

Long Bio: LILY NEILL

LILY NEILL has captivated audiences around the world with the dynamism and breadth of her performances, and her infectious passion for the harp. She has played for world leaders and ambassadors, luminaries in the world of music, young music students, and listeners who never dreamed they would ever hear a harp.

When she was just three years old Lily told her family that she was going to play the harp, and even made one for herself from a shoebox and rubber bands! She began her music education on the piano yet her determination to play the harp was unwavering and she soon became proficient at both instruments. By the time she was thirteen, Lily had won numerous prizes at music competitions—including the All-Ireland—and given her first solo concert.

Lily's teenage years were filled with everything from playing the harp in orchestral premieres, to collaborations with dancers and actors, and performances with the legendary Derek Bell and The Chieftains—whose leader, Paddy Moloney, noted her "...tremendous promise". Lily also performed for President Bill Clinton in Washington, D.C. and a decade later performed across the world in Moscow for President Mary McAleese, for the first ever visit by an Irish Head of State to Russia.

Collaborations with poets, rock n'roll artists, filmmakers, and dancers have all influenced Lily's playing and today it is her solo performances that highlight the scope of her musicianship. From North America, across to Europe and Russia, she has mesmerized and delighted listeners—from tens to thousands—in concert halls and theaters, at clubs and festivals, and on television. Critics have praised her effortless technique, versatility, and the uniqueness of her style, with *Irish Music Magazine* calling her, "...part of the new Harp revolution extolling aspects of harp music never previously heard". *The Washington Times* hailed Lily's collaborative work a "*tour-de-force*" and *fRoots* has written glowingly of her "superb" playing.

Unlike many young harpists, who are drawn to the orchestral pedal harp, Lily gravitated toward the the lever harp—a relatively modern type of harp that is a cross between the medieval Irish and Scottish harps and the pedal harp. Playing an instrument with a relatively low profile spurred her to learn as much as she could about its history. Lily's firm understanding of the harp, coupled with the diversity of her experiences, and her appreciation of music in the broadest sense, has contributed to her wholly rooted yet eminently distinctive and modern sound. Her concerts feature everything from original compositions and tangos, to Elizabethan music, ragtime, and traditional tunes from across the globe.

Lily earned a 1st Class Honours degree in Irish Music and Dance from the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick, Ireland, and a Master of Music degree from the prestigious Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. She also studied in Vilnius at The Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Lily is currently a part-time teacher at Sibelius Academy and has given master-classes for schools such as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the Royal Danish Academy of Music, London's City University, and for organizations such as the Clarsach Society and the Finnish kantele association *Kanteleliitto*. In 2014, she launched "The Harp Quarterly" as a way to work with harp students, building their repertoire and developing their technique.

www.LilyNeill.com