



## Harpist Yolanda Kondonassis Announces New Book *The Composer's Guide to Writing Well for the Modern Harp*

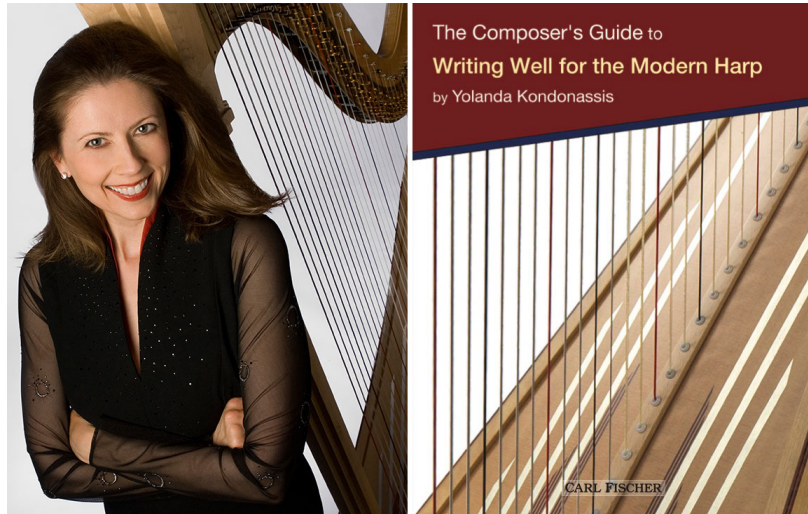


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New York, NY – Internationally acclaimed harpist **Yolanda Kondonassis** announces the release of her new book, *The Composer's Guide to Writing Well for the Modern Harp* (Carl Fischer Music), a comprehensive guide and conversational text on composing idiomatically for the harp. The book features 22 detailed chapters on a full spectrum of topics, including technical logistics, chromaticism, notation, context, resonance management, special effects, and more.

As one of the world's most renowned harp soloists, as well as an author, professor, orchestral harpist, and passionate champion of new music for her instrument, Kondonassis' experience spans over thirty years in the field of classical music. She writes, "In many ways, this book has been writing itself in my head for at least two decades. My motivation to demystify the harp is strong; I would even go so far as to call it a mission, but my goal is not merely to provide a set of rules, lists, and practical suggestions. While I have made a concentrated effort to streamline information and highlight those areas that I consider to be the most valuable and important, this volume should not read like a textbook. It should feel more like a friendly, candid conversation with an experienced harpist who wants to make composing for the harp easier and more successful."

Topics covered in Kondonassis' book include:

- Chromaticism and navigating the harp's pedal system
- Physics of writing idiomatic music
- Practical guidance on register, volume, and resonance
- Comprehensive index of traditional effects and notation
- Over twenty pages of contemporary special effects with notation
- Props, electro-acoustics, and media integration
- Candid advice on writing for the harp in every context

Kondonassis dedicates this book to "all the immensely creative and hard-working composers who find new portals of expression through music, with special thanks to **John Adams, Michael Daugherty, Keith Fitch, Stephen Hartke,**

**Jennifer Higdon, Aaron Kernis, Lowell Liebermann, James Oliverio, Anthony Plog, and Bright Sheng**, who generously offered feedback and advice on making this book as useful as possible.”

Passionately committed to the advancement of contemporary music for the harp, Kondonassis has promoted countless new works through her numerous recordings and premieres. She presented and recorded the world premiere of Bright Sheng’s *Never Far Away: Concerto for Harp and Orchestra* with the San Diego Symphony and most recently, she was the dedicatee and soloist in the world premiere series of Jennifer Higdon’s *Harp Concerto* after close collaboration with the composer. Kondonassis subsequently recorded Higdon’s *Harp Concerto* with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra for release on the album, *American Rapture* (Azica Records, May 2019). Of the recording, *Gramophone* praises, "Higdon’s concerto ... is a delight ... Throughout, Kondonassis’ playing is a delicious thrill,” and *Limelight* muses, “Like Ginastera, Higdon has extended the [harp] beyond its usual playing parameters ... Will the instrument ever be the same again?” Kondonassis’ extensive discography includes works by Rorem, Rochberg, Erb, Liebermann, Paulus, Fitch, Lash, Montsalvatge, Takemitsu, Cage, and Carter, among others.

