

HARP NOTES

Newsletter of the Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association

Calendar of Events:

'Harp at the Dock' Victoria

- May 8th, 2021
- June 5th, 2021
- July 18th, 2021
- August 7th, 2021
- September 11th, 2021
- October 2nd, 2021
- November 13th, 2021.

IHTP-AU Skills Workshop

- June 19th, 2021. Online.

ATHA Social Group

- Tuesday 20th April, 7:30 via zoom

[See inside for details.](#)

Recent graduates.

Glenda Underhill - IHTP

Congratulations!



President's Report

Hello fellow harpers,

Welcome to 2021. I think that we'll all agree to forget that 2020 ever happened but with the future roll out of a COVID vaccine, we should all hopefully be back into full swing by the end of 2021. Good news to hear that many of you are slowly returning to playing your harp at aged care facilities, hospitals and other venues.

Unfortunately for me, I returned with such zeal that I recently developed a painful condition to my right shoulder region (rotator cuff). I'm told this could be a combination of too much harp playing, poor posture and the ageing process. I prefer to believe that it was too much housework. That said, I was fortunate to find a local physiotherapist who just happens to be a grade 8 trained harpist and who is providing weekly treatment and shoulder strengthening exercises. I have included an article on the rotator cuff condition and it's treatment, written by Haydee. Haydee has also offered to provide an "Exercise for Harpists" to be included in our monthly HarpNotes, which I have kindly accepted on behalf of all ATHA members. (See the Article on "Harp Injuries".)

"Improv Magic", a monthly initiative by our ATHA Secretary, Catherine Lyons-Nash is going from strength to

strength with an average of 17 attendees at each Zoom Meeting. Thank you to all those harp practitioners for sharing your “Improv Magic” tricks with members of ATHA.

“Harp at the Dock” 2021 series began on Saturday 20th March after a long COVID hiatus. Mary Doumany facilitated the first workshop and all 14 attendees found her presentation inspiring, thoughtful and informative. Check the enclosed flyer for future dates to note in your diaries and join us at the Docklands Library. (See Flyer for 2021 Dates)

The ATHA Committee met last week and are currently working on a Therapeutic Harp Flyer to promote the work of therapeutic harp practitioners. Also, the committee are considering organising a National Therapeutic Harp Conference during 2022 which will further promote the work of our members. We’ll keep you updated as both projects progress.

Don’t forget to join our facebook page “Australian Therapeutic Harp Community” and to check our Web page www.atha.org.au regularly to keep up to the date with what’s happening around Australia and beyond and to connect with the therapeutic harp community.

Finally a big thank you to the hard working ATHA committee members who were all returned for the year 2021 - Anna Muller Kerry Viner, Catherine Lyons-Nash, Nicky Lock, Carol Booth, Vimukti Warr, Jenni Sawell. Each one of these committee members bring thoughtful and constructive ideas to the monthly meetings and are the reason that the ATHA association is progressing in such a professional manner.

Happy Harping

Christine Middleton (President)

Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association



The Therapeutic Harpist featured in this edition is...

Glenda Underhill



Images from Glenda Underhill

Most people I know have made a conscious choice to play the harp, my beginning with the harp is a little different. Sure, I'd seen Harpo Marx playing the harp in movies, and read about Druids and harps, but that was the extent of my relationship with harps, and to be quite honest, I was rather ambivalent until I visited the Power House Museum in Sydney, more than 20 years ago.

There it sat! Roped off in the corner of a room. An old broken harp with chunks of soundbox missing, no strings and being held together with wrappings of fencing wire. I don't know what, how or why it happened...but I was besotted. I can't really explain this. I was so drawn to this instrument. I sat on the floor with it for several hours...and so began my harp journey.

I knew I wanted to play this instrument, but where do you get one? Do you have to go to Ireland? I seriously knew nothing about harps, but after talking with people and asking lots of questions, I met Andy Rigby, an amazing harp player and maker.

I have to say on reflection, that for someone whose knowledge of harps was zero, I was very definite in what I did and didn't want. Andy specialises in the making of ParaCeltic harps, a hybrid cross between a Celtic harp and the light weight harp of Paraguay. They have a beautiful resonance and the convenience of being fitted with guitar tuners to tune the strings (you never have to worry about losing or forgetting your tuning key), but not what I wanted. I wanted to tune with a tuning key and I most certainly didn't want levers. I wanted nothing to interfere with the pure sound. Andy was brilliant and so understanding, and I played my part, being patient. Two years later, at the age of 41 years, I had a lovely Blackwood unlevered harp which I still have and still love.

Living in an isolated region, and having one lesson from Andy when he delivered my harp, I had little choice but to teach myself. I could read music as I had learned the piano accordion as a child, and books on playing the harp were plentiful. It didn't take too long before I could play a few tunes, O'Carolan of course!

Despite the distance, Andy and I became good friends and he would always let me know about any harp camps or retreats that were on offer, and when I could, I would attend. These were wonderful experiences for me and introduced me to a lot of inspirational harp players, and most interesting and enjoyable people. Peter Roberts and Mary Doumany are just two of the many that spring to mind. I also joined our local folk club, and although there were no other harp players, there were a couple of like-minded people amongst the members.

