists (I try to stay away from singers, but that's another story.) Allow yourself time and a 'safe place' to improvise (experiment) freely, without judgment. Don't even listen to yourself sometimes, especially in the beginning. Don't try to make it sound good.

Sometimes I suggest alternating between keeping strict time, playing very little melody and then switching over to losing the rhythmic continuity but really exploring the facets of the melody."

This writer would suggest that if one were to follow Deborah's instructions one could shortly become conversant with the jazz idiom. I have often wondered what the jazz world would be like if some of the great composers of the past (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt—*ad infinitum*) were living in our century. Each of the aforementioned used simple melodies—turned them inside out—played with them rhythmically. It would seem that a further definition of jazz might well be "instantaneous composition." It almost never gets written down. Now that we're in the age of computers . . . well, the mind just simply boggles!

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# on the lighter side

## John Escosa

by Carol McLaughlin

John Escosa has been touring as a concert harpist for over 25 years. For the past 19 years he has been on the Roster of Columbia Artists Management, performing over 1100 concerts throughout the United States and Canada.

John began playing harp professionally when he was 13, performing as First Harpist with the Fort Wayne Civic Symphony. (He had started piano lessons at age 4, and advanced to the pipe organ at 8 and harp at 10.) Five summers were spent at the Wainwright Band Camp in La Grange, Indiana, and those first harp lessons were with Band Director Jack Wainwright's daughter, Lynne Wainwright (Palmer), who had just graduated from Curtis. He also studied several of those summers with Ruth Dean Clark and Janet Putnam.

John remembers that his "finest training" came very early in his life from Clare Edwards, his organ teacher. At the first lesson, John (age 8) was asked to reharmonize a hymn tune, "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past." He was then asked to improvise a chorale prelude on the piece, putting the tune in the soprano voice. In subsequent lessons the tune was to be played in alto, tenor, and bass voices. John recalls, "I was 8 years old



*John Escosa, President of the American Harp Society*



*A very serious young John, age 13*

and didn't know that was considered difficult!"

This concept of freedom to "do stuff" colored his attitude toward all types of music, and he never felt restricted or intimidated by taking what the music said as being "written in stone." As John says, this was "enviable training for any kid," and proved invaluable when he decided to go into the pop harp field.

The foundation served him well when he substituted as harpist at various radio stations in New York. John recalls, "In those days they often gave you a piano chart and you had to fake it—or there were chord charts, which I quickly learned how to read."

John's musical career has included some fascinating ventures not directly involving the harp. In the years 1953–1957, John and a friend, John Neff, bought and operated a ballet school, with Escosa starting as accompanist and John's wife (at the time) Dorothy also working as pianist and secretary. The two "Johns" quickly developed a ballet company. In 1957 the company and school were growing too rapidly, and the partners gave it to the city; it became what is now the Fort Wayne Ballet Company.

John had earlier toured as assistant director and harpist with the first road company of Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, and was musical director for several summer musicals until he was drafted into the service.

Once again his musical talents paid off. On Palm





*Publicity photo of John Escosa with his first Salzedo model harp, 1960*

Sunday, 1951, John had attended the Post Chapel service at Camp Gordon, Georgia. When the congregation was asked, "Can anyone play the organ?," John responded, and his performance was heard by the post Chaplain. Later, as he was packing his dufflebag for Korea, he was told he had been transferred to the Chaplain Corps as a Chaplain's Assistant. Within a short while John helped to organize a 40-voice Army choir which performed throughout the southern United States. The choir also had a half-hour show, broadcast nationally each Sunday on CBS.

John has entertained as both pianist and harpist in many fine hotels and restaurants, including the Nocturne Room and Carriage Inn in Fort Wayne, and the Gibson Girl Lounge in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was in 1963, when John was performing at the Gibson Girl, that he first met Joe Longstreth, a well-known radio and television personage in Cincinnati. John honored an invitation to visit Joe at the WLW Radio Station and happened to walk in during the first five minutes of a half-hour live radio broadcast. On the air Joe asked John to "Bring your harp over to my farm and we'll see if we can play together." John did so the next weekend and thus began the Longstreth and Escosa duo.

Their first management was the Eastman Boomer Agency in New York. In 1968 they were called by George Blake, the President of Community Concerts, and signed as artists with Columbia Artists Management. They be-

gan touring for Columbia as "artists on salary," performing 122 duo harp concerts the first season but being paid with a weekly salary check, out of which they had to cover their own expenses. A few seasons later this was changed to the "per concert" fee basis. Longstreth and Escosa toured together for fifteen years, ten of those with Columbia. In 1980–1983 John toured in a two-harp duo with James Pinkerton, and from 1983 to the present has toured with fellow harpist Michael Rado.

It was in his fifth season of touring that John began to include popular arrangements in his programs. His solo arrangements of pieces such as "The Man I Love," and "Can't Help Lovin' That Man," are available through the Salvi Pop Series, and FC Publishing has also made available John's arrangements, including "But Not for Me."

John was a teacher at the Salvi Pop & Jazz Harp Festivals held 1978–1980 in Santa Barbara, California, and has also given Pop and Jazz Workshops at The University of Arizona and the 1986 Pop Harp Seminar at Boston University.

He was the featured artist at the final banquet of the American Harp Society Conference in Tempe, Arizona, and was a member of the AHS Board of Directors from 1980 to 1985. In 1988 John was elected President of the American Harp Society.



*John as a soldier at Camp Gordon, GA, in 1951*

# on the lighter side

**Ray Pool**

by Carrol McLaughlin

For the past three years, Ray Pool has performed at the prestigious Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, having enjoyed success in many areas of music: he was, for example, the first harpist to play the Broadway musical *Evita*, and in fact wrote out most of the harp part which is now widely used.



Ray Pool at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City

Ray's Bachelor of Music degree is in organ from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. It was through his first job as a church organist that he discovered the harp. Ray attended a National Fellowship of Methodist Musicians workshop, where Clara Walker, a harpist from Detroit, gave a workshop on troubadour and pedal harp. She stated, "Anyone who has keyboard skills should learn to use harp in his church music program." Ray returned to his church job in Virginia and rented a troubadour harp. Armed with Mildred Dilling's *Old Tunes for New Harpists*, but with no teacher, Ray proceeded to teach himself the instrument. He recalls, "I was clever enough never to play by myself—I always had someone else to distract the audience's attention, such as a violin, handbells, or children's choir." He always made his own arrangements to accommodate the harp technique he was developing.

Ray quickly concluded, after his first year, that being a church organist was not for him, and worked as a counselor for emotionally disturbed children for several years. He found he missed performing music, however, and one day "blithely announced to an organist" in a church where he substituted that he was going to become a harpist. The organist thought he had lost his reason.

Ray undertook study formally with Geraldine Ruegg and Mildred Dilling in New York. Through Mildred Dilling's recommendation, he began to perform with the Yale Summer School of Music orchestra, his first assignment being Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*, after only a few months of harp lessons!

Two other harp teachers who have been extremely important in Ray's life are Dewey Owens, who sponsored him, and Lucile Lawrence, who also sponsored Ray and about whom he states, "My career just would not BE without the incredible generosity that she offered."



Ray Pool (photo by Hashimoto)



Ray's first big playing experience in New York came with four hours' notice on New Year's Eve: second harp in the *Nutcracker* with the New York City Ballet.

His first job on Broadway was as a substitute in *Pippin*. Shortly thereafter he assumed the harp chair for Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*. Steady contracts for *On the Twentieth Century*, *Evita*, a revival of *Mame*, Lincoln Center's *La Tragédie de Carmen*, an off-Broadway production of *Pacific Overtures*, and the ill-fated *Grind* provided the bulk of his work in New York City. Between his own shows, he filled in for others in *Shenandoah*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *La Cage aux Folles*, and *A Chorus Line*. He also toured the U.S. with productions of *A Little Night Music* and the Goldovsky Opera Company's *Madama Butterfly*.

In 1985, Ray ended his last show on Broadway. At that time, fewer musicals were being produced, and synthesizers were taking over for many of the traditional instruments. Faced with nothing but spare time, he decided to arrange a tune a day for the harp in order to have a repertoire ready for background music. Utilizing a genre he knew well, Ray began with Broadway's

biggest hits. His style of arranging is to emphasize clear melody, "with enough harmony to make it interesting and few enough pedals to make it practical." Several of Ray's arrangements are available through F C Publishing Company, including *Lullaby of Birdland*, *Where Is Love*, *Bidin' My Time*, *I Get a Kick Out of You*, and *Fascinatin' Rhythm*. He is presently working on *A Harpist's Fake Book*, a lead sheet collection that has melody and chord symbols with pedal changes marked in. Ray presented some of his outstanding arrangements when he was selected to perform for the final banquet at the 1989 American Harp Society Conference in Evanston, Illinois.

In 1986, Ray started performing at The Cocktail Terrace of the Waldorf-Astoria, at first alternating two days a week with harpist Grace Paradise, and now plays five days per week from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. Ray loves the job and "enjoys meeting people. . . . I'm really doing what I expect to do for the rest of my life! I enjoy today so much I can't wait for tomorrow!"

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## the teachers' exchange

### *Le bon petit roi d'Yvetôt* by Marcel Grandjany:

by Kathleen Bride

Kathleen Bride began study of the harp at age six as a student of Mary Freeman Kay in Rhode Island. At age ten her family returned to New Jersey, and she continued study with Rosemary Evans Hinman. At age thirteen she began study with Marcel Grandjany.

Ms. Bride received the Bachelor of Music degree from Marywood College and the Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School. As harpist with the Juilliard Ensemble of Contemporary Music, she has recorded for Philips and RCA Victor.

An active recitalist, Ms. Bride also appears in duo-recitals with organist Jon Gillock. She has given her solo recital debuts in New York and London and regularly gives master classes in the United States and Europe.

Active in service to the AHS, Ms. Bride has been MidAtlantic Regional Director, a member of the Board of Directors, National Secretary, Chairman of the Young Artist Program, President of the New York Chapter, and is currently Chairman of the 1991 Marcel Grandjany Centennial.

Kathleen Bride is a member of the Visiting Faculty at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, England, Chairman of the Harp Department at Manhattan School of Music, New York City, and has recently been appointed Professor of Harp at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York.

#### *Editor's Note*

For convenient and accurate reference to the printed music, we employ in this column identification of page, system, and measure: 2/1/3-4 indicates page 2, system 1, and mm. 3 and 4.

\* \* \*

Marcel Grandjany's setting of the French folksong *Le bon petit roi d'Yvetôt* is an excellent example of "stepping stone" repertoire. It challenges the student to master a variety of technical and musical skills: grace notes played before the beat, understanding of enharmonic tones, melody carried by the left hand with chordal accompaniment in the right hand, paired-note phrasing, left hand harmonics combined with natural sounds and right hand jumping over a stationary left hand in a four-note pattern.

It is important to note that there are two editions. The first, copyrighted in 1913, was published by Durand. There was, however, a second "wartime" edition, printed by Elkan-Vogel Co. and substantially re-edited by Grandjany, dating from 1941 when publishers in the United States could no longer obtain music from France because of the war. The copyright was renewed in behalf of Durand at that time. The two French folksongs (the other is *Et ron ron ron petit patapon*) were among several works Grandjany republished with new editings to insure availability in North America. Most harpists who studied this work before or after World War II have never known of the 1941 edition and the many additional indications added by Grandjany at that time.

From the opening of *Le bon petit roi d'Yvetôt* Grandjany gives the harpist the opportunity to learn how to use the wrists to best advantage. He advocated an always supple wrist to help the hand remain relaxed and to

# on the lighter side

## Selected Resource Guide for Jazz Study

by Carrol McLaughlin and Rob Boone

As column editor, I am happy to introduce Rob Boone to our readers. He has been an Arizona resident since 1973, and earned a bachelor's degree in theory and composition and a master's degree in trombone performance from the University of Arizona. A professional musician since the age of 16, Rob has been active in the Tucson area in a variety of musical situations as performer, composer, arranger, and contractor. His credits include work with Sammy Davis, Jr., Rich Little, Pat Boone, Wayne Newton, Tommy Newsome, the Ice Capades, and the Ringling Bros. Circus. Currently he is on the faculty of the University of Arizona as Director of the School of Music Recording Studio and as interim Director of Jazz Studies; he teaches jazz improvisation, harmony, arranging, and piano. Rob is married to Tucson harpist Christine Vivona.

—Carrol McLaughlin

As more harpists find themselves working in the pop and jazz fields, there is a natural desire to learn more about the intricacies of jazz music. In addition to books written especially for the harp, such as *An Approach to Jazz and Popular Music for Harp* by Stella Castellucci, (Miranda Publications, 712 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 122, Santa Monica, CA 90401), there is a wealth of information available in books used by jazz educators and clinicians which can easily be adapted to the harp. The following have been selected as source books to be used by harpists who wish to learn more about harmony, theory, and improvisation.

