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.

Harp at the Port Workshops

24th June, 15th July, 26th August, 23rd September plus concert with Rosemary Hallo, 7th October, 4th November plus concert with Mary Doumany.



Welcome to the 2023 Winter edition of the ATHA newsletter. Before I get into highlighting this edition's content, I would like to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to **Kerryn Viner**, who has for the past years been our newsletter editor. Kerryn has decided to pass the baton on to me, Glenda Underhill. I must admit to feeling a tiny bit apprehensive, and my only hope is that I can adequately fill Kerryn's shoes.

Due to the interlude, this newsletter is brimming with all sorts of exciting things. There are harping events, state reports, not one but three editions of Brandden Lassells' informative "From the Harp Workbench", and just recently Christina Tourin has paid us a visit 'down under'. And what a lot of fun that generated!!

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

Winter 2023

President's Report

Hello Everyone. What a busy year it's been!

Our AGM was held in November 2022 with Tim Sheed acting as Returning Officer. Positions were elected as follows. President: Catherine Lyons-Nash, Vice President: Glenda Underhill, Secretary: Jenni Sawell, Treasurer: Christine Middleton, Ordinary Committee member: Lyn Johnson. Stepping down from the committee are Carol Booth, Kerryn Viner and Vimukti Warr, who were all founding members. Carol will continue her involvement facilitating the ATHA Discussion Group, while Vimukti continues to dedicate her efforts to promoting therapeutic harp through IHTP-AU. My sincere thanks and gratitude to these members who have contributed much.

ATHA State Rep Reports

ACT

Alison Ware - Canberra Updates

The Therapeutic harp program continues to be offered across Canberra Health Services and I just celebrated 15 years at Canberra Hospital. I have enjoyed developing and exploring new ways to bring the harp into different healthcare settings.

Although my work is predominately bedside, I also enjoy working with Staff.

This year I received funding to develop wellbeing sessions with staff from the community dialysis unit. The theme has been self-care and the creative arts. We have completed three sessions now including harp and art, harp and hand massage, harp and self-care and shared a "communitea" Staff enjoyed the different approach and of course

loved the harp. The program is being evaluated so hopefully will continue.



Winter 2023

In September I am looking forward to presenting at the Oceanic Palliative Care Conference in Sydney offering a 15-minute oral presentation on the Therapeutic Harp program in Canberra. It will be a great opportunity to play the harp and tell stories about the value of music in Palliative Care.

During Palliative Care week, the local nightly ABC News ran a story on Palliative care in Canberra. I am grateful the harp program was mentioned and I am fortunate to offer a peaceful presence through music and work alongside the specialist palliative care team. The story can be viewed at:

The ACT's proposed voluntary assisted dying laws have yet to be introduced, but could be the most liberal in the country - ABC News

Group relaxation session at University of Canberra hospital



I love playing my harp for animals especially at The National Zoo and Aquarium in Canberra. The animals enjoy the harp, and it provides both audio and visual enrichment. The music I play is simple, rhythmic, and adjusted to what is going on for the animal. There is a gorgeous video on my Facebook page of the red panda touching the harp. He loves the vibration. Please see <u>Alison Ware - HarpCare</u> <u>Therapeutic Music Services | Facebook</u>

I enjoy working with artists so asked Ying Chin and Munroosha Singh to develop the greeting cards below.





These cards are now for sale and one dollar from each card sold goes to The National Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Fund.

Winter 2023

One card is \$6:00

Three Cards are \$15:00

Plus, postage and handling. Please contact me at <u>info@harpcare.com.au</u> if you are interested in purchasing.

What's happening around NSW – June 2023

Jenni Sawell

This year has seen a dramatic increase in my workload, going from playing in two different Aged Care Facilities to five. A pleasant change from the lack of work during Covid! There are still the occasional lockdowns to negotiate, but it's nice that there is some sort of normality returning to the facilities. My schedules vary between weekly, fortnightly and monthly, with the bulk of the sessions being in the memory support units. It is always such a joy to see the responses from the residents when I play their favourite tunes in a relaxing style on the harp. I wish I could bottle some of the facial expressions and reactions! They can go from calling out, agitated and unsettled, to calm and with dreamlike expressions in just a few minutes. And no matter how sleepy they look, there is always some foot tapping going on! It is truly rewarding work, which I feel blessed to have.

