

The Newsletter of America's Hippest Harpist

Spring/Summer 2005

# Deborah Henson-Conant

## INSIDE:

- DHC Receives Major Grant to Record and Release DVD with full Symphony Orchestra (pg. 2)
- Mother's Day Sizzles in Beantown (pg. 3)
- Tour Updates (pg. 3)

Deborah Henson-Conant tells stories with music, sings and plays the solid-body electric harp. She's a cross-genre, Blues-Flamenco-Celtic-Funk-Folk-Jazz dynamo. She tells tall tales with the ease of a stand-up comic. She solos and wails like a rock guitarist. She's America's only bad-girl harpist. See her once, and you'll never look at a harp the same way again.

Deborah has opened for Ray Charles at Tanglewood, toured with the Boston Pops, jammed onstage with Bobby McFerrin and offstage with Steven Tyler, premiered her works with ensembles from the National Symphony Orchestra to the Prague Radio Orchestra. She's been interviewed by Scott Simon, Charlie Rose, Studs Terkel, starred in the PBS Special "Celtic Harpestry" and been featured in stories on NBC, CBS, CNN and NPR.

Now, Deborah's groundbreaking original work is raising the bar another notch. She's out to change the way people look at modern day orchestral composer/performers and she's just teamed up with an angel who can help her do it. Read inside about her new surround-sound symphonic DVD Project.



PHOTO: BRION PRICE, ORLANDO, FL

[www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com)

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"Imagine the talented love-child of André Previn and Lucille Ball."

Scott Simon, NPR

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"...bending the rules and shattering the notion of what a harpist can do." Steve Roberts - CBS News Nightwatch  
P.O. BOX 1039  
ARLINGTON, MA 02474



On Nov. 11, 2005 Deborah Henson-Conant and conductor David Lockington will step onto the stage. Lockington will raise his baton, 75 musicians will take a deep breath ... and the cameras will roll. During the next three nights, they'll record Deborah's symphonic show in front of a live audience. Not just the music, but the full spectrum of her colorful, high-energy performance – the stories, the music, the sometimes-

**"You really have to see Deborah perform to get the full impact of her work. A CD only tells half the story. A full-spectrum, surround-sound DVD was what we needed."**

*Jonathan Wyner, Producer*

lush, sometimes-fiery orchestrations and the powerful vision of Henson-Conant sweeping across the stage with her electric strap-on harp.

"Cool. She's making a DVD," you say. "But what's the big deal? Heck, lots of performers are doing it." OK, so technologically, it's easy to record for DVD these days. But a full-spectrum, surround-sound DVD with a professional orchestra? That's another thing entirely.

Financially, it's daunting. Musicians' fees alone can run to hundreds of thousands. Then there's the camera crew, the directors, the editing and manufacturing costs. For that you need the kind of financial support artists can only dream about. For that, you need an angel.

Enter Peter Wege, philanthropist, environmentalist and music-lover. In 1999 when Deborah first performed with his home-town orchestra, the Grand Rapids Symphony (GRS), he was moved by what he saw on stage: the chemistry between the orchestra, the passion and humor of Deborah's performance. He came back stage after the show glowing. "What I just saw out there," he said to Deborah, "I want everyone to see."

Wege and Henson-Conant became friends. Turns out they're passionate about a lot of the same things: music, art, water, big projects -- and the Grand Rapids Symphony.

Huh?!? The Grand Rapids Symphony?? Isn't that just some little orchestra out there in the Midwest??

Yeah, right -- and Deborah Henson-Conant is just another harp player.

The Grand Rapids Symphony happens to be a gem of an orchestra. Already one of America's leading regional orchestras, supporters like Wege are fast turning it into a musical jewel, with a world-class conductor, substantial educational outreach and some of the most dedicated and spirited musicians you'll find on any stage.

"This is a very unusual ensemble," says Deborah. "The enthusiasm and camaraderie of the players is palpable. When you play with the GRS, you know why they call making music 'playing.'" David Lockington is a thrill to work with and everyone from associate conductor John Varineau to

**"Inside every cultural cliché, like the harp or the Pops orchestra, there was once vibrant life, innovation and passion. Go back to the original intent – pull away the façade. Find the life, the passion, the beauty. Reignite them."** *Deborah Henson-Conant*

**Deborah Henson-Conant is all about reinvention.**

She took the stately, stuffy concert harp and transformed it into an instrument with a voice that stretches from Flamenco to Blues, from achingly beautiful ballads to Hendrix-like rock. "At its origin, the harp was that kind of instrument," says Deborah, "powerful and expressive. I'm not out to change the instrument. I'm out to reignite it."