It was through the folk club that I first played my harp for someone dying. One of our members whose Mother had frequently attended folk club, was nearing death and her family wondered if I would play for her. Of course, I said yes. Her Mother was in a bed in the centre of the lounge room surrounded by family members. They explained that she had been lying there for weeks now and was non-communicative. I began to play, she opened her eyes and smiled at me...it was a very powerful moment...for all of us. She died that night. This was a pivotal time for me and my harp playing.

Others had expressed that they found my playing very moving and transportive. Is this why the harp chose me? This question had been an ongoing question for me since my first encounter in the Power House Museum. What was I meant to be doing with a harp? I'm still somewhat unsure. However, I just kept (and still do) following my harp along the path to who knows where.

Having been made aware of the power that the harp had in the arena of health and wellbeing, how to legitimise it? was my next question. So, at 48 years of age, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts at La Trobe University, I thought perhaps Sociology, being about people and society, may be a useful coupling for my harp playing, but alas, the fit was not quite what I was looking for, so I did Social Work.

During this time, I'd attended a harp camp at Beaufort in Victoria and Peter Roberts and I were chatting, he was telling me about his training as a Thanatologist. It piqued my interest, but I was looking for something a bit broader than playing for the dying. Peter told me about a few other programs that used the harp at the bedside with a wider focus, a healing focus. In 2009 I enrolled in the IHTP.

Long story short, with two University degrees under my belt, an extremely demanding job that I loved, with ninety percent of the IHTP done, I deferred. However, life has a strange way of

presenting just what is needed at a particular time. As the pressure of life subsided, I enrolled in the Harps for Healing program and in late 2017 whilst in Ireland I received my graduation notification.

At this point, it is possibly useful to know that during my therapeutic harp student journey, I'd done an internship for IHTP with our local Palliative Care team and then another for Harps for Healing at our local hospital where I had previously worked as a Social Worker. During my internship I spent my days working with cancer patients, people living with diabetes and palliative patients. I also chose to do the harp therapy internship program at the Canberra hospital under the wise and watchful eye of Alison Ware. All of these experiences were challenging, enriching and provided opportunity for growth, not only as a therapeutic harp player, but also for me, on a personal level.

Moving on to 2018 (and not wanting to turn this article into a book), I heard that there was to be an aging well expo being held in my area. I wondered what that might be about and made the decision to go along and take my newly printed business cards. On the morning of the expo, I was reluctant. I tried very hard to find an excuse not to go. Then annoyed with myself...I just went. The expo was held in one of our council's function rooms and basically consisted of tables placed throughout the room with representatives from organisations providing services to older adults.

I went around the tables offering my cards and talking to those who were interested, explaining to them what therapeutic harp music was and ways in which it could be used. Most thought it sounded interesting but not a service that their organisation would offer, until...I came to one particular table. I handed my card over and the woman shrieked and began waving it to a woman on another table; I was bewildered. Then she said we've been looking for someone like you for the past week. They were representatives from an aged care provider.

Although their response was very enthusiastic and made me feel good at the time, I did wonder if anything would come of it. I finished my tour of the tables and went home. About an hour later I received a phone call from the area manager wanting to meet with me. We met the following morning and I have been playing my harp in a paid position as a Clinical Musician in aged care ever since.

My work in aged care encompasses a number of aspects; I play in areas where there are groups of people, I play for those living with dementia, I play for people who are bed-fast and I play for the dying. I am never quite certain as to what will greet me each session, but I find a sense of value in each and every area of service and this is reciprocated by staff, residents and their families.

I choose to work freelance and as my work in aged care although regular, is part-time, I augment my income by working in other areas with my harp. I work privately with individuals combining social work and therapeutic harp, and occasionally, I have been fortunate to get work with corporations using my services for reflective work in team building, and to support meditation sessions. I am constantly looking for ways to raise the profile of therapeutic harp music and have also presented at a number of conferences, utilising the arena of Social Work to educate health workers of the qualities and areas of health in which therapeutic harp music can be used.

Our time has come! Oh, (Silver lining thinking here) Covid provided me the opportunity to return and finish IHTP...I graduated last month!

ATHA State Rep Reports

ACT

Alison Ware reports: I have just returned to work after 6 weeks off so just settling back in.

One great thing is a lady in Canberra is training through the therapy harp training program so it's good to have someone here.

I'm officially at the zoo as a volunteer which is great fun.

The Art of Therapeutic Harp Weekend, 9th – 11th April 2021.

It has been a difficult year for many and I hope this weekend will be a time to relax and replenish while experiencing and sharing skills used by Therapeutic Harpists.

For the past 14 years I have been learning, training and working as a Clinician Musician. It is a unique profession where music is only one component of the service we offer. During the weekend we will be exploring what makes it so special and how to create a healing presence with music.

Something else that may be of interest is I am currently participating in 2 research projects - one in ICU and the other on a general medical ward (it's called the safe ward project) and the harp program is part of "intervention 3" calming methods.

I am not sure when the projects will be written up but I will share when available.

Alison also reports that her Therapeutic Harp Internship Program in Canberra Hospital unfortunately cannot go ahead this year, as volunteers have not been approved.

She is thinking of developing a graduate program too, with specialties, so we certainly look forward to hearing more about that when her program starts up again.

NSW

Jenni Sawell ran a Harp Therapy Improvising and Modes Workshop at the recent Harp Holiday at Blackheath in January, (run by Louise Johnson). The focus of the workshop was on how we use modes and improvising in different situations in therapy work, along with relaying some real life stories from on the job. Practical hands-on simple improvising was demonstrated, and everyone played together as a group.

