

This article by Anne Roos was first published in the March 2016 issue of the Sylvia Woods Harp Center e-Newsletter

You can find Anne's PDFs at www.harpcenter.com/Roos

If someone looked into a crystal ball to reveal my future back when I was in college, I would have told them they were nuts. I had no idea I'd be playing the harp for a living. It wasn't as if I yearned to play the harp, or any instrument, for that matter. It's all been happenstance.



After graduation from UCLA, I held a string of jobs that were not so satisfying, working as an audience research analyst in the entertainment industry. These were number-crunching jobs that were repetitive and stressful, with unrealistic deadlines.

Then one day I attended a Winter Solstice Festival at Cal State Northridge. In a booth in one corner of the exhibit hall sat a lady surrounded by little harps. She told me that if I wanted to take lessons from her, she would rent me one. I thought, "I need relief from job stress." So I signed up. Thus began my harp journey, totally by serendipity. The lady in that booth was Sylvia Woods.

As I studied with her, I returned to UCLA to take music theory courses and later contributed to Sylvia's *Music Theory and Arranging Techniques*. I continued on to get a teaching credential and taught math and music appreciation for the L.A. Unified School District.

Little by little, I eased into performing by playing for acquaintances that were getting married and as a pass-the-hat musician at the L.A. Renaissance Fair. For each opportunity that came about, I simply said, "Okay. I'll do it." I've always figured that if I turn down opportunities -- even when they appear to be a challenge for me -- I might miss out on something.



When I moved to Northern California with my husband, I burned out of teaching in public schools. I decided to focus on spreading the news that I was available to perform. It made sense, because Lake Tahoe is famous as a worldwide wedding destination, and I was soon playing more than 100 weddings per year.

I began contributing to *The Folk Harp Journal* with "The Harper in Business" articles back when the publication was printed solely in black and white. At that time, nothing in the *Journal* spoke to the experiences I had while performing. Apparently, this filled a niche, because for a time, I also served as the Non-Pedal Harp Editor for the *Harp Column* magazine.

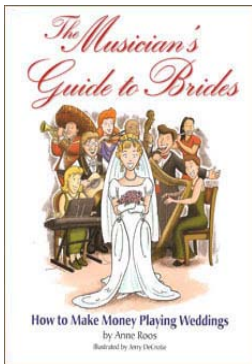
Because I never bothered to turn down a possible break:

- * I met a flutist with a huge library of commercially available recordings. He asked if I would like to record with him. I said, "Sure."

- * I met a recording engineer who suggested I join the Recording Academy, so I said, "Okay."

- * In the Recording Academy, record producers invited me to work with them on a series of CDs packaged inside of books. I said, "Great!"

These little books caught the attention of a friend of my producers, who worked at Hal Leonard Publishing. He asked, "Would you be interested in writing a manual to help musicians perform at weddings?" The end result of agreeing to these adventures is [*The Musician's Guide to Brides: How to Make Money Playing Weddings*](#).



My editor at Hal Leonard couldn't believe that playing at weddings was so involved, but I wanted to make sure my readers would be at ease working with brides and performing. It's written for all musicians, so if you are in an ensemble, everyone can use it. The book contains many of the real-life horror stories that we all like to giggle about and learn from, along with hilarious cartoons. You'll also find forms you can use for building your music list, creating a performance contract, and much more. I've collected many additional experiences since this book was published, so a 2nd edition is in the works.

In the meantime, you can continue to catch up on recent Harper in Business articles posted in [*The Folk Harp Journal*](#) for a sample and preview of what you'll receive with *The Musician's Guide to Brides*.

I'm extremely grateful that fate brought me to Sylvia all those years ago and that I didn't turn down any of the opportunities that followed. I'm looking forward to helping you along your performance path, and if you have any questions or feedback about your journey, feel free to connect with me.

-- Anne Roos

-- Anne Roos performed on the 2015 Best New Age Grammy Award winning album *Winds of Samsara*. Her music aired internationally on United Airlines inflight music service and on National Public Radio (NPR). She continues to perform for special events and weddings, and she teaches lessons -- You'll find her listed on [Sylvia's Harp Teacher List](#). Check out her website at [CelticHarpMusic.com](#) for more info, and connect with Anne across social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.)