Carol Booth

No news from up here near Port Macquarie except it is lovely to be able to get back to bedside visits, which I've been able to do for some months now. Still wearing a mask in the hospital.

Nicky Lock

I have reconnected with the nursing home and will be beginning again late May. The new recreation manager has been warmly welcoming and I have worked hard to keep him with understanding that this is 'harp therapy' not a concert. He has made a lovely poster for distribution around the facility with an animated version including some harp music.

Also, I have been using harp to accompany labyrinth walks at the Centennial Park labyrinth, and I accompanied a biblical reflection/relaxation at a counsellor's retreat this weekend.



Tasmania

Helen Morrison

Harp Fest NZ February 2023 - Bringing Harp Therapy to New Zealand

This was a wonderful weekend of harps, international harpists, concerts, workshops, merchandise, friendship and music. I presented two sessions, firstly, The Quiet Zone – music for relaxation. In this session I played a mix of traditional tunes and improvisation interspersed with poetry readings and singing bowls. Participants were able to rest and relax within the busy festival venue of Dilworth School, Auckland. Luckily we had a lovely, quiet common room in the boarding house with wide carpeted steps around the room to stretch out on, and windows that opened to let in a cool, afternoon breeze.

My second session introduced some of the elements of Harp Therapy for people who felt drawn to learn more about our exciting field. Practical activities included improvising on simple patterns, and an opportunity to explore easy repertoire. During one activity where we improvised with intent, offering our music to someone else in the room, a class next door began playing fast Latin rhythms! It gave us a real life example of staying in the moment and keeping focus on the person for whom we are playing.

These two sessions and Christine Middleton's Day in the Life of a Therapeutic Musician were all well attended and sparked lots of interest and discussion about the field of harp therapy, training and more. Our combined table in the marketplace was a showcase for the work of harp therapy in Australia.

Here's hoping there will be another Harp Fest NZ down the track. There was a good contingent from Tasmania and other parts of Australia, and I'm sure next time there will be even more from Australia now that word has got out about how good it was! Thank you to the Harp Fest NZ committee and Anna Dunwoodie for such an excellent experience.

St John's Calvary Hospital, Hobart

I am continuing my volunteer position at St John's with lots of great comments and feedback about the harp from staff, patients and families. This week I played at a special morning tea for the Gibson Unit, and I was presented with a lovely certificate from the Palliative Care team who spoke of the 'soothing sounds' of the harp.

Therapy Harp Training Program

As Director, I am thrilled to see the student body growing into a truly global community. I enjoy meeting with the students each month at our themed Zoom workshops which I run at two different times to cater for all the time zones! More details at www.therapyharp.com

The Harp Zone

Each month since March I have facilitated a relaxation session called The Harp Zone, held at the cosy Hobart Breathing Space. These sessions are for the wider community. Firstly, the group creates soundscapes together with small harps, singing bowls and gentle percussion instruments. Everything

Winter 2023

is provided, and participants really enjoy the chance to create sounds in a safe, structured setting. The second part of the evening is a short relaxation session where I play harp and singing bowls while participants enjoy taking time out to breathe and relax. I am looking forward to continuing these sessions throughout the year and word of mouth in Hobart is spreading the news that this is something worth doing!

Portarlington Harp Day

It was wonderful to attend the recent harp day hosted by Christine Middleton. Christina Tourin led us in an inspiring workshop and later presented a dynamic concert with several other local musicians. An excellent day of music which brought the wider harp community together.



ATHA

In the past few months, I have enjoyed presenting at Tune a Month and the monthly discussion group. It's always a pleasure to see everyone on there and I thank the committee and others who help make it happen.

