

## Back cover

*'As a solo instrument the harp sounds better than the zither, more masculine, more clutching, allowing a harder rhythm, there is no sentimental vibrato - it sounds picked and hammered when the player has music in his fingers.'*

Josef Leitgeb (1897-1952), *Von Blumen, Bäumen und Musik*, Salzburg 1947

Yes, if the player has music in his fingers then the harp is no longer the softly chirping instrument of the angels but a powerful accompanist for minstrels and wandering musicians that finds a place on concert stages and in jazz clubs.

The harp is one of the oldest and most versatile instruments around. It is known for at least 5000 years; since then it bewitches Kings and beloved maidens, is played on streets and clouds, sometimes sounding sweet or melancholy, then hefty and playful. It was once known in all corners of the world; today it is mainly found in large parts of Central and Southern America, Europe, and in the sub-Saharan belt. In Asia it only survived in Myanmar.

This collection assembles some of the most typical harp sounds from classical and traditional music and jazz; one of the three CDs contains recordings from a harp project at TFF Rudolstadt 2011.

## Prologue

Even James Bond believes the deceased Goldfinger to be "with a golden harp in heaven" where already Alois Hingerl, former porter no. 172 at Munich Main Station plucks, rejoices and grumbles "Hallelujah" on his cloud. Heaven, cloud and sky are since ages the most ostensible associations of the harp. Like no other instrument it can conjure heavenly, even spheric sounds. But at all times, harpists have mightily tickled the strings and played the instrument to accompany songs, for quite mundane entertainment and also for dancing.

In 2009 the newly built concert hall cum conference centre in the Icelandic capital Reykjavík was baptised "Harpa", and the harp is the national instrument of Ireland, Myanmar, Paraguay, and Wales. Even a special way of playing music is named after the harp: Arpeggio - from the Italian word arpeado, harp-style - is a musical technique where notes in a chord are played or sung in sequence, one after the other, rather than ringing out simultaneously; alternatively, also the term "broken chord" is used.

Especially in the English language, the term "harp" has quite a number of meanings: It is used for the jew's harp, the mouth (or blues) harp, a special kind of choral singing (Sacred Harp), and ultimately also for our harp. The latter is a composed chordophone which has the plane of its strings positioned perpendicularly to the soundboard. The most primitive harp forms may be the early earth bows and similar, portable Indian instruments. But it is questionable whether these manifold early chordophones may really be regarded as the ancestors of the harp proper.

One major objection concerns the elasticity that is essential to a hunting bow. An arched harp, on the other hand, has to be rigid so that the strings don't go out of tune all the time. But for the casual observer the arched harp looks like a hunting bow with a greater number of strings and a resonator attached to one end.

This may be one reason for the terminological chaos in the triangle between harp, lyre, and bow. Of the biblical king David who lived some 3000 years ago it is said: 'Later when King David has acceded to the throne, the harp was always around him. Exactly at midnight a soft breeze plucked its strings and King David awoke, got up and created the lovely, holy songs in honour of God that we call psalms.' What David played was called kinnor in the Bible - and kinnor is harp in Hebrew - but we know today that in truth it was a lyre. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (aka Joseph ben Mathitjahu ha Kohen) who lived in the first century noted that the strings of the nebel were thicker and rougher than those of the kinnor; nebel - the name is derived from the Phoenician nabra for harp - was the name of the harp in the Middle East. Which didn't keep St Jerome from translating nebel alternatively with psaltery and violin three centuries later in his Latin translation of the Bible, *Vulgate* - and kinnor consequently with harp.

Around 600, Venantius Fortunatus Bishop of Poitiers wrote: 'Romanusque lyra, plaudat tibi barbarum harpa' - the Roman lyre that the barbarians call a harp. The word "harp" is most likely based on the

Nordic “harpa” although this is used for all string instruments. So terms like harpa, cithara, and lira were wildly mixed. Also the word “hearpan” in *Beowulf* describes generally a string instrument rather than a harp, and a manuscript from the 12<sup>th</sup> century shows clearly a harp with twelve strings but calls it a “cythara anglica”. So it’s hardly surprising that still in 1511, the priest, singer, composer, and music theoriser Sebastian Virdung had to complain: ‘What one calls a harp is named a luter by the next one.’

Old depictions from Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt show that already 4,500 years ago men and women were playing instruments that were clearly harps - even according to today’s classifications. (Written descriptions date back even another thousand years.) The oldest Egyptian harpist that we know the name of was Hekenu; she accompanied the famous singer Iti and can be seen on a relief from the Fifth Dynasty (2563-2423 before our time). An intimate domestic music scene depicted in the grave of Mereruka shows him and his wife Sesheshet who was not a professional musician but a noble, probably of royal descent: In ancient Egypt, playing the harp was not the privilege of men but was practised by women until well into highest circles.

Ten marble statues of seated harpists have survived from the Cycladic culture (2600-2200 before our time); and archaeologists from Innsbruck in Austria have reconstructed an angled harp that is approximately 2000 years old; the arm made out of deer antlers is richly decorated and carries a Rhaetian inscription. The first depictions of a harp in Northern Europe appeared round about 800 in today’s Scotland, its curved neck and slightly angular string arrangement showing already the basic characteristics of a harp as it is used nowadays.

Where and when exactly the harp came about is unclear. Some musical archaeologists plead for the Cycladic Islands and Crete as possible places of origin. On the other hand, Egypt is almost unanimously regarded as the region from where the harp found its way to Black Africa, Asia, and Europe. The oldest instruments were arched and angled harps; today the family is subdivided according to the relation between the instrument’s most important components - resonator box and neck - in several major forms of which the most important ones are arched, angled, and frame harps.

### ***Peiwoh, The King of the Harpers***

Have you heard the Taoist tale of the Taming of the Harp?

Once in the hoary ages in the Ravine of Lungmen stood a Kiri tree, a veritable king of the forest. It reared its head to talk to the stars; its roots struck deep into the earth, mingling their bronzed coils with those of the silver dragon that slept beneath. And it came to pass that a mighty wizard made of this tree a wondrous harp, whose stubborn spirit should be tamed but by the greatest of musicians. For long the instrument was treasured by the Emperor of China, but all in vain were the efforts of those who in turn tried to draw melody from its strings. In response to their utmost strivings there came from the harp but harsh notes of disdain, ill-according with the songs they fain would sing. The harp refused to recognise a master.

At last came Peiwoh, the prince of harpists. With tender hand he caressed the harp as one might seek to soothe an unruly horse, and softly touched the chords. He sang of nature and the seasons, of high mountains and flowing waters, and all the memories of the tree awoke! Once more the sweet breath of spring played amidst its branches. The young cataracts, as they danced down the ravine, laughed to the budding flowers. Anon were heard the dreamy voices of summer with its myriad insects, the gentle pattering of rain, the wail of the cuckoo. Hark! a tiger roars,—the valley answers again. It is autumn; in the desert night, sharp like a sword gleams the moon upon the frosted grass. Now winter reigns, and through the snow-filled air swirl flocks of swans and rattling hailstones beat upon the boughs with fierce delight.

Then Peiwoh changed the key and sang of love. The forest swayed like an ardent swain deep lost in thought. On high, like a haughty maiden, swept a cloud bright and fair; but passing, trailed long shadows on the ground, black like despair. Again the mode was changed; Peiwoh sang of war, of clashing steel and trampling steeds. And in the harp arose the tempest of Lungmen, the dragon rode the lightning, the thundering avalanche crashed through the hills. In ecstasy the Celestial monarch asked Peiwoh wherein lay the secret of his victory. ‘Sire,’ he replied, ‘others have failed because they sang but of themselves. I left the harp to choose its theme, and knew not truly whether the harp had been Peiwoh or Peiwoh were the harp.’

## Arched and Angled Harps

The oldest depictions of harps that we know were found in Mesopotamia and Egypt. In a grave in Egypt Saqqarah from the First Dynasty (since 3300 before our time) 'fragments of a wooden object have been found that are considered to be a harp'. Already back then existed harps of different sizes and types: a model up to two meters long mainly played by men, a middle-sized harp that was played by men and women, and a small, portable version for women only. Some instruments were lavishly decorated - showing apart from the kings' and women's heads at the crown of the string carrier mostly Khenti-(n)irti the falcon-headed god of musicians and harpists who was also imagined blind but then in human figure.

In Egypt as well as in Mesopotamia the harp was an instrument for all social classes. It was played by princes and princesses, of course by trained and salaried court musicians but also by normal folks. This common touch earned it a number of epithets: Nefer, the beautiful (or beautifully sounding) in Egypt, the instrument of fame and honour in Mesopotamia. The real arched harp disappears later from Egypt to give place to the angled harp. At least it is not depicted anymore and slowly sinks into folk and other neighboured music.

There's no denying that the angled harp has many advantages: Its mostly rectangular, two-part branchwood of resonator and neck stabilises the instrument which can also hold more strings than the arched harp. Today it is ascertained that the Egyptian harp spread northwards - the sistrum and the pharaonic flute came to Europe as part of the Egyptian art music, and most likely so did the harp. We know it from vases and mural paintings in Athens as well as from a mural in Pompeii: It shows a petite instrument thusly a diminutive form of the Egyptian angled harp. Presumably by trade of Phoenician, Greek, or Arabian merchants amongst the Ptolemies and the Roman emperors the instruments reached India via Persia from where they travelled on to Burma, China, Korea and Japan. The harp survived only in Burma, though - the Chinese konghou of today has nothing in common with the ancient instrument of the same name: Its historic predecessor was an angled harp that disappeared from public musical life during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) while the contemporary konghou is very similar to the European concert harp; only the phoenix head decorating the top of the instrument resembles the ancient ancestor.