Louise Bell also added to the session with some blues chords to improvise on, based on one of her own compositions.

The workshop was very well received.

Some flyers were also available with information about Brandden Lassells (Harps and Harps) new carbon fibre therapy harp which has just been released. There was a good amount of positive interest generated in Harp Therapy work overall.

TAS

The Harp Society of Tasmania hosted its annual Harp Island weekend at Grindelwald (Swiss-style village resort) on the March long weekend. I (Helen Morrison) was

pleased to be able to offer a range of ensemble workshops called 'Play Your Part'. While learning beautiful ensemble pieces we covered topics such as starting an ensemble, managing performance anxiety, playing with expression, and we delved into big ideas like teamwork, resilience and connection.

Our concert to family and friends on the final day was a good opportunity to put everything into practice. A mix of ensemble pieces and solos made for an interesting and balanced program. We all went home on a high with harp music ringing in our ears and so grateful that we could get together for this weekend of music-making, sharing and friendship.



Pic - Harp Island 2021 (photo credit John England)

SA

Welcome to Maureen and Ilona who are both recent students in therapeutic music.

Maureen Ritchie from Adelaide, South Australia has recently enrolled in the Therapy Harp Training Program, New Zealand, and is enjoying immersing herself in the learnings to become a Certified Healthcare Musician. Maureen is a Social Worker, Counsellor and Meditation teacher and has been playing the harp for two years, fulfilling a long held ambition.

Ilona Weir has recently begun studying with the Therapy Harp Training Program, which is run by Marion Titmuss and based in New Zealand. This flexible and affordable course is now recognised by ATHA. The THTP trains students to play healthcare music in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice and in home/clinic settings, and graduates earn the title 'Certified Healthcare Musician'. Ilona had previously completed Level 1 with IHTP (including a placement at Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide in 2015) and has been able to use Recognised Prior Learning for the course. The course is open to all musicians (not just harpists). There is lots of information about the course, in addition to some resources, at <https://www.therapyharp.com/>

Ilona currently works 2 hours per week at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, playing the harp as part of the 'Music for Wellness' program in the Neonatal Unit. The music she plays is designed to be appropriate for pre-term babies, but also takes into consideration staff and parents. A music therapy program has also recently begun in the neonatal nurseries, whereby a registered music therapist sings (and helps parents to write) lullabies for the babies. The music therapist works closely with the parents and baby to promote bonding.

An article with further information and photos from the music sessions at the WCH is available on the WCH Foundation website:

https://wchfoundation.org.au/neonatal-nurseries-harp-ilona-weir/?fbclid=IwAR3xur9QI5_bmaj4mhEa_5r42TeVmCf4qmopsMGXAoP3M8nlEmt-HCc-kHc

NICU-Music Therapy Course:

Ilona recently studied Part 1 (online) of the NICU-MT course, provided by the National Institute for Infant and Child Medical Music Therapy (Florida, USA). The course is designed for music therapists working in NICUs, but would also be very useful for any therapeutic musicians working in NICUs. The course took place over 2 days and presented results of the most up to date research in the beneficial effects of music therapy on infants. Hospitals are a very stressful environment for babies, and the research shows that playing music in NICUs can actually help babies to go home earlier. Therapeutic music can help to reduce stress, lower heart rates, help babies to feed, sleep and gain weight. Furthermore, the beneficial effects of music are now thought to be long term for the infant. Music programs are economical; they can help to save hospitals money by reducing the length of the baby's stay. NICUs can often be quite noisy environments, but playing gentle music can help to reduce ambient noise in the nurseries. This is generally because people tend to lower their voices when therapeutic music is being played. Research has shown that the most optimal music to play for

babies are simple, repetitive tunes/lullabies. The music should be kept in a major key with no more than 4 chord changes. The music should be soothing, with a slow tempo and steady rhythm.

Rosemary Hallo continues to teach the harp to beginners and more advanced players through the WEA, potentially bringing more harpists into therapeutic music. She is also researching medieval harp music and its connection to music therapy. Rosemary hopes to present the results of her research at a Docklands workshop later in the year.

Lyn Johnson has recommenced playing the harp at the Laurel Hospice for six hours per week, thanks to additional funding from the Foundation. This is in addition to six hours/week in the Flinders Medical Centre. The hospice adjoins the hospital so Lyn splits her hours into three hours twice a week in each facility. Patients, families and staff frequently comment on the relaxing effect of the music.

Several harpists in Adelaide, including Ilona and Lyn have formed the SA Celtic Harp Orchestra. They meet for monthly practices during 2020 and performed at several sold-out performances for the 2021 Adelaide Fringe Festival. Although the program was entertainment based rather than therapeutic, the fun and fellowship within the group was therapeutic for the members and enjoyable for the audiences.

Harp Workbench

By Brandden Lassells

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: How do I disinfect my harp and advice on rust and corrosion?

With the concerns of spreading viruses via contact with a harp used or touched by multiple people we can offer this advice. Isolation may work for you although there are varying degrees of advice on how long viruses can live on a hard surface and this strategy may not be feasible.

In some situations, there may be specific protocols that need to be followed. If you are concerned what this means for your harp, I will discuss the effects some disinfecting agents may have on your harp's finish and strings.

