

# HARP NOTES

Newsletter of the Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association

## Calendar of Events

### **ATHA Tune a Month**

- Meets online first Tuesday evening of each month.

### **ATHA Discussion Group**

- Meets online third Tuesday evening of each month.

### **Presentation with Ana Salvi Maddoz, director of Bow Brand Harp Strings**

Sun 30th Jun 2024, 2:00 - 4:00pm  
Auditorium, Knox Cultural Centre,  
Wahroonga NSW [Tickets](#)

### **Inaugural Australian Harp Teaching Symposium**

July 1st - Thursday July 4th, 2024  
To be held at Knox Cultural  
Centre, Knox Grammar  
School, Wahroonga NSW  
Enquiries to Verna at  
[veenlsy@gmail.com](mailto:veenlsy@gmail.com)



Welcome to the 2024 Autumn edition of the ATHA newsletter. Once again we have a newsletter full of interesting and exciting content.

Members have been busy over the Summer and into the Autumn. Some in reflection, some playing, others attending concerts and get togethers or taking pleasure in learning.

My highlight was getting to meet a number of members face-to-face at the Josh Layne Day in Portarlington. What a great day that was! Such a lovely man. You can read all about it in Christine Middleton's article.

Once again Brandden has provided helpful advice regarding our beautiful and sometimes challenging instruments in his Harp Workbench article.

I hope you find this edition informative and engaging. If you'd like to contribute to future editions, please contact me at [harptranquility@gmail.com](mailto:harptranquility@gmail.com)

## ATHA State Reports and Articles

### From the ACT

#### Alison Ware - Canberra

The Therapeutic Harp program continues across Canberra Health Services with a new Health Campus now also being visited. (North Canberra Hospital)

As it's the beginning of the year with plenty of new staff I have been delivering education sessions across the hospital and enjoy sharing with staff the value of a music program.

It is also an opportunity to provide a few moments of music and mindfulness prior to the education sessions. The nurses find this of great value and some areas now start their own meetings with a mindful pause.

I continue to play across all areas of Canberra Hospital and recently, played for an elderly grandmother being visited in hospital by her daughter. After I played for them, I visited the postnatal ward where coincidentally her granddaughter had just given birth to her great grandson. I played for 4 generations in one day which I felt was so special.

Alongside my bedside visits I also enjoy offering variations to programs within the hospital for staff. These include music and mindfulness, harp and art sessions, harp and hand massage and Harp Yoga. These have become popular, and I hope to develop resources for others to use.

In the community space, Harp yoga is now being offered four times a year, and yoga teacher, Jo, and I, have now been contracted by the Cancer Council of the ACT to offer sessions.



Jo, from Health and Wellbeing here in Canberra, will be offering a wellness retreat and while it is not a harp retreat, I will be playing the harp during Yoga sessions and running an art activity. I've included the details and their newsletter for those who might like to attend. (See at the end of my article)

## Animals

I continue to play at the zoo, but I also come across animals within the health care environment. There have been Cats, lizards, Therapy dogs, Alpacas and Miniature horses all within Canberra Health Services.

Currently, I share space with Lachie -the spiritual support assistant dog. He is well loved by patients and staff and reminds me of the importance of the animals we share our lives with. In health care spaces animals provide comfort, companionship and solace. They also bring a sense of normality and “home” to clinical environments.



I regularly have the pleasure of supporting patients and their animals in hospital. Animals are highly sensitive to their environments, and I am always mindful of trying to support them with my music as well as their owners and so I share this story. Please note all names have been changed.

Some years ago, I was called in my private practise to see an actively dying woman “Beth” in her home. Her family were just outside the room and smiled as I started to play tunes I hoped would deeply soothe and relax. I noticed her bed was covered by a beautiful quilt with vibrant hues of red and blue.

While I was admiring this quilt, I saw it slowly change shape and start to move. I was taken aback but then saw a brown scruffy terrier make its way out from under the quilt.

While I continued to play with one hand, I reached out with the other to touch the small dog. Its wet nose and pink tongue gently touched my hand. I continued to play, and watched as the dog licked his owner’s hand and readjusted itself by nestling close to its dying owner, positioning himself between me, the stranger, and his beloved mistress.

