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Sylvia Woods Harp Center January 2019 Newsletter

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A personal note from Sylvia

Now that the new year is here, it is time to make your resolutions. Here's my suggestion for you:

"I resolve to become a better harp player in 2019."



And what's one of the best ways to make that resolution a reality?

Answer: take harp lessons!

Have you taken lessons in the past, or are you self-taught?

Are you a total beginner, or have you been playing for a while?

Do you want to expand your musical horizons?

Is your music theory a bit hazy?

Could you use some help with a particular piece?

Do you feel you're in a rut, or have you reached a plateau in your playing?

Whatever your answers to these questions, I can pretty much guarantee that some lessons will be helpful. As the saying goes . . . "There's no time like the present." So, give yourself a new year's present and sign up for some harp lessons!

See the next article for information about our teacher list, and make 2019 the year that you take your harp playing to the next level!

Happy New Year!
Sylvia

P.S. My newsletter series about life in Kauai will return in next month's issue. Aloha.

List of harp teachers

In February 2015, I added a [teacher list](#) to my website at harpcenter.com/teachers. We now have over 500 teachers listed! Almost all of the listings are in the U.S., but we also have 14 teachers in Canada, and 26 throughout the rest of the world.

Our U.S. teachers are organized by state and zip code, and the international ones are organized by country. Check to see if there are any teachers near to you.

Support your local teacher and become a better harp player!

But, even if there are no teachers in your area . . . never fear! About 50% of our teachers also teach through Skype or FaceTime. For example, even though I live in Hawaii, I teach students throughout the U.S. and Canada, as well as in England, Hong Kong, Brazil, Australia, and other countries. So, it doesn't matter where you live . . . or where they live . . . you can still take harp lessons from your favorite teacher.



(If you are a harp teacher and would like to be included in our listing, please [click on this link and complete our questionnaire](#).)

Music teachers who changed my life



This month is the 50th anniversary of my very first harp lesson.

In January 1969, at the beginning of my second semester of college, I walked into the pedal harp room at the University of Redlands and asked Marjorie Call, the harp teacher, if I could take harp lessons. I had never touched a harp before, but luckily she said "YES!" Little did I know that my life would be changed forever . . . and changed for the better!

Here I am at my first harp recital at the university.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my three favorite music teachers who helped mold me into the musician I am today.

SHIRLEY NUTE

Shirley Nute was my high school choir director. She was (and still is) a teacher who expected her students and her choirs to excel, and so we did!

I accompanied the choir on the piano during all three years of high school. Although I begged to get the music in advance so I could practice it, she often would give me the music at the same time as the choir, and we'd begin immediately! Because of Shirley, I learned many useful skills, including:

to sight-read almost anything;

to read all four vocal lines and the piano part at the same time;

and to keep going no matter what.

In later years, I realized that I had also learned a lot about chords, scales, keys and theory just by having to play the warm-up exercises and scales for the choir.

MARJORIE CALL

As I mentioned above, Marjorie Call got me started on the harp. She taught me the importance of hand position and technique, and gave me a good, solid foundation.

Marjorie also started me on the road to arranging. One day she said to me, "We need a flute and harp arrangement of *The Swan* by Saint-Saëns, and I think you should write it."

And so it began . . .

Unfortunately, Marjorie passed away in 1991.

SUSANN McDONALD

A few years after I graduated from college, I took a few semesters of music classes at Cal State LA, and had the privilege of studying harp with Susann McDonald. One of the things that I remember about my lessons with Susann is that with just one sentence, she could tell me what I was doing wrong and how to fix it, and my playing would instantly be better. She was (and is) amazing!

By the time I started lessons with Susann, I had purchased my first Celtic harp, and was going through a "harp identity crisis."

Did I want to be a pedal harpist and play in an orchestra? (No.)

Did I want to learn pop songs and play pedal harp in a restaurant? (Maybe.)

Did I want to pursue the Celtic harp? (Who knew what that meant?)

Susann encouraged me to try various genres, harps, styles, and approaches to find which one worked for me, and to "blaze my own trail," if need be.

And that, I think, was the best advice of all.

Thank you, Shirley, Marjorie, and Susann.

You have been an inspiration to me throughout my life, and I am eternally grateful.

Our featured composer: Anna Dunwoodie

[Anna Dunwoodie](#), from New Zealand, is our featured composer this month. Here's what she has to say about herself and her music.

When I was ten years old, I saw a teenager singing and playing her Celtic harp at a local music competition, and immediately said to my mother "That's what I want to do!" Unfortunately, harps were rare in NZ, and harp teachers were just as hard to find. The nearest teacher was in Auckland and as we lived two hours away, it was a challenge!

My parents were totally supportive of my mad musical passions. At age 15, my first harp was a combined Christmas and birthday present, and any other gifts were often harp music books. The Sylvia Woods catalogue was read from cover to cover and back again, pages were marked, and I left the catalogue out strategically to indicate what my preferences would be! The Folk Harp Journal and UK Harp Association magazines were my bibles and I still have all my well-worn issues from the late 80s. There was NO harp music available anywhere in NZ, and a very small harp community both here and in Australia.



I started teaching when I was 13 or 14. I was teaching from a plan book for group keyboard lessons after school in the school music department, and from this started developing my own teaching programmes. A trio of divine little six-year-old recorder players, along with some pre-teen pianists, taught the teenage me an awful lot about teaching and learning, as well as the concentration span of young learners! Teaching and gigging brought fantastic pocket money through secondary school, and there wasn't much time for anything except music. I was totally immersed and loving every minute of it. It wasn't until many years later that I realised I had missed much of the experience of being involved in the music from a student's perspective, because I was living in a small town, and my musical experience elevated me to that of teacher and performer well before my time.