You can gently clean your harp with soapy water and then wiped dry with a dry cloth. The cloths should not be reused but discarded. Harps finished with hard coatings such as nitrocellulose lacquer and other finishes as used by Dusty Strings, Camac Harps, Harps and Harps and other major harp makers are safe to use with alcohol wipes. Again they should then be wiped with a dry cloth. These methods are safe for nylon, synthetic and metal strings but used with caution with gut strings. Alcohol will dissolve oiled or shellac finishes so do not use alcohol on these finishes and we recommend testing a small inconspicuous area of your harp before using any of these solutions. Hand sanitiser is not recommended to be used on your harp as most contain other ingredients, such as hand softeners, other than the alcohol and they can harm the finish on your harp.

If you do not like the squeaky clean feel of the strings after wiping with alcohol wipes, you can have reasonable success using a towel with dish detergent to wipe the strings and then wiping the strings with a damp cloth followed by drying. This would be similar to the advice of washing hands with soap and water.

Rust and Corrosion We have encountered situations where metal parts of harps are rusting and/or corroding. According to research papers the air even up to 40 KM from the ocean can carry corrosive air. If you notice that your tuning pins or the fret pin in your levers are rusting, you need to take corrective action. The discoloration of the strings and tuning pins may be primarily a cosmetic issue, but if there is rust on the fret pin of your lever it can cut into the strings when engaged.

Penetrol, found it paint stores, wiped on with some 0000 steel wool should remove rust and leave a rust inhibiting layer on the metal parts. If you live within the 40 Km area you might also use a cotton bud to coat the fret pin (the part that engages the string) as a preventive. If rust has started you will need to use some abrasive cord to remove the rust first, then treat with Penetrol.

Questions and comments for future “Harp Workbench” column of this newsletter can be addressed to the editor, Kerry Viner at beached@me.com or to Brandden. Brandden Lassells is 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

HARP IN OUTBACK AUSTRALIA

By Christine Middleton – President, Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association

Published in the Folk Harp Journal Fall 2020 No 188

Schools of the Air are uniquely Australian. Commencing in 1951 in Alice Springs in far northern Australia, the service was set up to meet the needs of students in remote and isolated communities throughout Queensland. Teaching was taught and still is today, by on-air classes.

Mount Isa school of the Air (MISOTA) is an Australian government co-educational program servicing the needs of students living on isolated cattle stations in the far north west of Queensland and the Northern Territory. The area covers 1 million square kilometres and the land is often described as “Golden Sunsets across Flat Plains”. The 200 children within this catchment are taught via satellite and their outback classrooms vary from a kitchen table, caravan or under a tent fly. They are supervised mostly by governesses and come together annually at designated outback Rodeo grounds for the MISOTA Minischool program.

This Minischool is conducted by a MISOTA field team of teachers who, over a period of six weeks, travel over 2600kms across rural and remote outback regions throughout north central Queensland. The program enables students the opportunity to work face to face with their teachers, over a period of four days with a range of activities. This program also engages the services of an “Artist in Residence” to travel with them. The theme for 2019 was “music, mindfulness and robots” and I had the good fortune of securing a contract as “Artist in Residence” (Harp & Drama) with this unique touring program.

Throughout most of the year, I work as a professional harpist at weddings and special events as well as providing Therapeutic Harp services across three Melbourne hospitals. To be employed as an “Artist in Residence” was a new and exciting opportunity.

My husband is an Australian Bush Poet and each year, as the chill of Winter descends on the southern part of Australia, we travel almost 3,000kms to far north Queensland to chase the sun, along with thousands of other Australian Grey Nomads. With our little motorhome and a small trailer filled with 8 coloured harpsicles, last year we set off from the south and headed north to meet up with the MISOTA teachers in the North Central Queensland mining town of Mt. Isa. I knew that the next six weeks travelling in convoy with the MISOTA teachers, throughout the wide breadth of the Gulf of Carpentaria was going to be an interesting journey but I was not expecting the life changing experience that it turned out to be.

Every Sunday afternoon a cavalcade of families would arrive from the outback stations in their 4 wd utes, cars and with many towing caravans/horse trailers. These trailers would normally carry horses at one end and be decked out with beds, chairs and bicycles on the other. Another bonus on this trip

was that the parents provided all the meals and we were fed as though we were hard working ringers and stockmen.....

I facilitated three harp classes per day for up to 8 children, aged between 7yrs-11yrs over a four day period culminating in a harp concert on the final evening. As the children filed into the classroom, they would quietly be seated on the floor in a circle around my harp with eyes closed and one hand resting on the harp. I would then gently play a different improvised piece of music each day. This served to not only settle the children down but also enabled them to experience the vibroacoustic qualities of the harp.

I divided the lessons into four parts....Theory, Storytelling, Creative Art & Mindfulness activities. Over the course of the week the children were introduced to theory concepts through the introduction of Glissandos, F & C coloured strings, string names, rhythms, simple music pieces and creative storytelling using the harp. Songs such as “Kookaburra sits on the Old Gum Tree”, “Wedgetail Eagle” & Incy Wincy Spider” were excellent for introducing F & C strings and improvisation. “The Underwater Song” and the story of “The Little Dove” were also excellent for introducing musical concepts and storytelling. The children loved to play, sing and dance to these well known stories and songs.

