



One of Scotland's leading harpers, Karen Marshalsay has released a new album of traditional harp music and original compositions, ***The Road to Kennacraig***, on Cramasie Records (CRCD 001).

Karen is a master of all three Scottish harps – the warm sounding modern gut-strung lever harp, the clear ringing wire-strung clarsach of the Highlands and Gaelic culture, and the Baroque bray harp with its buzzing sitar-like effect – and she features each of them, as well as whistle on one track, across the album.

With a particular interest in playing pipe music on the harp, Karen has worked with Allan MacDonald, of the famous Glenuig piping brothers, featuring in his acclaimed pibroch concerts, including the Edinburgh International Festival's Herald Angel Award-winning *From Battle Lines to Bar Lines* series in 2004. She also featured in the National Piping Centre's *Ceòl na Pìobba* concert in 2013 and has worked with African, Paraguayan and Indian musicians on multi-cultural projects including *Yatra*, which premiered at the Edinburgh Mela in 2008. More recently she guested with the Russian String Orchestra, playing her own compositions, during the Edinburgh Festival in 2018.

Karen's passion for pipe music is highlighted in the pibroch, *The Battle of the Bridge of Perth (Ceann Drochaid Pheairt)* with its phrasing closely resembling piping techniques, and in the classic 6/8 pipe march *PM Donald MacLean of Lewis*. Her compositional talent materialises on tunes written for people and places, including *Helen's Farewell*, *Isabel Gow's Welcome to Edinburgh* and *The Road to Kennacraig* itself. With tunes spanning over 400 years, this first solo album shows Karen is a highly accomplished player of traditional music and a fine composer of tunes in a living tradition.

The album was produced at Temple Studios by Robin Morton, a founder member of internationally regarded folk band Boys of the Lough and one of traditional music's top producers whose credits also include Dick Gaughan's classic *Handful of Earth*, Alison Kinnaird's seminal *The Harp Key* and albums of Gaelic singing by Flora MacNeil and Christine Primrose.

As well as appearing in solo concerts, Karen is currently a member of Irish folk music legend, flute and whistle master and singer, Cathal McConnell's trio. She has also produced new works for Celtic Connections' New Voices series, Hands up for Trad's Distil showcase concerts, and Drake Music Scotland, and she was Composer in Residence with Harps North West in 2016.

Karen is available for interview; please contact Rob Adams on 0131 556 2264/07724 876867

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