The same fate is allotted to the family of the closely related Korean gonghus and Japanese kudragoto (often short: kugo). Also the Indian vipanci vina lives only on in memory. That there once was a pinn in Thailand - pinn being the Khmer derivation of the Indian word vina - is only evident by the name of the royal orchestra: Pinn peat. The engkeratung of the Maloh people in Sarawak has vanished as has the Persian chang of which the treatise *Kanz al-Tuhaf* (Treasure of Peculiarities; Isfahan, 14<sup>th</sup> century) that classified all instruments according to their construction judged the chang harps were the most perfect of all imperfect instruments.

## Saung gauk

So it is Myanmar (the former Burma) that is upholding the harp's flag in Asia today. The music, so the Burmese say was born out of the rustling of an apple tree. The national instrument and the synonym of Burmese music is the arched harp saung gauk - a fragile dream of delicate lacquerwork formed like a royal junk with gold decoration and silk strings. Its resonator is covered with deer skin; the nine to thirteen strings (today often nylon) are tuned by moveable red laces. The instruments are often ornately adorned with inlays of semi-precious stones, glass, gilded brass, and red and black paintwork. Four holes are cut into the membrane. The moment they are cut is astrologically crucial to the harp's fate: When the holes are opened, the spirits are asked to take residence inside the resonator. Therefore the instrument has to be treated with respect.

Already in the third century before our time the saung gauk was played in Buddhist ceremonies; it is said that the cognition of the Middle Course was bestowed to Buddha through tuning the harp. The name saung gauk may be derived from similar names for harps in Persian (chang) and Hindi (canga). The instrument's star was rising during the cultural heyday of the Konbaung Dynasty, the last independent Burmese kingship from 1752 to 1885 when it was considered the most noble of all court instruments. 'With the decline of the royal house also the environment for the classic harp music vanished. But with the independence movement of the 1920s started a return to the traditional heritage. Since this social change the saung gauk is used by a large part of the population albeit in small scope as an instrument for quite chamber music. Its position as the national instrument is rather of symbolic than of practical importance. Lately, the harp has been rivalled by the Hawaiian guitar. On the other hand, it experiences sort of a modern-way renaissance as a sought-after and

decorative object of purchase for tourists.' Visually the close resemblance between the Burmese saung gauk and the Ugandan enanga is conspicuous. Whether both - and also all the other African arched harps - derive from ancient Egyptian models or are "fossil" offsprings of instruments that once, at least prior to the Fourth Dynasty were the African prototypes of ancient Egyptian forms is not always ascertained yet.

While Europe has developed its own harp type with the frame harp, and while the harp has almost completely disappeared from Asian musical life except for Myanmar, the instrument has survived in Africa among almost all ethnic groups between the Sahara in the North and the Equator in the South, i.e. between Mauritania in the West and the Sudan in the East. Almost all of these varied specimen are arched harps. Be it the kolojo of the Bwa, Lobi and Dyan in Burkina Faso, the geedal of the Efe pygmies in Central Africa, the kundi or bonguma in the North of the Congo, or the enngas, adungus and ekidongos of the many tribes in Uganda - until today these arched harps with one to ten strings enjoy great popularity among their peoples.

### **Ardin**

But there are two exceptions to the rule "arched harp". The first is the ardin, traditionally played in Mauritania by the women of the Hassaniyah, an ethnic group that most likely came to the country from the Arabian peninsula. The ardin is the only African angled harp. 'During a Sahara expedition 1956 Henri Lhote discovered a rock painting in the southern Algerian mountain massif Tassili n'Ajjer that shows an angled harp with six strings whose player hunkers on a low three-footed stool. The scene in brown before a yellow background depicts the profile of the musician with the instrument whose thin neck is positioned towards the player's upper body held vertically. Opposite on the right sits another person that is sometimes interpreted as the king who is just being entertained. The only known rock painting of its kind is only preserved as a sign-off wherefore its authenticity has been questioned. It is roughly dated to the Period of the Horse which means app. 1500-500 before our time.'

The ardin is unambiguously of ancient Egyptian origin and was mentioned for the first time in 1685 in a report of the French traveller Sieur de la Courbe; it is not related to the instruments that were introduced later to Mauritania with Arabian music. It has between ten and sixteen strings and is characterised by a sheet metal that is placed between the resonator's cover and the crossbar leading to a slightly rattling sound.

In the Mauritanian hierarchy of instruments the ardin is second to the tidinit lute which is the instrument of the iggāwen, the country's jalis. (Jalis were and are travelling minstrels who sing and tell stories in the villages and cities; they have been the source for news in former times. In many West African societies they are the bearers of history and culture.) But beside them, female singers who accompany themselves on the ardin have occupied a firm place at weddings and other festivities. Female jalis rode behind a warrior and played the ardin to fire him up - the ardin is a women's preserve and may not be touched by men.

### **Kora**

The kora must be regarded as a special form of harp. It is mostly classified as a harp-lute (or as a bridge-harp). It is not related to the old Egyptian harps but represents a unique development of a spike lute of the n'goni type: Its neck does not exit the corpus at a right angle but moves - as in these lutes - parallel inside. A big, half calabash covered with beef skin serves as resonator. The instrument has no fingerboard but the strings are attached to the resonator's end, run approximately at its midst over a bridge and then freely to the neck where they are tuned. In earlier times the strings were made of leather strips of intestines, today they are of nylon. The kora's 21 strings are plucked only by the two thumbs and index fingers while the other fingers hold the instrument. The first four strings on the left are bass strings and are hit by the left thumb. The remaining 17 strings are tuned heptatonically. A virtuoso is capable of playing the melody, its interpretation and the bassline simultaneously. He sometime knocks with the index fingers rhythmically against his instruments thusly creating a percussive accompaniment.

In western literature the kora was first mentioned in 1799 when the Scottish adventurer Mungo Park published his *Travels in Interior Districts of Africa* where he talked of a 'korro, a big harp with eighteen strings'. Mandinka tales reveal that the kora's origins date back to the legendary jali Mady Fouling Cissoko who lived during the Kaabu Empire of Senegambia, i.e. most likely in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Mandinka people originate in an area that is today's Mali from where they wandered westwards looking for more fertile pastures.

Although the kora is found among a great number of West African peoples it is with the Mandinka it is most closely related. They regarded it as the king's instrument and the archetypical instrument of the jalis. Yet today, a great number of kora players are no traditional jalis and are working in various world music projects.

Apart from the big kora there is the smaller m'bolon with three or four strings, and the even smaller, yet six-seven stringed simbing (also donso n'goni or kamalen n'goni) of the hunters' societies of the Manding in Mali. There are good arguments that the latter is the missing link in the development from the n'goni to the royal kora. Also the box-shaped seperewa (or sanko) of the Akan in Ghana or the kerân-nonkonîng of the Dan in Senegal belong to the harp-lute family.

## Turlough O'Carolan

Turlough O'Carolan (Gaelic: Toirdhealbhach Ó Cearbhalláin) was born in 1670 in County Meadh, Ireland. In 1684, his family moved to County Roscommon where his father, a simple peasant found a job with Mrs McDermott Roe. Four years later, Turlough was blinded by smallpox. As a blind man he couldn't work on the farm so Mrs McDermott financed him a three-year harp study. But he was already too old and the time-span too short for him to become a real harp virtuoso.

Nevertheless, equipped with a horse, a guide and a little money, he was set out to travel the country at the age of 21. This was common for a musician in those days. Unfortunately (?) some of the patrons he called upon often had musicians entertaining them and had therefore developed a sound ear for music - and especially for the harp which was a popular instrument and often played. And compared to others, young Turlough did not really perform well: George Reynolds from Lough Sgur in County Leitrim advised him bluntly to rather try composing. O'Carolan had never thought about that but took to the idea and composed his first piece right away: *Sídh Beag agus Sídh Mór*, the little and the big fairy mound, which has become a hit in Irish folk music after Planxty recorded a version for their eponymous debut album in 1973. A propos Planxty: Also this term is most likely an invention of O'Carolan's as it only appears in his tunes - planxties are musical greetings he offered to his numerous friends and patrons.

227 compositions of Turlough O'Carolan's have survived, although often only the melodies: Originally all his works had lyrics - he composed the tune first and then set words to it - but like his instrumental skills also his poetic ideas didn't match his compositional qualities. There, his importance lies in the natural yet fascinating synthesis of traditional Irish art and folk music with Italian classical music - O'Carolan was a huge admirer of Antonio Vivaldi's and is said to have known and met his pupil Francesco Geminiani.

We have no information how O'Carolan played or harmonised his pieces. Only simple melody lines have been preserved of his compositions, most likely the result of his habit to compose while riding his horse, using the buttons of his waistcoat as strings. When he reached his destination the melodies were noted by someone who could read and write music and went afterwards into the property of the person the composition was dedicated to.

Toirdhealbhach Ó Cearbhalláin was the last Irish musician who was both, harpist and composer. After his death the two professions went separate ways. Today he is regarded as the Irish national composer and as probably Éire's most singular important musician. He died on 25 March, 1738 in the cottage of his patron Mrs MacDermott Roe in Alderford, County Roscommon.