One session was devoted to the telling and acting out of a children’s story I have written titled “Pelican Pete”. This is the story of a lost pelican who is rescued by a harp playing mermaid. Most of the children were fascinated by the sea themes and enthusiastically acted out everything from jellyfish to sharks, creating musical effects on the harps and playing a wide variety of percussion instruments.

Creative Art Activities consisted of colouring in, dot to dot and making a harp using cardboard and wool. One word of warning through.....never supply glitter.....it goes everywhere!! One of the most popular activities however, was for the children to “Create a Musical Story” . This activity had been introduced to me at an Australian IHTP/ESM facilitated by Christina Tourin. The children were provided paper and pencil and asked to draw a single line, squiggle or circle. They then swapped their papers with each other and drew an animal from the shape before them. Then in pairs, with one harp between them, they were required to create a story incorporating their animals and include a harp. They then presented their story back to the class with one student reading the story and the other creating sound effects on their harp to enhance the story. There were wonderful stories of crocodiles swallowing harps, snakes being charmed by harps and wild pigs being tamed by harps.

On the final evening, there was a concert where the children would present to their families all that they had learnt during the week. At the concert they played harps, danced, told their crocodile stories and we all finished with the round “Oh how lovely is the evening”.... I was amazed and delighted at how quickly and enthusiastically the children embraced the harp while the parents and teachers were astounded at their progress in such a short period of time.

The Harp program provided a unique, engaging and fun musical experience for children, most of whom had no musical background. As well as covering the musical aspect of the Arts curriculum, it also allowed them to participate in the other elements of wellbeing, drama and creative story telling.

As an “Artist in Residence” I had to connect quickly and effectively with a broad spectrum of families and students and be prepared for the unexpected.

I encourage all of you to take whatever harp opportunities come your way. I had never done anything like this before but the memories and the relationships that were created during this period will last a lifetime.



Article No.2 - Internship.

By Carla Whiteley

So where does one do an internship you may ask. Do you find a facility that meets with your interests, or do you seek out somewhere to broaden your horizon and gain experience and insight in a field that may be of interest in the future. For me it was a challenging question in 2011.

I realised that I was on a journey, but with this journey I was not quite certain as to where the next step would take me. I was still discovering the harp and all its beauty and magic and I recognised I still had so much to learn. Where to go and how to go about it?

I came across this quote “Don’t give up, when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until you stop trying. Don’t be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect. It is this fragile thread that binds us to each other. Don’t be afraid to encounter risks. It is by taking chances that we learn to be brave”.

So, I encountered the risks, took the chances, and went to Anchorage, Alaska, which is just about as far away from Australia as one can get, but yes, that is where I did my internship.

You may well ask ‘Why Anchorage?’

It was, as I said, 2011. Early days for Therapeutic Harp in Australia. At that point, places to do the hours for the final qualification for the IHTP were not readily available. My dream was to work as a Therapeutic Harp Practitioner in the local Hospital, just 7 minutes down the road, but they were reluctant for me to be there, even on a volunteer basis.

I mentioned in my previous article that when I commenced with the IHTP, the modules all required one to travel to the USA. One of those journeys, in 2009, took me to San Diego, where I shared an apartment with Heidi, from Utah and Dr Liuhsiu Kuo from Alaska. Liuhsiu was originally from Taiwan and was working 40 hours a week at the Providence Hospital in Anchorage, employed as the Therapeutic Harp Practitioner. It is a large hospital, the second largest private employer in Alaska with 401 beds, 1190 nurses, more than 850 physicians, and a team of 6 chaplains. Heid mentioned to me in 2010 that she had gone to do her internship there and it had been a wonderful experience having been given a broad overview all the aspects of a large hospital, nicu, pre and post- surgery, oncology etc. She encouraged me to go there as it would give me such a broad perspective.

I had been wanting to see our daughter in New York again so it was a perfect opportunity to combine the two, plus collect my harp, a Triplett Sierra 34 string, which the makers were able to ship to Alaska, and bring it back to Australia as access baggage.

So, the journey began. First New York, where hurricane Irene, threw my travel plans into some sort of disarray, and then onto Anchorage, a 17hour journey, it was a long way from home.

Providence Hospital was established by four women, from the Sisters Of Providence, who travelled from Montreal, Canada, in 1902, to Nome, Alaska, following their mission to minister to the needs of

the poor, sick and unfortunates amongst the gold mining communities (remember the song 'North to Alaska, go North the Rush is on').

It was, for me a challenging, enriching and in many ways a rewarding time, that had at times feelings of achievements as well as a sense of great inadequacy.

Hospitals, the size of Providence, can be daunting and overwhelming, at times. For me the hours were long. I would arrive at the hospital at 8.30 and more often than not be there for up to 12 hours. My main task was to 'shadow' Liuhsiu, as she moved to the various sections of the hospital. I watched her give talks to new staff and I spent time with the chaplains, learning from them and observing their work. Every day I was required to sit in a public section of the hospital and play. This was often in an area where the sound travelled through an open section which allowed the music to reach several floors. Liuhsiu had also set me 12 tasks which she required me to write about.

One of these tasks was the following article she asked me to write which I thought you might find of interest:

QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR THE THERAPEUTIC HARP MUSICIAN.

It is most important for Therapeutic Music to flow, do not stop and start.

Don't play too loudly, cut back on dynamics.

Learn to be flexible with a piece of music maybe it needs to be faster, maybe it needs to be slower.