“You are taking good care of your mistress” I whispered. The dog looked up at Beth and then looked at me. Its liquid brown eyes said it all. It was



both a look of love, sadness and knowing. I just knew this beautiful little dog was aware its beloved owner was dying and the chances to lie closely together were coming to a close. I felt tears well up in my eyes as I imagined the life these two had shared together.

A family member "Sarah" came in and said "I see you've met "Maxie"?

The music is beautiful isn't it -you can enjoy it too" She reached over and caressed the small dog's head. "These two have a special relationship". Beth rescued Maxie when he was only a pup. He was in a terrible state-no fur and so thin!!!! I agreed that he had been well cared for- now with soft brown tufts of fur, plump and curious. "Sarah" leaned forward and said quietly "Don't worry Beth - we'll look after Maxie for you" She tenderly patted the small dog and it repositioned itself closer to her owner. I left the room but must admit the image of this little loyal dog stays with me. Maxie taught me that when animals are nearby, I should include them in my therapeutic harp playing and also support them.

[Alison Ware - Harpcare.com.au](http://AlisonWare-Harpcare.com.au)

### Yoga Retreat

Over two nights and three days from 31 May to 2 June, you will immerse yourself in the beautiful surrounds of Heartspace Retreat located in the Yass Valley NSW. Your weekend program will be designed for you to leave behind stress and tension of your busy lifestyle, to find quiet and support you to rest deeply.

Using the teachings of yoga, we will explore how it feels to relax and support your body to release tension. We will move through sequences drawing on Hatha Yoga, Yin Yoga and Restorative Yoga teachings to find stillness through movement, connect with our bodies and move energy around our body, nourishing ourselves deeply.

As a special treat some of our yoga practices will be accompanied by the sounds of the Harp, as Alison Ware from HarpCare joins us as a special guest. Harp Yoga is deeply soothing, with the sounds and the vibrations of the Harp taking us on a wonderful journey, uplifting mind and spirit.

Enjoy the peaceful surrounds of the Homestead and be nourished by the delicious seasonal vegetarian and gluten free menu prepared by a chef from organic and locally sourced produce. The weekend also includes workshops on wellness, habit setting, mindful cooking and visual art.

[Bookings](#)

## From NSW

### Verna Lee

Verna has sent through two wonderful events coming up later this year. The inaugural harp teacher's symposium. This symposium is a "roundtable" event for all harp teachers. Discussions will include, relevant topics and challenges, a sharing of knowledge and ideas, and developing as a teacher. Preceding this event will be a short informal presentation by Ana Salvi Maddoz, director of Bow

Brand Strings. Ana will speak about the fascinating process about making harp strings, followed by a Q & A session. Details for both of these events can be found on page 1 under “Calendar of Events”

## Anne Horton

### *Alison Ware will visit the Harpkeepers' Book Club!*

Most people reading this will be familiar with the exceptional Alison Ware, most widely known for her pioneering work as a Certified Therapeutic Harpist in Canberra, Australia, and mentor of Therapeutic Harpists from far and wide.

### *But what is the Harpkeepers' Book Club?*

During a time when people all over the world were in lockdown and isolation, a wonderful opportunity arose for harpists to build relationships, friendships and connections with each other. Deborah Henson-Conant (DHC), jazz harpist and coach extraordinaire based in Boston, USA, offered free, weekly, online “Harp Time Live” sessions. A steadily growing group of enthusiastic harpists joined these zoom sessions from all over the globe ... even from as far away as Australia!

As each Harp Time Live session finished, Deborah would invite people to stay for “Anne’s Salon”, an “after party” that I hosted for anyone who wanted to stay and chat about all things “harp” or even remotely “harp-related”. These chats often continued for hours, with no-one to tell us, “that’s enough about harps already!”.

During one of our Salons, in July, 2021, I held up a copy of Daniel Levitan’s, “This is Your Brain on Music” and said, “I have to review this book as part of the harp therapy course I am doing. Has anyone here heard of this book?”. To my surprise, three other people were suddenly holding up the same book and saying they hadn’t read it yet, but wanted to. We decided to read a portion each week and come ready to discuss it at our after-party. This we did. Each week we looked forward to increasingly robust discussions, as experienced musicians amongst us shared anecdotes that brought the text to life. Interest and momentum grew, and by the time we finished the book, there were over 20 people asking, “What are we going to read next?!”. Our book club for harpists was born!