Victoria

Carla Whitely

Things are gradually opening up somewhat in Victoria. Aged Care appears to be more willing for Therapeutic Harp Practitioners to be visiting again. There is a willingness for musicians to be allowed to play in public areas. However due to a resurgence of Covid sone facilities are reluctant to allow THPs to sit with residents in their rooms for one-to-one sessions. We still have to do RAT tests and have our immunization up to date.

ATHA Discussion Group

Carol Booth

At the recent discussion on Tuesday 16th May, Gwenda Davies gave a talk titled 'My use of the harp in music therapy practice.' Gwenda's fascinating presentation began with an eye-opening description of the difficulties of utilising a harp within the Music Department of a major university. Gwenda then described the ways she uses a lap harp, large harp and reverie harp with children, people in aged care (some with dementia) and people with autism. She illustrated with specific examples. Gwenda also spoke about her Master's degree research on the use of harp as an

Winter 2023

interactive tool in music therapy. The discussion which followed explored the differences and similarities between music therapy and therapeutic harp practice. Gwenda highlighted the need for collaboration between the two disciplines.

The next ATHA discussion group will be on Tuesday 20th June at 7.30pm. Christine Middleton, will present her talk "A Day in the Life of a Therapeutic Harp Practitioner" which she presented at the Harp Fest NZ in February 2023. She will be sharing her journey in the world of therapeutic harp, including training to be a therapeutic harp practitioner, highlighting all the different areas that therapeutic harp practitioners can work in, case studies and stories from the bedside."

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.

Should I have a spare set of strings? Also, a bit on slipping tuning pins.

The answer to spare strings is that it depends. If you are performing, then you should definitely have a spare set of strings for your harp. You never know when a string might break and trying to play with a broken/missing string is challenging if not impossible. It surprises me the number of times that we get a panic call, requesting that a string be Express Posted to them as a string just broke and they have a gig coming up in a couple of days. Obviously if you have a spare set of strings, you are covered and then you can order the replacement string without the panic.

If you only play at home for your own enjoyment, then you will not be so frantic to get the replacement string. Although, it would still be nice to have a replacement on hand and not lose valuable practice time rather than waiting for a replacement to arrive.

If you are performing, then the cost of the spare stings should be considered part of your cost that you charge. If the cost of a spare set of strings is a challenge for you, there are some ways to reduce the cost.

The first is that you could have a set of strings less the metal strings and take the chance that a metal string will not break since they tend to break less often than other strings. The other strategy is to order a skeleton set. In this case you do not carry a replacement for every string but only the coloured strings for each octave, (C and F) plus a D and an A for each octave. The D can replace the D or E as they are close to the same gauge and likewise an A can be used for the G, A or B. Again these are all close to the same gauge and can be used without damaging your harp.

Slipping Tuning pins. If your tuning pin slips, that is it turns back after tuning then there are ways to remedy this situation.

The first thing is to determine the type of tuning pin. If it is threaded it needs to be treated differently than traditional tapered tuning pins. If it is threaded as in a zither pin which only protrudes on one side and is used mostly on smaller harps. Or some other harps such as those from Dusty Strings, some past harps by Harps and Harps and many harps from Pakistan will need a

Winter 2023

different approach. For these, one solution is to apply "PinTite" to the pins. Another is to apply a thin coat of glue to walls of the hole, these probably are best done by a harp technician. Or it may be possible to remove the pin and insert a piece of string into the hole before reinserting the pin. This will make the hole smaller and should hold the slipping pin better. Do not attempt to push these pins in to tighten them.

For standard tapered tuning pins as found on most harps, the solution is to push the pin in deeper. These pins are tapered and fit in a tapered hole so by pushing them in further, they will be tighter. While bracing the string side of the neck, with the tuning key in place, apply slight back and forth motion and apply pressure to the pin. Due to limited space here, you might check out this video by Steve Moss on how to do this.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T lxlj0OjyQ

Regulation, what is it and do I need it?

When your harp no longer sounds an exact half tone when the lever or pedal/disc is engaged this is a big clue that a regulation is needed. Other reasons are if there are buzzes and other extraneous sounds. Regulation is the process of setting the discs/pedal mechanism or levers and bridge pins so that they raise the pitch exactly a semitone when engaged and resolving any extraneous sounds.