Sometimes when people make a request there is not always the need to play the whole piece, just play a phrase and modulate around it.

Avoid stopping and starting, go through the piece gracefully, stopping and correcting is not good for the listener. Look at the patient once in while, find an angle so you can see the Harp and the patient.

When you are going to a meeting with a patient it is important to stay focused on the immediate situation and not to be distracted with idle conversation.

Music is accessible and connects to memory and emotions. All people have had experiences with music.

Live music is able to be structured to the listener. The player is intuitive and sensitive to the situation. It can be a catharsis to the listener and release emotions. The patients are encouraged not to repress tears and to move, sing, hum whatever pleases them. The musician can match the listener's moods and bring them to a state of greater calm if needed. The breathing can calm down, heart rate can settle, blood pressure reduces. The musician works not just with the heart beat but also the brainwaves.

In hospitals people are weak. Live music can match their bio-rhythms.

4 stories of the effects of music when Liuhsiu played.

A young person aged 7 who had been treated for a brain tumour and had short term memory loss. He asked for Michael Jackson's "Beat It". He really enjoyed L. H's rendition of it and when she returned the next day he remembered her, the harp and the song.

Amazing Grace is one of the most requested songs. A lady had Amazing Grace played for her. She was in Palliative Care and in her last days she had not responded for some time. When the music played she folded her hands as if in prayer. Music helped her connect with reality in those last moments.

Hearing is the last thing to go. Another lady, mid 50's, who was palliative in ACC (Acute Critical Care) and had not responded for some time had Amazing grace played for her. Two weeks later she saw L.H and told her that the music had given her hope. She had wanted to die. She felt helpless and afraid as she had heard the staff discussing turning off her life support. The music lifted her, gave her the will to live, it had lifted the suffering.

A young man in ACC, a gunshot victim, was on life support. LH played for him during the last moments and his mother testified that for a short time he had been able to breathe on his own. He became an organ donor.

A few More Points Highlighting the Qualities of the Therapeutic Harp Musician.

As therapeutic musicians we have a high standard to maintain. We must be prepared to know our "stuff" 200% and then, when under pressure, we will do 100%+

There is a great difference between performing and providing therapeutic music. We as T.H. M. have to be flexible and very well prepared. We have to be in tune with what is going on around us. We must have a wide repertoire at our fingertips as it is important for the listeners not to hear the same thing all the time.

The music must flow. If a mistake is made, keep going do not go back.

As we are playing we need to have in our minds some sort of "program" to move the music into the areas of the listeners needs.

Even when playing in a public space, doing it as a therapeutic concert or performance we have to be flexible and able to meet what is facing us. We are playing therapeutic music which is not the same as entertainment and performance.

We must never have the music between us and a patient.

There is a vast difference between a musician and a therapeutic musician, this needs to be recognised. However, both must know their music 100%+. The therapeutic musician is providing music to cater for the emotional well-being of the folks they are playing for.

When playing we may get emotional but we must be able to keep going and distance ourselves at those times from our emotions and deal with them later. Hence it is important to know your repertoire.

I returned to Australia, having been away for almost four weeks. I was challenged in so many ways and I know that for me personally it helped to grow as well as confirm the path that I had taken.

Did I fulfil my dream of playing at the local hospital?

That is another story to be told at a later date.

IHTP News.



Module 2 ESM Review

The IHTP Module 2 ESM was originally scheduled for April 2020, as an attendance ESM in Melbourne Australia. This was going to be the one to help IHTP students finish their training by December 2020 when the old campus was retiring. Covid 19 thrived and our lives were, and are, affected forever. IHTP students could not finish their training or their internship. Students had to think outside the box. Creative ways of finishing were necessary.

IHTP founder Christina Tourin also explored creative ways to help her students. The first ever Virtual Module 2 ESM was proposed. Who would have thought it could be possible to be able to teach how to find and work with resonance and double resonance? Christina did. And up to 27 people who attended the ESM over the two intensive long weekends, following nine weeks of prep lessons, experienced this possibility. Students in waiting can now finish their training, graduates get their CEU's and newer IHTP Affiliate students can continue without interruption.

I personally think having to have a virtual gathering showed the importance of setting INTENTION. It showed us that Intention is not limited to a physical understanding of it. We can feel it thousands of kilometres away; we can feel it without verbal communication; it is greater than the physical.

A virtual ESM meant students from the USA, Canada, Australia, Asia, U.K and Europe were able to come together. Judith Hi> joined us for discussion on setting Intention. Mentors popped in and out. We were visited by cats, dogs, children and so[toy madness!