We decided to set up a separate time for the book club to meet, so we could focus exclusively on discussing our book of choice. We became known as the “Harpkeepers’ Book Club”.

If you’re wondering how the term “Harpkeeper” came about, here is the story. One day we were discussing the phenomenon of “having a break from your harp because the piece you are trying to play is too challenging, only to come back later and discover with amazement you can now play the part you couldn’t play before!”. We asked, “Could it be true that simply whilst keeping a harp, you could develop skills for playing it?!” In the same conversation, someone mentioned they had been neglecting their harp due to a book-keeping course they were doing. Our response? “Don’t worry, you have been ‘harp-keeping’ while you were ‘book-keeping’” ... and the term “Harpkeeper” was coined.

Initially, in 2021, our book club met weekly as we gradually worked our way through a book.



Later we started to meet monthly and picked up our reading pace by reading a new book for each meeting. At this point, although I am always the host, we began to share the role of providing the book review among book club members who were keen to participate as reviewers, usually because they were enthusiastic about a certain book. This works very well, as different people bring their passion and interest on a topic to share with the rest of us.

The topics are always relevant for someone who owns a harp, even if you, like me, feel you are harp-keeping more than you are harp playing.

In 2022, for the first time we experienced the joy of welcoming an author to visit our book club. This author came in the form of Australian harpist Peter Roberts, co-author of “The Harp and the Ferryman”. This turned out to be a breathtaking session and thereafter we have been keen to invite authors whenever possible.

In 2023, three further authors visited Harpkeepers’ Book Club across the year: Angela McKinney, author of “Untangle: How to Create Big Possibilities Through Small Changes”; Glenda Underhill, author of “A Harper’s Journey: On Horse and Harp”; and Kylie Beilharz, author of “Music Remembers Me: Connection and Wellbeing in Dementia”. Each visit was outstanding in its own way. Naturally it’s not always possible to have the author visit us, but we love it when it happens.

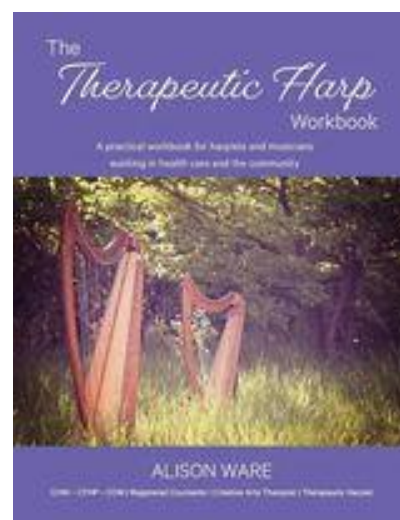
In 2024, we are meeting every third month. For those of us in Australia, this will be the fourth Friday morning of the month, that is: 23 February, 24 May, 23 August and 22 November, 2024.

We meet at 7.30am (Sydney time). This time slot means our friends in the northern hemisphere are able to join us (it is still Thursday evening for them).

### ***So how does Alison Ware fit in this picture?***

In 2019, Alison Ware published “The Therapeutic Harp Workbook: A practical workbook for harpists and musicians working in health care and the community” (available from Amazon).

It gives me extreme pleasure to announce that Alison Ware will be joining us at our Harpkeepers’ Book Club on 24 May, 2024 to review and discuss her extremely helpful and practical workbook. In this book, Alison has documented and distilled everything she has learnt over 17 years of work in the field, and even generously includes her mistakes for others to learn from. Alison is living proof that the only thing limiting us is our imagination.



Please know that YOU ARE WELCOME! The meeting with Alison Ware will be via zoom and you are most welcome to join us. If you would like me to send you the link for Harpkeepers Book Club, please email me: [annehorton@gmail.com](mailto:annehorton@gmail.com)

Bye for now and Happy Harpkeeping!

Anne Horton.

## Queensland

Rae Lloyd-Jones

*Reflections on the Indomitable Gloria Bray*



As I sit here and write, it's exactly a year - to the date and time - since I first met and played my little Reverie Harp for Gloria.