David Baker. *Jazz Improvisation: A Comprehensive Method of Study for All Players*. Bloomington, Indiana: Frangipani Press, 1983. (\$21.95)

A recently revised comprehensive method for the beginning to advanced student. Basic concepts covered include chord nomenclature, scales, and chord progressions. This is an excellent beginning method book. Baker is Professor of Jazz and Chair of the Jazz Department at Indiana University.

Frank Mantooth. *Voicings for Jazz Keyboard*. Winona, MN: Hal Leonard Publishing Corp., 1986. (\$12.95)

An excellent source of jazz voicings and harmonic concepts. Pianist/arranger Frank Mantooth, a respected soloist, clinician, and writer, lives in Chicago and teaches at Chicago's American University. Mantooth organizes his book in a simple and logical fashion. Jazz topics presented in the book include generic voicings, "miracle" voicings, polychords, tritone substitution, voice leading, and melodic comping. Many of the chapters contain worksheets which enable you to practice the material.

Jimmy Amadie. *Harmonic Foundation for Jazz and Popular Music*. Bala-Cynwyd, PA: James Amadie, 1981. (\$24.95)

A good sourcebook of jazz materials. Jimmy Amadie is a pianist and composer teaching at the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts. His book contains a wealth of material including voicings, notation, harmony, and voice leading. The focal point of the book is the harmonization of melodies, or how to work off a "fake sheet." The book is designed for individual or class instruction and contains exercises and assignments which emphasize chord voicings.

Chuck Marohnic. *How to Create Jazz Progressions*. Studio PR. (\$5.95)

This 42-page book offers an accessible overview of the possible methods of chord substitutions, including cycle extension, relative majors and minors, diminished and half-diminished chords, and alternate or tritone substitution. Chuck Marohnic is a pianist who has been influenced by the style of Bill Evans. He is Professor of Jazz Studies at Arizona State University.

Scott D. Reeves. *Creative Jazz Improvisation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989. (\$19.95)

An excellent resource for jazz improvisation. Scott Reeves is a Professor of Jazz at the University of Southern Maine. This neatly organized book covers many improvisatory elements such as modes, jazz scales, rhythm, and other harmonic structures. Reeves presents many useful exercises and provides transcribed solos at the end of most chapters.

Another avenue of study open to harpists is the *Play-A-Long* book and record sets by Jamey Aebersold. Each volume includes a stereo LP, (or cassette or CD in many instances) and a coordinated booklet with parts. The melodies and chord progressions are in each booklet and they match the recorded accompaniment on the recording(s). The harpist can play the parts while getting the experience of being accompanied by top calibre jazz artists. This method is particularly ideal because, due to a stereo separation, the harpist can choose to select only the left channel on the stereo, therefore hearing only bass and drum accompaniment (your own harp trio!), or select the right channel containing piano or guitar and drums.

There are 43 volumes available, each concentrating on a certain style or concept, but not becoming progressively more difficult. Aebersold recommends as a suggested order of study:

**Volume 24, Major and Minor**, with exercises for learning basic skills in the major and minor modes. Book and 2 LPs or cassettes. (\$11.95)



**Volume 1, *A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation*.** Beginning/intermediate level. This book includes chapters on how to practice, ear training, related scales or modes, and practical exercises for each recorded track. Book and 2 LPs or cassettes. (\$9.95)

**Volume 21, *Getting It Together for All Musicians (Instrumentalists and Vocalists) Regardless of Ability*.**

This volume is a thorough practice set of 31 different tracks including emphasis on the establishment of a thorough knowledge of scales, chords, suspended 4ths, and the blues form with tempos that are not too fast, so everyone can sharpen his skills. Books and LPs or cassettes. (\$11.95)

Other particularly worthwhile volumes to harpists might include:

**Volume 22, *13 Favorite Standards*.** (Lyrics included).

This gives the harpist a chance to improvise with standards such as "Stella by Starlight," "Wives and Lovers," "If I Should Lose You," and "Tangerine." Book and 2 LPs or cassettes. (\$13.95)

**Volume 12, *Duke Ellington*.** Intermediate level. This includes some of the most famous jazz standards in the world—ballads to swing: such tunes as "Satin Doll,"

"Take the 'A' Train," "Sophisticated Lady," and others. Book and LP or cassette. (\$9.95)

**Volume 31, *Bossa Novas*** (Lyrics included).

It has become standard practice today for the professional musician to play at least one Latin tune in each set as added spice to the overall mix. This set includes 10 tunes by Antonio Carlos Jobim and others, including "Girl from Ipanema," "One Note Samba," and "Wave." Book and LP or cassette. (\$9.95)

**Volume 39, *Swing, Swing, Swing*.**

Includes eight standard tunes—particularly good for harpists to experience the feel of a rhythm section playing swing. Includes "Oh, Lady Be Good," "Bye Bye Blackbird," and others. Book and LP or cassette. (\$10.95)

All textbooks, record sets, and other materials mentioned in this article are available through Jamey Aebbersold, P.O. Box 1244C, New Albany, Indiana 47150; phone: 1-800-456-1388. Most of these sources emphasize a practical approach with exercises and pieces for practice and experimentation. Each harpist is urged to pursue his study at his present level. Going back to these books in future years will yield more information and new tools as the harpist develops further as a jazz performer.



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# on the lighter side

## Casper Reardon: A Retrospective Portrait

by Elizabeth Reardon Deveau, with Remembrances  
by Reinhardt Elster and Margaret Slaff

The demand for a second reprinting of a biography of Casper Reardon offers ample testimony to the esteem in which this great and pioneering artist of the harp is held now, nearly 50 years after his tragically premature death. The late Elizabeth Reardon Deveau was Casper's sister, and she contributed her affectionate portrait of him originally to *Harp News* (spring 1952). That article was used again in an early issue of the *American Harp Journal* (winter 1974) with a few deletions from the original text which have been here restored. I am deeply grateful to Lucile Lawrence for envisioning the form this article would take, to Dewey Owens who located members of the Deveau family, to Reinhardt Elster and Margaret Slaff for their first-person remembrances, and last, but certainly not least, to Thomas C. Deveau for supplying the photographs and family memorabilia, copies of which will be assembled by me for the AHS Repository. Mr. Deveau is Casper Reardon's nephew and son of the author, Elizabeth Deveau; he resides with his wife Rita in Byron, CA.

In the years since the article was first published, we have grown more reluctant to use the word "jazz" to cover all popular styles; I have taken the liberty of altering a few terms to convey more clearly to modern readers the author's intention. Casper Reardon was born on 15 April 1907.

—Ed.

Casper, or "Brud" or "Cap" as he was called in the family circle, could dance and sing practically as soon as he could walk and talk. My father and uncle were partners in a small theatrical enterprise comprising two silent movie houses and one legitimate theatre which booked the leading vaudeville and minstrel acts of the day, and, occasionally, a Broadway show. It was a sort of family affair, with my mother playing piano for the movies, my father taking tickets, my grandfather and uncle running the hand-wound movie projectors of those days, and my aunt selling tickets. On Friday nights, Casper and I attended the first show of the movies and ate popcorn!

Dad's pleasing Irish tenor voice, Mother's fine piano playing, my violin, and Brud's versatility were in great demand in local circles for amateur entertainment. When Casper was about six he decided he wanted a certain piece he had heard somewhere used for a dance we were doing in our current act. No one knew the name of it, much to Brud's disgust and impatience, although he hummed the melody over and over again for the family. Finally, in desperation, my father called on a musician who identified the selection as the *Coppelia* waltz; but, the surprising thing was that Cap was humming the melody in the original key and insisted that it be played in that register. Needless to say, we danced to the *Coppelia* waltz and everybody was happy.

My mother decided Casper should take piano lessons, but he had different ideas. He loved music but refused to play anything but a harp. Where he ever got the idea we



Casper Reardon

never knew, as no one in town played anything nearer to the harp than a zither, and I doubt if he had ever seen one outside of a picture. I do remember that we had a violin and harp record of the Houser "Cradle Song" which was one of Brud's early favorites when he was about four or five. In later life he played the piano very well and my mother often reminded him of his early aversion to the instrument.

When Brud was about eight my uncle presented him with a small Irish harp. Since there were no harpists in the vicinity, much of Casper's early knowledge and technique on the harp were self-acquired. He had a few lessons at extended intervals from a young lady who used to go to Syracuse for a lesson once a month, and then came home and taught Brud what she had just learned herself. He spent a great deal of time working out things himself on the instrument, and all this at a time when he was too small to reach the Irish harp except with the legs folded up! He was very annoyed with my violin playing in those early days, and if we were to play anything together it was always his interpretations that won out.

During the month of December 1919 my father took Casper to New York City to see the harps of the genial Mr. Hunt of Lyon & Healy. A style 15 was purchased which Brud triumphantly brought home to be the pride of Schenectady, where we had moved.





A professional portrait

It was Miss Adele Fortin, a fine pianist in the music school located next door to our home, who convinced my parents that Casper should go to a competent teacher. On one of her trips to New York for her own lesson, she took Casper along and he played for Mr. Salzedo some of the original things he had done and some Debussy he had learned by himself. Salzedo was just the person Casper had been waiting for all these years. From that time on Casper went to New York once a month for a lesson. He was 15 at the time and he seemed to know the goal he wanted to attain and could not wait to get out of high school to start earnestly his career. Through diligent study and tutoring he completed the four-year course in three and a half years.

After graduating from high school he won a scholarship in harp with Mr. Salzedo and another one in composition at the Curtis Institute. While at Curtis he acquired orchestra experience under Stokowski and Rodzinski. After graduation from Curtis, at the age of twenty, he played one summer season with the New York Philharmonic at Lewisohn Stadium, and then went to the First Harp Chair of the Cincinnati Symphony under the direction of Fritz Reiner. He remained in Cincinnati five years, playing under Reiner and Goossens, and at the same time heading the Harp Department of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

While he was in Cincinnati he became interested in Negro spirituals and authentic Negro "blues." Since there was no precedent for the performance of this type of music on the harp, he worked out appropriate techniques of his own for these and other non-classical styles. However, he was still the little boy with stubborn likes and dislikes, and refused to play real jazz on his instrument which he did not consider suitable or appropriate

## COUNTRY'S PREMIER HARPIST.

**Distinction Accorded Casper Reardon, a Native of This City.**

Old Little Falls friends were glad off the opportunity to greet Casper Reardon last week. He and his sister motored up from New York to visit his uncle, Casper Shults. In connection with his visit the following article regarding Casper, published in The New Yorker, is interesting:

### Hot Harpist.

The only swing harpist in the world is Casper Reardon of Little Falls, N. Y., a slender, bespectacled young man of 20. A swing harpist, is, of course, a man who plays swing music on the harp. Mr. Reardon is riding on the crest of the current swing-music craze, playing nightly with this and that dance orchestra, and making frequent vaudeville appearances. Last year he grossed \$8,000 and expects to hit \$11,000 this year. He'll probably pay more income tax than any other harpist in the world, if that's any comfort to him. He comes of a theatrical family, and played upstate towns in a vaudeville skit with his father and sister when he was a child. His father, a vintage Irishman, owned an Irish harp (smaller than a true harp,) and Casper learned on this. In 1922 he came to New York to study with Carlos Salzedo, one of the greatest classical harpists in the world. Then he went to the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where his progress was so rapid that in 1927, when he was only 20, he was engaged to play with the Philharmonic during its summer season at the stadium. That winter he went with the Cincinnati Symphony as first harp, and remained there for five years, acting at the same time as head of the harp department of the Cincinnati conservatory.

It was in Cincinnati, on a winter's afternoon in 1929, that Casper first twanged a frivolous harp string. He and a number of his harp students were sitting around after a lesson, and suddenly, for no particular reason Casper struck up "The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise." It went fine, and Casper began buying popular

records and accompanying them on the harp. It was Ethel Waters' record of "Shake That Thing!" that converted him to swing. It's still his favorite number. Before he knew it, he was playing jazz over a local radio station, under the catchy pseudonym of "The Arpeggio-Glissando." "I still looked down my nose at jazz," he told us, "but I liked it even more than I would admit to myself, and finally got so I could play very dirty."

In 1932 he returned to New York, as an out-and-out, unabashed hot harpist, and in no time at all was playing with Whiteman and Gerahwin on various Woodbury soap and Kraft cheese hours. Then along came the swing mania, and he was all set. He hasn't completely given up his classical work, and now and again plays slowly and solemnly for a wedding or funeral in one of the big churches. His classical repertoire includes two hundred pieces, ranging from Bach to Stravinski, and his swing repertoire is nearly as large. His favorite swing numbers are "Loveless Love," "Honeysuckle Rose," "Washboard Blues," "Junk Man Rag," "St. Louis Blues," and, of course, "Shake That Thing!" He prefers to play in a fairly slow tempo, and wouldn't dream of attacking such a breathless piece as "Tiger Rag." There are quite a few technical difficulties involved in swing harp music. For one thing, the harp has little sustaining power, and the notes fade quickly—much more quickly than piano notes; you have to work fast to cover this up. Pedalling is another tricky point. Harps have seven pedals, each pedal with three positions. Casper feels that it's his pedalling which makes him as good as he is. He pedals in special shoes, made for him by Abercrombie & Fitch. The worst trial of all is keeping the harp tuned. The strings are very sensitive to changes in temperature. He went thro hell recently when he was playing five shows a day at the Paramount theater. The blast from the air-cooling system raised the pitch of his strings, and then, when the time came for him to play a solo, they put a spotlight on him, and the heat lowered the pitch again. (That's what he says, anyway.) "I was so busy tuning," he said, "that I could hardly concentrate on going to town."