Pedal harp regulation can be more involved and is outside the scope of this article. Pedal harps usually require regulation anywhere from every 6 months to several years depending on how often the harp is played and how accurate the sound needs to be. If you have a Camac harp the basic over and under adjustment is a do it your self procedure using the electric "do-hickey" that came with your harp and the cables can be easily adjusted without removing the base. Other pedal harps require much more effort, time and cost and usually require a trained technician.

Over time harps change shape with the string tension exerting a force on the soundboard that can cause the soundboard to belly up and/or the neck to distort down. Your harp may sound better with a belly to the soundboard but it shortens the string length and therefore the note sounded no longer is raised a semi tone when the disc or lever is engaged.

Lever harps can be regulated by a harp technician or the procedure is fairly simple if you want to do it yourself. Fortunately, most modern lever harps have adjustable bridge pins which make this procedure substantially easier than in the past. Unless the note is way out, it is a simple matter of adjusting the bridge pin in our out to get a perfect semitone. Only in a rare case would the lever itself need to be moved.

Whether the bridge needs to be screwed in or out to get the semitone depends on the brand of lever. Some levers raise the string when engaged and others depress the string when engaged. There are a number of tutorials on line that can walk you through the procedure depending on the type or brand of levers that you have. Usually the pitch is too sharp when engaging the lever. For Camac, Loveland and other levers that depress the string you will need to screw the bridge pin in closer to the neck. Truitt, Rees and other levers that raise the string when engaged will be just the opposite.

Winter 2023

There are other issues that may arise such as buzzes and "ticks". Buzzes usually are a result of the string being too close to one part of the lever when not engaged. Adjusting the bridge pin should remedy this but then if you can no longer get a semi tone you may have to also move the lever. It can be a procedure of adjusting everything so that the sting does not buzz and the also getting the semitone. A ticking sound when engaging the lever is usually a result of the lever not being aligned properly with the string. In this case when the lever is engaged, the string will pop into the grove in the lever and cause a "ticking" sound. The lever will need to be moved to realign it in this case.

How do I designate a replacement string?

Good question since this causes a lot of confusion. As a supplier of replacement strings for many harp models, we get lots of confusing requests from confused customers.

Adding to the confusion is that harp octaves and piano octaves differ. You can check out this link which gives a chart illustrating the harp octaves and one comparing harp octaves to piano octaves. https://harps.com.au/strings-and-accessories/ Since most chromatic tuners and many American harp suppliers use the piano octave designation this adds to the confusion. Harps are unique in many ways including how the octave/notes are designated. A bit of harp history is that early pedal harps started the numbering from the top/treble note as number one. These harps had an E as the first note and octave (first octave E). Then the remaining notes followed down to the bass. Later as more strings were added to the pedal harp models, the added treble strings were designated as octave "0" (often called octave 0 and above). All pedal harps and most gut strung harps as well as lever harps from Europe and many Australian makers use the harp octave designation. Adding to this is that harp octaves start in the treble and go down to the bass and change octaves starting with the E while piano octaves are the reverse (lowest octaves in the bass) and change octaves at the C. By coincidence middle C, C4 is the same in both systems.

Also, some people refer to the bass as the highest notes since on most harps the neck at the column end is physically higher than the knee block end although the string pitch is lower. So, if they say the string above middle C, do they mean physically higher location or higher pitch?

When ordering replacement strings for pedal harps and most other harps you can order strings by harp octave and note, i.e. 3rd octave C for example. For many folk/lever harps the easier way is to list the harp model and then the string number and note. For example, Dusty Strings Ravenna 34 # 22, A.

If your string is other than "gut" or "nylon" you will need to add a note as to the type of string, for example, fluorocarbon or even a brand name if appropriate. Most harps with say nylon strings the strings are interchangeable. But, with a nylon string harp from Camac, the string gauges of Camac nylon strings are slightly different than Bow Brand nylon strings. They will work without damaging your harp, but the sound may be slightly compromised if not using the string the harp was designed for.