*The Composer’s Guide to Writing Well for the Modern Harp* also features six original illustrations by cartoonist **Jeffrey Curnow**. Each cartoon was drawn especially for the book and imparts Curnow’s gift of musical humor. A multi-talented artist, Curnow is Associate Principal Trumpet of the Philadelphia Orchestra and draws a weekly featured cartoon for National Public Radio’s Classical Facebook page.

As an author, composer, and arranger, Kondonassis has published three books to date: *On Playing the Harp*, *The Yolanda Kondonassis Collection*, and *The Yolanda Kondonassis Christmas Collection*, all published by Carl Fischer Music. Kondonassis carries her passionate artistic commitment to issues regarding the protection of natural resources, air quality, and climate change. Royalties from several of her projects are donated to earth causes and she is the founder and director of *Earth at Heart*, a non-profit organization devoted to earth literacy and inspiration through the arts. Her first children’s book, entitled *Our House is Round: A Kid’s Book About Why Protecting Our Earth Matters*, was published in 2012 by Skyhorse Publishing and was a featured title from Scholastic Books in 2019.

**About Yolanda Kondonassis:** Yolanda Kondonassis is celebrated as one of the world’s premier solo harpists and is widely regarded as today’s most recorded classical harpist. With “a range of colour that’s breathtaking” (*Gramophone*), she has been hailed as “a brilliant and expressive player” (*Dallas Morning News*), with “a dazzling technique unflinchingly governed by impeccable musical judgment” (*Detroit News*). She has appeared around the globe as a concerto soloist and in recital, bringing her unique brand of musicianship and warm artistry to an ever-increasing audience. Also a published author, speaker, professor of harp, and environmental activist, her many passions are woven into a vibrant and multi-faceted career.

Since making her debut at age 18 with the New York Philharmonic and Zubin Mehta, Kondonassis has brought new audiences to the harp and has appeared as soloist with numerous major orchestras in the United States and abroad such as The New York Philharmonic, The Cleveland Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic, to name a few. She has been featured on CNN and PBS as well as Sirius XM Radio’s *Symphony Hall*, NPR’s *All Things Considered* and *Tiny Desk Concerts*, *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, and *Performance Today*.

Kondonassis has also earned a reputation as a world-class chamber musician, collaborating with artists such as the Shanghai, JACK, Jupiter, and Vermeer string quartets, pianist Jeremy Denk, and guitarist Jason Vieaux, among others. The Kondonassis/Vieaux duo released their debut album, *Together*, in January 2015 on Azica Records.

With hundreds of thousands of discs and downloads sold worldwide, Kondonassis’ extensive discography, released on the Telarc, Azica, Oberlin, New World, and Channel Classics labels, includes twenty titles. Her 2016 album, *Ginastera: One Hundred*, celebrates Ginastera’s centennial and pays tribute to his iconic harp concerto. Her 2008 release of music by Takemitsu and Debussy, *Air* (Telarc), was nominated for a Grammy Award. Her many albums have earned universal critical praise as she continues to be a pioneering force in the harp world, striving to push the boundaries of what listeners expect of the harp.

Born in Norman, Oklahoma, Kondonassis attended high school at Interlochen Arts Academy. She continued her education at The Cleveland Institute of Music, where she received her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees as a student of Alice Chalifoux. Kondonassis heads the harp departments at Oberlin Conservatory of Music and The Cleveland Institute of Music, and presents masterclasses around the world.