

LIVING MUSIC

A Glimpse into the Professional Lives of the Musicians of the KSCC

By Monica Buffington

It's 10 minutes before the start of the KSCC concert. You settle into your seat and hear the sounds of musicians warming up on stage. You watch final preparations, conversations between colleagues, oboists working on their reeds. The lights dim, the music begins, and you enjoy the art of the orchestra. Ever wonder about the people behind those glorious sounds? Join us this season as we peek inside the professional lives of the musicians of the Kennett Symphony of Chester County.

Call it a happy coincidence, synchronicity, or perhaps even divine intervention. No matter the term, anyone who has heard harpist **Janet Jackson Witman** perform will be grateful to whatever force of nature brought this talented KSCC musician to the harp. It all started with a 10-year old Janet and a Sunday school class during which a lesson was being taught on David and King Saul. Janet was taken with the story of how David calmed Saul with his harp music, and despite having never seen a harp nor having heard the sound of a harp, promptly announced to her mother that she wanted to play the instrument. After a year of searching their rural Lancaster County farm community for a lead on teachers - this in the days long before Google search and web pages - Mom's perseverance paid off. A teacher was found, and Janet began lessons.

Fast forward to a present day Janet and you will find a musician who enjoys a diverse musical life performing on both classical harp and celtic harp. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, she has performed classical harp with the KSCC for over 15 years, has been a soloist with the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, Allentown Symphony, Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, and the KSCC, among others, has been featured at the Hotel DuPont for over 20 years, and teaches at the Delaware Music School and her own private studio. As a celtic harpist, Janet won the 2000 National Scottish Harp Competition resulting in a trip to perform and study at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival. As part of her studies in Edinburgh, Janet learned about Scottish celtic harp orchestras and was inspired to found the Brandywine Harp Orchestra upon her return to the U.S. As Music Director of the harp orchestra, Janet arranges and composes repertoire and has produced several CDs. In the spring of 2009, the harp orchestra received the honor of being the first American harp orchestra to perform at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival in its 29 year history. KSCC audiences will have the opportunity to hear the group perform during the symphony's summer concert series at Longwood Gardens this coming August.

ESPECIALLY FOR YOU: Here's what Janet would like our KSCC audiences to know about LIVING MUSIC:

"I love playing both classical harp and celtic harp. The instruments speak to me in different ways, and I enjoy the creative process of planning and performing concerts that bring their distinctive sounds to life for audiences."



Learn more about **KSCC musician Janet Witman** by visiting her website www.harpexcellence.com



Just in time for holiday gift giving! Enjoy **KSCC musician Janet Witman** and the **Brandywine Harp Orchestra** as they bring together 14 celtic harps, hand bells, children's choir, flute, pennywhistle and organ in exquisitely crafted arrangements of holiday carols. Visit www.brandywineharps.com to listen to samples and purchase the CD.