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atching the growth and development of the harp community in New Zealand over the last 20 or so years has been a blessing. We have wonderful models in the USA and UK to watch and learn from, and to then develop ideas that fit with the Kiwi mentality and way of life.

My first *Folk Harp Journal* (FHJ) arrived in the post in late 1987, followed closely by the Sylvia Woods Harp Centre mail out and the UK Harp Association journal. These were all treasures, and my mother and I read them from cover to cover. Our NZ Harp Society magazine, still very much in the early stages, came out several times a year. And, of course, what is from abroad always seems more exciting than what is in your own backyard!

At that time, although we already had a world class harpmaker, Kim Webby, harps and teachers were hard to find. I waited five years, from the time I first said to my Mum, “I want to play that!” to the day we had the first of many two hour drives to my first harp lesson.

In the 80s and 90s, our few harpists and teachers were spread thinly across the two long narrow islands of NZ. At that stage, visiting international harpists often came only to the main centres, and only one island. I considered myself very lucky to see and meet a wide range of performers like Danielle Perrett, Katarina Englichova, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Alfredo Ortiz, and Marisa Robles. I will never forget my 16th birthday present—a ticket to see Clannad—and watch harpist Moya Brennan sing and play for 90 minutes without a break. Apparently, I barely breathed through the whole concert and never took my eyes off the stage. Any harp experience was a great one for me!

This is a big year for me—2018 marks 30 years of my life harping—or 35 years if you count back to the time I first decided I wanted to play. I studied harp at University, taught music and then, more specifically, harp, and have met remarkable harp enthusiasts at festivals around the globe. The internet has been an miraculous resource and gone are the days when the enthusiastic young Kiwi musician had to wear out a cassette tape, rewinding and pausing, trying to notate the latest favourite tune—now we can dial it up from anywhere in the world, and probably download the sheet music too!

While for some reasons, mainly political, we are happy to be far distanced from parts of the world, this distance has made some things more challenging. Pre-internet, there would be a wait of a month or so for mail order sheet music to arrive—now it arrives instantly! But there is still nowhere in NZ to spend an afternoon in a harp shop, sight reading potential new music, and thumbing your way through piles of harp music, with the intent to purchase.

For years I’ve watched my international role models run harp festivals and events. While I wasn’t able to attend any of these things as a young harp student, I’ve been able to duplicate the ideas here in NZ over the past twenty years. We’ve had mini festivals, harp retreats, annual performance competitions, workshops, ensemble weekends, harp orchestras. We have a healthy harp scene developing, and working with visiting harpists has been an education in itself!

I’ve already published more music than I could ever use in my own studio. For the last ten years, my music has been available in countries from NZ to Sweden and all the places in between. With this in mind, in 2017, I launched *The Harp Music Club*—the musical surprise lands in your inbox on the first of each month.



Growing a Harp Community

by Anna Dunwoodie



For generations Anna's family has gathered at Whangamata (which means Headland Bay in Maori).

Each month has two new harp solos and an ensemble piece at the late beginner/early intermediate level. Two of these pieces are arrangements and one is an original composition. And subscribers from all over the world are signing up. You can check it out on my website, along with samples of the music.

On July 28th, for my 30 years harpiversary, I put on a party called **100 Harps**. This was a showcase of the local harp businesses—harp teachers, harpists, harpmakers and retailers, the NZ Harp Society, and other harp related items. Such as my favourite supplier of fingerless gloves I wear throughout winter—even when teaching! 100 Harps featured a harp petting zoo, stunning performances, harp shaped chocolates and biscuits, and finished with little wine and cheese “harpy hour.”

We are quite a distance from your larger land masses, and larger harp populations, but there is no doubt that the developments in the global harp community have managed to make it here and have a positive spin for those of us “Downunder.” Thanks! We are raising a glass to those who have helped the NZ harp scene get to the place it is today—and, personally, I’m most grateful!

If you are thinking about visiting New Zealand or Australia, check out the website HarpsDownunder.com for local harp societies, harpmakers, harpists, and teachers.

We look forward to meeting you, and hearing your harp story!



Anna Dunwoodie

Anna lives in Auckland, New Zealand, and is passionate about all things harp—teaching, performing, composing and arranging. She is the founder and director of the Auckland Harp Orchestra, BegEnz (Beginner Harp Ensemble), and The Harp Music Club and organises regular harp gatherings, events with visiting harpists. Anna is the editor of the *New Zealand Harp Society Journal*, and administrator for “Harps Downunder,” the info hub for local NZ and Australian harpists. Anna loves the energy that surrounds this incredible instrument, the harpists and the students, and the journeys that they all are making together.

The Auckland Harp Orchestra in concert in 2017.



The Lad's Annual Waltz

Anna Dunwoodie

Lazily *mf*

7 *G* *A* *D* *A*

11 *G* *D* *Bm* *A* *G* *D* *Fine*

17 *Bm* *F#m* *G* *A* *Bm* *F#m* *mp*

23 *G* *A* *Bm* *Bm* *F#m*

27 *G* *A* *D* *Bm* *G* *D* *D.C al Fine* *Bm*

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The Harp Music Club

This tune was written for Anna's son and his best mate who have danced the supper waltz at every ceili since they were just little lads. The now teenage boys set aside their female dance partners for this one waltz and it never ceases to amuse everyone!

"Drizzly Morning Blues" by Anna Dunwoodie, from the Harp Music Club, was featured in the Fall 2018 issue of the *Folk Harp Journal*.