Now she's doing the same thing for the orchestral Pops format. "Pops" was originally a vibrant alternate programming, a chance for audiences to connect with living composers and new compositions with that larger-than-life symphonic breadth.

Since her debut with the Boston Pops in 1995, Deborah Henson-Conant is bringing that spirit back to life, opening the stunning power and beauty of the symphony to a new audience, through vibrant, moving, accessible - and completely new - music.

**Now she's bringing that to DVD.**

**"A combination of Leonard Bernstein, Steven Tyler and Xena, the Warrior Princess"**

*The Boston Globe*

Operations Manager Roger Nelson is out to make the music come alive."

That spirit is turning the GRS into the orchestra of choice for composer/performers like Henson-Conant and fiddle virtuoso Mark O'Connor, who are both performing on the 2005 GRS season. They're drawn to the GRS for the energy and enthusiasm of the players and Lockington's artistry, musicianship and openness to musical challenge.

**To read more about this project or to book a date for the 2006-2007 tour, visit Deborah's website or contact her office at the numbers below. For more on the GRS Concert Season: [grsymphony.org](http://grsymphony.org)**



Above: The movers and shakers behind this project: John Varineau, GRS Associate Conductor, David Lockington, GRS Music Director, DHC, Peter Wege, Jonathan Wyner, Producer.  
TV photo (above left) : Orlando Philharmonic, Andy Lane Conducting.  
Photo by Brion Price, Orlando, FL.

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# NEWS, UPDATES & UPCOMING SHOWS

# TOUR DATES

"The audience laughed, got to their feet and cheered, or simply sat open-mouthed as she gave us the blues, on a blue harp..." *The Scotsman (Edinburgh Fringe)*

## WHERE YOU BEEN?

■ **SOLD OUT IN JANUARY!** "Stand Up and Sing, Harp Lady!" at Jimmy Tingle's OFF BROADWAY- Just for fun, Deborah and comic Jimmy Tingle decided to co-produce a show at Tingle's "Off Broadway Theatre" on the worst two weekends of the year: the first two after New Year's. "It was an experiment," says Deborah. "We wanted to do something different, and we wanted to see if anyone would turn out." And boy, did they turn out! For two weekends straight, the show was sold out. Will Deborah be back at JTOB's? "You bet!!!"

## ■ "RIDE THAT HARP, BIKER GIRL!"

Deborah was featured in issue 122 of "The Ride" magazine, with both her harp and her beloved bicycle. Was she riding and playing at the same time? "Uh, well, I'm still working on that one." Check out "The Ride" at [www.RideZine.com](http://www.RideZine.com)

## ■ HARRISBURG, CHA CHA CHA!

After her 2002 "Frog Princess" performance with the Harrisburg Symphony, Deborah returned this winter for another family show with members of the Harrisburg Symphony. "This time music director Stuart Malina and I decided to pare down the orchestra. Just the essential instruments: a violin, a piano, a harp, percussion and two tubas." Two tubas? "Yes, indeed. A rare treat!"

Speaking of treats, the concert sponsor, M&T Bank, "brought tambourines for every single kid in the audience! Which was perfect, because we had a grand finale with a huge audience percussion solo. And for refreshments, they gave out the best animal crackers I ever ate! I ... uh... took some home in my luggage. Yum."

**THE SMALL PRINT:** All photos in this newsletter by Brion Price (Orlando, FL) [exc. photo of DVD folks on pg. 2] - DHC in concert with the ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC / Custom-built harp by CAMAC Harps / [www.camac-harps.com](http://www.camac-harps.com) See these & other photos (in color!) at Deborah's website: [HipHarp.com](http://HipHarp.com)

This secret document decoded at HipHarp Headquarters by Secret Agent #62 (Matt P.), Agent #0007 (Eugene S.), Agent #3.14 (Gina-Marie C.), Agent #12 (Catherine D.), Agent #29 (Jonathan W.) and Agent #11 (DHC). Special Thanks to: Dan Beach, CAMAC Harps and Lyon & Healy Harps.

## MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND IN BEANTOWN!

### FOUR CONCERTS - ONE WEEKEND - BOSTON AREA!

It started out as a single Saturday night show, Deborah's Annual Birthday party we couldn't find time for last November. Since it fell about 6-months late, we planned to call it the "Birthday Bash-and-a-Half." But then it started growing ... Now the weekend includes four shows: a Thursday night "Wild Woman" benefit for cancer research, two solo shows (Friday & Saturday night) and a very special Mother's Day brunch on Sunday, with members of the Boston Classical Orchestra, conducted by Steven Lipsitt.

### SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SHOWS?

**THURSDAY: Wild Women Unite for the Cure - Benefit:** The "Wild Women Unite" show in 2003 was a very intimate concert with special guests, inspiration, camaraderie and some funny, moving stories. Ninety percent of the proceeds benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the Avon Foundation. For more, see [www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com).

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY:** The Birthday parties Deborah didn't get to have last November -- so if you've ever been to a DHC Birthday Bash, you know what's in store! If not, visit [HipHarp.com](http://HipHarp.com) for more info.

**SUNDAY - Mother's Day Matinee:** DHC will perform with members of the Boston Classical Orchestra. This is a sneak preview of some of the material Deborah will record on her full-orchestra DVD project this fall. The ensemble for this concert is: string quartet, flute, clarinet, bass, percussion -- and maybe tuba. Don't miss it! For more info: [HipHarp.com](http://HipHarp.com), of course.

### "THE DVD PROJECT" TIMELINE:

*Deborah's symphonic DVD Project with the Grand Rapids Symphony spans nearly 3 years from inception to tour end. Below are some of the timeline details:*

**SUN. MAY 8 - SNEAK PREVIEW** with members of the Boston Classical Orchestra (see above for more details)

**MAY - AUG - COMPOSING / ORCHESTRATING**

**TUE. AUG. 2 -** Reading Rehearsal with the GRS

**NOV. 11 - 13 - PERFORMANCES & RECORDING WITH THE GRS**

**MAR. 2006 - CD/DVD RELEASE**

**MAR '06 - DEC '07- DVD RELEASE TOUR**

From March '06 through Dec. '07, Deborah will tour, performing music from the DVD with Orchestras and Ensembles throughout the US and Europe.

**PRESENTERS:** To book a date on this tour, see booking info below

**FANS:** If you want to bring this show to your city, let us know the name of your symphony or chamber ensemble and we'll be happy to send out an informational packet about the project.

**To book Deborah as part of the 2006-2007 DVD tour, contact us at: (781) 483-3556 info@HipHarp.com**



St. Paul UCC Fine Arts Committee Presents  
**HipHarp In Concert • St. Louis Area**  
 with the St. Louis Harpbreakers!  
**Apr. 3 • 2 pm • St. Paul UCC • Belleville, IL**  
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The Arts Council, Inc. Presents  
**Panoply Arts Festival • Huntsville, AL**  
**Fri. & Sat Apr. 22/23 - 7 pm - Main Stage Concerts**  
**Sat. Apr. 23 - 1 pm - Stories at Gazebo Stage**  
**Sat. Apr. 23 - 4 pm - Theater Demo Stage**  
 Tix/Info: [www.panoply.org](http://www.panoply.org) or (256) 519-2787  
*Schedule subject to change - so stay tuned!*

**MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND**  
**Regent Theatre • Arlington, MA**  
**Thu. May 5 at 8 pm**  
**Wild Women Unite for the Cure Benefit**  
**Fri. May 6 & Sat. May 7 at 8 pm**  
**Deborah's Birthday-Bash-and-a-Half!**  
**Sun. May 8 • Mother's Day Matinee**  
**3 pm Sneak Preview of Deborah's DVD**  
**with members of the Boston Classical Orchestra**  
 Tix and info:  
[www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com) / (888) DEB-STUF  
[www.RegentTheatre.com](http://www.RegentTheatre.com) / (781) 646-4849

**May - Nov. 2005**  
 Because of preparations for the DVD Project, no shows are currently scheduled between May - Dec. 2005.