I share with you some of the many comments from the participants to show what the event was like:

"Loved the ESM sessions of playing along with recordings. That was plain, delicious, failure-free fun. Ki Massage and Laura's self-care tasks were valuable. I'd sprinkle them in during the course of the 4.5 hour ESM sessions. I liked doing this online! Yes, there are pros and cons. With our intentions focused as they were, I experienced numerous moments of unforgettable intimacy, language barriers notwithstanding!! It worked! I met harp players I would never otherwise meet. We did not have to be behind masks or travel with all that expense. (I love to travel, but this was so convenient.)" *Canada*

"I thought the training was very good online, considering all the challenges and each were met as most humanly possible. People vs. technology! So much fun!!! I don't know how you all did it, I couldn't have. I got a lot out of the training. I thought for me it was more comfortable in many ways because I didn't have to travel, adjust to a time

change or any of the other environmental factors when away from home trying to work through an intense program. I am glad to be a part of the IHTP family.” **USA**

“On the way back to my time zone I sort through my many notes and documents, pause again and let the images of the last two weekends pass by. The various creative exercises have inspired me to develop my own ideas, the many inputs on resonant tone, improvising and working with humans as well as with animals were lively designed and have enriched my life. The application of what we have learned will only find its confirmation in practice which will enrich us with new insights. That is what I want to work towards. Thank you all for allowing me to participate! I really appreciated the virtual setting in that loving environment, supporting each other in its unique way.” **Europe**

“It was sad for me to cancel my trip to Australia last year, but it was more than amazing we experienced with you, an ONLINE Module2 this time. Thank you very very much for your planning this Module2, ARIGATO! First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Vimukti, Christina, and all faculty in AU. You always think of us Japanese member speaking English as the 2nd language, thank you. I think we join this wonderful Module 2 happily, meaningfully, with your warmth. I feel ChrisIna planted various seeds of creativity into our heart. Having creativity gives us confidence, then we respect each other more. I think if we have creativity, we try to let children, elderly people and others have creativity, also. So, we will be able to make happier circle by creativity planted by IHTP. We have got a lot of treasure from ChrisIna and you all! Also, I was impressed by your great team work. ChrisIna and the faculty of AU support each other, respect each other, which taught me a lot, too. If I were dying soon I would like to be with a harp practitioner who have thoughtful consideration, then listen sparse notes played with warm heart..... Through Module 2, Breaking rooms, Music with the drawing story, Animal therapy, made me noIce a lot of things!! I would like to continue to work with you, IHTP if possible! Thank you, thank you!”
Japan

“All I can say is what an amazing experience and fantastic job you all did puttng the virtual ESM together! Thanks again.” **Australia**

On the 17th of April we have the traditional ESM final day where students perform their ESM composition. As a virtual gathering, mentors will also be able to a>end.

Whether we meet face to face or virtually we now know the Module 2 ESM training can go ahead. From the administration side we have much to take away, adjustments to consider, successes to keep and mistakes to learn from.

Everyone who attended made this event a success and a joy to be involved in. Thank you. Finally, I would like to give recognition to and thank Christina Tourin for her great contribution and service to the world of Therapeutic Harp.

Love, Vimukti Warr IHTP~AU Director

Here we are goofing off at the end!



~ Hello dear Therapeutic Harp Community ~

On behalf of ATHA I am offering to Host a monthly Social get together, virtually.

It is a wonderful way to come together to share and discuss what we are doing and what else is happening in the Therapeutic Harp world. I have recently had experience with setting up a similar meeting for a harp teaching academy.

I propose we come together for 1 to 1½ hours once a month with a bit of a structure:

Meeting 1

Meet and Greet with brief introductions from all in attendance. (Who you are, where you live and what is your Therapeutic harp interest). How long we have for this will depend on how many attend.

Give ideas for topics to discuss.

Ask for a volunteer to be the Spotlight speaker for Meeting 2

Meeting 2

Welcome any one who is attending for the first time.

Spotlight Speaker – this is where the speaker gets to share more of their story or give a presentation on a project they are involved in, or Show and Tell etc..... 10-20 minutes.

Topic of Discussion

News

And so, it goes.

I find it so inspiring to come together and share this.

Our first meeting will be at **7:30pm on Tuesday 20th April**

If you would like to come along and see what it is like you can be added to the Zoom invitation link by emailing your interest to:
vimukti@wholebodyharmony.com.au

Please give at least two day's notice to ensure there is time to add you to the invitation list.

Thank you

Sisterly love

Vimukti

Therapeutic harp during challenging times.

Barbara Carr is currently in Switzerland.

She is working in a nursing home where singing isn't allowed and group activities aren't allowed.

No residents are visible since they have to keep a distance.



Barbara Carr plays for residents in aged care in Switzerland.

HARP INJURIES

by Haydee Ferguson, Director Portside Physiotherapy

(B. Physiotherapy; Grad Cert Health Research)

Musicians tend to develop overuse or chronic injuries, particularly as playing requirements change. With the return of live performances and face-to-face teaching post Covid in 2021, many musicians are finding they are struggling with stamina and niggles as their playing load increases.

"Christine recently began her physiotherapy journey to help manage some shoulder pain that she has been experiencing since her performance schedule has increased. After an initial discussion and a physical assessment we have discovered that she is lacking some shoulder rotator cuff endurance and this is leading to limited movement and referred pain into her right arm and elbow particularly after playing her harp. A combination of hands on physiotherapy techniques and the introduction of some theraband exercises quickly improved Christine's range of pain free movement."

Seeing a physiotherapist can help you better understand the physical requirements of playing your instrument, find ways to improve your posture and breath and prevent injuries from occurring in the future.

****Exercise – Theraband.** With elbows by side, hold theraband in both hands. Keeping one side stable, slowly pull hand to open on compromised shoulder x 30 times daily.



***** NOTE:**

Haydee began her harp journey when she was 8 years old training with Rosemary Hallo in Adelaide, South Australia. She has completed exams in AMEB, Trinity and has also studied the Suzuki method. Haydee has a unique understanding of the physical requirements needed for playing the harp and the impact that posture, breath and endurance have in making playing seem effortless and, most importantly, enjoyable.