As a further note at this time is that strings are in short supply. Bow Brand a major supplier of strings especially gut strings has been unable to fully supply strings. Many lever harps use wrapped nylon strings and there used to be a number of suppliers overseas, however several have retired or

Winter 2023

otherwise stopped suppling nylon wrapped strings meaning the remaining two suppliers in America are overwhelmed and it may take a while to get replacement strings.

Questions and comments for future "Harp Workbench" column of this newsletter can be addressed to the editor, Glenda Underhill <u>harptranquility@gmail.com</u> 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 <u>www.harps.com.au</u>

Greetings from Peter Roberts.

Standing alongside Christina Tourin and having a chat with her is not an unusual thing for most ATHA members, but it was a treat from me to visit with her again recently after so many years.

Christina's influence in establishing a field of therapeutic harp training around the world is legendary. You only need look at the photos she posts of her travels and the group sessions she presents to be amazed at her passion, continued enthusiasm, and energy for this work.

I first met Christina several years ago when she was presenting.at a Music -thanatology conference at the Snowbird Ski resort in the Rocky Mountains near Salt Lake City, Utah

She has visited my home in Geelong, and I'm sure we've bumped into each other elsewhere overseas, but a memorable time for me was spent during the leadership we shared of an International Harp Convergence, held in Melbourne many years ago.

But here she is again. This time in Port Arlington Vic. It was lovely to catch up and to hear her play. She still has that twinkle in her eye and hasn't changed one bit.



Winter 2023

SOME GOOD NEWS!

REVERIE HARP DONATION

Dear ATHA members.

The Institute of Music in Medicine (<u>www.imim.com.au</u>) of which I am the CEO, has recently received a generous donation and I would like to use some of the money towards the placement of three, **free**, Reverie harps, carry bags, stands etc for use by ATHA members.



If you would like to be considered for one of these harps, please contact me on the following email address (<u>ceo@imim.com.au</u>) with a *brief paragraph or two* outlining some hopes or intentions of yours for the use of one of these beautiful instruments.

If you are a fortunate recipient of one of these harps, the Board of the IMIM would eventually like to have a photograph of you using your Reverie harp along with a paragraph or two giving feedback on any outcomes of the use of your instrument.

Best regards



Peter Roberts <u>www.imim.com.au</u> <u>www.robertsmusic.net</u>

Winter 2023

HEAVENLY HARP DAY PORTARLINGTON

On Saturday 13th May 2023, Christine Middleton hosted Christina Tourin for a highly successful Harp Workshop/Concert at the Portarlington Uniting Church. Thirty enthusiastic harpists were treated to an inspiring two-hour workshop led by Christina. Following a shared lunch, the harpists were then joined in the Church venue by 65 members of the community for a sold-out concert.

Two tables were set up in the foyer of the church where a range of harp merchandise was displayed including Glenda Underhill's newly released novel "A Harpers Journey", Glass Angels made by a local artist using recycled coloured glass found on local beaches on the Bellarine, Glass Window Harps provided by Catherine and a large selection of CD's recorded by Christina and ATHA members. Peter Roberts also had a display of his Reverie Harp and CD's.

As the crowds arrived at the church door, Jenni Sawell played a lovely selection of harp music which settled the crowd down before the commencement of the concert.

The Concert opened with ATHA President Catherine Lyons-Nash, belting out in her bluesy, fresh style of singing... "Fever", "Aint No Sunshine" and "Hallelujah". Catherine was accompanied by Tim Sheed on Double Bass and Christine Middleton on Harp. The trio, formed three days before the Concert, had the crowd clicking their fingers and singing, which created a high energy start to the afternoon.

Next came Christina, walking down the aisle playing "Claire De Lune" on a lap harp. Throughout the rest of the concert, Christina played on large levered harps, delighting the audience with a mix of Celtic, Paraguayan & Meditative music. The audience were mesmerised by her storytelling and the beauty and skills of her performance on the day.