*Reardon's visit to family and friends in early October 1936 was proudly noted in the home town newspaper. Of great interest is the quotation of an article from The New Yorker, which consistently designates his chosen style as "swing."*

for the harp. I have heard him refuse many a lucrative radio guest appearance because the sponsor wished him to play an arrangement of some "jive" number that he did not think would be effective. His popular style was a purist form, and even when he made appearances by himself without orchestral accompaniment, his arrangements held the elusive, rhythmical swing that is unequalled. Dana Suesse wrote the Suite *Young Man with a Harp* especially for him, and it was performed for the first time by the Philadelphia Orchestra with Casper as soloist in 1939.

He was a regular member of the George Gershwin Radio Program and wrote a special harp cadenza for the opening of the program. He also made frequent guest appearances with Benny Goodman, Paul Whiteman, Alec Templeton, and others. For several seasons he was the featured performer at the swank Ruban Bleu where he frequently played Ravel, Salzedo, and Debussy for the night club patrons. He was featured on the Magic Key Program with Dr. Frank Black, and also played many staff radio shows, including the Eddie Cantor Show, the Fred Allen Show, the Sealtest Show with James Melton,





*Casper Reardon's sister Elizabeth, a talented violinist and author of this article*

and many others. He wrote and played a special harp sequence in the Rodgers show *I Married An Angel* during its New York run.

Casper had marked attributes other than his musical talent: notably, moral courage and confidence in his own opinions, and he continually surprised his friends with new ideas. He called on Mr. Hunt, after he had resigned from the Cincinnati Symphony and Cincinnati Conservatory, and said he did not care for the "humdrum" routine of the symphony and cared less for teaching. He knew his friends would think him crazy when they learned that he was going to devote several years to developing the harp in the popular idiom. He claimed that jazz, swing, or whatever one wished to call it, was here to stay and that it was "thoroughly American."

He died on 8 March 1941, at the age of not quite thirty-four, after a short illness. Besides music he had a number of hobbies. He was an avid stamp collector, loved to ski and swim, and did higher mathematical problems for fun! He was a great reader, delving into Plato and Aristotle and was quite a student of languages. At the time of his death, he was learning to speak Serbian, and had collected quite a bit of the history and folklore of that country. He left many excellent pupils who are still devoted to him, and wondrous true tales of his proficiency on the harp—it is said that when he played "St. Louis Blues" he would sit at the harp playing his part and then tear madly to the piano and fill in the parts Paul Whiteman and the Orchestra would play. His speed of pedaling was incredible. His hips, from the back view while using pedals, literally moved in rhythm with the music. He wore special shoes to facilitate movement of pedals.

His harp repertoire, with editing and arranging in his own hand, is on file in the Music Branch of the New York Public Library, for it was at the suggestion of Lucile Law-

rence, and through her help, that I was able to accomplish this. It is called the "Casper Reardon Memorial Harp Collection" and was given to the Library in my name and in Cap's memory.

My father died in 1927, just before Casper received his contract with the Cincinnati Symphony. My mother died in August 1940, just a few months before Casper, so she lived to see him attain the fame and acclaim for which she had always known he was destined. Casper lived with my mother, whom he fondly called "Bessie," and their home in Cincinnati was a gathering place for

## Untimely End of a Brilliant Music Career

**CASPER REARDON, MASTER  
HARPIST, PASSES AT 33.**

**This City Shocked at News of His Demise, Following Emergency Operation in New York City Hospital—Born Here in 1907, His Musical Education Began Early in Life, and He Attained Preeminence in His Field—Formerly With Cincinnati Symphony and Paul Whiteman's Orchestras—Introduced "Swing" Music on the Harp, But Preferred the Classical—Played Before President Roosevelt at the White House, and Made a Movie in Hollywood—Funeral Services in Metropolis Tomorrow and Body Will Be Brought Here to Await Burial in the Spring.**

"The silent organ loudest chants  
"The master's requiem".  
—Emerson.

The harp that gave utterance to sweet music under the master touch of Casper Reardon, native of this city, stands mute today. Casper Reardon is dead.

The soul of the talented young harpist, who was only 33 years old and whose musical skill won him recognition as one of the outstanding artists in the country, took flight Saturday night at Polyclinic hospital in New York city, after a brief illness, following an emergency operation. The first general knowledge in this city of his passing from life came Sunday morning, when prayers for the repose of his soul were offered at the masses at St. Mary's church. News of the untimely ending of so brilliant a career came as a profound shock to relatives and friends in this city, where Casper started on the road that led him to the pinnacle of fame and success in his chosen profession.

It might well be said that love of music was born in Casper Reardon, for his parents, the late John and Elizabeth Shults Reardon, were musically inclined and talented as entertainers. The family resided for some years on West Monroe street, and it was there that Casper was born in 1907. He was educated in the local schools and in Schenectady, to which city the family moved from here. His musical education was continued at Curtis Institute of Music at Philadelphia, to which he won a scholarship.

Choosing one of the oldest and best beloved of all musical instruments, the harp, as his specialty, his mastery of it became so complete that he was welcomed into membership in the Cincinnati Symphony orchestra as first harpist playing with this celebrated orchestra for several seasons and becoming a teacher of the harp at the conservatory of music in that city. Later he joined Paul Whiteman and his orchestra in Cleveland. As it was at this time that "swing" music was coming into popularity, Casper studied "swing" and became the first to utilize it on the harp. His success as a "swing harpist" greatly increased his popular fame, but he personally preferred the classical music and ultimately returned to it as his first love. He often decried the extremists to which the "swing" enthusiasts went with their favorite new type of music.

At the height of his success as a "swing" harpist, he made a number of radio appearances, participated in Broadway shows and made a movie in Hollywood.

Casper had the distinction of playing on a number of notable occasions and before distinguished audiences; but the high light of his career came when he played by invitation before President and Mrs. Roosevelt at the White House. He also played for a time with Leopold Stokowski's Philadelphia symphony orchestra.

About three months ago Casper, who had been residing at 39 West Ninth street, New York, began rehearsals for a musical show at Boston entitled, "Crazy With the Heat", but illness forced him to return to New York city. His condition was not not regarded as serious, however, at the time.

Surviving are a sister, Mrs. Thomas Deveau, who resides at the Hotel Empire, New York city, of which her husband is assistant manager; also an aunt, Mrs. John Mea, and his uncles, Casper Shults and City Clerk Dennis B. Reardon, all of this city. Mr. Shults was called to New York yesterday morning and was accompanied there by his daughter, Mrs. Bernard Ryan.

The remains are reposing in the Regency room of the Abbey, 132 East 70th street. Funeral service will be held from the Blessed Sacrament church, 172 West 71st street, tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock. The body will be brought to this city and placed in St. Mary's vault for interment in the spring in the Reardon-Shults lot in St. Mary's cemetery, town of Herkimer, beside the remains of his parents. Casper's last visit to this city was when he brought the body of his mother here eight months ago for funeral and burial.

City Clerk Reardon plans to leave for the metropolis this afternoon to attend the funeral, and will accompany the remains back to this city.

*The obituary notice summarized Reardon's career and carried the names of his nearest relatives. The church of the Blessed Sacrament on 71st Street in New York City was attended by Marcel Grandjany during his residence in this country, and was the site of the funeral services for both of these legendary harpists.*



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*Casper Reardon*  
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*An autographed announcement from Lyon & Healy*

numerous guests, for Cap loved to entertain and Bessie was a wonderful hostess. When Casper was engaged to do a spot in a movie in Hollywood in 1937 called *You're a Sweetheart*, starring Alice Faye and Ken Murray, Casper bought a new car and he and mother drove out, so she too could enjoy the trip.

Casper was a "master" of modulation and was preparing to write a textbook on the subject. It is all too tragic that he did not live to fulfill and achieve all of which he was capable. He was a courteous, thoughtful person, planning surprises for his friends, generous almost to a fault, most gracious in assisting young players in mastering the angles of swing music, and always helping someone not as fortunate as himself. All in all, he was a pretty special guy, as an artist, a friend, and a brother.

### *A Remembrance by Reinhardt Elster*

More than a half a century has passed since I had the honor and pleasure of meeting Casper Reardon. He visited Philadelphia when I was a student of Salzedo at the

Curtis Institute. I saw him again for the second and last time in a New York radio studio rehearsing for a broadcast with Paul Whiteman.

I was awed and overwhelmed by his success, and, of course, his great talent and originality. My memory of reality is vague since so many years have passed, but my feelings are still clear and strong. Casper played with style, grace, and elegance in the swing genre of the era. His arrangements were unequaled in their delightful inventiveness and ingenuity. With Casper the harp "swung" for the first time in recorded history. He created a way for the harp to participate in the jazz idiom with taste and without losing its uniqueness.

The harp's potential as a jazz instrument is not as great as that of most other instruments, but it has a special magic. Casper understood this. His sister explained that he "refused to play real jazz . . . which he did not consider suitable or appropriate to the harp," or to play "some 'jive' number that he did not think would be effective." That is most admirable. However, in today's "pop culture" it may be a standard too difficult to maintain for young harpists trying to establish a career. But that is another story.

There is no way to evaluate how much we have lost because of Casper's early death. I imagine the great reservoir of talent that might have enriched us. If he had lived, he might have created a bridge—an evolution of a harp jazz style—and we might have been at a more advanced and interesting place today.

[Mr. Elster was for 38 years principal harpist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. —Ed.]

### *A Remembrance by Margaret Slaff*

I met Casper Reardon the summer of 1928, when he was harpist with the Cincinnati Zoo Opera Company: the musicians in this orchestra were members of the Cincinnati Symphony.

Shortly after graduation from high school, I had arrived in Cincinnati to join the Cincinnati Ballet, which was a constituent of the Cincinnati Zoo Opera Company. By 1928, I was in my third summer with the Opera—most of our artists were from the Chicago Opera. Fausto Cleve, who became one of the great Metropolitan Opera conductors, was the chorus director; he was then very young and new to this country.

At our first full rehearsal with the Opera, the girls in the ballet could not wait to tell me that I was to go with them and introduce myself to Casper Reardon. I had heard of him, since I was a member of the National Association of Harpists—I had attended a few Conferences with my teacher, Marrett Savern, who was a Salzedo pupil. However, I was not about to do this. I was out of practice and my harp was back in Louisville, Kentucky, my home town.

What a harpist we now had in the pit! It was 62 years ago, but I remember such wonderful harp playing and to my great delight, I could hear every note. All the singers were so excited about him; the musicians were so pleased with this young man with such great talent; even the stage crew could not believe what they were hearing.

After rehearsals Vladimir Bakaleinikov, who was asso-

ciate conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony under Fritz Reiner, introduced me to Casper Reardon. (Mr. Bakaleinikov was also our Opera Ballet Conductor for special ballets which we performed on Saturday nights.)

Mr. Reardon invited me to come with him to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music where he was teaching—he wanted to hear me play. I remember I was scared *pink*! He was so kind to me when I told him I had not touched the harp for two weeks—he had me warm up in the studio before he heard me play, and was very patient with me and a fine teacher. During the summer I had more lessons with him. All of these were impromptu, since we both were so busy. He even asked me to come back in the fall to study the harp seriously. I told him I wanted to dance and that I would go on to Chicago, yet we became good friends during that summer. I remember him as being so young, and that he did not play cards to pass time as some of the musicians did.

He would join our ballet group (girls and boys) at the Zoo ballroom and do the Charleston with the rest of us; he loved to sit and listen to the band play. We were so full of energy that we could finish our part in the opera and return to the ballroom to dance some more! Thus passed the summer of 1928.

I will always remember Casper Reardon as a great harpist, a good friend, and a fine person.



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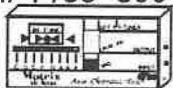
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# on the lighter side

## The Synthesizer and Its Impact on the Recording Industry

by Carrol McLaughlin

For harpists, who play an instrument which has been in existence since earliest times, the accelerating popularity of an instrument only invented in this century, the synthesizer, must seem extraordinary.

The word "synthesizer" is taken from "synthetic" and means simply that the sounds are not generated acoustically, but are electronically produced. The first synthesizer actually dates back to between 1902 and 1906, when an American, Thaddeus Cahill (1867–1934), invented the 200-ton "Telharmonium."

