

MEDIA RELEASE

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WHO: Deborah Henson-Conant &
Grand Rapids Symphony
David Lockington, conductor

WHAT: New DVD & CD
“Invention & Alchemy”

WHEN: Now available

INFO: Deborah Henson-Conant:
InventionAndAlchemy.com
HipHarp.com

Grand Rapids Symphony:
grsymphony.org
ctanis@grsymphony.org

PHOTOS/VIDEOS:

Hi-res photos & artist info
at: HipHarp.com
Audio/Video clips, liner notes,
etc: InventionAndAlchemy.com

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Deborah Henson-Conant Reignites the Symphony

Electric Harp Meets Orchestra on New DVD & CD “Invention & Alchemy”
with the Grand Rapids Symphony and Conductor David Lockington

If you think harp is limited to whimsical fluff and elevator music, then you haven't heard electric harpist Deborah Henson-Conant. This composer and performer straps on her solid-body electric harp and wails in styles from Blues to Flamenco. You have to see her performance to understand what she does -- and now you'll finally be able to.

Henson-Conant has performed throughout the US and Europe in theaters, rock clubs and concert halls. She debuted with the Boston Pops in the late '90's, went on to tour with Ray Charles and has since pioneered a style of performance that mixes virtuosic harp playing, theatrical storytelling, gutsy vocals and lush, eclectic symphonic orchestrations.

She captures that dynamic performance style on her new DVD & CD, “Invention & Alchemy,” with conductor David Lockington and the 80-piece Grand Rapids Symphony. Recorded live during three concerts in November 2005, the DVD & CD program features musical stories ranging from a madcap science experiment – complete with lab coats – to the haunting lament for a mother's voice, to a provocative retelling of tales from the Arabian Nights. Throw in an award-winning lighting designer, Emmy Award-winning director, and Grammy Award-winning sound engineer and producer, and you start to understand the caliber of this production.

(more)

(Deborah Henson-Conant & The Grand Rapids Symphony – “Invention & Alchemy” DVD & CD – cont.)

What Is “Invention & Alchemy”?

“Invention & Alchemy” is a 90-minute concert DVD & CD with electric harp, voice, and 80-piece symphony orchestra. The project was recorded live in Hi-Def video and surround-sound audio. (Consumer copies of the DVD have been processed to standard video format for home viewing.)

What Will I See and Hear on “Invention & Alchemy” DVD & CD?

INVENTION: Henson-Conant is the mastermind behind everything you see and hear on the DVD & CD. From the stories to the orchestrations, this is a journey into one creative mind.

AND ALCHEMY: “The real alchemy is the collaboration,” says Henson-Conant. “The chemistry of musicians and composer, audience and performers. Until we are on stage with an audience, the music is only an idea. The performance turns the invention into a living thing.”

THE PIECES: The 11 segments of the program are like a series of musical short stories that come to life on stage. The orchestra turns into a science lab in “The Danger Zone,” complete with lab coats, clipboards and bubbling test tubes. Conductor Lockington turns into a sultan in “996,” Henson-Conant’s retelling of 1001 Arabian Nights. Henson-Conant marches to the back of the orchestra for a duet with timpanist David Gross in “Catcher in the Rye,” reinvents the concept of “blues harp” and turns the structure of the love song on its head with “Way You Are Blues,” creates the soundtrack for an imaginary movie in “Merceditas,” and takes a trip in a time machine in “Baroque Flamenco.” Her pieces blur the line between theater and music, audience and performer, one-woman-show and symphonic collaboration.

In addition to the concert presentation, the DVD includes special features, including behind-the-scenes footage and interviews with Henson-Conant, producer Jonathan Wyner, conductor David Lockington and orchestra members. These additional features are arranged both as a series of stand-alone segments, which can be accessed at various points throughout the concert program, and as an independent 15-minute video presentation. Other special features include “Healing the Waters,” a collaboration with members of the Grand Rapids Ballet. It is an intimate pas de deux, inspired by the environmental passion of DVD sponsor Peter Wege.

Press: Bios of artists, producer, director, etc. and tech specs of the project available on request.

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