## Frame Harps

'Right from the beginning all European harps were clearly frame harps', states Hans Joachim Zingel lapidary in the encyclopaedia *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. And even when we limit this statement to Northern and Western Europe - Greek and Roman harps were angular - immediately a second question springs to mind: Is this three-part European harp constructed of resonator, forepillar, and neck a genuine European development or was it built after foreign models?

Following the theory that the European harp started its triumphal march through Europe on the Irish Isles, it might have got there from the Mediterranean - both regions maintained busy relationships since time immemorial; even Christianity reputedly reached Ireland directly and without a detour through Central Europe. On the other hand, harps can only be seen on pictures from eleventh

century Ireland - earlier European depictions are found on stone crosses of the Picts in Northern Scotland, dating back to the eighth to tenth century.

At any rate - in Ireland playing the harp was encouraged vitally right from the start; from there the instrument came as *cithara anglica* to the mainland. Its characteristic form was already distinctively developed, only a proper name was lacking. At first, the Irish called it *cruit*, later *clarsach* or *cláirseach*; Welsh named it *telyn*, Bretons *telen*, and in Old English it was a *gleebeam* (aka *gligbeam*) or *joywood*. The German term “*harfen*” on the other hand denotes very generally “to pluck on an instrument”.

The resonator of a *clarsach* was carved out of one piece of wood (often willow tree or moor pinewood) and closed with a lid on the backside. The brazen strings were plucked with the fingernail and not with the fingertips. This led to a resonate, bell-like sound; the disadvantage was that the long reverberation could produce unwanted dissonances. To avoid this the strings that should not sound any longer had to be stopped with the fingertips or dampened while the consonant strings swung on. This way of playing required a long training; it is small wonder therefore that harpist were in high demand and esteem. One of the best known Irish harpers was blind Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738; see above). During the folk revival of the 1960s and 70s O'Carolans pieces found their way into the repertoire of quite many bands; the best example are The Chieftains who had, in the person of Derek Bell also the flagship-harper in their line-up. He re-popularised the harp in its native country so that today a great number of young Irish harp players are to be found - and this despite the fact that with the English rule in Scotland and Ireland, the end of an unbroken harp tradition had begun: Harpist had been pursued, sometime even hanged, and their harps burnt. In 1792 the last remaining harpers - ten Irish plus a Welsh guest - assembled in Belfast. Luckily a young organ player was attending the meeting, Edward Bunting who recorded the melodies. He also made detailed notes about the playing - otherwise this art would have been lost for good. After this meeting, the tradition of harp playing died out quickly, though, in Scotland and Ireland ...

... until in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century a revival began. In it, not the old *cláirseach* with metal strings was used but the modern pedal harp. These new harps - in Éire often called neo-Irish harp - were equipped with a bowed forepillar which resembled the original instrument but was otherwise built just like the pedal harp with a corpus that was rounded at the back and gut-strung. Small brazen plates were used for re-tuning. The modern so-called Celtic harp with semitone discs and gut or nylon strings is based on this development from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Gothic Harp

Early European, so-called Roman harps had a softly swung neck with a pronounced round shoulder and a broad contour - shoulder and head were almost at the same height. In all probability its strings were from gut. Like with the Scottish and Irish harps the resonator was most likely carved from one massive log of wood and closed with a lid at the back. But the form of the harp changed drastically in the 15<sup>th</sup> century: It became high and slim with a sharp head and was therefore called “Gothic harp”. (Compared to nowadays' concert harp with its average height of 1.80 m it was still a dwarf, though, hardly higher than 50 cm.) The resonators of the few instruments that have survived from those days show a rather oval cross section and are like the medieval harps cut from one piece of wood. One such harp richly decorated with inlays of *certosina* and dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century can be seen in the Wartburg castle in Eisenach. Legend has it that it belonged to the famous German minstrel Oswald von Wolkenstein; it is therefore called either Wartburg or Wolkenstein harp.

At the same time, a totally different harp form existed, though. It is displayed on many period engravings, mostly in the hands of street musicians: Neck and forepillar are voluted, the resonator is simple. Three such harps in the hands of music-making angels from app. 1580 have been discovered in the funeral chapel of the Freiberg Dome. The corpus is cut from one piece of wood, convex at the front and closed with a flat plank at the back. The strings are fixed to the corpus with little nails so that big bray hooks could be applied without altering the tuning of the instrument. Bray hooks were widely used: Thereby, the instrument sounds louder. The buzzing sound suggests a use as a accompanying or rhythm instrument. Given the number of pictures with angels playing a harp it is obvious that this sound has been regarded as quite pleasant in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century. Also the manuscript *Musica* by Welshman Robert ap Huw (ca. 1627) was meant for harps with bray hooks. These hooks were common in Germany until well unto the 18<sup>th</sup>, in Wales even into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Luckily, it was possible to turn off the hooks if the buzzing was not welcomed.

Between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century a popular instrument in Europe was the harp psaltery. Its form resembled a harp with two rows of strings, most likely brazen, and a hollow resonator (or a simple wooden board) between them. No instrument proper has survived but as they were depicted quite often - for instance the famous *asinus lyra*, donkey with harp psaltery - it is possible to reconstruct them quite accurately. Most probably the strings were tuned diatonically alternately on the right and left side, for example first string right C, first string left D etc. This hampered playing melodies but was excellent for playing in parallel fifths or thirds. The harp psaltery is - just like the harp-lute kora - a hybrid with elements of the harp but also design features of other instruments such as zither or lute.

During the early Middle Ages the harp belonged to the household of noble men and women or clerics; it was even protected by law. In the height of medieval Europe it is, together with the fiddle the instrument most often mentioned or depicted: The art of troubadours, trouveres, and minstrels is unthinkable of without musical accompaniment, and no description of a feast, no minstrel rule, nor hardly on any picture with musicians is missing a fiddle or a harp. Even the names of players that performed either solo or with an ensemble, outdoors or during dinner, for dancing or at court entertainments have been handed down.

The harps in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance were mostly tuned diatonically. Pressing against the neck or the resonator enabled shortening the strings to obtain *musica ficta*, chromatic tunes. To enhance the possibilities of the instrument further musicians and instrument makers went two different ways: Increasing the number of strings led to chromatic harps, mechanical devices changed individual pitches and led to manual and pedal harps. To match the growing musical aspirations that asked for more and more chromatic notes harps with multiple rows of strings were developed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century - *cuerdas coloradas*, coloured strings, complemented the succession of notes at first with the necessary semitones (incomplete chromatic harp), later with five additional strings per octave each (complete chromatic harp) as was noted by the chronicler Bermudo 1555 in his *Declaración de los instrumentos musicales*.

### Arpa de dos órdenes and Arpa doppia

The Iberian Arpa de dos órdenes, the harp of the Spanish Baroque had two crossed rows of strings; they were plucked where they met. Its construction with a voluminous resonator and its sound are very similar to today's Southern American harp and excel by a powerful, warm bass.

Arpa doppia is the double harp of baroque Italy where parallel rows of strings with at first two, later three rows (*arpa tripla* or *arpa tre registri*) gained acceptance. The diatonic and the chromatic row were slightly displaced to each other so that the finger could grip into the interspace between two diatonic strings and pluck the chromatic string (semitone). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century these Italian were popular from Sicily to Flanders and Wales; Monteverdi's *Orfeo* as well as Handel's *Concerto in B* were originally composed for arpa doppia. In Germany double-row harps have been manufactured until the 18<sup>th</sup> century; because of the carved head of King David that crowned the forepillar they were called David's harp (*Davidsharfe*; like for instance the instruments made by Johann Volckmann Rabe from Nordhausen in Thuringia). Also the first compositions that were particularly "suited for the harp" have most likely been written for the arpa doppia: the richly figured partitas in Giovanni Maria Trabaci's *Il secondo libro de ricercate* (Naples, 1615). Utility music of a simpler kind are contained in Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz' *Luz y norte* (1677) and Fernando de Huetes' *Compendio numeroso di cifra* (1702) as well as in two anonymous manuscripts in the Madrid Library (*Cifras para arpa* and *Libro en cifra de arpa*). *Die musikalische Rüstkammer auf der Harfe* from 1719, a student collection of pieces for singing and playing from Leipzig, *The Ladys Entertainment* from London 1709 as well as several gallantry pieces for harp from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century lead to the conclusion that the harp has always moved between simple chordal plucking by instrument lovers or simple musicians and elaborated paraphrases for the virtuoso. These virtuosos were most often to be found among the folk musicians; while the "higher" arts carelessly ignored this "imperfect" instrument, harp girls and pub musicians from Bohemia, partly also from England Spain gained most remarkable skills.

### Welsh Triple Harp

In the course of time the number of strings raised to over one hundred although the result was still not wholly satisfying: The instruments were still too clumsy and imperfect. Furthermore it became harder and harder to tune and play them. 'One can easily imagine how easy the composition and how bad the presentation must have been', Johann Herbst complained in his *Schule für Hakenharfe*

(Tutor for Hook Harp) 1792. Still the principle has survived until today: The Welsh triple harp, a big three-row harp has been developed after the Baroque Italian arpa tre registri.