Before 1920 Lev Thérémín invented a highly popular instrument, named, appropriately, the "Theremin," which consisted of one looped piece of metal and one vertical metal rod, each "plugged in" electronically. With this highly unusual instrument, the performer never touched the instrument at all, but instead controlled pitch and volume or amplitude by the proximity of the player's hand to the metal rod or loop. All notes were connected by glissando, and the eerie sound produced was often used in horror films, such as *Spellbound* by Alfred Hitchcock.

Two synthesizers were invented in 1928–30: the "Ondes Martenot" in France and the "Trautonium" in Germany. Both instruments used the concept of the "sine wave." A sine wave has no overtones or harmonic content. Most notes played on an acoustic instrument do have overtones, and those overtones are responsible for making a clarinet, for example, sound different from a flute. On the Ondes Martenot, in order to make a sound like an acoustical instrument, similar overtones were added to the sine wave. By adding different combinations of overtones, complex timbres and unusual sounds could be made by the synthesizer. The Trautonium used a similar concept, but instead began with a complex sound and filtered out unwanted overtones until it matched the overtone structure of the instrument it was imitating.

Other inventions contributed to the development of the modern synthesizer. In 1934 Laurens Hammond, in Evanston, Illinois, patented the "Hammond Organ." As late as 1964, Robert Moog created the "Moog Synthesizer," one of the first synthesizers that was



Gayle Levant tuning up before a recording session



developed to be used in live performance, not just for recording purposes. The Moog synthesizer became extremely popular and was often used by rock groups, such as the Beatles and Emerson, Lake & Palmer. One of the most famous adaptations of the Moog Synthesizer was "Switched-on Bach."

Within the last ten years, the accessibility of the "Digital Sampler" has greatly enhanced the capabilities of synthesized music. A Sampler is almost like a tape recorder. Any acoustic sound can be played into a Sampler, which then will transpose that sound to every note, giving a whole keyboard that will produce a harp, or an orchestra—whatever sound was recorded in. There will, however, always be the absence of the human factor, the many nuances that a harpist, for example, would put into a performance of a given group of notes.

The word "MIDI," often used in the world of synthesized music, is actually an acronym, standing for Musical Instrument Digital Interface. A MIDI allows several pieces of equipment to work together, almost providing a common language. A "MIDI Interface" for an instrument such as a guitar is a small piece of equipment that attaches to the guitar at the bottom of the set of strings. It uses infrared light beams to detect what pitch and velocity have been played acoustically, and then can convert this into MIDI, which, after going through a MIDI Converter, can be plugged into a sound module (synthesizer), and will then sound like anything you wish—drums, an orchestra, etc.

Within the past five to six years, MIDI Controllers have appeared on the market, especially for woodwind instruments. These are electronic instruments which have the same fingering as a normal saxophone, for example, but which are connected to synthesizers. Ex-

perimentation with electronic harps has been going on for several years.

Because of the capability of one player to produce the sounds of many different instruments, synthesizers have had a large impact on the recording industry. On a limited budget, a record company or film studio might choose to use synthesized music instead of paying for studio recording time and the wages of a group of live musicians.

In Los Angeles, harpist Gayle Levant has seen many changes brought about by the addition of the synthesizer to the recording industry, both as a studio harpist and as co-owner of a well-respected Los Angeles recording studio, Evergreen Studios. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s there was a large amount of work for live harpists in records, commercials and television, much of that work is now done by synthesizers, especially for commercials and self-contained rock groups. To make the situation more complex, many synthesizer players have now established recording studios in their own homes, and can turn out a professional product without using traditional recording studios.

The larger motion picture recording studios have, to a large degree, struck a compromise between the fields of electronic and acoustical soundtracks. Los Angeles harpists Ann Stockton and Dorothy Remsen, as well as Gayle Levant and others, have found that 1990 was one of their busiest seasons for motion picture recording. In many instances, there will be a string section or full orchestra on the date, used in conjunction with several banks of synthesizers. Often the synthesizers will be used for special timbres or effects, or to enhance the sound of the acoustical instruments. Many composers are writing outstanding harp parts, and Gayle Levant has been actively introducing nylon- and metal-strung Celtic



*A setup at Evergreen Recording Studios*



# on the lighter side

## The History of the Harp in a Jazz Ensemble

by Sarah K. Voynow

We are pleased to welcome Sarah Kaieolani Voynow as guest writer for this issue. She brings with her most impressive credentials in the classical, popular, and academic areas of music, and last year completed the Doctor of Musical Arts Degree at The Juilliard School. The topic of this article formed one of the chapters of her doctoral document. (Dr. Voynow has asked me to point out that most of her research was conducted from American sources, since it was in this country that jazz originated.)

A versatile performer, our author recently won First Prize at the 1991 International Pop and Jazz Harp Competition at the University of Arizona. She has been featured soloist on the McGraw-Hill *Young Artist Showcase* on WQXR radio in New York City, toured and recorded with The Woody Herman Band with clarinetist Richard Stoltzman (1988 Grammy Award nomination), performed and recorded with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in Wagnerian repertoire, and has won two Ruth Lorraine Close Awards—and these are a few achievements among many.

As a composer, Dr. Voynow's music has been featured at the Universities of Indiana and Washington, and at the American Harp Society's National Conferences in 1986 and 1988. In addition to a busy schedule as a freelance musician, she is currently involved in writing, arranging, and performing with her rock-and-roll band in the San Francisco area. —Ed.

The word "band" is thought to have originated from the medieval Latin *bandum* which means banner, company or crowd. In jazz, "band" is a term used in connection with an ensemble of musicians exceeding two in number. More frequently, "band" is used when describing the larger ensembles, such as the popular big bands of Woody Herman, Glen Miller, and Duke Ellington, to name a few. The smaller jazz ensemble, any size up to nine or ten players, is best described as a "combo." The groups can be divided into two categories: "... smaller groups play music that is largely improvised, and larger groups, in which a substantial amount of music performed is previously arranged, either worked out in rehearsal, and memorized, or actually played from written scores."<sup>1</sup>

In general, the determining factor that distinguishes one type of improvising ensemble from another is the number of melody instruments in the group: "... it is widely believed that not more than three or four such instruments can successfully improvise together, and that groups containing a larger number of them must play arranged parts."<sup>2</sup>

In a jazz band, there is a basic division between soloing and accompanying instrumentalists. In a large ensemble, the melody instruments are chiefly comprised of wind or brass players, such as the clarinet or trumpet. The accompanying instruments, known as the "rhythm section," are mainly comprised of drums, piano, bass, and sections of the wind or brass category.

In a combo composed of just the rhythm section, such

as a jazz trio, each instrument would be responsible for "setting up the tune" while alternating solos and accompaniment. For instance, in a trio comprised of bass, piano, and drums, drums set up the tempo and "beat" while the bass provides harmonic structure. The piano serves as the solo or "lead" player, assuming the melody and adding more complex chords to fill in the harmonies.

In the early 1900s, the term "jazz" was used in connection with dance music, disseminated by honky-tonk, marching, society, and organized touring minstrel bands located primarily in the South—particularly in New Orleans. Performing for dances, advertising wagons, as well as for other social functions, the organized touring band became the prototype for the earliest jazz bands. Although instrumentation varied with each group, and distinctions between black blues bands varied from white military-influenced styles, the earliest jazz bands usually consisted of cornet, trombone, clarinet, piano, banjo, tuba, and drums.

Bands led by King Oliver and, later, Louis Armstrong played popular standards of the day such as "High Society Rag" and "Basin Street Blues." These popular tunes were performed by playing and repeating the melody with varied instrumental combinations. Although variations of the melody occurred through repetition, little else was done harmonically to alter significantly the composition.

The model for big band orchestration developed shortly after 1916 when a composer named Ferde Grofé was working in a San Francisco band led by the drummer Art Hickman. It was Hickman who first encouraged Grofé to begin writing arrangements, departing from the standard repetitious popular song format by allowing one or more instruments to play a solo at various points in the song, thereby harmonizing the accompanying instrumental parts in different combinations. Using these soloing "sections," the instruments would play off other sections of the band in a broadly contrapuntal fashion.

Later developments of this new sound continued in 1919 with The Paul Whiteman Orchestra. Arranged by Grofé and Bill Challis, musical elements inspired by blues, Southern folk tunes, dixieland swing, and classical music eventually led to Whiteman's term, "symphonic jazz."<sup>3</sup> With this tightly controlled, well-rehearsed assemblage of musicians, an inevitable need for varied orchestration and repertoire emerged, since considerable attention was paid to instrumentation and arrangements. Don Redman further expanded the idea of sectional counterpoint by introducing call and response alternation of wind and brass choirs in The Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. In contrast to the earlier jazz, this



new structure of the band became the popular new art form. Younger bandleaders such as Duke Ellington together with his arranger, Billy Strayhorne, continued to experiment with a "hotter" sound, producing arrangements that were orchestral in texture, yet solo-oriented in performance.

Written rehearsed arrangements that included free improvisatory choruses for soloists began to dictate the big band style. As the band continued to increase in size and musical sophistication, the need for musicians who could read music and for more varied combinations of instruments also increased. During the popularity of the big band swing era (approximately 1920–1940), there was fierce competition among orchestras looking for an identifiable style. The search for "exotic" sounds, or varied, innovative orchestration became the rage. "As more bands appeared on the scene and as radio and recordings began giving each of them more exposure, the importance of the arrangers continued to increase. For as competition became keener, so did the public's ears, and attractive and distinctive sounds—musical styles, became a more and more crucial factor in the potential success of each band."<sup>4</sup>

Inspired by the music of Ravel and Stravinsky, arrangers such as Boyd Raeburn included instruments from the symphony orchestra to define further his band's style. Drawn from the inspiration of the orchestral sound, the harp emerged as a secondary instrument in the commercially successful society bands of the time. Although not a jazz instrument, the primary function of the harp was to fill in orchestral textures which mainly included a flurry of rapid glissandos and arpeggios. A pleasing addition to sweeten the big band brass sound, the lyrical quality and varied sonorities of the harp provided the ensemble with elegance and helped to establish the jazz orchestra as high society entertainment.

Searching for employment opportunities, harpists who had been classically trained in conservatories and universities began working in the swing bands as full-time "jazz" musicians. Harpists such as Ruth Hill played and recorded with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, Loretta McFarland with the Ted Lewis Band, and Loretta Thompson with an ensemble arranged for and led by Boyd Raeburn.

Although the symphonic jazz era gave birth to a steady stream of arrangers, most of the arranged material was written for the "ordinary" band instruments. Ignorance about proper notation for the harp left many harpists to either read the chord chart and "comp" with piano, guitar or any other member of the rhythm section, or completely improvise introductions, fills, and endings to a non-existing part. The arranger for Harry Soznik's band never wrote a harp part for Adele Girard. Working out the chords and adding special effects by "filling in" was always improvised. As Adele remembers:

They didn't have anybody that knew how to write for harp . . . ; he [Harry Soznik] would just say, "play some arpeggios here . . . ; because I had perfect pitch, my ear would just pick it up. Later on, while playing with other jazz ensembles, I still used my ear, even though arrangements were provided.



*Adele Girard in 1957*

They wrote harp music that looked like Greek . . . I was much better working out my own material. The only time I ever used a [chord] chart was in the studios, and I still hated playing those silly arrangements!<sup>5</sup>

All of this was especially true in the beginning of live broadcasts for early television and radio. Because of certain budget restraints, some of the smaller stations did not always have the money to support the personnel of a standard band combination and used whatever instruments were available. This sometimes made for odd combinations of instruments, and harpists were often forced to read chord charts, edit, and compose their own arrangements from stock arrangements—chord charts that included parts for winds, guitar and piano to plug the popular song of the week.

As staff harpist with the WTIC broadcast orchestra located in Hartford, Connecticut, in December of 1938, Robert Maxwell recalls:

The WTIC Orchestra consisted of twelve strings, organ and harp. We played everything from soaps to light classics to pop tunes. The staff arranger, who actually was little more than a copyist, would use printed band arrangements from which he would transpose the sax and clarinet parts for the string players, give the piano-conductor part to the organist, and give me the guitar part containing nothing but chord symbols.

It was sink or swim! I had to learn how to "fake" and learn fast . . . .<sup>6</sup>





*Adele Girard playing through a break of The Murray Korda Orchestra*

By copying the harmonic styles of pianists, Robert Maxwell began establishing not only his individual arrangements, but had arrangers utilizing his gift of chromatic harmony for the harp by using enharmonic flatted fifths and ninths against major seventh and ninth chords. With a thorough knowledge of harmony, Maxwell became known as a harpist who could instantly transpose from one key to another. In a recent conversation, Robert Maxwell explained:

I don't know who learned from whom. Actually, I picked up most of my harmonic language from listening to musicians I was working with—like the great jazz violinist Joe Venuti, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington. An arranger by the name of Andre Kastonalis wrote for harp quite frequently, and I'd often go over the parts carefully with him."

In addition to participating as supportive players in society bands as well as in radio and television "orchestras," harpists also played with smaller ensembles that included the harp as a featured instrument. These groups not only played during radio commercial segments, but also served as intermission entertainment in auditorium lobbies between stage and screen shows.

