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Harpist Yolanda Kondonassis

Performs Ginastera's Harp Concerto with Grant Park Orchestra Led by Emmanuel Villaume

Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 6:30pm
Jay Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park | Chicago, IL

Reserved seating (\$26-\$99) available [here](#). Free seating on a first-come basis on the Great Lawn and Seating Bowl.

More information at www.gpmf.org

[Watch a video of Kondonassis performing the Ginastera Concerto](#)

“Yolanda Kondonassis’ performance abounds with affectionate detail ... she plays with a keen sense of dramatic timing and a range of colour that’s breathtaking.” – *Gramophone*

Chicago, IL – On **Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 6:30pm**, internationally acclaimed harpist **Yolanda Kondonassis** performs **Alberto Ginastera’s Harp Concerto** as soloist with the **Grant Park Orchestra** led by **Emmanuel Villaume** at **Jay Pritzker Pavilion** (201 E Randolph Street). The program also includes Ravel’s charming Mother Goose Suite and Bizet’s First Symphony. This concert will be broadcast live on 98.7WFMT and streamed live at www.wfmt.com.

Since its premiere in 1965, Ginastera's Harp Concerto has acquired an almost cult status as the definitive harp concerto of the 20th century. With its pulsing Latin rhythms, virtuosic displays, and creative use of many unique colors and special effects, the work has received numerous performances during the past several decades, nearly 200 of which have been performed by Yolanda Kondonassis.

“Alberto Ginastera’s Harp Concerto not only *made* my solo career, it was probably a major factor in my decision to choose the harp over the piano at a critical fork in the road,” says Kondonassis. “Having a piece of music that gave me the opportunity to be passionate, ferocious, vibrant, dissonant, and fiery was a deal-maker for me. While I love much of the harp’s traditional repertoire, Ginastera’s Concerto gave me a window into all the other characteristics that the harp - and a harpist - could possess. That excitement was my fuel.”

Kondonassis released the concerto on *Ginastera: One Hundred* (Azica Records) in celebration of his centennial in 2016. “The project afforded me the profound luxury of looking back with reverence at a composer whose music affected me deeply,” Kondonassis explains. “It was an opportunity to honor a man who, in my opinion, has not been honored enough for his life of musical contributions.”

Of the album, *Gramophone* notes, “[Yolanda Kondonassis’] performance abounds with affectionate detail, particularly in the third-movement cadenza, which she plays with a keen sense of dramatic timing and a range of colour that’s breathtaking,” while *Cleveland Classical* praises, “The album is a masterpiece. Kondonassis’s playing in the concerto is rhythmically exact, yet passionate. It is mesmerizing... A wonderful overview of Ginastera’s music.”

Her latest recording, featured on the album *American Rapture* (Azica Records), is the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner Jennifer Higdon’s Harp Concerto, written for and dedicated to Kondonassis. Released May 17, 2019, it was recorded with Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Music Director Ward Stare. Rochester’s *CITY Newspaper*

reports, “On the world premiere recording of Jennifer Higdon's mercurial Harp Concerto, the crystalline precision of Yolanda Kondonassis's harp, the rhythmic buoyancy of Stare's conducting, and the cohesion of the orchestra achieve a kind of mystical alchemy.”

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

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

The first harpist to receive the Darius Milhaud Prize, Kondonassis is committed to the advancement of contemporary music for the instrument, with recent premieres including works by Jennifer Higdon, Bright Sheng, Keith Fitch, and Gary Schocker. Kondonassis has also earned a reputation as a world-class chamber musician, collaborating with artists such as the Shanghai, JACK, Jupiter, and Vermeer string quartets, pianist Jeremy Denk, and guitarist Jason Vieaux, among others. The Kondonassis/Vieaux duo released their debut album, *Together*, in January 2015 on Azica Records.

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

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

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

For more information on Yolanda Kondonassis, visit www.YolandaHarp.com.

About the Grant Park Music Festival

For more than 80 years, the Grant Park Music Festival has been Chicago's summer musical sensation, demonstrating that classical music, performed by a world-class orchestra and chorus, can have a transformative impact on the city. Led by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Carlos Kalmar and Chorus Director Christopher Bell, each summer the Festival offers a 10-week season of concerts, artistic development initiatives, radio broadcasts and community engagement and outreach programs. It operates as a unique collaboration among the Grant Park Orchestral Association, the Chicago Park District and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

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