I went on to study pedal harp at the School of Music at Auckland University, and then on to Teacher's College studying Music and English. I went busking every Saturday to earn enough for my living expenses and picked up many gigs this way. During Teacher's College, I was also playing and singing full time with an Irish band, and spending five or six nights a week playing the harp in Irish pubs all around the North Island. With my classical and very formal music education to back me up, I quickly learnt to improvise to keep myself entertained through many repetitions of the same sets of music many nights of the week.

After living in the UK for a few years and attending every festival I could get to, I returned to NZ, and I knew classroom teaching was only going to be a means to build up my own harp teaching business, complete with harp events. I set on my way to do this. Having two children, and ultimately raising them by myself slowed me down a little, but they learnt very quickly that a harp was never far away from mummy, and as two very happy, sunny little boys, they too loved all things musical.



Having been a lone harper as a teenager, and through university, it was great to have a group of keen students of all ages, and I started to organise the sorts of events that I would have liked to have attended as a student: workshops, concerts, ensemble rehearsals, and retreats. These things are now a prominent feature in the Auckland harp scene. I also took over the editor's role for the NZ Harp Society Journal. I began filling the thrice-yearly journal with articles from NZ and international teachers, harpists and harp makers, album and book reviews, and news



from the community.

I now have a career portfolio as teacher, composer, performer and event organiser. I teach more than 50 weekly students at four different schools around Auckland, at home and in the Waikato. I have to actively schedule in time to 'stop, sit and compose' or arrange new music and my own practise.

Planning for the next event is always on my mind - The harp retreat is next up (held at a school camp out of

Auckland) for 35 harpists and their families -- fantastic fun to be totally immersed in all things harp!!! I've also started arranging music for Harpenz mid 2019 (I've been running this since 2001), a four-day ensemble workshop where we get up to 45 harpists attending from all over NZ and Australia to play ensemble music together. It takes a while to arrange 30 pieces of music for all levels from absolute beginner to advanced pedal harp, so I have to start a year in advance.



I realise now that so much of what I do is due to the fact that my young musical years were very sparsely scattered with musical events, and that I want to create the sorts of events and music that I would have liked to attend. Hopefully, I'm encouraging a few emerging harp teachers, composers and performers along the way who can eventually share the load with me.

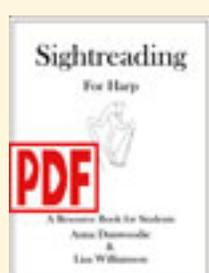
The internet has been a lifeline for building up the harp community. Accessibility to music, to other composers and teachers, and to resources on You Tube and other websites has opened up the harp world to all of us, particularly those of us in more isolated parts of the world.

- Anna

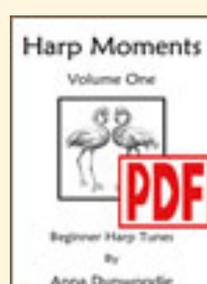
This month's sale

This month's sale features compositions by Anna Dunwoodie. The code word is **Anna**.

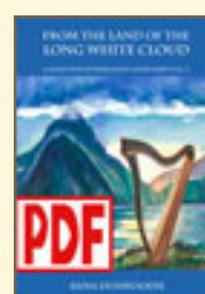
To get the 15% discount on the products below, **enter the code word Anna in the Promo Code box on your shopping cart page and click "Enter Code" by January 28, 2019**. For more information, see the [15% Off](#) section at the bottom of this newsletter.



[Sightreading for Harp](#)
series
by Anna Dunwoodie



[Harp Moments](#)
series
by Anna Dunwoodie



[Land of the Long White Cloud](#)
series
by Anna Dunwoodie

[PDFs](#)

15% off with **Anna** code



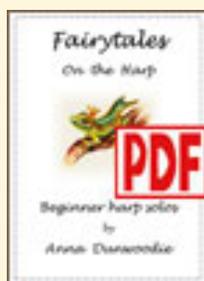
BegEnz Beginning Ensemble series
by Anna Dunwoodie

[PDFs](#)

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[PDFs](#)

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Fairytale on the Harp

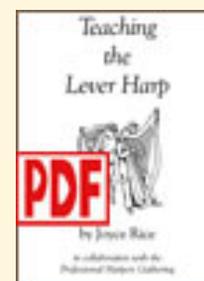
by Anna Dunwoodie

[PDF #p7087](#)

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[PDFs](#)

15% off with **Anna** code



Teaching the Lever Harp

by Joyce Rice

[PDF #p7595](#)

15% off with **Anna** code

15% off select sale items when you use the code word: **Anna**

Our newsletter promo codes are only redeemable online and can only be used for the items featured in the [sale section](#) of this newsletter. They are not valid for phone or e-mail orders. This month's code word is **Anna**, and it is good for 15% off the select PDFs in the **sale section** above. Just because an item is mentioned somewhere in this newsletter doesn't mean that it is on sale. It must be listed in the [sale section](#).

Here's how to get your newsletter discount at harpcenter.com :

#1. Put the items you want to purchase in your cart.

#2. On the page where you view the items in your cart, type this month's code word **Anna** in the "Promo Code" box, and click on "Enter Code."

The actual price of the featured sale products on this page will then automatically change to reflect the discount. You'll also see a note below the Promo Code box saying the name of the promo code you entered, and the percentage amount of the discount.

REMEMBER: you must enter this month's code word **Anna in the Promo Code box and click "Enter Code" on your shopping cart page by January 28 to get the discount!**
If you forget, or if you have trouble adding it to your order, [email Sylvia](mailto:sylvia@harpcenter.com) immediately.

Offer expires at the end of the day on 1/28/2019.

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