Primarily known as a classical musician, Laura Newell (1900–1981) along with four other colleagues from the NBC radio orchestra formed a popular group called "The New Friends of Music" in 1939. The swinging septet, which included two violins, viola, cello, bass, and guitar, played written arrangements by the group's cellist, Alan Shulman, such as "Backboard Blues" and



*Casper Reardon*



*Laura Newell performing with The New Friends of Music, a "swing-ing" septet founded in 1939*

an upbeat quick-step version of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Betty Glamann later similarly followed by introducing real swing tunes such as George Shearing's "Lullaby of Birdland" with her ensemble called the "The Smith-Glamann Quintet" in 1955.

Eventually the exposure to swing inspired a few harpists to develop their own styles and pursue careers as full-time jazz soloists. One such harpist was Casper Reardon, who assimilated the language of dixieland swing and blues while "gigging" with Jack Teagarden, Freddie Traumbauer, and Charlie Teagarden in the Paul Whiteman Orchestra from 1934 through 1938.

Combining elements of swing and ragtime, Casper established his style, displaying a greater use of rhythm by playing ahead of or behind the beat, which was set





*Dorothy Ashby*

up by left-hand walking tenths and “oompa” stride (alteration of bass note and chord) accompaniment. Supported by a chordal choir of winds, brass and strings, this technique, together with a composed single-line right hand melody, earned Reardon the reputation as a “pioneer in swing harp.”<sup>8</sup>

During the Depression the nightclub industry began to revise its format of larger ensembles. With tighter budgets and smaller rooms no longer able to accommodate the larger swing dance bands, owners and managers were compelled to hire smaller jazz combinations, such as duos, trios, solo pianists, quartets, and similar groups. While swing remained the popular idiom of the time, the jazz combo section emerged in a new type of jazz in which the clientele was expected to sit and listen to the music as in a concert setting. Further developments, emanating from the musical style of bebop in the early forties, enhanced the popularity of the combo as the standard jazz ensemble. The instrumentation of this smaller group featured one or two wind or brass soloists backed up by an accompanying rhythm section, which included bass, drums, occasional rhythm guitar, and piano. By scaling down the larger section of a jazz ensemble, the skeletal instrumentation representing a “section” offered greater variety and texture to the music.

In performance, the lead instrumentalist would take the notated 16- or 32-bar melody, called the “head,” while bass and drums accompanied. After playing the “tune,” the solo player began to improvise on a given harmonic framework called “changes.” Usually, the lead player improvises upon the changes (called “blow-

ing”) at least once. More often, the player improvises much more, following the 16- or 32-measure harmonic pattern established at the beginning. After the lead player improvises, one or both of the accompanying instrumentalists also get a chance to improvise upon the changes while the lead player “comps” chords, usually in the syncopated rhythm against the existing beat. These arrangements became popular with the smaller combo because they allowed the improvising soloists to express themselves more freely in the use of harmony and rhythm than in the written arrangements previously performed by the larger ensembles.

Formally covered by layers of orchestral textures, the scaled-down instrumentation of the small combo provided opportunity for soloists of the “quieter” instruments, such as flutes, clarinets, guitars, and harps, finally to be heard. While harpists continued their roles as supportive rhythm section or rehearsed featured soloist in a combo, the gradual transition from secondary musician to a freely improvising jazz soloist began in the early fifties.

The mid-1950s recordings of harpist Corky Hale demonstrate the chamber-music approach involving the harp as lead and supporting instrument. Together with flute, vibraphone and guitar, the harp alternates verse and chorus solos and assists in comping with a bass-and-drum rhythm section. Liberated from the structured walking bass lines, Hale’s comping style—articulated block chords irregularly played off of the rhythm section—integrates pianistic voicings and harpistic arpeggiated chords.

Accompanied by an instrumental choir to support the harmonies, the harpist’s solos are simply and clearly ar-



*Corky Hale*



Deborah Henson-Conant in action with her Jazz Harp Trio in 1985



ticulated with brief 4- or 8-measure antecedent/consequent, single or octave phrases occasionally punctuated by intermediary chords.

These smaller groups not only offered harpists the chance to solo in combination with other players, but also provided the opportunity to feature the harpist as leading musician, supported by an accompanying rhythm section. For the first time, the jazz harpist was responsible for stating the principal theme or riff, while alternating solo verses and choruses with bass and drums. Inspired by blues and the "cool" jazz introduced by Miles Davis, Gil Evans, and others, Dorothy Ashby formulated a style inspired by blues, bebop, and swing as lead instrumentalist in her trio of harp, bass and drums in 1953. Continuing the technique of using pedal slides to create "bluenotes" and rhythmically liberal comping, Ashby became known for her spacious, extended single-line or octave improvisational melodies.

Even in a combo accompanied by bass and drums, the principal problem of performing in a jazz ensemble was that the harp could not be heard above the other instruments. Attempts at capturing the complete range of the instrument were explored in the fifties by electric pickups placed directly onto the soundboard with adhesive backing. The pickups translate sound waves into electrical signals which are then electronically magnified through a required preamplifier. This again translates the amplified signal back into a sound wave by means of a speaker.

While playing in her trio, Dorothy Ashby attempted to enhance her sound by using early amplification techniques. Husband John Ashby recalls placing two "gigantic" adhesive microphones on the sound board, and another inside the hollow body. To stifle the noisy movement of the pedal mechanism, he carpeted the inner body and Dorothy wore pieces of carpet glued to the soles of her shoes. With this particular amplification system, the instrument could be heard above the louder instruments. By the early sixties, this type of electronic assistance became quite popular for most pop and jazz performing harpists.

More recently, with accelerated advancements of amplification techniques for acoustic instruments, a growing number of harpists are exploring possibilities in the field of electro-acoustic music. The art of New Age harpist Andreas Vollenweider, fusion artist Susan Mazer, and jazz-influenced Deborah Henson-Conant, among others, continues the experimentation with transducer pickups and rack-mounted modules to enhance and alter the sound of the acoustic harp.

Further advancements to alter the sound of the instrument occurred in the mid-1980s with the development of electronic harps. With the exception of the work of a few harpists, such as rock-performance artist Zeena Parkins, or jazz harpist Lori Andrews, the exploration of the enormous potential of the instrument's capabilities has yet to be fully realized. However, with the increasing number of harpists who are performing jazz and rock music in nightclubs, pop/jazz music at competitions and festivals, and in recording studios, the demand for a clean, amplified sound that can cut through banks of synthesizers, a full drum set, and electric bass guitars is creating an electronic renaissance for the harp. Perhaps the continual integration of musical style and technology will further enhance the success and advancement of the harp into the 21st century.

#### Notes

1. "Bands," *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (London: McMillan Press, 1988), p. 57.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 60.
4. George T. Simon, *The Big Bands* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1967), p. 10.
5. Adele Girard, Personal Interview, 30 September 1989.
6. J. Reig, "Robert Maxwell—A Profile" (*The American Harp Journal*, winter 1986): 5.
7. Robert Maxwell, Personal Interview, February 1991.
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# on the lighter side

## Penny Howk Beavers

by Carol McLaughlin

Penny Beavers' career as a freelance harpist is fascinatingly diverse and leaves little time for boredom. For example, she recorded the music from *The Star Wars Trilogy* under the direction of John Williams at George Lucas's new multi-million dollar facility near San Francisco, "Skywalker Ranch." She has also performed on live shows with such stars as Johnny Mathis, Melissa Manchester, and Connie Stevens, and was the harpist for the 1990 recording of the Linda Ronstadt album *Cry Like a Rainstorm*. One of the many other aspects of her career includes playing three services each Sunday at the Northwest Church in her home town, Fresno, California.

Born in Joliet, Illinois, Penny was introduced to the harp by her mother, who played the instrument, and who started teaching her talented child when Penny reached the age of four, the first instrument being a Clark Irish harp. From the time she was eight years old, Penny recalls playing in recitals at the Lyon & Healy factory in Chicago. She also studied with Sister M. Charles until she went to college.

In 1965 Penny received the Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Michigan, where she was a pupil of Ruth Dean Clark. While in her senior year at the university, Penny began to teach harp at Flint College and was able to gain experience in local recording studios as harpist for commercials and Christian recordings. During the summers of 1959 and 1960, Penny studied with Charles Kleinstuber at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan. In 1960 she was featured as a concerto soloist at Interlochen, performing David Bennett's *La Rougette* for harp and band. It was at Interlochen that Penny met her first husband, a bass player who later went on to perform with the respected jazz artist Maynard Ferguson.

In 1972 Penny, now remarried, moved to Fresno, and was asked to be the harpist with the Fresno Philharmonic. Penny did not have her own harp at that time, and in order to perform with the Philharmonic, she borrowed a harp from California State University, Fresno, and later became a member of that institution's faculty.

In 1978, Penny attended the first Salvi Pop and Jazz Harp Festival, held in Santa Barbara, California. Though she had not had any previous instruction in the popular field, the festival inspired Penny to branch out into performing pop music on the harp. At the end of the festival, she returned to Fresno determined to get a "gig," and within an hour had negotiated an agreement with a Fresno restaurant owner to provide harp music for Sunday brunches in his elegant restaurant.

Penny recently performed in a given year 134 weddings, 25 grand openings of stores or fashion shows, 7



Penny Howk Beavers

fund raisers, 56 business parties and 30 to 40 private parties! In addition to that hectic schedule, she has 16 to 20 private students and maintains her 11-year position as harpist at the well-established Fresno restaurant "The Greenhouse."

Penny takes the responsibilities of being a freelance harpist very seriously, and has an admirable approach to the business aspects of professional music. When first contacted with regard to, for example, a wedding, she quotes a fee which includes a consultation with the bride at Penny's home. There is a required \$75.00 deposit to "book" the date, with the remaining monies due at the wedding consultation, usually one month before the wedding. A letter of confirmation is sent to the bride, which serves as a contract and which Penny keeps on file.

Penny also uses a form (please see illustration) which she fills out during the bridal consultation, to keep track of all the music the bride has selected, and any special musical requests. As Penny says, "The consultation really

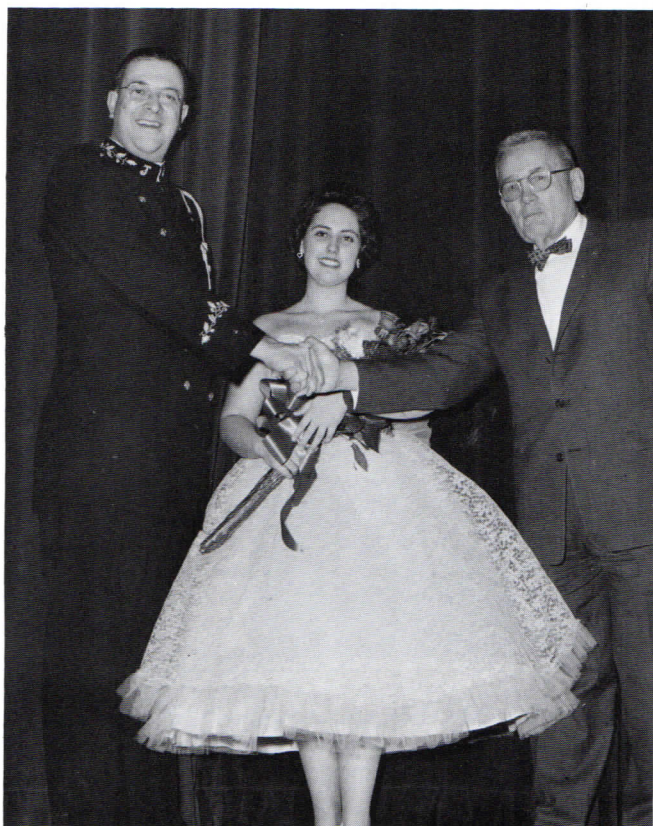




*Penny playing her mother's harp at age 6*



*At Interlochen, age 16*



*With conductor Bruce Houseknecht and composer David Bennett following a performance of La Rouquette with the Joliet Concert Band in 1960*

| WEDDING CONSULTATION<br>WORK SHEET  |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Bride/Groom:                        |        |
| Mailing Address:                    |        |
| Telephone: (home)                   | (work) |
| Date of Wedding:                    |        |
| Location:                           |        |
| Minister:                           |        |
| Soloist:                            | -----  |
| PROCESSIONAL:                       |        |
| Candlelighters:                     |        |
| Special Seating:                    |        |
| Attendants:                         |        |
| Bride:                              |        |
| After Prayer:                       |        |
| Communion:                          |        |
| Unity Candle:                       |        |
| RECESSIONAL:                        | -----  |
| NOTES:                              |        |
|                                     |        |
| Date Booked:                        |        |
| Deposit Received (date and amount): |        |
| Balance Received:                   |        |

*A sample of Penny's business forms*



doesn't take more time than a phone conversation, and I can make the bride feel that her musical selections are really special." After the consultation, Penny saves this form in a three-ring notebook, filed by the month. The day of the wedding, she simply takes out the form (or 2 or 3 forms, according to how many weddings she is doing that day!), and she is as professionally prepared as anyone could hope to be.