Almost two metres high, the instrument is tuned chromatically meaning that there is an individual string for each tone and semitone. The up to 99 strings are three-layered, with the two outer ones in equal diatonic tuning (corresponding to the white keys of a piano) while the row in between them provide the black keys, i.e. the chromatic semitones. Therefore a triple harp needs no pedal. It has found lovers in classical music, too: Georg Friedrich Handel wrote his *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra* for it. The harp was already popular in Wales earlier on, though; it was the instrument of the bards, was used to accompany chants in the churches, and is to this day closely related to poetry (which probably helped it to survive). “Canu gyda’r tannau”, singing with strings, is the name for this tandem in Wales. Nevertheless, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the harp was on the brink of extinction. Industrialisation and religious zealots condemning the link of the harp with dance and feasting made for the loss of musical and dance traditions. Only after the foundation of the Cerdd Dant Society in 1934 - cerdd dant is a medieval term meaning something like the power of the strings - the traditional singing to the sound of the harp was revitalised. In 1996 the Society for the Traditional Instruments of Wales followed in which Robin Huw Bowen is playing an active role. Today the triple harp is regarded as the Welsh national instrument.

### Hook Harp

A relief from the sound restrictions was produced as often as not in the development of musical instruments by the application of mechanical tools. Pioneering were those musicians who first developed a hook harp, i.e. the first manual harp: Rotatable small hooks flushed into the neck raised the pitch by a semitone so seven strings were sufficient for an octave. Whether the patent right lies in Tyrol as was argued up until now, or after all in Bohemia as new researches by Nancy Thym seem to suggest requires final clarification. At any rate, the principle soon was circulating through Bohemia and Franconia as well as in Austria and the whole Alpine region. Despite obvious shortcomings - one hand could not play while turning the hook - this harp was so popular in Germany even after the turn from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century that it was called “the German” (in contrast to “the French” pedal harp); instrument makers continued in their attempts to improve the hook harp. The “Celtic” and “Bohemian” harps popular today are sometimes called hook harps although the original simple hooks have been replaced by semitone keys.

### The Single-action Pedal Harp

The pedal harp with pedals attached to the harp’s foot was most likely invented by Jacob Hochbrucker (1673-1763) in Donauwörth - the earliest known and dated pedal harp stems from his workshop. Already in 1720 (his son claims it was already in 1697) he applied the hooks to rods that lead to the pedals so that the feet could be used for shortening the strings - the hands were left free for playing. On the other hand the sounds of the pedals were now audible. Many constructors worked on further improvements. Already at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the rods between the hook and the pedals were accommodated inside the pillar (rather than in the soundbox); the strings were shortened by a tractive crook mechanism that drew the strings towards the neck.

With the invention and the distribution of the pedal harp Paris became the centre for an important chapter in the history of the harp. This is due to a specific social situation: Especially ladies took to this new and precious instruments because of both, their decorative appeal and also as musical novelties. The first printed musical supplies were printed in the 1760s, shortly after 1770 also a tutorial. Sonatas, variations, dances, concerts, duos and trios as well as accompaniments to romances and ariettas formed the repertory of a considerable production and proved how popular the harp was besides the piano as an instrument for salon music. The most important contributions to the literature for the single-action pedal harp came from Johann Baptist Krumpholtz, Jan Ladislav Dussek, and Louis Spohr, and it surely is only small wonder that all three of them were married to professional harpists (Krumpholtz was even a talented harpist himself).

A special form of a single-action harp is the Tyrolean folk or song harp that appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It allowed the re-tuning that was so necessary for the typical change of key in Alpine folk music by simply stepping onto the pedal. When the pedals are not used, it is tuned in Es major. The name is derived from its main area of distribution in Tyrol and Southern Tyrol. Especially the inhabitants of the Zillertal where the instrument had arrived in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century developed a special liking to the harp. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Zillertal National Singer Associations travelled all around the world. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the hook harp continued to be an integral part of the folk music ensembles. It was only after World War I that the hook harp



was replaced by the Tyrolean folk harp. Instruments built by Franz Bradl from Brixlegg or the artistry of musicians like Thomas Steiner (1901-1979) and Berta Höller (born around 1920) helped to establish this construction as the standard harp in the whole Alpine region.

### The Double-action Pedal Harp

In 1794 Parisian Sébastien Erard (1752-1831) replaced the single-action pedal harp's tractive crook mechanism by a brazen wheel with two fork-like pins. In 1810 he enhanced the chromatic possibilities of the pedal harp by a second wheel per string. With this each string could be raised by two semi-tones. With 46 to 48 diatonic strings the instruments today encompass six and a half octaves; the standard tuning is C major. This double-action pedal harp that has been improved by Erard's nephews and successors signifies the preliminary terminal point in the development of the harp; it is this instrument that is meant with a (European) concert harp.

Yet there were always new aspirations to also improve this instrument. Gustave Lyon for instance, director of the music house Pleyel in Paris, tried at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to introduce a chromatic harp with crossed strings after having detected that due to its diatonic tuning the double-action pedal harp could produce chromatic pieces and notes beyond the diatonic scale only with a major effort on the pedals. With crossed strings, both the diatonic scale and the semitones could be reached without having to grip through the strings. The tuning of this so-called Pleyel harp is that of the Spanish Baroque harp; its construction is similar to the concert harp, though. Ultimately it could not come out on top over Erard's harp.

One of the major first virtuosos on the new double-action pedal harp was British harpist Elias Parish Alvars (28 February, 1808 - 25 January, 1849). He immediately recognised the possibilities of the new instrument and developed a series of innovative playing techniques. Also French composer Hector Berlioz promoted its use (*Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*; Paris, 1844). But it "needed" the Impressionism that the harp not only gained importance in the colourful orchestras but also in solo and chamber music works. Debussy's *Danse sacrée et danse profane* from 1904 (written for the Pleyel harp), his *Trio Sonata* from 1916 and Ravel's *Introduction et allegro* (1906; for the Erard harp) are prime examples that have evoked a proper renaissance of music for the harp. Compositions by Gabriel Pierné (*Concert Piece*; 1901), Camille Saint-Saëns (*Morceau de concert* op. 154; 1919) or Gabriel Fauré emphasised the leading role of French composers in the development of harp music.

This French sound aesthetic ultimately also initiated Italians and Englishmen to follow their example. The model of impressionistic music that is usually set harp-appropriate and extremely differentiated soundwise echoes in expressionistic sonatas, major concert works, solo passages in orchestral works or chamber music compositions. Today, variable harmony is taken for granted; after experiments with the chromatic harp hardly anybody has considerations for the pedal technique - even serial techniques have to be mastered, and the linear trends of our time are decisively reflected in the compositions of late. With this, the harp has reached a new sphere today. Rhythmically an ultimate precision is required (jazz harp). And to diminish, if not neutralise the blurring reverberation, new methods must be developed; the technicians face new problems, and the players new endeavours.

### Mozart's Harpist

In 1782 (others say 1787) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart sojourned in Prague. Because of a carnival he visited one evening the pub U zlatého anděla (The New Pub) in what is today ul. Celetná. A harpist was playing entertaining the guests with favourites from the popular opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* and own fantasies. Josef Haisler - other spellings are Hajsler, Haissler, Hausler, Häussler, Häußler, Häusler; the name Hof(f)mann that is also to be found is rather a mistake of the respective author - was quite well-known locally in then Prague. Eventually Haisler was a splendid harpist who also impressed Mozart with his playing. The latter requested the musician to come to this table and asked him whether he were able to improvise spontaneously over any new melody. Haisler nodded whereupon Mozart swiftly scribbled some notes on a piece of paper. Yet - Haisler was a street musician and illiterate. So Mozart asked him up to his room, sat down at his fortepiano and played the melody. Haisler bethought for a while and then asked Mozart to play the theme again. He then played the melody on the harp and varied it several times so splendidly that 'Mozart uttered his contentment and gave Haisler a generous present', as Nikolaus von Nissen, second husband of Mozart's widow Constanze remarked in his biography on Mozart.

(In a later report Haisler appears in a different light: After it Haisler played, much to Mozart's horror the same tunes over and over again. Out of despair Mozart wrote a new tune for Haisler who took the paper home, practising night and day until he could play it ...)

However it may have been - Josef Haisler lived a long life and proudly carried the piece of paper with Mozart's melody in his breast pocket until his death. A bookseller from Prague who knew him tells of a meeting in 1842. This story was later included by Rudolf František Procházka in his book *Mozart in Prag*. It must be the final testimony of somebody who knew Mozart personally. 'His greenish brightless redingot reached down to his knees, and the old man of low stature wore him open so that his old vest that once was adorned with blossoms and an old silk tie could be seen. His black stockings, his buckled shoes and his straight hair combed backwards tied together with a ribbon and hanging down his back complemented his rococo attire. A surely good musician named Kaiser saw him once and asked who he was. When he heard that this man had known Mozart and that Mozart had even composed a tune for him he approached him deeply touched... During the conversation the harpist abstracted a piece of paper from his pocket and showed it to him but taking the utmost care to never let it go out of his hand and immediately putting it back. It was Mozart's melody. Kaiser wanted to borrow it for to copy it but was rejected. The harper poor as a church mouse didn't want to divest himself of the manuscript even for a short while, not even when a considerable sum was offered to him. Finally Kaiser asked him to at least play the tune on the harp, and this the old man did with pleasure'.