Of course, I have since had regular musical encounters with dozens of other Nanyima Residents, many of whom have also gone on to their rest. So on the way to her funeral yesterday morning, I was reflecting on what made Gloria so special – a real standout - and the sense of indebtedness and gratitude I feel for having known her – even for this short time - and why I wanted to honour her by attending her funeral to get a fuller sense of the amazing woman she was, and to say goodbye.

The first time I met Gloria, she was just waking from a nap - laying on her bed on her side, facing me - hands tucked under her head like a little girl. She smiled and welcomed the offer of a bit of music, so I sat and answered Gloria's many questions about myself and the instrument – the Reverie Harp. Her eyes remained pretty much closed the whole time I played, but occasionally she opened them to look at me, and smile, and let me know she was enjoying the music. Gloria was calm and restful throughout the whole encounter, and appeared to enjoy the gentle rhythms I was playing. I told her as I ended playing that each person I play for brings out a different tune, or melody, or rhythm, so what she just listened to was created just for her, the music was hers and her alone. She seemed pretty pleased that what I played was uniquely "her song". I told her I visited most Tuesday afternoons, and asked if she would like me to play for her again next week? "Yes thank you dear, I would like that".

So over the following 12 months, I met with Gloria almost every time I visited Nanyima.

The last time I saw her (16th Jan) I was told she had been unwell, and although I often play for others while they're sleeping, Gloria was sleeping so peacefully I just did not want to wake her. On my next visit 2 weeks later, I was told she had passed the week before, 23rd January. I feel so sad that I did not get to play for Gloria again, or see her lovely smile that always came with her "Thank you for the music, dear."

I am indebted to Gloria for allowing me to catch a glimpse into the daily world of someone who wants to be anywhere else on earth, but where they are – but most especially longing for a life and a home to which they know deep inside that they will never return. Gloria knew that. In a way I cannot actually find the words to describe, she was able to share some of the weight of the immense sadness she carried along with that reality – you could see it hiding behind her eyes, you could hear it in her voice. Gloria made very real for me the concept of "sharing the burden of another", carrying it with her, in order to alleviate some of the heaviness of it, even if only for a very short space of time.

I learned so much from the encounters I had with Gloria, in such an environment as Nanyima, and from watching how she grappled at times to interact with those around her through her illness, as well as how those around Gloria interacted with her - insights which will inform and guide my practice as a Healthcare Musician well into the future.

Time spent with Gloria constantly reminded me of the most important component of the musical offering, what is being attempted as fingers vibrate the strings, is human to human connection. Seeing the whole person who sits or lies in front of me, in a way that allows them to know they are seen, acknowledged, valued. Not just playing to alleviate symptoms, but to convey a sense of caring presence, something special, tailored uniquely just for them. That I come with no expectations, I want nothing from them, except to bless the Human Spirit dwelling within the failing form before me, offering love and care through the musical presence of another human being.

With Gloria, I was keenly aware that this person before me was so special, so unique, and had lived an amazing and full life, filled with family, friends, love, adventure, hopes, dreams, careers, just from the way she spoke about all these things, and many more. She had known and been known, she had loved and lived and been loved and lived for. She did not want to be forgotten – or to forget.

Gloria told me the Harp music was very soothing for her, comforting, and during each encounter, the music appeared to help free her mind from the grip of the dementia that was determined to fully take it from her. But as long as my fingers were moving on the strings, not even always playing a tune, just "toodling", she was calm - it amazed me how quickly this music appeared to calm her, especially if I had arrived during one of the times the indomitable Gloria was "storming the halls." The invitation to come and listen to the music was like a switch, straight away she would be calm – "thank you dear" - and would begin talking quietly, she reminisced, she asked lots of good questions and expected good answers.

Gloria was clear and coherent during most of the times I played for her, only becoming distracted and agitated with the comings and goings of staff.

She smiled a lot, and asked me a lot of questions about my Harp playing. She was quite a music aficionado, and was always quick to tell me I was playing something she had already heard – her



memory in that regard was excellent. She once told me she'd had a Pianola at home and how much she missed it, "playing piano always made me happy." I asked her why she didn't play the piano at Nanyima - they have one there. "No, it's not mine, they wouldn't like it."