In 1984, Penny's close friend and mentor Jack Nebergall extended to Penny an invitation to perform at the prestigious Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Francisco. Penny played in the hotel for one year, performing both with the Regency Strings and as a soloist. That same year, Penny recorded the first of four solo harp albums: *Penny*. Later recordings include *Memories For Dad* (1987), *Christmas with Penny* (1989), and *Christmas Again with Penny* (1989).

In addition to what this writer estimates at the over 750 times per year that Penny moves her harp to various performances, she finds time to be a member of the Board of Directors of the American Harp Society, a position she has held for the past six years. She is also the founder of the AHS Central California Chapter, formed in 1976. Penny was featured as the banquet soloist at the 1988 American Harp Society Conference in Denver, and along with John Escosa, was the featured artist at the Northwestern Regional Mini-Conference held in Eugene, Oregon.

From the first Pop and Jazz Festival which inspired Penny to say, "I can do that!," she has come full circle. She

was a faculty member and judge at the 1985 Pop and Jazz Festival in Santa Barbara, and now has 10 of her own arrangements in print by F C Publishing. When asked how she feels about the hectic schedule and her many commitments, Penny's typical answer is, "I just love it! It gives me a high to make people happy—to make the occasion more special because of my music."

[Readers might be interested in the article by Penny Beavers which appeared in this Journal in vol. 11/4 (winter 1988) titled "Self-Marketing in Popular Functional and Entertainment Music." —Ed.]



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# on the lighter side

## Dale Barco, the Harp Doctor

by Carol McLaughlin

For more than thirty years Dale Barco has been known and appreciated by harpists all over the world as "The Harp Doctor."

Strangely enough, Dale's profession before becoming a part of the harp world was with Naval Ordnance, assembling torpedoes. He had served previously in the United States Navy, working in Mine Warfare on mine-laying destroyers, and in Germany working with booby traps and demolitions. The steady hands and perfectionistic standards of such exacting work have served Dale well with his later work on harps. He was once asked in an interview, "What happens when you make a mistake assembling torpedoes?" His answer was, "It was worse when I worked with Demolition!"

Dale left the torpedo job, "with all his fingers intact" in 1954, and began working for the Comptometer Corporation in Chicago. It was also highly exacting work, since this was a research and development company. With them Dale helped to develop the first quartz crystal oscillator, an oscillator which was sent up into space on the first satellite.

When the Comptometer Company's contract with the U.S. Government expired in 1961, Dale found himself looking for a job. He vividly recalls being in Chicago, and travelling home on the elevated train, the "Lake Street El." Outside the window he saw the Lyon & Healy Factory, and remembered he had seen an advertisement in the paper stating that they were looking for help.

Dale walked in and talked with Mr. Kopseaker, the manager at that time of the company then owned by the Durham Brothers, two Illinois lawyers. Henning Christiansen, later to be President of Lyon & Healy, was working in the factory as a violin repairman.



Dale Barco

Mr. Kopseaker said to Dale in the interview that the machinist job which was advertised was gone, but would Dale like to fix harps? Dale's reply was "What's harps?"

Dale had six months of orientation and training in the Chicago factory, and was then sent to open a Lyon & Healy repair shop in Los Angeles. Learning all the intricacies of harp repair and maintenance in such a short time was a very tall order. During those six months, Dale recalls, "Every time anyone *moved* around a harp, I wrote it down in a notebook. Every time they picked up a



The studio-workshop in Woodland Hills, CA





*The "Hand of Man," carved by Dale Barco in cherry wood. The piece stands 12 inches high.*

screwdriver, gilded, or repaired anything, I added it to my notes."

Dale had always been fascinated with art. As an expression of his artistic nature, he has completed a number of outstanding wood sculptures, including a maple carving with mother-of-pearl inlay of a person's—or alien's—head, and the "Hand of Man" (please see illustration), which is carved in cherry wood. For Dale, the harp brought the mechanical and artistic sides of his personality together, and he was taken by the beauty of the instrument. As he says, he got "hooked on harps."

For the next 14 years, Dale worked for Lyon & Healy at their West Coast office on Melrose and Highland in Los Angeles. Beginning in 1968, Dale's co-worker in the office was Clifford Wooldridge, whom Dale remembers as "the only true gentleman I ever knew."

In 1975, Victor Salvi invited Dale to work for him, and



*Dale's dog "Echo," who helps out in the workshop*



*Dale Barco at work in Salt Lake City, 1988*

to open the American operation of the Salvi Company. That job included a large amount of travel from a base in Los Angeles. With Mr. Salvi, Dale travelled to Italy and France to see how the harps were made. At that time, the Salvi harp mechanisms were made in Switzerland, and the wooden parts of the harp in Italy. Later trips which Dale took representing the Salvi Company included visits to Japan, Holland, and a return trip to Europe. Dale greatly respected the research and development of the harp that Victor Salvi initiated. He can remember opening up boxes



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in the Los Angeles office of re-designed mechanisms which had been developed by Swiss researchers that Victor Salvi had employed. There was also a physicist at the University of Genoa in Italy who was engaged to study the acoustic properties of harp sounding boards.

Dale Barco now has his own independent harp repair studio in Woodland Hills, in the Los Angeles area. A large part of his work includes travel throughout the U.S. as well as to Australia, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico and Canada. Dale still remains closely associated with the Lyon & Healy and Salvi Companies.

Dale Barco has had some fascinating experiences working with harps, and has seen it all. . .from termites in the column to a loose marble rolling around in the crown of a harp. He has done some highly specialized work, particularly colorizing, or using a pigmented lacquer to color the wood. The first harp he made in this way was for Gail Laughton, who wanted a Style 13 Lyon & Healy harp in a thallo green color. For his very good friend Jack Nebergall, Dale customized a Lyon & Healy Style 3 harp in cobalt blue and also restored a Louis XV gold harp and a very old Lyon & Healy instrument which was encrusted with mother-of-pearl. For these jobs Dale used all the tricks he had stored up since his days taking notes in the



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Lyon & Healy factory, since the board and the neck had to be replaced on the Louis XV, as did much of the mother-of-pearl inlay on the other instrument.

There is virtually no part of repairing or restoring a harp that Dale is not familiar with, from re-riveting, or re-building the mechanisms, to re-finishing and restoring older instruments. Much of his work is done in his fascinating studio/workshop, situated behind the Woodland Hills home that he shares with his wife, Paula, whom he met while in Germany. Dale's work space is completely surrounded by old harps, intriguing harp paraphernalia and antique tools that he has collected for years.

Dale has given numerous lectures and workshops at Universities and Conferences, and has helped many a harpist out backstage before a competition or recital. He feels that from the time he got off that Lake Street Train in Chicago, the harp world has been good to him. He has been places and met people that he would never have been able to do but for the harp. Thinking about his beginnings with torpedoes and demolition work, Dale feels his life has gone "from the ridiculous to the sublime!"

## on the cover

### *Ann Thompson* by James Peale

I wish to thank many individuals who assisted the Journal in securing the rights to our cover illustration: first, Elise Peale P. Gelpi and her friend Geraldine Ruegg for bringing the portrait to my attention; second, Henry Gerlach of Upper Darby, PA, owner of the painting, which is part of the "Henry and Pearl Gerlach Collection;" and last, the Robert D. Schwarz Galleries of Philadelphia for the excellent photograph and informative notes which appear below. (As you may have guessed, Ms. Gelpi is descended from the famous Peale family.) —Ed.

About 1810 when James Peale phased out his career as a painter of miniatures, he turned the commissions over to his daughter, Anna Claypoole. During the succeeding years he concentrated on full size portraits many of which were shown in the years 1811-1826 at the annual exhibitions of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Our painting of Ann Thompson was listed as Number 38, "Portrait of a Lady playing on a Harp, 1819" in the 1819 exhibition. Four sketches for the harp are found in James Peale's only surviving sketchbook in the collection of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. The decidedly neo-classical painting is a successful rendition of a rather sophisticated composition employing both the figure and the harp. It is interesting to compare this portrait with Thomas Sully's *Elizabeth Eichelberger Ridgely*, dated 1818 (National Gallery of Art, Washington). Both works depict women with harps, but the Peale work is an intimate portrait, delicate, and sensitive, while Sully's enormous canvas is a showpiece of both woman and harp. James was not and would not become a painter with such grand confidence. As in the still-life work that would soon occupy his talents, he is interested in the specifics of the subject from her curled hair to her red dress and especially with the details of the harp which he worked out in his sketchbook.



# on the lighter side

## The World of Gayle Levant

by Carrol McLaughlin

In the thirty years that Gayle Levant has worked in the music field, she has established herself as one of the premier harpists in the Los Angeles recording industry.

Gayle, a native of Los Angeles, was born into a musical family. Her father, the late Mark Levant, a highly respected concertmaster, worked for many of the major studios from 1935 until his untimely death in 1950. Her mother, although not a professional, played the flute and violin.

Gayle's musical abilities became apparent at the age of three when her mother observed Gayle's reaction to a wrong note that her father had played while practicing at home. It was decided at this point that Gayle should have music lessons. She began her studies at the piano and, in a very short time, it was discovered that she had "perfect pitch"—a gift which has served her well in the profession.

At age eleven, Gayle moved on to study jazz piano and improvising, and also began to study the harp. Gayle felt that the transition from piano to harp was a very natural one, and used both instruments extensively in performances at school. At fifteen, Gayle attended Fairfax High School which had a very active music and drama depart-

ment. She immediately became the piano accompanist for the school's choir, a job she continued for two years after she graduated. Gayle has always enjoyed sight-reading: "I love the challenge of having something put in front of me and not knowing what it's going to be."

Following high school, she received a scholarship to attend the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music. Her first harp teacher for many years had been Hazel Bruster. She then studied with Raiya Kibbee who, she says, "worked her fingers to the bone." At the Conservatory, MaryJane Barton was her teacher. She and MaryJane, along with Grace Follet, and Mary Margaret Tobias formed a harp quartet and traveled throughout California giving recitals.

This was a busy time in Gayle's life. While at the Conservatory, she also played with the orchestras at U. C. L. A. and U. S. C. each week, as well as still helping out as accompanist for her high school choir. She also had a job as a piano accompanist to an opera coach. As Gayle says, "both harp and piano were very much a part of my daily life."

In January of 1962, Gayle started working on a steady basis playing harp six nights per week in a Hollywood restaurant called "Lucy's." In this setting Gayle performed in a trio consisting of piano, accordion and harp, along with four opera singers. They worked together for five months.



*The ensemble composed of Gayle Levant, MaryJane Barton, Grace Follet, and Mary Margaret Tobias*





*Gayle at age 21, performing with Murray Korda and the Monseigneur Strings*

In the summer of that year, Gayle received a call from the musical director for Liberace offering her a three-week engagement at Harrah's Hotel in Lake Tahoe. The show required the harp to be featured in duets with Liberace. For the next year, Gayle remained at Harrah's playing harp for many famous artists who appeared at the hotel including Nat King Cole, whom Gayle remembers as a lovely man, Judy Garland, the Mills Bros., Jerry Lewis, and a host of other stars of that period.

In 1963 when Gayle returned home from Lake Tahoe, she was invited to perform nightly with Murray Korda and the Monseigneur Strings at a new restaurant that was being opened at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills. This group consisted of piano, bass, drums, cello, harp and twenty strolling violins. In addition to playing with the group, Gayle was required to play solo for one hour each night. She remained with the group for three years.

In 1965, the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas opened a new restaurant called the "Dome of the Sea." A feature of this restaurant was a lagoon in the center of the room upon which a harp was positioned on a small boat that slowly moved around the lagoon. The boat was just large enough to hold Gayle and the harp, but not a music stand. Therefore her improvising skills and a catalogue of many tunes in her head served her well. Gayle helped to get the room started for the first month, having taken a leave of absence from her current job at the Hilton.

In 1966, Gayle began a busy schedule of working in the record industry. It was a very active time for session musicians, and it was not unusual to work three, or perhaps four sessions a day, five, and sometimes six days a week. Often because of Gayle's busy schedule, she would go into the studio late in the evening to overdub her harp on a pre-recorded track. More often than not,

there would be no written harp part or chord sheet provided, since the producer and or the arranger would rely on Gayle's ability to improvise and therefore bring an added dimension to the existing track. Many of these late-night sessions were in Hollywood, so for protection, Gayle would always have her Great Dane with her. The "two of them" became a well-known team in the studios. The dog had wonderful studio etiquette and would lie quietly on her harp cover at her side while she played.

In 1971, Gayle began a long and happy relationship with The Carpenters, playing harp on their first and all subsequent albums. The list of famous recording artists that Gayle has worked with is formidable. Some of these include Frank Sinatra, Stevie Wonder, James Taylor, Paul McCartney, Lionel Richie, Burt Bacharach, John Denver, Barry Manilow, Dionne Warwick, Barbra Streisand, Ray Charles, and on and on—the list is extensive.