### Travelling Harpists

The hook harp is an instrument we mainly know from the travelling harpists from Bohemia and Germany. Occasionally Bohemian travelling harpists are mentioned in texts from the midst of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For writers, artists, and composers they served as sources of inspiration. Goethe memorialised them with the harpist Horatio in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795): The harpist always appears in the right moment to voice in his sad and lonely tunes the confused thoughts of Wilhelm Meister. Goethe's fascination for the travelling harpists most likely is grounded on a meeting during his Italian journey in 1786: On his way from Wallensee to Mittelwald he met a harpist and his 11 year-old daughter who were walking the roads. He takes her along in his coach to the next village. Among other things she tells him that the next days would be bright: 'They'd have their barometer on them which would be the harp - when the treble is tuning up the weather would be fine. And it did so today' - a fact that can still be regarded today when using gut strings. But not everybody was happy about the playing of travelling harpists: J. C. G. Wernich complains in the foreword to his tutorial *Versuch einer richtigen Lehrart, die Harfe zu spielen* (Attempt of a correct tutoring to play the harp): 'The majority of harp players are lousy bunglers who only please the ears of the mob with rousing dances but who cannot provide the connoisseur with the smallest satisfaction.' Johann Herbst, also in his harp tutorial (1792) adds that the harp 'is so vilified that it is almost only to be heard in pubs and alehouses to entertain the guests with some noisy dances and vulgar hits.'

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the first "harp girls" from Preßnitz (Erzgebirge) came to the Leipzig Trade Fair. Soon Preßnitz became a musician's town and the profession became popular in other villages in the Erzgebirge as well as in Nechanice in Bohemia, Hundeshagen in Eichsfeld in Thuringia, and Salzgitter in Lower Saxony. The hook harp was an integral part of the bagpipe bands from Egerland where it was played almost exclusively by men, and also the travelling harpists from Viggiano in Italy were mostly men. But the overwhelming majority of players at the time were girls and women who with the harp on their back, alone, in a duo or in family bands travelled to Africa, Asia, Northern and Southern America to earn money for themselves and their families. They played popular dance tunes and sang the hits of the day. As soon as they were old enough they received their harps and hit the road: Economic hardship forced them to earn their bread this way - the families were starving and waiting desperately for the money. The song of the Hundeshagener Klingerdilms (harp girls from Hundeshagen) recounts a telling tale.

The life of female harpists travelling alone was hard. Some women disguised as men even adopted men's behaviours. Elisabeth Weidel from Egerland played harp, fiddle, and trumpet, she smoked and snuffed tobacco. She appeared in front of a judge and asked for a passport that identified her as a man. Her request was granted.

Some sources report of the harp girls from Nechanice in Czech Bohemia that they were organised by band leaders who acted towards their musicians almost like pimps. The girls were provided with harps; in return they had to deliver all the money they earned. They performed at weddings, fairs,

in pubs and beer gardens. When on the road they only got the bare necessities for living. A fee was only paid after their return home. The musicians were without rights at the mercy of the band leaders and were recklessly exploited. One comment, though: These sources are contentious as they were written by men who wanted to ban all travelling musicians. Yet they match reports about the exploitation of “harp slaves”, young boys who were bought in 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy from their families and then brought by padrones into big cities like Paris, London, or New York to play there in the streets.

And while cities like Vienna or Hildesheim officially employed their own harp girls others became veritable harp girl nests - result of the economic destitution and high unemployment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Preßnitzer Schaller, Hundeshagener Klinger, and Salzgitter Klesmer were groups that were organised as family ensembles. (Despite their names the musicians from Salzgitter were no Jews - here Klesmer is a word derived from their cant.) A typical harp combo consisted of father and sons on fiddle and clarinet, plus wife and daughters on harp, flute, and vocals. Music lessons started already at an early age.

The musicians even developed their own jargon - a kind of thieves' cant - and also a correspondence in cipher. Their life was often quite adventurous. The following story is reported from Salzgitter: One day a band played in the beer garden of a brewery. As was common habit the musicians were encouraged to play by serving free beer. This day it was quite likely too much. After the performance Diedrich, the harpist fell into the canal. But the harp that he carried on his back was wrapped into kind of canvas and functioned as a lifejacket: It saved his life. The brewery paid for the repair costs, new strings, and cancelled performance time as they found all this extremely funny...

Because of their experience in travelling the Salzgitter Klesmer were often employed as companions for unaccompanied children and women who joined the other emigrants to Northern America. In the New World, a lot of adventures were waiting for the harp bands. Whether the following story is true or not is subject to further evidence. If not it is wonderfully made up: With violin and harp in their baggage the Weichler couple travelled west with a bunch of pioneers in prairie schooners. One night they were suddenly raided and taken prisoners by Indians. Their scout suggested they should secretly play on their instruments with distorted faces and wrenched bodies. The others should sing so out of tune as if they were mad: The story went that Indians did not do any harm to insane people. And indeed they could survive and even lived with the Indians for a while. One of the girls even married the chief of the tribe...

Only few Klesmer groups travelled into the South of the USA. One of them was the family band Kerntner that performed with flute, fiddle, and harp for rich farmers. One admirer was so excited that he made daughter Euphronia the present of the slave Sambo. In 1855 they went for a cruise on the Arkansas river. Suddenly a storm came up and the boat overturned. Sambo jumped immediately into the water and saved Euphronia at the risk of his own life. In gratitude she released him into freedom and even taught him to read, write, and in music. Finally, Euphronia and Sambo got married and started a new band with black musicians. The black woman playing the harp in that group was most likely the first black female harpist in the USA. During their journeys through the USA's south they played exclusively for blacks and taught them to read, write, and calculate. But their attempts to educate the black population were all but popular with the white mastery. In February 1890 or 1891 they were assaulted and tortured by members of the Ku Klux Klan. Both died from their wounds. (Also this story requires a final proof of its truth.)

The last of the Hildesheimer Nachtigallen (Hildesheim Nightingales), Therese du Carrois, performed in beer gardens, pubs, and at every important reception of her city. She was, just like the Berlin Harfenjule, the widow of a marionette player and died on 27 June, 1915. World War I meant in general the end of the tradition of travelling harpists and “Harfenjulen”; only the Hundeshagener Harfenmädchen carried on until 13 August, 1961.

## Harfenjule

*I am the harfenjule with huge pompadour,  
In the whole of Berlin and Rixdorf I only play the harp!*

Although later used for all female street musicians playing the harp, Harfenjule was at first a nickname for just one woman: L(o)uise Nordmann née Schulze.

Louise Schulze was born on 6 September, 1829 in Potsdam. Blind by birth, she could at least see a little bit with one eye after an operation in her childhood. A benefactor financed her music and singing lessons. As a street musician in the courtyards of Berlin's residential areas she had to earn enough not only for her own living but also to support her parents. After their death, she married the puppeteer Emil Nordmann in 1965; together they performed in a traveling theatre.

After the death of her husband and child due to tuberculosis in 1871 she moved to Schöneberg which back then did not yet belong to Berlin. With her sister-in-law she lived there in a basement flat in Steinmetzstrasse 46 until her death. In any wind and weather she moved up and down the streets of Berlin, the harp on her back and a big straw hat with ribbons and flowers on her head. Half blind, she nevertheless tickled the strings vigorously. One day she was run over with a hackney. Thanks to her strong constitution she survived and, although not as robust as before she continued to ply her job for still some years. She died on 7 January, 1911 and was buried four days later on the Evangelischer Luther-Friedhof in Berlin Lankwitz. During World War II, the grave was destroyed. A private initiative erected on the same cemetery a memorial stone in 1969 that was cleaned and restored in 2010.

The Harfenjule is regarded as a Berlin original. She was well known - as a street musician in imperial Berlin but also through press reports beyond the German capital. Her appearance with a chafed black straw hat and a harp was several times depicted in sculptures and drawings, amongst others by Heinrich Zille. The poet Klabund (real name: Alfred Henschke; 1890-1928) literarily immortalised the historic Harfenjule with his collection of poems published in 1927 *Die Harfenjule. Neue Zeit-, Streit- und Leidgedichte von Klabund (The Harfenjule. New Period, Dispute, and Misery Poems from Klabund)*.

## Central and South American Harps

'The Celtic and Arabian harps are lost forever in old Europe', claims Venezuelan musician Iván Pérez Rossi and proudly adds: 'Today their strings vibrate in the soul of Latin America - here they have found a new home.'

Now harp strings are still vibrating in Africa and Myanmar, in The Alps and in Wales, as we have seen. Still there shines a ray of truth through Pérez Rossi's assertion: Once Spanish Jesuits brought the harp to Southern America in the 16<sup>th</sup> century - echoes of Spanish Baroque are resonating in the Latin American harp music to this day - it soon spread also among the Indians and mestizos and became the most popular instrument between México and Argentine. Today the colonial and religious connotation has completely vanished in the fog of time; it is quite remarkable, though that this European colonial import has been so fully absorbed by the Indians in Central and Southern America that it is not possible to think their traditional music without the European harp.