Another time Gloria told me her birthday was the next Tuesday, she'd be 92. I asked her if she could eat anything on her birthday, what would it be? "A nice Pav, I used to make a lovely Pavlova with all the fruit." She said she loved Pavlova. I told her I do too. I wish I'd made her a good one...

One afternoon I met her in the dining area to play for her, where she'd been listening to some country music on the radio. She had headphones on, and was dancing slowly with her walker.

Gloria preferred the smaller Reverie Harp to the larger and more traditional Lap Harp – the last time I offered music to her on the larger Harp she said "Thank you my dear, but that one's a bit plucky-plucky. Bring the other one next time."

I really appreciated Gloria's no-nonsense way of clearly letting you know – kindly - without being "complaining" - what she liked and disliked. She told me once that "the food here, of course, is not how I would make it at home, but it's not that bad.....I just wish they would make a good Pav."

I understand that the last year in Nanyima was very difficult for Gloria, and she was not always as easy going with the staff there as she was with me. Dementia is a cruel and unrelenting foe - there's no other way to see it. But I believe one reason why I often got to see her – Gloria as she really was - is because I patiently looked beyond her illness, I sought to see Gloria, and so I was truly rewarded with glimpses of the intelligent and formidable woman that her family and friends knew and loved.

I really enjoyed talking to her, she was interesting, and had lived a long, fulfilling and colourful life. We would talk about her family, how she liked music, especially the piano, gardening, proper pavlova - so many things.

One time we chatted about what she misses about being at home – she said it was mainly pottering in her own garden. So I asked if she could do some pottering in the Nanyima gardens to give her something interesting to do, and she laughed back, "they can look after their own bloody garden!"

She would sometimes compliment my playing, and sometimes she critiqued my playing: "you have improved quite a bit my dear, much better than last time you played that for me, it's nice they let you come and practice on people like me."

She would ask how many people I played for each time I came to Nanyima, and did I charge a fee? NO? Then why are you doing it?

When I told her that I was doing this just for people like her, who felt maybe a bit stuck where they were, and that feeling of being stuck made them a bit sad, and that I wanted to do something nice to make them a little more cheerful, she gave me a really teary and thankful smile, I could see that she knew that I saw her – and she was understood.

And yes, of course, often within a few minutes, we had the same conversations all over again - repeatedly – such is the short term-memory loss that comes with dementia.

One day, after I had been visiting and playing for her for almost 6 months, Gloria was on her own in the little linkway lounge, listening to Abba. At first she didn't remember who I was, but as soon as I

sat down and started talking to her, she suddenly lit up and with a smile and remembered that I came and played music just for her. So she was very happy to have some Gloria music, and of course asked me all the usual questions about when I started to play and why etc.

Time spent with Gloria was always a delight for me. Even in the face of her dementia, she remained resolute - a woman with an indomitable Spirit.

I always looked forward with anticipation to playing some peace into her world, and I will feel her absence at Nanyima well into the future.

God bless you Kind Lady, and may you rest in peace now that you are truly Home. xxx

## Tasmania

### Helen Morrison

#### *A Summer of Harps in Tasmania*

In early January we welcomed Cliona Molins, a well-known harpist from Sydney. An enthusiastic group of harpists from around the state converged on the Claremont RSL for Cliona's workshop which included her beautiful piece, Golden Kelp. The day culminated in a short performance of pieces from the workshop and featured Golden Kelp for harp ensemble, with the shakuhachi part arranged and played by me on cello. Everyone had a great day.

This led to a packed weekend of music-making at Sheffield with Andy Rigby, harpist and harp maker from Victoria. A short Friday afternoon rehearsal of violin, harp, accordion and cello (its second outing in the month) gave a taste for the fun to come. The weekend consisted of around 20 harpists learning a bunch of tunes from around the world, mainly by ear. This is a challenge for many but a great way to really learn a piece. The weekend ended with a stunning concert in the Sheffield Town Hall where our 'Friday chamber group' performed along with several pieces by the harp workshop participants, some singers amongst the group, and much more. Thanks to Kate Fraser for organising such a fun weekend of harp music.

