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Harp soloist to perform with Eugene Symphony

Harpist Yolanda Kondonassis is a recording artist as well as a performing artist

By Remzi Bajrami
Freelance Reporter

An angel in Eugene? Not quite. But she has devoted her life to the most heavenly of instruments. Yolanda Kondonassis is one of few harpists who make their livings as concert soloists.

On Thursday, Jan. 23, Kondonassis will perform at the Hult Center with the Eugene Symphony under the baton of guest conductor Alasdair Neale. She is the first harp soloist to perform in the Symphony's 31-year history.

With the Eugene Symphony, Kondonassis will play two French favorites: Debussy's demonic "Danses sacree et profane" and Ravel's "Introduction and Allegro." The program also includes one of Prokofiev's most popular compositions: the high-spirited Symphony No. 5.

"I often relate the evolution of the harp to the evolution of women. Like most women, the harp is capable of countless different styles, moods, and dimensions,

and shouldn't be narrowly perceived," Kondonassis said.

Kondonassis has already amassed a long list of prestigious prizes and international honors.

"By the time the young Oklahoma-born harpist had spun her last golden phrase, she might have been crowned queen of her instrument on the spot," said *The Detroit News*.

Kondonassis made her recording debut with the critically acclaimed 1993 Telarc release *Scintillation*, featuring music by the French Impressionists.

A *New Baroque* and *Sky Music* are among her latest releases. This devoted chamber musician has performed, recorded, and toured with the Cleveland Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony and the Atlanta Symphony.

There will be a free one hour lecture/demonstration in the Hult Center's Studio 1 Jan. 22 at 12 p.m.

Tonight's 8 p.m. concert is sponsored by the Eugene Symphony Guild.

Tickets are available at the Hult Center (687-5000) and the EMU Ticket Outlet. Tickets are from \$10 to \$34. Discounts are available for students, seniors, and youth.



COURTESY PHOTO

Yolanda Kondonassis will be the first harp soloist in history to perform with the Eugene Symphony.

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