Southern American harps resemble the diatonic Spanish renaissance harps. The instrument has lost its pentatonic strings in the course of time, though; today it is a diatonic instrument with no retuning facilities. It is strung with nylon strings and plucked with the fingernails. Compared to its European relatives the body is quite large in relationship to the other parts of the instrument, and several instruments have their soundholes at the back (other than the European frame harps). Typical features of the Latin American harp music are syncopated bass lines that are played rhythmically independent of the improvised melody line as well as elaborated glissando and dampening techniques. And although some harps from the subcontinent produce sugar-sweet tunes - characteristic for the music is a (often hard) driving rhythm that the musicians produce by powerful and fast plucking. As a peculiarity some harps are being played by two musicians: while one is the harpist proper who plucks the strings the other is the so-called golpeador, a percussionist who beats with one or two sticks on the harp's body

The harp is especially popular in México, Colombia, Venezuela, the Andes, and in Paraguay.

### Mexiko

In México the harp is mainly used to accompany singing. We find it in the states of Chiapas and Michoacan and not the least in the region of Veracruz. The port's "national music" is the son jarocho, a driving dance music with arpa jarocho and two guitars, the requinto jarocho and the jarana jarocho (plus occasionally percussion). Jarocho is the name of Veracruz's inhabitants, and since more than 200 years the music brings the feet of the people of this coastal area to dance and the hearts to overflow.

## **Venezuela (and Colombia)**

Venezuela knows two different types of harps and of harp traditions: arpa llanera and arpa central (also arpa mirandina, tuyera or araguena - the extensions denote the region in the country where the respective harp is to be found).

The arpa llanera can mainly be heard in smaller ensembles, the conjuntos criollos with the small four-stringed guitar cuatro and with maracas. To suit the zeitgeist an electric bass is sometimes added. The arpa llanera is approximately 150 cm high and has 32 nylon strings; the distance between the strings is 1.4 cm and the soundholes are in the resonator at the front of the instrument. As the steppe-like llanos that gave the instrument its name stretch from Southern Venezuela to North-Eastern Colombia, this harp type can also be found in the neighbouring country. There are scholars who regard the harp in a typical Colombian conjunto llanero as a concession to the tourists' tastes, though; in Venezuela the harp belonging to a traditional conjunto llanero line-up is undisputed.

The arpa central is almost 20 centimetres longer and quite uniquely stringed: The first 12-14 strings are made of brass, then there are nylon strings for the middle parts, and the bordones are made out of cow or pig bladder, sometimes also of deer skin. The arpa central is usually played in a duo: The harpist who is often also the singer is only accompanied by a maraca player.

The central position of the harp in the Venezuelan music is closely related to its leading role in the national dance, the joropo: The rhythm that developed out of the old Spanish jarabe is much more than a mere dance - it is a national institution and a reminder of the cultural roots of the people.

## **Andean Harp**

The Andean harp was developed in Ecuador and Peru on the basis of the arpa republicana that is a product of colonial times. While the harp in Southern Peru, i.e. in Cuzco, Ayacucho, and Huancayo, is traditionally strung with nylon while brass strings are used in Cajamarca (Northern Peru) and in Imbabura (Ecuador). The harp is played solo but also in ensembles together with the Indian reed flute kena and with violins, mandolins, and guitars. It has 34 strings and attracts attention by its large resonator box. During processions in the Cuzco area it is propped by a bow on the shoulder and played headlong.

While the harp still belongs to the most popular instruments in Peru, its star is declining in Chile, Ecuador, and Bolivia. But Paraguay is still holding high the harp's flag - very high indeed.

## **Paraguay**

The harp as played today in Paraguay and in the bordering regions of Corrientes und Misiones in Argentine dates back to a type of harp that was used in the Jesuit missions in East Bolivia, in Paraguay and in bordering parts of Argentine and Brazil. The typical Paraguayan harp has 36 strings and is some 150 cm high; the distance between the strings is approximately one centimetre. The sound holes are at the back of the instrument.

Around 1920 an instrument manufacturer introduced a number of novelties in the production process; he sold his harps as "arpa india". The term is still frequently used today; the official name is arpa paraguaya, though.

It's due to the creativity of Paraguayan instrument makers that the local harp has reached an exceptional quality in terms of sonority and brilliancy: Thanks to pioneers like Digno García, harpist with Los Paraguayos, and above all Félix Pérez Cardozo Paraguay's national instrument must be regarded today as Latin America's most advanced harp.

## **Aeolian Harp**

The Aeolian harp, also spirit, wind, or weather harp holds a unique position. Its strings resonate, i.e. sound under the influence of a flow of air. The name is derived from Aiolos, Latin Aeolus, the lord of the winds in Greek mythology.

An Aeolian harp consists of a long, narrow resonator box (most often with soundholes) with two bridges and an undefined number of narrowly attached strings (nylon or gut). The strings are usually of equal length, diversely thick, sometimes of different surface character but tuned to the same fundamental tone.

The wind sweeps over the strings; in doing so, air twirls are produced that make the strings vibrate which in turn evokes a tone. Depending on the wind speed melody lines are produced, and chords when the overtones of the various strings are stimulated. Also the loudness depends on the wind, its force can lead to anything from pianissimo to forte - and back. Specially designed units over the strings can enhance the air current and thusly the effects of a wind harp.

Aeolian harps were already known in Antique times. First theoretical explanations were given by Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) in *Musurgia universalis* (1650) and *Phonurgia nova* (1673). Later, the instrument was buried in oblivion before being re-discovered by English poets in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century the instrument gained new prominence and was technically developed further by German music theorist Heinrich Christoph Koch and by Parisian piano manufacturer Ignaz Josef Pleyel; as a symbol it found its way into quite some literary and musical oeuvres.

In 1822, Goethe wrote his poem *Aeolsharfen. Ein Gespräch* (Aeolian harps. A conversation); he also mentioned them in his *Faust*. Another German poet, Eduard Mörike was so enthralled by their sound that he memorialised them in his poem *An eine Aeolsharfe* (To an Aeolian Harp; 1837). Both, Johannes Brahms and Hugo Wolf wrote music to these words and made them into a Lied with piano accompaniment.

## Disk 1

### 1 José Gutiérrez y Los Hermanos Ochoa (Mexico): La Bamba 3:08

Long before Richie Valens (and later Trini Lopez or Los Lobos) turned it into a chart hit, *La Bamba* was a classic of Mexican Jarocho music, mentioned for the first time shortly after year 1800. Felipe and Marcos Ochoa hail from Rancho de Zacaiste, a small town near Tierra Blanca in the backdrops of Veracruz and home to a number of local harp greats. With their trio Jarocho Chalchihuecan de Los Hermanos Ochoa - Chalchihuecan is the beach where Hernán Cortés landed - they still play the hard driving Son Jarocho. Their trio partner changes regularly; José Gutiérrez is one of them.

### 2 Peter Reitmeir & Otto Ehrenstrasser (Austria): Brixentaler Bauernpolka 2:59

Already as a young man Peter Reitmeir, born in 1947 in Gnadewald, visited the harpers in the Tyrolean valleys and collected the tunes he later documented and passed on. He is professor and teacher of folk music, organises the Tiroler Singwochen (Tyrolean singing weeks) and the Tiroler Adventsingen (Advent choral concert), he is chairman of the Tiroler Volksmusikvereins (Folk music association) and presides over the Alpenländischer Volksmusikwettbewerb (Alpine folk music competition).

Peter Reitmeir and his brother-in-law Otto Ehrenstrasser both play Tyrolean harps. This polka from the Brixen valley in Northern Tyrol stems from the repertoire of Thomas Steiner.

### 3 Harpo Marx (USA): Harpo Woogie 1:41

Adolph Arthur Marx (23 November, 1888 - 28 February, 1964), the second oldest of the Marx Brothers only reluctantly warmed to his muteness in film. But then he cultivated his role where, equipped with a red wig and a coat with an infinite number of pockets as well as with a harp, he made himself understood by whistling, honking, and gesturing. As was self-trained and used a tuning completely of his own. He later tried to learn "correct" playing and tuning and engaged a number of well-known teachers - but all they died during the courses was marvelling at his unique technique. Harpo Marx donated his harp to the people of Israel.

### 4 Rüdiger Oppermann (Germany): If Six Was Nine 6:09

Already the first gig he played was with a self-built harp - Rüdiger Oppermann (born 1954) was always both, harp builder and musician. And much more - globetrotter, puzzle freak, composer, organiser, and project manager (*Harfenfestival, Klangwelten, Karawane* etc.). He collected several national and international awards and has maintained his curiosity and creativity to this day. This version of a Jimi Hendrix tune comes from a period when he was playing an electric harp of his own design and at times also dwelled on reminiscences of his school days as a blues-rock guitarist.

### **5 Temusewo Mukasa (Uganda): Okwagala omulungi kwesengereza 3:03**

The music of the court of Buganda belongs to the most beautiful one can hear in Africa. Also this kingdom was destroyed, the palace burnt down, the kabaka (king) and his courtiers killed or driven into exile, the instruments, many of them more than 400 years old, burnt - the new rulers feared rivalry from the local chieftains. Temusewo Mukasa was the last harpist in the royal orchestra whose heritage was later restored and preserved by musicians such as Evalisto Muyinda or Albert Ssempeke. His pieces on the eight-stringed *ennanga* belong today to the most precious recordings of African music. This tune is somehow prophetic: 'To love a beautiful person (i.e. the kabaka) only leads to trouble. To get in with the powerful is dangerous.'