In 1977, N. A. R. A. S., the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, awarded Gayle the "Most Valuable Player" award, the first time it had ever been awarded to a harpist. This prestigious award was again given to Gayle in 1980, 1981, and a fourth time in 1982 when she was awarded "Most Valuable Player *Emeritus*," since there was a three-time limit on receiving the award. She remembers fondly receiving a nice note from Catherine Gotthoffer thanking her for "putting *us* on the map!"

Throughout the 70s, along with the record work, Gayle was active in television and film-scoring sessions. In the late 70s, recording work for live studio musicians started to decline with the advent of synthesizers. Gayle therefore found herself working more extensively in television and film. At this time, she acquired a metal-strung celtic harp and began to introduce composers to an alternate sound. This was well received and led to the





Gayle on the boat at "Dome of the Sea," Las Vegas, 1965

purchase of a nylon-strung celtic harp and a Paraguayan harp. She has used these harps extensively in television and film work. Composer Danny Elfman was looking for a special harp effect in a dance dream sequence for the film *Edward Scissorhands*. This required Gayle to record a basic track on pedal harp, followed by several overdubs with the celtic harps. The final result was very effective. Some of the recent films for which Gayle has played include *Dances with Wolves*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Prince of Tides*, *Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and *Batman Returns*.

Gayle Levant is not only familiar with the performing side of the recording industry, but has also been a co-owner of one of the most well-known recording studios in Los Angeles. In 1978, she along with Artie Butler and Charlie Fox, formed a partnership to build a recording studio. It was in October of 1979 that Evergreen Recording Studios officially opened its doors. This studio had the latest technology for television and film score recording. With a staff of twenty people, Gayle was kept very busy for the next thirteen years overseeing the business of running a highly successful studio, as well as her own career as a harpist.

Today, Gayle continues to enjoy playing her harp, and is becoming involved in producing her own albums as well as those of other artists. She shares her life with her



On break in a studio session

English husband, John Richards, a well-respected music recording engineer.

Just as busy as ever, Gayle says, "I love what I do so very much," and values the privilege of working with the incredible talent of her fellow musicians.

We asked Gayle to give us some insight into the daily life and operation of activities in her world as a sort of coda to this article. She responded:

The life of a "studio musician" is usually a very hectic one. As the musicians finish one date and quickly move on to another one, they never see any of the music ahead of time, and, therefore, never quite know just what they are going to have put in front of them. They must be able to read practically anything right "on the spot!" The same musicians are often used to play on certain weekly shows, and if a composer knows his recording schedule of upcoming sessions, he is very likely to ask his "key" players to hold the times and dates of those sessions until the "call" comes out.

Some of the studios in Los Angeles have their own "contractor," or person who hires musicians to play on the sessions. Often the "call" for the musicians is handled through one of three main telephone answering services. The composer gives a list of the requested musicians to the "contractor," and the "contractor" then contacts the answering service to put out the call to each of the players. Occasionally the harpist will be called by the composer directly and be asked to bring a harp solo, or a piece which is "public domain," or a piece on which the copyright has expired that can be used for "source music." This music might be used in a scene where a harpist has been filmed playing in the background, and it will then appear as if he or she is actually playing what has been newly recorded on the session. Sometimes just the sound of a harp playing in the background is all that is required. Usually the harpist will record the solo at the end of the session after all the other musicians have packed up their instruments and dashed off to the next recording date. A hectic life indeed!



# on the lighter side

## Hints for the Wedding Harpist

by Sydney Payne Wilson

Sydney Payne Wilson was the founder of the Fort Worth Chapter of the American Harp Society. She has degrees from the University of North Texas and the New England Conservatory of Music. She has been supporting herself by teaching and playing professionally for 25 years in the Fort Worth/Dallas area, and for 14 years played first harp with the Fort Worth Symphony and Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra. She now prefers free-lancing but accepts an occasional orchestra engagement. Sydney teaches college students and in the prep department at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. In 1989 she started a Suzuki Harp program at TCU. She is a busy wedding harpist and has been playing High Tea at the Worthington Hotel for four years. Sydney is a widow with three grown children. [After this issue went to press, Sydney Payne Wilson remarried and is now Mrs. Daniel H. Howell.

—Ed.]

Most of us who play pedal harp are classically trained. We may have a tremendous technique, we may have won competitions, we may even have a good orchestra or teaching position. But harpists, I'm here to tell you: there is money in weddings! Here I offer suggestions to help you get started in this lucrative business.

Weddings are wonderful if well planned and disasters if they are not. This is because a wedding is a production, a traditional pageant really, which comes in a variety of forms and can involve many details. Not many brides or their mothers have experience in managing so formal an event, so you, the harpist, must be prepared to steer the participants into a production that will be dramatic and memorable, and particularly so because of the beautiful harp music! This requires careful planning on your part, especially in asking the bride the appropriate questions. In other words, you, the harpist, are the professional. These guidelines will help you to perform as one.

### *First Contact with Customer*

Always answer the telephone courteously. First contacts are very important. Be confident, businesslike, yet friendly, and have prices well considered, including minimum and overtime charges. Let the customer know what the price includes, such as cartage, if you charge extra for that. (I recommend one overall charge. It's simpler.)

### *Pricing*

If you are in a new area, seek out other harpists and ask them what the going rates are. Does the rate include cartage (moving the harp)? Find out what others charge for out-of-town jobs. Your rates should be comparable. Let them know you are available to sub for them. Be friendly! You don't want to alienate the harpists in an area by making them feel threatened or by undercutting their prices. After you have established your minimum and what it includes, have a system for extra charges



Sydney Payne Wilson

such as out-of-town jobs as well as your overtime rate. Don't quote a price until you know exactly what the job includes. Then when you have priced it, be firm. Don't back down. You will get many requests for charity jobs. What you do about these is your business, but you should have a general policy in mind. My own policy is that I don't play free for anyone except my own church or weddings for close friends. For my students I give a discount, but not free services. If you are just getting started, a good way to get experience is to offer your services to nursing homes, retirement homes, hospitals and schools, all of which are always looking for entertainment.

If the customer is aghast at the high cost of harpists, you can politely inform him or her that this is the going rate for harpists in your area. Don't let your customers put you on the defensive. Keep your professionalism. If they can't afford you, say "Thank you for calling," and hang up.



### Getting the Details

After you have agreed on the price, then go over the details of the engagement very carefully. *You* must ask the questions, for the customer may not think of them. In many cases the employer has never hired a musician or organized a wedding before. Even if you are dealing with a wedding consultant you still must ask all of the questions, every time. Here's a sample list:

1. When is it? (The time the wedding is scheduled to start and when you are to start playing.) Ask this question first to be sure you have the date available.
2. Where is it? Get the exact address and directions if necessary.
3. What is the dress? Formal, semiformal, etc.
4. What colors are being used? (If you can't match the bridesmaids' dresses, wear a neutral color. Avoid black or white unless you clear it with your employer.)
5. What is the best entrance to use? The closest may not be the easiest access for you. Ask about a ramp.
6. Will there be someone to help unload and load after the job? It's a good idea to mention this in your contract (more on contracts later).
7. What kind of music is preferred? Be sure to check on rules for music in the church. Many churches allow only religious or classical music, and the bride may not know it! The most familiar processional is the "Bridal Chorus" from the opera *Lohengrin* by Wagner. The most familiar recessional is the "Wedding March" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Mendelssohn. Of course there are many others which you can recommend.
8. How many bridesmaids/attendants will there be? If there are more than two suggest processional music for the attendants that is different from what you use for the bride.
9. What is your cue to start the processional? Usually it's the seating of the bride's mother, but you should ask. (She should be seated in the first row on the left side facing the altar.)
10. What are the cues for special music within the wedding?
11. What is the cue for the recessional? You need to ask the clergyman this question.
12. How long to play the recessional? Sometimes it is informal and you stop when the wedding party is out. Other times several rows of family are ushered out during the recessional.
13. Do you need amplification? If you don't have an amp there may be one at the church or where you are playing, but you should check it out. Consider buying one. Until then you can borrow or rent.
14. Do you need to bring a light? (You might want to keep one in your car, plus an extension cord.)
15. Where will the harp be situated? Remember, if you are playing the marches you have to see the bride! If this isn't practical, get someone to signal you when the bride is ready. The sound will be better on a hard surface. If the ceremony/reception is outside, be sure you have a platform of some sort to keep the harp off the grass. (See paragraph on outside weddings.)

*Sydney Payne Wilson*  
2820 WEST FULLER • FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76133-1513

March 17, 1992

Mrs. Judi Dewett  
501 Daniels  
Crowley, TX 76036

Dear Judi,

This letter will confirm our agreement for me to play harp music for your daughter Alicia's wedding and reception to be held at First Baptist Church, Crowley, on July 10, 1992 at 7:30 P.M.

As you requested I shall begin the prelude at 7:00 P.M. I shall arrive at the church around 6:30 and would appreciate some help getting my harp unloaded. Please tell me which entrance would be best to use. It's much easier if there is a ramp or very few steps.

Please let me know if Alicia requests any special music for the prelude or reception. Usually I play classical music for the wedding and love songs and show music for the reception. If either of you can come to High Tea at the Worthington to hear me, you could get an idea of what kind of music I play. I play on Mondays and Thursdays and every other Friday. I am playing every day March 16-20.

The fee for this service is \$200.00 for two hours or less. If the reception goes beyond 9:00 P.M. I will ask you if you want me to continue. The additional rate would be \$50.00 per half hour. Please send a deposit of \$100.00 now to hold the date.

I look forward to meeting you and Alicia soon!

Sincerely,

*Sydney Payne Wilson*  
Sydney Payne Wilson

*A sample contract letter*

16. Who will be responsible for giving you your check? Suggest to the bride that someone else such as the maid of honor or best man handle this. (Some musicians request prepayment.)

17. Are you playing the reception? Where is it? Ask the bride to appoint someone to help you load quickly to get to the reception.

18. What about overtime? If the reception is still in progress at the end of your contracted time, ask the bride or someone in charge if he or she wants you to play overtime (for an additional fee).

I recommend you keep a copy of these questions by your phone so that you don't have to call back to get more information.

### Outside Weddings

Personally, I don't like to play outside because of the risk to the harp, because the weather is rarely perfect, the wind blows my music, the sun is in my eyes, and it's very difficult to judge acoustics. Because of these difficulties, I charge a substantial extra fee for playing outside. If you do accept outside engagements be sure you are prepared. You must request that the harp be on a hard



smooth surface, not grass, and preferably not carpet. Ask to be in the shade if possible. A platform four feet by four feet is adequate. Take a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses if it is in the daytime. If at night be sure you have plenty of light. Also have a handful of clothespins to keep your music from blowing away.

### *Contracts*

After you have all the details worked out, tell the customer that you will be sending a contract or letter confirming the engagement. Include all the details you know about in the correspondence. Ask for a deposit immediately. Tell the customer that this will secure the date. The balance will be due at or before the wedding. The deposit is not refundable unless there is an extreme emergency. Sometimes you have to make a judgment call, but generally, you keep the deposit, period.

### *Agents*

If an agent calls you about playing a wedding, reception, or both you need to tell him your minimum fees. The agent generally takes from 10-20% of the fee, so you need to decide if that comes off the top or is added to your fee. Even if an agent is contracting with the customer, you still need to ask all the above questions. The agent may not think of them, and you are still responsible for getting all the details. The agent will have a contract with the customer and probably with you. If not, you may want to send your contract letter to the agent. A personal contact with the customer shortly before the engagement is still a good idea, to check details and discuss repertoire. (See sample contract letter.)

### *Auditions*

If the customer wants to hear you play, invite him or her to hear you publicly if possible. Otherwise invite him or her to your home or send a demo tape with a sampling of your repertoire.

### *Repertoire*

Be able to play the traditional marches: the Wagner processional and the Mendelssohn recessional. Also have alternatives, such as the Purcell "Trumpet Tune" and the "Trumpet Voluntary" by Clarke. For smaller weddings I like to suggest a Renaissance processional. As long as it has a good two or four meter, it will work. Learn the "Lord's Prayer" by Malotte as a solo and as an accompaniment, "Ave Maria" by Schubert (as well as the Bach/Gounod version), and other familiar classics and hymns. It's a good idea to have "The Lord's Prayer" in several keys. When you accompany, if the soloist doesn't provide the music, always check the preferred key. Of course for the reception, most will also want pops. I recommend keeping an updated repertoire list available for customers and agents. Be sure to include music of several decades to appeal to the different generations of friends and relatives at the wedding. I recommend that you tune in to an "easy listening" radio station regularly so you are up on the latest love songs and show tunes. Fortunately

we have some very clever harpists who have made excellent arrangements for us of lots of standards and popular songs. However, you must learn to make your own arrangements. Do take advantage of whatever workshops you can to learn how to do this. Work with a private teacher if possible. There are several helpful books available: consult the catalogs of dealers in harp music.