Haydee graduated with a Bachelor of Physiotherapy from the University of South Australia in 2012.
portsidephysiotherapy.com.au (03) 5259 1277



International
Harp Therapy Program
Australia

Presents an online

Skills Workshop

Saturday June 19
1~ 4pm ~ Cost: \$45

Three Topics:
Find Your Strengths as a Therapeutic Harpist ~ Anna Muller
Amazing Modes ~ Louise Bell *Animal Planet ~ Vimukti Warr*

Please join us for a fun and informative session to learn more
about harp therapy in a supportive environment. Play
along on mute if you already have a harp.
No prior experience required.

Enquiries: admin@harptherapycampus.com.au



harptherapycampus.com.au



HARP AT THE DOCK

You are invited to a series of exciting workshops to be held throughout 2021 at The Docklands Library, Melbourne. Learn simple tunes, develop new skills, meet other harpists and share the joy of our chosen instrument.

These workshops are open to all ages and skill levels. Harps are available for hire if required.



Bookings essential.
Contact Christine
Middleton at
christine.mi@bigpond.com
or call 0419 526 550.

HARP AT THE DOCK 2021

SATURDAYS

20th March

8th May

5th June

7th August

11th Sept

2nd Oct

13th Nov

11.00am-2.30pm

COST: \$65

\$45 (ATHA
members)

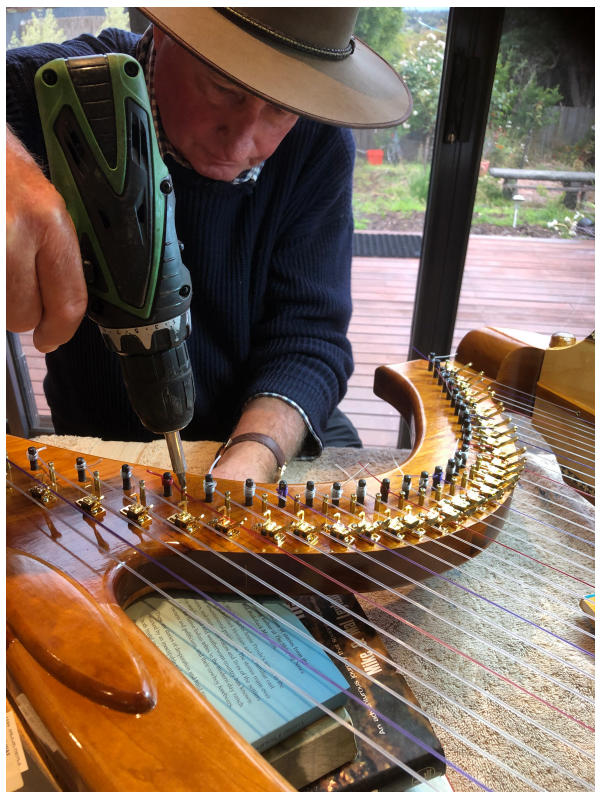
HARP AT THE DOCK
is an initiative of the
Australian
Therapeutic Harpists
Association (ATHA)

www.atha.org.au

**ATHA is a non-profit
organisation**

Advertisement

**Tim Sheed, Portarlinton, is available for Harp Repairs,
Restraining, Levers and Harp Hire.**



Contact Tim on
0438 861 271



Many thanks to all contributors to this edition of 'Harp Notes'.

Enquiries about ATHA can be directed to;

Christine Middleton - President. christine.mi@bigpond.com

Linky Muller - Secretary. harplink@icloud.com

Catherine Lyons-Nash - Vice-President clyonsnash@hotmail.com

Kerryn Viner - Treasurer. beached@me.com

*Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association***MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Membership is for a Calendar Year running from 1st July to 30th June

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title: _____ Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Mobile Phone No: _____

Application & Declaration

I hereby apply to become a member of the Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association and as such declare that I am committed to the objectives of the Association. I declare that I meet the requirements for the type of membership that I have applied for and if applying for full membership I declare that I will comply with the ATHA Ethics Statement, professional development requirements and hold appropriate professional indemnity insurance. If requested to do so I will supply evidence of my professional development activities and insurance.

I give consent to being photographed at any ATHA event and accept that photographs may be displayed in advertising, on the website or on social media. (ATHA will use due discretion when displaying such photos).	Yes / No
--	----------

Signature _____ Date: _____

PAYMENT DETAILS: *please circle the payment you will be making*

Full Member	Graduate of approved therapeutic harp training program	\$90
Associate Member	Students undertaking an approved harp training program	\$45
Friends of ATHA	Anyone interested in the practise and promotion of therapeutic harp	\$35

Donation	Donations are very welcome to support the work of ATHA Thank you for supporting the work of ATHA	\$
Membership is from 1 July to 30 June. Due date of payment is 1 July.		Total

DIRECT PAYMENT - can be made into the ATHA bank account from your bank, credit union or building society account

Bendigo Bank
 Australian Therapeutic Harpists Incorporated
 BSB: 633000
 Account No: 163189897

****Remember to put your SURNAME in the payment description when transferring monies for easier identification**

Membership fee \$ _____

Donation \$ _____

TOTAL PAYMENT \$ _____

WHEN COMPLETED, please scan or photograph the completed form and forward to the Membership Secretary membership@atha.org.au or 0419 526 550.