Norma O'Donnell, 87 yrs of age and a member of the Portarlington Sea Angels, played her 10 string King David Harp - "A Rosebud By My Early Walk" - Robbie Burns, "English Country Garden" and "Summertime". Her performance also received a large applause from an admiring audience.

Christina accompanied Carla Whitely on flute for a beautiful rendition of "Star of the County Down" and with Anke Arkestyn for "Habanera Gris - Orlando Ortis and a lovely set of improvisations in the key of G major and D major.

Tim Sheed, accompanied by Christine Middleton playing the "Tennessee Waltz" in the background, recited an Australian Bush Poem by Keith Lethbridge called the "Wongundy Hall" The story, poem and music created a magical trip down memory lane for the audience of old-time dance halls and interval suppers.

The Harp Day was a resounding success and many thanks go to the performers on the day – Carla, Anke, Jenni, Catherine, Norma, Christine & Tim. They not only gave fantastic performances as supporting acts to Christina but also volunteered in a myriad of ways to make it the success that it was. Thanks also to Andrew Whitely and Gillian Turner for assisting on the merchandise table and in the kitchen. Contact Christine Middleton on 0419 526 550 if you would like to view the concert.

Plans are underway to hold another Heavenly Harp Day in Portarlington later in the year.

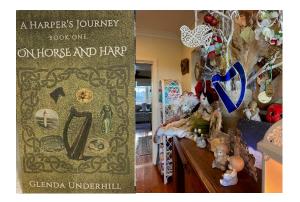
Winter 2023



Christina's workshop attended and enjoyed by 30 eager participants



Catherine entertains the audience with her dulcet tones, ably accompanied here by Tim



Trading table





Christina

Norma on her King David harp

Winter 2023



Christina and Anke

Norma, Jenni, Christina, Carla, Christine, Anke and Tim



Christina – nothing like a new Aussie hat to make you smile!



Two lovely ladies sharing a moment!

IHTP- AU May 2023 Live Events

We met in beautiful Guildford, Victoria, wonderfully hosted by Vimukti and Karel at their stunning property. **Module 1** (a refresher for most) saw a rich variety of sessions, from presenters Anna Muller, Christina Tourin, Claire Evelynn, Genevieve Fry, Jenni Sawell, Louise Bell and Vimukti.

Topics included The Power of One Note, Modes, Improv, Grief, the Reverie Harp, Touching Sound, Harp & Voice, Interactive Music, Creating in Canva, and combining recorded improvisations with art ~ Drawing Sound.

The days were full and intensive, balanced by social time and meals, including Vimukti's delicious vegan creations, and the opportunity to wander in the peaceful environment amongst trees, birdsong, fresh air \sim and to enjoy the twilight visits by kangaroos!



We were blessed to experience amazing **Module 2** presentations by Christina Tourin, founder of International Harp Therapy Program, visiting from California. Subjects included Chinese Elements, Celtic Circle, Heart Math, Art and Composition by the Students, and of course Resonant Tone ~ a unique keynote of IHTP and a potent method for connecting deeply with and playing intentionally for recipients. Equally engaging were Vimukti's sessions on Resonant Kinesiology, Living Anatomy with funky music and movement, and her insights for meditative connecting on an energy level.

Winter 2023

Participants had many opportunities to work in pairs: to play harp for each other, share insights, and practically ground the materials.





Preparing to play Beautiful Tunes for appreciative visitors

Sound Journey with Christina & Louise

Winter 2023

An incredible experience playing harps at Edgar's

Mission sanctuary for rescued farmed animals in Lancefield was featured on Channel 9 News that night.

> AND ... we're delighted to announce an Internship partnership between IHTP-AU and Edgar's Mission Please contact Vimukti who is co-ordinating this.

!!



On Celebration Day we were honoured to take part in a Smoking Ceremony with Dja Dja Wurrung elders Aunty Marilyne [far L] and Aunty Vicky [far R]

No. 12

Thank you Anna Ng & others for these great photos! *





Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association 2023. If you'd like to contribute to future editions, please send to glenda at harptranquility@gmail.com