### *Rehearsals*

You do not have to attend the wedding rehearsal unless you want to. Be sure to ask if you will be needed to accompany a soloist. If so, the singer or instrumentalist should send you a copy of the music he or she is performing to be sure you have the same arrangement. You should also charge for a required separate rehearsal, unless it is just before the wedding. I warn you that the "singer" may be "Aunt Mary" or "Uncle Fred" who doesn't read music, so be on your toes!

### *Keeping Records*

This may be the most important part of your job, although not the most fun! A computer makes it easy, but a notebook works fine too. Put your engagements on the calendar. I haven't mentioned this before but as you become busier you will live and die by your calendar. Get a good week-at-a-glance calendar and keep it current. Your engagement notebook should include the date, the customer's name and address, telephone numbers and all the details of your engagements. Be sure to record the date the deposit is paid. Don't forget tolls, mileage, and expenses such as parking and tips. These are all tax deductible, but only if you keep records.

### *Professionalism*

This is very important! Be business-like, courteous and ethical. That is, be true to your word. When you contract to play an engagement, you should never, never renege on your agreement, whether it is written or verbal. Nothing will ruin your reputation and your career faster than a lack of dependability. If you agree to do a job and a better one comes along, stay with the first one. If you accidentally double-book yourself (which happens to the best of us on occasion), take it upon yourself to find a harpist to play for the job you booked last. Then contact the person with whom you booked the second job and explain the situation. Do this right away. If you become ill, play anyway or find a sub. If your car breaks down, rent one, or in an emergency borrow one.

### *Promotional Material*

At the very least, have good-looking business cards printed, and never go anywhere without them! A more elaborate brochure with your picture and background included is a nice handout, but not necessary at first. Audio cassette tapes are a good idea, and a video is great if it is of good quality.

### *Playing the Wedding*

The day before, check your notes to make sure you



have the right music, dress, directions to the job, etc. Decide when you need to leave, allowing 30-45 minutes between your planned arrival and the time you start playing. You have to allow for emergencies, and if it is very hot or cold the harp needs time to adjust to the room temperature before you tune. Take three times as much music as you think you'll need. You never know when a wedding will be delayed, and you must keep playing the prelude until the signal to begin the processional. It is not at all unusual for a wedding to be delayed 30 minutes or more.

As soon as you are set up, find the people you need to see, if any (the clergyman, wedding consultant, etc.), for last-minute instructions.

Play out strongly and with confidence, even during the prelude. The harp is not a loud instrument, and you want the guests to hear you and ask you to play for *their* weddings.

Finally, *enjoy yourself!*



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photo: Susan Wilson



# on the lighter side

## Achieving Success in Restaurant Performance

by Michelle Gwynne

Michelle Gwynne, of the Northern Kentucky city of Fort Mitchell, began her musical studies at the piano, switching to harp at age eight as a pupil of Emily Oppenheimer. Following a family move to Ohio, she studied throughout high school with Alice Chalifoux in Cleveland, commuting by plane to her lessons. As a teenager, Michelle played with local pit and show orchestras, was a member of the Dayton (Ohio) Philharmonic and many local community orchestras, and performed on a freelance basis. She continued studying with Ms. Chalifoux at the Cleveland Institute of Music during college. While in Cleveland, Michelle worked in several restaurants both as a soloist and as a member of a duo. After graduation she toured for several months before enrolling in a master's degree program at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Soon after completing her studies there she began performing at the Riverview Revolving Restaurant in Covington, Kentucky, where she has been playing six nights a week for over a decade. During this time she recorded two solo albums (and is currently completing a third), and is the first-call session harpist in the greater Cincinnati area. Michelle is on the faculty at Northern Kentucky University and also teaches privately.

Musicians need to be versatile; for those planning a career in entertaining rather than in orchestras with secondary jobs in the entertainment arena, the following suggestions may be of interest. Entertainers are specialists; they must build a rapport with an audience and remain an *asset, not an expense*, to the establishment where they perform! Entertainers must not only find and maintain a unique voice in music, but share that voice with an audience.

For the purposes of this article let's define Artist and Entertainer. An Artist does something specific, and the audience comes to hear what he has prepared (for instance a set program, recital, or a particular genre of music, i.e., show tunes). The Entertainer is a "jack-of-all-trades" on a particular instrument. An entertainer needs to know the audience and to play what it will enjoy. A good example of an entertainer's niche is a nice restaurant with a clientele of business people, those celebrating special occasions, and local folks out on the town. An entertainer's music must be what the customer wants to hear.

Reading the audience is one of the most important "survival techniques." Look in their eyes—are they thinkers, laborers, or office workers? How old are they? In what musical era were they 20? Most people have a favorite song from today's popular music, but will get that special thrill which comes in hearing a song from "their" eras.

Keeping the restaurant example mentioned above, an entertainer must remember:

### **Etiquette**

Etiquette is important, not only with the management and staff but most important of all, with the customer. Often a customer might not be a person one would



Michelle Gwynne

choose as a friend; however, in the hospitality industry, "The Customer Is the Boss!" Part of your job as entertainer is to stay out of the way but still enhance the visit. It is therefore important to notice if the customers *wish* to be recognized individually.

For instance, when a regular customer arrives with a new escort, don't mention previous escorts unless the customer does first. This also holds true for a single parent with children.

It's never a good idea to ask personal questions. Many times people share more than they intend, so don't probe. Music will frequently evoke sentiment, so special requests will sometimes trigger stories (frequently *long* ones)! Just listen—don't try to top their stories—even if you feel the story has been slightly insulting. "When I was \_\_\_\_\_ years old, I saw a harp at \_\_\_\_\_ that was much \_\_\_\_\_er than yours," should be responded to with "How wonderful," *not* "Mine is the \_\_\_\_\_est made!"

### **Requests**

Customer's requests are an important part of the entertainer's job. All requests, no matter how ridiculous, should be taken seriously. If you have the requested tune,



play it promptly when the customer is listening for it. If you don't have the request, quickly categorize it in your mind and suggest a song along those lines. For instance, if it's an opera aria or symphonic request, offer an alternative by the same composer or another composer from the same country or time period. If it's a more contemporary request, offer instead a song in your repertoire from the same artist or musical style which would make a good substitution.

If you can't seem to get a smile from the requester, write down the song title and make it clear you will do your best to have it at a future visit. There is nothing that makes a customer happier than hearing his request on a return visit, so follow through! Do whatever it takes—find the music, or transcribe it from a recording (good ear training!); it's these little extras that build a personal rapport with the audience and make you special.

As difficult as it is to categorize music, it's much more difficult to categorize people. However some generalizations can be made. Do customers in plaid shirts and boots request Andrew Lloyd Webber or Randy Travis? [The gentleman's surname, by the way, is Lloyd Webber—no hyphen. Look for his biography in dictionaries under "L." —Ed.] Keeping mental notes on who requests what can be an invaluable aid in looking at people and then playing something they will enjoy.

As you become more comfortable in your job, you will begin to sense the audience's concentration level as you play. If, after two or three up-beat tunes you sense a lack of energy, the audience may be getting tired; play a slow tune or one with a relaxed feel. On the other hand, if you've played several slow tunes and you sense restlessness, it's time to play something livelier. The "showpieces" you learned in college can be fun to play, but beware of losing the audience with unfamiliar music. Be prepared to pull out something recognizable as soon as you feel the concentration level dropping.

What *will* a particular crowd recognize? Read the audience! If unsure, take the easy way out and ask if anyone has a "favorite." Once a tune has been chosen, decide how to best play it. While some musical styles don't leave many options, standards such as "Love Me Tender" or "Misty" give more leeway.

Make sure your arrangement is fresh and varied (remember: people have heard these songs a million times). Don't be afraid to start a tune in a rubato fashion and switch to a beat at one of the song's sectional divisions. The beat will depend, again, on the nature of the audience. If the people appear to be conservative, don't stray too far from the melody. If the crowd seems to handle it, be more adventurous.

Have a working knowledge of all applicable musical styles. "Working knowledge" is being able to play a particular style with enough confidence that you are not hunting for notes and the rhythm is solid. Listeners should be able to snap their fingers with the beat. A steady beat is essential to the performance of most styles. An unsteady beat is *instant death!* A tapping foot is the finest complement a customer can give.

Treat each musical style with respect. People like a certain style of music because it fulfills a certain emotional need. If you play their style of music poorly, you're being disrespectful—almost insulting. Play each tune as if it's the last time you'll ever play. The melody should sing and the harmonies should shine. Try to hear your playing the way your listeners do.

Much of the music you play the listener has heard as a hit on the radio or movie screen and therefore has a preconceived idea as to how the song should go. Be sure that you are able to play a given song in the fashion it was intended or that any departure is planned and confident. It's a good idea to wait six weeks after a big song has peaked in its popularity before playing it. This way the comparison between your work and the standard version of the hit is not so apparent, but the recognition factor is still in your favor.

### Arrangements

Playing high-quality arrangements can contribute greatly to being perceived as an experienced professional rather than as an amateur. However, excellent published arrangements are hard to find, and pop song lead sheets are usually incomplete and sometimes just plain wrong! Inevitably, you will have to do some of your own arranging.

Arranging can be little more than making a certain tune playable on your instrument, or it can be an entire reworking of the piece. How about a reggae version of "My Funny Valentine?"

It's important to understand the song before arranging it; therefore, a little research is in order. Rent the movie or tape from the radio—whatever it takes to find the original. Remember: these expenses are all tax-deductible!

Variety is an important asset to a good arrangement. The main arranging tools at your disposal are use of register, texture, and musical style. Most pieces have a definite climax near the end and sometimes will wind down with a short coda. Before choosing the first note decide on a style for the piece. Keep the style and form of the original as the safe method, or radically change it if you have a fresh concept. A few ideas for using a thin texture are:

- Play the melody in the midrange while accompanying with open fifths, basic triads, or glissandi up high.
- Play both melody and accompaniment up high for a music box-like effect.
- Play melody solo using harmonics or PDLT or even just as you would normally on the string.

To achieve thicker texture:

- Expand the range of the accompaniment and play the melody in octaves or full-voiced chords.
- Expand the harmony with proper chordal extensions to add more color to the chords. Don't be afraid to add appropriate 7ths and 9ths if the musical style permits.
- Use big, open inversions of chords.
- Add a stronger rhythmic pulse to propel the arrangement.



Use "surprise" events:

*subito piano* or *forte* passages  
sudden tempo changes  
extremes of register

Above all, don't be afraid of a nice juicy *Generalpause!*

Be creative and innovative in your arrangements. Don't play a trashy arrangement because it's "good enough"—audiences *do* know the difference between good and mediocre even if they can't verbalize the specifics.

### Survival Training

Even if you play in a busy restaurant, it is inevitable that there will be nights when the audience consists mainly of the staff! If they have requests, treat them seriously: if they are happy they will transfer those feelings about you to the customers in the future. Their favorites

are probably going to be requested by customers in the future anyway.

A good way to supplement your income is to sell recordings of yourself. The music that you choose to record should be both popular and varied. Don't ignore a segment of your audience. The best way to sell your recording is to play the music from it and then tell the audience it is available. A good performance will practically make the recording sell itself.

In summary, the most important aspect of the job of Entertainer is Knowing the Audience. Not only must the entertainer make a good appearance and play well, but also must ride the concentration level of the crowd. Once you know your audience, you will become an asset to the establishment, bring the customers back, sell your recording(s) and maybe even receive monetary tips! But best of all, you'll keep your job!

## reports

### The Fifth World Harp Congress in Copenhagen

by Linda Wood Rollo

The Fifth World Harp Congress took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, 18-25 July 1993. Many American Harp Society Members performed at the Congress, including Carrol McLaughlin with Bill Marx in "From Harp to Harpo" and in improvisation workshops; Marcia Dickstein in concert with the Debussy Trio; Beverly Hoehn with the Soka City (Japan) Citizens' Choir in works by Rutter, Britten and Kobayashi; and Mario Falcao, who gave the world première performance of Concerto for Harp and Orchestra by Thomas Rajna in Tivoli Concert

Hall as well as a performance of the Concerto for Harp and Orchestra by Michael Kurek on another program.

Sarah Bullen was featured in a concert of solos and concerti with the Århus Sinfonietta and also gave a workshop on orchestral repertoire.

The presentation of 20th century music (*Focus on Today*) included Ruth and Sonja Inglefield, Ann Benjamin, and Jill Kreuger Pitz. David Ice's extraordinary film-lecture, "Hooray for Harpywood," was shown twice to



Mario Falcao on stage in Tivoli Concert Hall after his world première performance of Concerto for Harp and Orchestra by Thomas Rajna



Panel: "Expanding Your Career Possibilities." Left to right: Ulli Brinksmeier, Louise Trotter, Jill Pitz, Penny Beavers, and Catherine White. Eleanor Fell, moderator, is not shown.