**Grand Rapids Symphony • Michigan**  
**Nov. 11 - 13 • Concerts & DVD Recording**  
 Be there when the cameras roll! Tix go on sale after Labor Day '05. For an email reminder, join Deborah's cyber-fan list at [www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com) or email for more info: [info@HipHarp.com](mailto:info@HipHarp.com)

*The universe is in a constant state of flux - and so is Deborah's tour schedule. Check [HipHarp.com](http://HipHarp.com) Tour Schedule and/or join her Cyber-Fan Club for tour updates and ticket specials.*

**Missed a show? Join Deborah's email mailing list at [HipHarp.com](http://HipHarp.com). Don't know how to describe her to your friends? Visit the website for video, audio, live concert photos, biographical notes, CDs, tour dates & more!**

**[www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com)**

DEBORAH HENSON-CONANT

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**"Striking flamenco sparks from the strings... belting gut-bucket blues and crooning lullabies... it's impossible not to be mesmerized."** Clifton J. Noble, Jr., Springfield Union-News

**ALL STANDARD CDs (below) are \$15**

**Artist's Proof: Phase 2** ('04) Enhanced CD (Audio & Video) Includes "Way You Are Blues," "Land of You," "Never Too Late," & others! For more info on this "special project" CD, see "Artist's Proof Project" at [www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com)



**Artist's Proof**



**Altered Ego** ('98) Some of Deborah's most-requested songs including: "The Nightingale," "Belinda," "Congratulations! You Made it This Far," "Dogs of Somerville," and others.

**Just for You - Live in Concert** ('95)  
Harp, bass, percussion and vocals.

Upbeat original latin, swing and world-beat jazz.



**The Celtic Album** ('98) Improvisations on traditional Celtic tunes with a few blues twists.

**Round the Corner** ('87)

Jazz Standards for harp, bass & drums. "Take Five," "Summertime," "Over the Rainbow" and other familiar jazz tunes.



**Naked Music** ('94)  
Deborah's solo CD for harp & voice. This is a new limited re-release on CDR.

For a full catalogue, see [www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com)

**"With her cobalt-blue electric Irish harp slung around her neck, she gives Celtic bardery a new image."** Amazon.com publication

**The Gift** ('95)

Improvisations on traditional Holiday songs from around the world. A great holiday gift!



**The Frog Princess**

('00) "A Froggish Fairy Tale" written, narrated and sung by Deborah (no harp!)

Newly remastered in 2004 (see website for details).



Great for Kids!

**SHEET MUSIC:** See the website for a full listing of available sheet music.

- Nataliana for harp (Intermediate to Advanced) **(\$8.50)**
- New Blues for harp (Intermediate to Advanced) **(\$7.50)**
- The Nightingale for harp & voice (Beginning to Advanced) **(\$10.50)**
- Off She Goes & She's Gone for 2 harps **(\$10.50)**
- Intro to Improvisation & Vamps with playalong CD! **(\$25)**
- Gurl's Guide to Amplification for the "Gurl" in everyone! **(\$20)**

**SPECIALTY CDs:** The following "Specialty CDs" come specially packaged. Please note the prices are different than the standard CD prices above. For more info, visit the website.

- Songs My Mother Sang** ('84) (Lullabies & Songs for Children) CD & Songbook with illustrations by artist Ellen Lebow. **(\$17.95)**
- Birthday Card CD** ('98) Deborah's birthday single "Congratulations, You Made It This Far," in a birthday card with a red balloon. **(\$10 ea. / 2 for \$15 / 12 for \$75)**

**AMPLIFICATION KIT:** Wanna get LOUD(er)? Here's everything you need to turn a harp into an electro-acoustic instrument: pre-amp, pickup, cables, instructions AND Deborah's book, "Gurl's Guide to Amplification" **(\$295)**. See website for more info and FAQs about amplifying an acoustic harp.

**ORDERING INFO:**

You can find all Deborah Henson-Conant CDs at [www.HipHarp.com](http://www.HipHarp.com)

You can also visit one of our friends below or see our website for a longer list of CD stores that carry Deborah's CDs.

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or call toll-free: **(800) 272-4277**

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