

Frequently asked questions

How long have you been playing Celtic harp?

Since March of 1992. I've been making a living with the harp since 2004.

Do you play other instruments?

Yes, I played piano and organ professionally for many years, before I even learned harp. I also played violin in orchestra in my younger years. I play a little African drums, harpsichord and guitar, as well.

How did you start playing harp?

I wanted to buy a 12-string guitar. When the salesman wouldn't sell me one until I learned on a 6-string, I walked across the street and bought a 29-string harp instead. (It was my angel guides giving me a push!) In retrospect, the salesman was wise. My guitar skills are still quite limited on a 6-string.

What kind of harp training do you have?

Since I was on the move a lot in the early years of playing harp, I have had limited opportunities for lessons and am pretty much self-taught. I did, however, have a great instructor when I first started. I credit my piano skills and ability to read music at a high level with my progression on the harp. I also attend master classes and sneak in an occasional lesson with visiting artists as time and opportunity permit.

What kind of harp do you have?

I have a world class 36-string Bubinga Dusty Strings lever harp.

Do you play in a symphony or orchestra?

No, because I do not play pedal harp. The techniques and literature are different.

Is playing harp difficult?

Everyone asks this, and I don't know how to answer. It depends on your motivation and background. I believe that knowing how to play piano and read music helps you progress quicker. My best advice is to approach it the way one

does yoga—with complete acceptance of one’s ability and skills at that moment, with joy and keeping an open mind to lessons — other than just harp skills — that can be gained through this practice.

And **PRACTICE** is the key, of course.

Do you have any advice for beginning harp students?

Practice. Until you’ve been playing awhile and your fingers are used to it, you recommend practicing several times a day in small blocks, maybe 15 minutes, instead of long sessions. It’s a better way to gain muscle memory. I also practice finger exercises before my long practice sessions.

Always enjoy where you are in the process and don’t compare your **WORST** efforts to a more advanced player’s **BEST**. It’s all a gift.

Have you ever done anything besides music as a career?

Yes, I have long resumes as a mother, journalist and visual artist. I have two wonderful, grown daughters, a degree in painting and printmaking and nearly 20 awards for my journalistic efforts.

What is your favorite “event” to play for?

Any day playing harp is better than doing any other kind of work, so I enjoy it all. I particularly like my work as a hospice harpist. Playing for the actively dying has a special place in my heart and soul. And by extension, any place where my music is used to soothe, reduce stress and tension, comfort and heal — even in corporate settings — is a favorite place.

Whatever the venue — wedding, luncheon, memorial service — I think of my playing as a service, rather than a performance. It is really not about me, but about the positive energy my music can contribute to the celebration or event. It’s about the client, not about me.

What are the most unusual events or places you’ve played?

I have a very long, varied list because I have been very creative and open as to what I will do with my harp. I played for three hours one holiday season in a pet

food store with lighted antlers on my head. And, I've played for the State congressional members during a session at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe.

How did you come up with the idea for an album of music to accompany therapeutic massages?

One day I had a massage, and the music playing was not synchronized with the motions of the massage, and it bothered me. So I decided to create music that would follow the natural choreography of a massage, theorizing that the patient would receive greater benefits if both the massage and the music could be fused together.

What is your favorite music to play?

Anything that sounds lush and correct on the harp. I have quite a large and eclectic repertoire. I'm particularly fond of minor keys. And, I confess to a little bit of prejudice against adapting country music for harp performance. Some of the popular music doesn't translate well, either.

How do you determine your standard rates for bookings?

My rates are formulated from the recommendations of the New Mexico Musician's Union.