Then the inimitable Adriano Sangineto, harpist from Italy, arrived in Hobart. Some of us had met him at the NZ HarpFest and were quite taken by his energetic and unique playing style. His trip was sponsored by Carter Harps Australia and included concerts at Fern Tree under kunanyi/Mt Wellington, MONA and in the north west at Wynyard, as well as several mainland dates.

Rhondra Howland of Queensland shared her beautiful compositions in a Sunday workshop in February. We enjoyed listening to her stories about her music and we have all come away inspired with lovely pieces to work on.

To cap off a wonderful season, Josh Layne will return to Tasmania as lead tutor for the Harp Society flagship event Harp Island on the March long weekend. This will be a special and unique experience for all attendees. Josh will follow up with concerts around the country. Indeed it's been a wonderful harp time for everyone.

## Victoria

**Carla Whiteley**

### *Harp holiday 2024*

What better way to start off the new year then to attend a harp holiday, or upon reflection, was it more a harp bootcamp?

10 years ago, Louise Johnson, Principal Harp of the Sydney Symphony (1985-2019) commenced the first harp holiday, an intensive workshop in a friendly and relaxed environment for anyone of any age wanting to learn more about the harp and for those wanting to enhance their performance skills. Since that first gathering in 2014 a group of amateurs and professional harpers have gathered together in January, to share their love of the harp and music.

I went to my first harp holiday in 2019, when the event was held at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains, at the Blackheath Christian College. Andrew and I rented a cottage in the Blackheath Caravan Park. Each participant is sent the music prior to the event with the expectation that one becomes familiar with the music to be played on the final day of Harp Holiday culminating in a concert.

This year, 2024, the event was held at Waverley College, Sydney, giving an opportunity for the more junior members who are studying at The Sydney Harp School, to attend. The ages ranged for about 8 to 15, I think. It was wonderful to watch these young and upcoming harpers play with such enthusiasm and skill.

I have to confess there is nothing as wonderful as being surrounded by the sound of, as it was in this year's case, 28 harps. Quite magical. However, to say it was a "Harp Holiday" is to be questioned as we worked very, very hard. We would practice daily, before lunch with the lever ensemble and after lunch with the large ensemble, studying and perfecting the pieces that were going to be performed in the final concert. Each participant of Harp Holiday had an hour's individual lesson with Louise is always a great experience

I was part of the Lever Harpers. We studied and performed the following pieces with the larger ensemble which included the pedal harps.

Great Day, by Nancy Gustavson. The Aesthetic Weasel. By HeidiCortez Reicher, and our final piece Brazil by Ary Barrowso/ arr Johnson. These pieces also used the harp as a percussive instrument.

For the lever harp ensemble only, we performed a Welsh Traditional piece arranged by Rachel Hair, Arrane Ny Nie- Auldyn River and a very evocative piece composed by Louise Bell, especially for the occasion called Waverly Waltz.

For those of you who are members of the Sydney Harp Society 3 of the performance pieces have been posted where you can watch them.

It was hard work but also an amazing and magical experience in every way to be surrounded by 28 harps playing on mass. A great start to 2024.





## Christine Middleton

### *Harp At Port*

On Saturday 23rd March 2024, the Portarlinton Sea Angels hosted the gifted virtuoso Josh Layne. Josh is a Canadian Harpist/Composer, international touring and recording artist and has performed extensively across Canada, the US, Europe and South America. Josh is the teacher of an educational YouTube series called “Harp Tuesday” that has had over 2 million views and combines his love of music with his love of the outdoors in his series “Harpist in the Wild”.

Josh facilitated a morning Harp Workshop with 34 harpists, navigating them through the beautiful Welsh piece “Morfa’r Frenhimes (The Queens Marsh). This Workshop was followed by a sold-out concert in the St. Andrews Church, Portarlinton during the afternoon.



***Josh and the lovely 47 string Lyon & Healy Gold Pedal Harp***



A small number of supporting acts were featured throughout the 2 hour concert. Tim Sheed (Bush Poet) and Christine Middleton (Harp) opened the concert with “Carol of the Birds” with the welcome verse of “Orana”.

***Tim & Christine – Welcoming all with their delightful opening***



This was followed by 5 yr old Ruby playing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” and Josh was warned at this stage that young Ruby would be a hard act to follow .



