

BLOG POSTS from DEBORAH HENSON-CONANT

For the Utah Symphony / USUO / E-mailer and Blog - July 2009

BLOG POST #1:

Dear Utah Symphony Friends --

I'm here in the Salt Lake City airport -- just passing through this time — but knowing I'll be back at the end of the month for my performance with the Utah Symphony at Deer Valley! I keep wanting to go up to everyone in the airport and tell them to come to the show! I love to perform, I love working with great musicians, and I'm so excited about the show we're performing August 1st. I've never been on a program that paired me with the "1812 Overture," but I have a few ideas of my own about how to live up to that exciting challenge!

My harp is snug in the hold of the plane as I write this. After years of struggling to tour with a 6-foot concert harp, I feel pretty smug checking my custom-built carbon-fibre electric harp onto the plane! If harps were cars, then I guess this harp would be the Harley-Davidson of the harp world. It even has flames on it! The man who painted it specializes in airbrushing trucks and motorcycles ... and now electric harps!

I'm so looking forward to my concert with maestro David Lockington and your wonderful symphony! David and I have a long history together and share a love of both great music and great entertainment. This is our first chance to work together since our 2006 Grammy-Nominated project, "Invention & Alchemy," a huge project that later went on to become a music special on PBS. If you missed it on PBS, you can see clips of it on YouTube — just go to my website – HipHarp.com - and click on the YouTube icon on the home page to get a taste of what you can expect from us on the stage. Then come join us August 1st at Deer Valley when the "1812 Overture" meets "Hip Harp!"

See you there!

Deborah Henson-Conant (HipHarp.com)

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BLOG POST #2:

Dear Utah Symphony Friends --

I'm thrilled about coming to play with the Utah Symphony at Deer Valley for a concert that I think of it as "'1812 Overture" meets "Hip Harp." Elevation, 8,000 feet with electric harp, voice, orchestra ... AND CANNONS! Now THAT'S what I call fun!

Before I get there, I want to tell you a little bit about my instrument, because it's very unique. For years I played the 6-foot tall gold concert harp, but every time I tried to get it on a plane, I dreamt of an instrument I could carry over my shoulder, and strap on like an electric guitar -- yet powerful enough to soar over the kinds of orchestrations I like to write: lush, rhythmic, sometimes bombastic. I wanted an instrument I could play Blues on, and Flamenco, as well as Ballads. Year after year I went to harp builders all over the world saying: "OK, so let's say a harp and an electric guitar got married and had a child. THAT'S the instrument I want! Could you build me that?" I even made my own prototype, painted it to look like a *Stratocaster* guitar, and took it around as a model!

Then finally, the late Joel Garnier, the premiere harp builder in France, gave me a present: the first solid-body electric body-harp. "Here," Joel said (in his beautiful French accent), "I have made you the harp. Your Blue harp! And now YOU must create the music to play!" So for the past fifteen years, I have been creating music and his firm, CAMAC Harps, has been building and rebuilding the instrument. The instrument you'll see at Deer Valley is the newest generation, a carbon fibre harp, with a crystal piezo pickup on every string. There are only two in the world, each with a different design. The harp only weighs 11 pounds but oh, what a glorious sound!

So can the little harp that Joel built carry it's own weight next to the "1812 Overture?" Come find out!! Please come join me with the Utah Symphony Aug. 1st at Deer Valley Amphitheater when "Hip Harp" meets the "1812 Overture" 8,000 feet up!

If you want to see what the harp looks and sounds like, you can see many clips on YouTube. Just go to my website, HipHarp.com and click on the YouTube link on the homepage to link to videos.

I'll see you at the show!

Deborah Henson-Conant (HipHarp.com)

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BLOG POST #3:

Dear Utah Symphony Friends --

Do you ever wish you could get behind the scenes and find out what really sparks the creativity of the performers you see on stage? Well... I invite you into my mind to do just that! On July 30th, at 2pm, two days before my August 1st show with the Utah Symphony at Deer Valley, I'm presenting a very different kind of show at the intimate Utah Opera Production Studios.

"Strings of Passion" combines performance and audience interaction for a journey of self-discovery. Using the harp as a metaphor, we'll explore the path that leads to a life of artistic passion! It's is like getting a Backstage Pass into the artist's MIND!

And it's a chance to ask me questions directly -- about my music, my instrument, my life, my pets, my hair (yes - people *always* ask about my hair!) -- a chance to get to see it all up close. It's kind of like an invitation to come in through the back door before everyone else gets there, and find out what's *really* going on!

So please join me July 30th at 2pm at the Utah Opera Production Studios -- for "Strings of Passion." And then see that passion in action Aug. 1st at Deer Valley Amphitheater when I join the Utah Symphony for a wonderful show I think of as "1812 Overture" meets "Hip Harp!" (Please see my earlier blog posts for more about that show!)

I hope to see you there!

Deborah Henson-Conant (HipHarp.com)