

BIOGRAPHY - CATRIN FINCH

Internationally renowned harpist Catrin Finch is one of the most accomplished harpists of her generation. Described as “*The Queen of Harps*”, she has been delighting audiences with her performances across the UK and worldwide, since the age of five. Having started her studies in Wales with Elinor Bennett, she achieved the highest mark in the UK for her Grade 8 ABRSM exam at the tender age of nine, going on to study at The Purcell School and the Royal Academy of Music with Skaila Kanga, graduating with the Queens Commendation for Excellence in 2002.



In 2000 she had the honour of reviving the ancient tradition of Royal Harpist to H.R.H, the Prince of Wales, a position she held until 2004, which was last held during Queen Victoria’s reign in 1873.

Her first major competition success came in 1999 winning the Lily Laskine International Harp Competition in France, one of the premier harp competitions in the world. On winning the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York, Catrin went on to play in over thirty states in the USA, including recitals and concerto debuts in New York (including the Lincoln Centre and Weill Recital Hall), Boston and Washington D.C. In May 2004, and again in 2012, she was nominated for a Classical Brit Award and is also the winner of an “Echo Klassik” in Germany.

Since then, she has performed extensively throughout the USA, South America, the Middle East, Asia, Australia and Europe. She has appeared with many of the world’s top orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Pops, the Philharmonia, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the London Mozart Players, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, the Lake Charles Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony and the Manchester Camerata.

In 2015, she joined the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as soloist, for their four week tour of South America, which included performances in Patagonia, Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Chile and Venezuela, and in 2016 she was Artist in Residence with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic under the baton of Vasily Petrenko, and toured with the Philharmonia.

Festival appearances include Salzburg, Edinburgh, Spoleto, Smithsonian Folklife, MDR Musiksommer Festival in Leipzig, Le Domaine Forget and Lanaudiere Festivals in Canada, Festival No. 6, and the Gödöllő Harp Festival in Hungary.

Catrin has appeared on all the major television and radio networks in the UK and many abroad. Among her earliest appearances on TV were two features on the BBC’s ‘Blue Peter’, and since then there have been many appearances on radio and television in the UK. In 2003, Catrin presented a TV documentary about herself entitled ‘Charlie’s Angel’ which was awarded a BAFTA Cymru/Wales award for the best music programme. She has recently been heard presenting concerts with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales live on BBC Radio 3 from the Hoddinott Hall in Cardiff Bay. Recent TV appearances include BBC Breakfast and the Andrew Marr Show.

She has recorded for most of the major international recording companies, including Universal Records, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI and Sony Classical, both solo and with notable artists such as Bryn Terfel, Sir James Galway and Julian Lloyd-Webber. Since her first recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations for the Deutsche Grammophon label in 2009, which entered the UK Classical charts at number 1, she has recorded three further albums for the label including the bestselling "Blessing" with John Rutter, which also went to number 1 in the UK classical charts and was nominated for a Classical Brit Award.

She has also collaborated closely with composer Karl Jenkins on stage and on disc, including the première of a new double harp concerto commissioned by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. She has received over a million hits on You Tube for her performance of Jenkins' "Palladio".

2015 saw the release of Catrin's self-composed album entitled '**Tides**' in support of the International Development charity Water Aid. This new release marked the first time Catrin's own compositions appeared as a body of work on stage and on record, revealing a new side to her exceptional musicality, including her piano skills for the first time.

Showing her versatility in different musical genres, in 2013 Catrin collaborated with Senegalese kora player **Seckou Keita** on an album entitled '**Clychau Dibon**', winning the 2014 Album of the Year in both Froots and Songlines magazines, and sitting atop the World Music charts for a number of weeks. This successful collaboration continues to this day, and they will be releasing their second album in April 2018. They have performed extensively throughout the UK, Europe and America, including at festivals such as WOMAD, Shambala, SFinks and L'Orient Interceltique Festival.

She has received honours from the University of Wales Aberystwyth and Bangor, Glyndwr University, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. She is a visiting Professor at the latter two musical institutions and is in great demand for masterclasses.

Known for her work within the community and with the younger generation, Catrin is committed to promoting the harp and classical music in general to a new and wider audience, through her now successful annual **Academi Catrin Finch Academy Summer Harp School**, an **Annual Harp Fun Day** and her '**Classical Café**' evenings.

NB: Catrin's biography is updated regularly and we ask that it is not altered without permission