### **6 Cristina Braga (Brazil): O Gaúcho 3:31**

Cristina Braga, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1966 is the main responsible for letting the world know that there is also a harp music played in Brazil. Since 1993 she is solo harpist with the Symphony Orchestra of the Municipal Theatre of Rio de Janeiro and since 2009 also professor for harp at the city's university. Besides, she has recorded two albums with Christmas songs and played with many of the country's most popular pop stars.

### **7 Asni The Harper (Germany): Chaconas y Marionas 2:11**

Asni was born Astrid Nielsch in Germany but lives in New Zealand since 2003 where she added The Harper to her artist's name. Asni has specialised on the music and the performance practice of Early and Baroque Music, including several excursions into Middle Earth. These two melodies belong to the famous collection *Luz y Norte Musical* (Madrid 1677) of which Asni has published a print version. Fittingly she plays here on an arpa de dos ordones.

### **8 Nicanor Zabaleta (Spain): Estudiantina 8:14**

For some he is the Paganini, for others the Segovia of the harp. Basque Nicanor Zabaleta Zala (7 January, 1907 - 31 January, 1993) was the most important concert harpist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two decades spent in the USA helped him to become famous on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1954, Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo wrote a three-part concert serenade for Zabaleta. The appellation of the first movement recalls a habit that dates back into the 16<sup>th</sup> century of students marching through the streets while playing guitars, mandolins, violins, flutes, castanets, and other instruments. The march theme is derived from this *estudiantina* music.

### **9 Saw Takah Wah (Myanmar): Altes Lied der Karen 5:30**

Saw Takah Wah learned to play the Burmese national harp *saung gauk* at the National Conservatory in Rangoon and played it later in a marine music band. For this song he uses a *t'na*, though, a small harp made from teak wood and with five steel strings. It belongs to the instrumental cosmos of the Karen, mountain people on the border to Thailand whose culture is suppressed in today's Myanmar. Saw Takah Wah fled from Rangoon together with the Karen freedom fighters; today he is the president of the Overseas Karen Refugees' Salvation Organisation that was founded in April 1991. This song is 800 years old and tells the story of how the Karen tribe was relocated by the Burmese king to the jungle at the Thai border where it had to live under extreme conditions. Some people stayed in their old villages but were not allowed to have contact with their fellow Karen. The song contains verses which sound like nonsense, for instance: 'A honeycomb is sticking to the nose of the black Indian but the bees don't sting the Indian.' Yet they contain a code the inhabitants of the two villages could use to communicate.

### **10 Alhaji Bai Konte (The Gambia): Jimaro Sose 3:16**

Alhaji Bai Konte (1920-1983) is one of the true kora greats of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This *jali* from Brikama has not only influenced generations of musicians in his homeland but also popularised the instrument in the West, not the least with his tours in the USA (for instance with his concert at the Newport Jazz Festival 1973).

### **11 Paul Dooley (Ireland): Loftus Jones 2:31**

Should one ask why the old Irish harp looks so clunky: It was metal-strung and therefore needed a solid body to hold the tension. Paul Dooley has devoted himself to these old harps. He plays a self-constructed replica with metal strings, tears the strings with his finger nails and dampens unwanted reverberation with his finger tips. This means that this interpretation is as close to the original sound of O'Carolan and his harp as one can get.

*Loftus Jones* is one of Carolan's last compositions: When he died, Mr. Jones from Ardnaglass in County Sligo was still a very young man.

### **12 Leila Mes-Chischwili (Georgia): Horumi 2:43**

Originally equipped with six or seven strings made from horse-hair, today's neo-changi has twenty strings. Leila Mes-Chischwili's instrument also possesses a little wooden lever that she can use to drum on the harp.

**13 Strange Rainbow (Scotland): transformed into these lacy fiery fragments 5:15**

Catriona McKay studied pedal and Celtic harp as well as electro-acoustic composition at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. She is a member of the group Fiddlers' Bid and plays in a duo with Shetland fiddler Chris Stout (or with the Swedish nyckelharpa maestro Olov Johansson), with the Kronos Quartet or with the musician and lecturer Alistair MacDonald in the experimental duo Strange Rainbow. Unusual sonorities from the harp meet nature sounds and soundscapes straight out of Alistair MacDonald's computer, they are deconstructed and newly composed, resulting in a tremendously colourful tonality that is at the same time deeply rooted in the earth and in the fantasy.

**14 Dorothy Ashby (USA): Dancing On The Ceiling 7:27**

She hasn't introduced the harp in jazz (that was done earlier by Adele Girard) but she was most likely its most important representative: Dorothy Jeanne Ashby née Thompson (6 August, 1932 - 13 April, 1986) is according to the *New Groove Dictionary of Jazz* the only important harpist in bop. No other integrated the specific sound of a harp so successfully in modern jazz like this woman who also experimented with guitar-like, amplified sounds. She played with Woody Herman and Louis Armstrong, later also for Bill Withers, Stevie Wonder or Diana Ross; songs from her albums have been sampled on numerous hip hop records. In 1970 she also successfully integrated the Japanese koto into jazz.

**15 Aliquando (USA|Germany): Freisinger Petruslied 1:48**

Californian Nancy Thym came to Bavaria (Germany) in 1977 and has since then engrossed her mind intensively into the history of the (European) harp. In Bavaria's Freising she founded a harp museum, in Burgheßler in Saxony-Anhalt she runs the Gotisches Haus as a centre for Early Music. Besides, she is a musician, lecturer, collector, and curator of exhibitions.

**16 Cui Junzhi (China): In Search Of The Ordinary Life 7:32**

**17 Lanta Kerkure (Burkina Faso): Le célibataire - La prostituée 2:18**

Here we step into a grey zone: Strictly speaking, this "arched harp" from Burkina Faso is a multi-stringed musical bow with a resonator as the strings are not attached to this resonator but run parallel between the two ends of the bow. (A number of forked harps are working after the same principle.) But even the noble ethnomusicology does not refrain from speaking of arched harps here. In West Africa it is known among the Lobi - to whom Lanta Kerkure belongs - as kolojo, kulonjo or sala/salan, as kolonjo with the Bwa, kolonjon with the Dyan or koninya with the Gan. In African French it is called "navel harp" or simply - "guitar".

*Le célibataire - La prostituée* is a mocking song about two people who are both rather despised of: a bachelor and a prostitute.

**18 Alfredo Sánchez (Venezuela): Flores Aragueñas 4:01**

Metal strings are responsible for the typical sound of this harpa central from Venezuela. And as the music also shows influences of European baroque, it is categorised as "semi-classical" by Alfredo Sánchez (born 1948).

**19 Loreena McKennitt (Canada): Stolen Child 5:07**

Loreena McKennitt from Manitoba in Canada began around 1978 to pursue a deeper interest in Celtic music, history, and culture. Her debut album *Elemental* (1985) served as a starting point for a journey into Celtic realms. The artist who has received several awards - among them three honorary doctorates and the Order of Canada, the country's highest civil accolade - has also committed herself to a number of social projects such as water safety and support for families and children. *The Stolen Child* is an early poem by William Butler Yeats that was firstly published in December of 1886 in the *Irish Monthly*. One year later it was also included in his first book, *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*. The verses are based on ancient Irish legends and talk of fairies who are trying to entangle a child to come with them.

**Disk 2**

**1 Songhai (Mali|Spain|Great Britain): Jarabi 3:38**



World music, the genre newly incarnated in the summer of 1987 started with this bombshell: a collaboration of kora wunderkind Toumani Diabate with the Nuevo Flamenco group Ketama. More than two decades later Toumani Diabate, born on 10 August 1965 into a dynasty of jalis as son of Mailan kora legend Sidiki Diabate is regarded as being the best and most innovative kora player around. By the way: Out of pride about the Songhai project Toumani's family composed a praise song for him, *Banaya*.

## **2 Edmar Castañeda (Colombia): Entre Cuerdas 8:03**

Born in Bogotá in 1978, Edmar Castaneda lives in New York today. Based on Latin American harp and folk music he has developed an individual funk-jazz style which earns him exuberant praise especially in jazz circles.

## **3 Solongo Damdin (Mongolia): Mandah Narrh 3:26**

All is lost regarding the Mongolian harp cheng, the instrument and also the repertory. Solongo Damdin, essentially a studied violinist plays here an instrument that her compatriot Ulanbagjir has jointly reconstructed with German Rüdiger Oppermann.

## **4 Fran O'Rourke & Derek Bell (Ireland): Easpag Seán Ó hArt 4:25**

The Chieftains called their harpist alternately professor or Ding Dong Bell, the Queen pinned an MBE to his reverie for his merits on classical and Irish music, and the audience mused about the man with tie and grey suit whose trousers were often short for to see better the gaudily colourful socks. Ulsterman George Derek Fleetwood Bell (21 October, 1935 - 17 October, 2002) was being classically trained yet has made significant contributions to the harp being re-introduced into contemporary Irish folk music.

In June 2000 Derek Bell und singer Fran O'Rourke, professor of philosophy at the University College Dublin rehearsed for a joint record with songs by Turlough O'Carolan. Unfortunately Derek Bell died before the project could be finished. Carolan composed the waltz for Dr John Hart in 1735: 'If I were in Rome, as I would like to be / And had my choice of things to do / Certainly I would make an archbishop of you - / John Hart yourself.' On 20 September the same year the wish came true: Dr John Hart was appointed Archbishop of Achonry.