***Josh & Carla – Harp/Flute Virtuosos***

Glenda Underhill (Harp) and Michael Oates (Harmonica, Irish Whistle, Concertina) opened the second part of the Concert Program with Celtic sets from the Isle of Man, Brittany and Ireland.



***Glenda & Michael – Playing some Celtic sets!***



***Ruby. All concentration!***

Josh continued the first part of the Concert program with outstanding Musicianship with pieces by Bach, Chopin, Layne, Renie with Carla Whiteley joining him for another outstanding set of tunes by Gounod, Mendelssohn and Massenet.

Josh then continued the program with pieces by Godefroid, Bach, Debussy and Walter-Kuhne.

It was lovely to share the day with so many harpists including some of our ATHA members – Carla Whitely, Glenda Underhill, Rachel Gellert, Gillian Turner, Bernadette O'Rourke, Angie Smales, Gai George, Anne Horton, Tanya Stewart, Jenny Burchill, Helen Burvill, Gail Casey, Michelle Boughen, Sharon Meade, Ashael Schembri, Cathryn Chee, Crenagh Kelly, Andrea McVean, Jennifer Stephens, Marg Lapham, and Shirley Allott

Josh was brilliant, both as a teach and performer. Glenda Underhill summed his performance up perfectly as "breath-taking, spellbinding and exquisite". Everyone who attended on the day came away moved and inspired. At the conclusion of this wonderful concert, a standing ovation said it all.



***Harp Workshop facilitated by Josh***

Although I received much feedback of personal thanks, it was a group effort by all the harpists on the day that made the day such a success. Everyone pitched in by bringing plates of food to share, assisting other harpists to navigate the music during the workshop, setting up the church and hall, manning the door, the merchandise table and were supporting acts in the concert.



***The final bow***



## Harp Workbench

As a service to the subscribers of this newsletter, Brandden Lassells of Harps and Harps will answer questions you may have pertaining to the making, maintenance or repair of harps.

### ***Question: My tuning pin is very tight and hard to turn what should I do?***

First off and very important, if your tuning pin is difficult to turn. Stop and do not continue to try to turn the pin to tune the string. If the pin is hard to turn and you try forcing it with your tuning key, there is a very good chance that you will snap off the square end of the tuning pin. This can then be a challenge to replace.

### ***What are some of the causes of a tight tuning pin?***

A common cause is corrosion and/or rust. The tuning pin becomes “frozen” in the neck. Possibly due to infrequent use or the climate in which the harp is kept. There is a good chance that the end of the pin will be snapped off if you continue to forcibly turn it. The pin with the broken square end will then need to be driven out, the tapered hole reamed out and a new pin installed.

Another cause which we see often is a tuning pin with too many string wraps, enough that the string winding is wedged against the neck causing the pin to be hard or impossible to turn. In this case hopefully before the pin is snapped off, unwind the string, reinsert the string to the proper length and number of windings and tighten in the usual manner taking the string up to pitch. Then trim off the excess string.

Very rarely the pin is just too tightly inserted. This can either be due to a knock or perhaps when trying to wedge the pin in to stop the pin from slipping and getting it too tight. This can usually be loosened by using the tuning key and gently turning the key back and forth while also applying pressure from the string side.

These comments apply to the common tapered tuning pin situations. If you have a threaded tuning pin that has become frozen in the neck you will need to use locking pliers to grip the pin and remove it by unthreading it. The threads on the pin can then be cleaned and the pin reinserted. This is not recommended unless absolutely necessary.

The important thing is that if your tuning pin becomes difficult to turn for whatever reason, **STOP** and address the problem before you snap the end off the tuning pin.

Questions and comments for future “Harp Workbench” column of this newsletter can be addressed to the editor, Glenda Underhill [harptranquility@gmail.com](mailto:harptranquility@gmail.com) or to Brandden. Brandden Lassells, the proprietor of Harps and Harps, home of the light weight all carbon fibre harps. Brandden can be contacted on (07) 4125 8393, 0419 692 286 or through his website [www.harps.com.au](http://www.harps.com.au)

Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association 2024. If you'd like to contribute to future editions, please send to glenda at [harptranquility@gmail.com](mailto:harptranquility@gmail.com)