## **5 Félix Pérez Cardozo (Paraguay): Llegada 2:45**

Félix Pérez Cardozo (20 November, 1908 - 9 June, 1952) is considered as the most important innovator of interpretations on the Paraguayan harp music and as a pioneer in its technical development. The mita guazú - Guaraní for "big boy", his nickname - learned harp by watching other musicians in his area play; he never had any formal training. In 1928 he removed to Asunción, three years later to the Argentine capital Buenos Aires where he finally made a career - as a soloist, band member, arranger, and composer. In the process the borderline between his arrangements of traditional pieces and his own compositions vanished - he put his stamp so distinctively on many pieces usually labelled "trad." that one has to rate them as his composition at least by half.

## **6 Dimi Mint Abba (Mauritania): Chaviou Elwara (Introduction) 5:14**

While the Irish Prime Minister mourned Derek Bell's death in public no word of praise was heard from the Mauritanian government when Dimi Mint Abba suddenly died on 4 June, 2011 after a stage accident in Morocco. After all the singer who was born Loula Bint Siddaty Ould Abba on Christmas Day 1958 was the most famous musician of her country; her father is the composer of the national anthem. During this recording she was joined by her family, a brother, a daughter, a cousin, and a niece. *Chaviou Elwara* is a praise song to the prophet Mohammed: 'Compared to this pure diamond all others are mere pebbles...'

## **7 Ba Cissoko (Guinea-Bissau): Yele 5:10**

Ba Cissoko is the pioneer of the electric cub kora. Born into a jali family in 1967 either in Guinea-Bissau as his early biographies say or in Guinea as can be read on his website today, he moved to Guinea's capital Conakry in 1989 and later on to Marseille. There he founded together with two cousins his groovy quartet and dived deep into electric koraland. *Yele* ironises these stylistic turnings: 'Young Sekou plays the kora like an acrobat and handles this classic and noble instrument very lightly (light-hearedly?).'

## **8 Biermösl Blosn (Germany): Che-Guevara-Landler 2:21**

## **9 Sileas (Scotland): The Dusty Windowsill 4:40**

Sileas na Ceapaich was a Gaelic poet from the 18<sup>th</sup> century whose odes to the harp inspired the two Scots Patsy Seddon and Mary MacMaster for their name when they allied in 1985 for a duo. Today's

Sileas impress not the least with the interplay of one gut-strung (Patsy Seddon) and one metal-strung harp (Mary MacMaster).

**10 Inle Myint Maung (Myanmar): Kou mye' soun (The Twelve Royal Gates) 6:49**

Court music from Burma: The repertoire of the thachin gyi, the great song, is praised as the most elegant genre in Burmese music. The grandmaster of saung gauk music, Myint Maung (3 June, 1937 - 5 September, 2001) not only played these songs but was also the first to write them down. This song interpreted by his favourite vocal student Daw Yi Yi Thant lists the twelve gates of the royal palace in Mandalay.

**11 Xenia Narati (Germany): Round 1:31**

Xenia Narati works as harpist in theatre and concert contexts and gives special pleasure with her adaptations of New Music compositions for the harp. Besides she is docent for dispokinetics with her own office; dispokinetics is an integral training of posture and movement for musicians.

Lou Harrison (14 May, 1917 - 2 January, 2003) is one of the most original American composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his works, he integrated traditional music of the Native Americans, from Korea or Indonesia but also used quite unusual percussion instruments. He composed *Round* in 1991 for Jafran Jones.

**12 Joseph Lidza (Congo): Abu Madzada 1:23**

Joseph Lidza from the Balendu ethnic group plays here a bonguma, a small five-stringed harp. The Balendu live in Northern Congo at Lake Albert near the Ugandan border; they belong to the Sudan people. The bonguma is therefore a harp from the Nile valley.

**13 Aberjaber (Wales): Pedwar Darn Llawysgrif ap Huw 8:47**

Robert ap Huw's manuscript published in 1613 is the oldest known source of Welsh music. Because of its unusual notation it is still controversial as how exactly the music shall be played. With a Welsh triple harp and the ancient bowed lyre crwth Aberjaber took a big step towards an original sound.

**14 Sidikiba Keita (Mali): Tita 5:08**

In his native country in Southern Mali Sidikiba Keita represents the tradition of the bards who send the hunters on their way and also praise their success upon they return. But his repertory also includes songs by the jalis that have visited the area. *Tita* passes on the wisdom that there will be problems when a woman is forced into a marriage with a man she does not love. Sidikiba Keita plays the lute-harp sinbi whose seven metal strings are made of brake cable wire.

**15 Wind Song 10 2:39**

The largest European wind harp can be found in the knight's hall at the castle ruin of Hohenbaden in Baden-Baden (southwest Germany). The instrument was erected in 1999, it is 4.30 m high and has 120 strings the longest of which counts 1.60 m. It was constructed by Rüdiger Oppermann and dove-tailed exactly into the window opening of the wall. For this song, the nylon strings are tuned to a pentatonic scale.

**16 Alan Stivell (France): Reflets 4:19**

Alan Stivell was born as Alan Cochevelou on 6 January, 1944 in Riom in France's Auvergne. He is undoubtedly the most influential Breton musician of the last fifty years. His father reconstructed for him an old Celtic harp which he started playing aged nine. At 14 he learned bagpipes and Breton; in 1966 his father built for him a bard harp with bronze strings. With his music and his singing - amongst others in Breton, Welsh, Irish, and Scottish - he was one of the first to focus on the historic and cultural affinities of the Insular Celtic settlement area. With this, he was the inspiring example for artists - harpists and other (folk) musicians - in all Celtic corners of the world.

**17 Phia Berghout (The Netherlands): Danse sacrée et danse profane 9:20**

Dutch Phia Berghout (14 December, 1909 - 22 March, 1993) was one of the most distinctive harpists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She not only shone as a concert artist but also memorialised herself by founding the Harp Weeks which in 1983 evolved into the International Harp Congress.

Debussy's Dances were commissioned by Gustave Lyon for his then-new Pleyel harp. The Parisian harp top dog, the Music house Erard retorted by contracting Maurice Ravel who quickly composed his *Introduction et Allegro*. More than a hundred years later it is remarkable that both pieces not only still rank among the highlights of harp literature but are also regularly put back to back on record as standards of musical Impressionism. The same occurred in 1953 when this recording of the Debussy dances were released letting the reviewer of the reference magazine of classical music, *Gramophone* get carried away: 'Phia Berghout who proves herself a harpist of the very first rank has

an unbelievably silent and instantaneous pedal technique that is most useful in negotiating the awkwardness of some of the chromatic harp passages.'

### Disk 3

In 2011, the annual *Magic Concert* at TFF Rudolstadt was devoted to the harp. In two ensemble concerts as well as in their respective solo performances six artists from four continents presented various facets of the instrument. And although the tongue-in-cheek sighing 'a harper always tunes but a harp never is in tune' was also true here sometimes - some of the most outstanding and (in every aspect) harmonious moments are captured on this CD for posterity.

#### **Robin Huw Bowen**

is a relentless fighter for Welsh language, music, and culture and currently most likely the most prominent representative of the Welsh triple harp. He was lucky to still have learned from Eldra Jarman, the last of the great British gypsy harpists. The movie *Eldra* shows the childhood of this woman between the vagrant and the resident people; Robin Huw Bowen contributed the soundtrack and was awarded the British film award BAFTA for it.

#### **Sixto Corbalán**

Sixto Tadeo Corbalán Sanabria, born on 10 December 1984 in the Paraguayan capital Asunción belongs to the young wild harpist scene that is shifting away from the too often too sweet harp music of the country. He integrates styles such as bossa nova, jazz, country, rock, or classic in his music and also tries to open new doors for the Paraguayan harp music by using modern techniques such as two half-ton keys in each hand.

#### **Tom Daun**

Thomas Daun first studied school music (classical guitar and English) in Cologne und afterwards folklore research and Early Music in Scotland where he received a Master of Music from the University of Edinburgh in 1985 on the subjects Scottish Traditional Music and History Of Notation. After his return to Solingen he founded the ensemble La Rotta; since 1992 he mainly performs solo with programmes of Baroque and traditional music.

#### **Lamin Jobarteh**

was born in The Gambia in 1965. He studied music in Dakar. In 1998 he came to Switzerland for a couple of concerts; he stayed on and met saxophone player Roger Greipl with whom he formed the band King Kora shortly afterwards. The group toured extensively through Europe and West Africa; for their third album *Mandingda* they received the Pro Helvetia Prize.

#### **U Kyaw Myo Naing**

U means simply Mister in Burma. Family names are unknown, everybody receives two or three first names instead. Kyaw Myo Naing was born on 8 January, 1973. He came to music via his father who played in a traditional music ensemble; he died in May 2011. The composition on this disk is dedicated to his memory.

#### **Park Stickney**

The US-American is one of the greats of the international jazz and electro harp scene. With full physical play he slides over the pedals turning the harp into a percussive and grooving instrument. A graduate from the prestigious Juilliard School in New York, he travels the world as a solo harpist, teacher (he is professor for jazz harp at the Royal Academy of Music in London), and also as a member in various ensembles playing music between jazz, classic, and rock.

#### **Nora Thiele**

from Germany received a classic piano training before turning, at the age of 16, to the frame drums and to non-European music. She studied ethnic percussion, drums, and piano at the Leipzig Music School; today she performs as a soloist but is also active in a variety of music ensembles.