

ANNA MARIA MENDIETA - Biography

Anna Maria Mendieta – Harpist

Short Bio:

“The interwoven sound of Mendieta and the orchestra was luminous...”, Richard Scheinin, San Jose Mercury News and League of American Orchestras. The world said it couldn’t be done, but American harpist Anna Maria Mendieta has made history offering her harp as a new voice for Argentine Tango. Concerto soloist and touring artist, Ms. Mendieta performs all styles of music, but is best known for performing Argentine Tango on the harp. Her recent album “Tango Del Cielo” featuring Tango & Flamenco with harp and orchestra has won international awards and reached #2 on Billboard’s Classical Crossover Chart with her groundbreaking vision.

Medium Length Bio:

“...an exceptional soloist, harpist Anna Maria Mendieta, was even more impressive. A charismatic player, she ranged through her instrument: exquisite, finger flicked dustings up and across the strings; or guitar-like strums, crisp and percussive; or rich-blooded low notes or brilliant high ones. The interwoven sound of Mendieta and the orchestra was luminous...”, wrote Richard Scheinin of the San Jose Mercury News. The outstanding review was specially chosen by the League of American Orchestras to internationally announce the success of the world premiere of a concerto no one thought possible. Making history with that performance, American harpist Anna Maria Mendieta proved it could be done and performed on the harp the intricately chromatic and percussive Argentine Tango music of Astor Piazzolla; music which she is now famous for. With innovative and daring programming, Ms. Mendieta continues to be recognized internationally as a pioneer in creating new music for the harp in this genre.

What began years ago as a new vision for harp and tango, Anna Maria Mendieta’s “Harp-Tango” project has blossomed into a multimedia touring concert-show of award-winning musicians and dancers called “[Tango Del Cielo](#)” (Tango of Heaven). Ms. Mendieta is again making history happen and is thrilled to announce the release of her newest album *Tango Del Cielo* for Harp & Orchestra featuring tango and flamenco with particular focus on the tango music of Astor Piazzolla, collaborating with Piazzolla’s closest colleagues and Grammy award-winning composers. It has won many international awards, reached #2 on Billboard’s Classical Crossover Charts and is played on classical music stations across the United States. Ms. Mendieta’s *Tango Del Cielo* show was featured at the 2019 World Tango Festival in Victoria, Canada. Her story is featured in the 2021 February issue of the [International Musician Magazine](#) and is the focus of a documentary film. When she’s not pulling strings, she is out on the dance floor as a part of the show.

Ms. Mendieta enjoys a busy career as a soloist, orchestral musician, recording artist and teacher. She is the principal harpist with the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera and has performed with orchestras and chamber music groups across the country and beyond including the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, Russian National Orchestra, Russian State Ballet and others. Ms. Mendieta has been honored with concertos specially composed for her including a commission award from the American Harp Society. She has performed for Pope Benedict XVI, President Clinton, President Gorbachev, and the King and Queen of Spain as well as other dignitaries. Ms. Mendieta performs all styles of music from classical to contemporary and has enjoyed performing with celebrities such as Frederica von Stade, Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, Frank Sinatra Jr, and Barry Manilow, who calls her his “favorite harpist”.

Updated: September 30th, 2021

Anna Maria Mendieta

Harpist

“Artistic excellence... exudes style, presence, and an astonishing instrumental mastery performance.” - *Latina Style Magazine*

“an exceptional soloist, harpist Anna Maria Mendieta, was even more impressive. A charismatic player...”
- *Featured Review, League of American Orchestras*

Anna Maria Mendieta enjoys a busy career as a soloist, orchestral musician, recording artist and teacher. She is the principal harpist with the Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera and has performed with many symphony orchestras and chamber music groups in the U.S. and abroad including the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera & Ballet, Russian National Orchestra, and Russian State Ballet. Ms. Mendieta is often featured performing the harp concerti of Joaquin Rodrigo as well as special tango arrangements created for her for harp & orchestra. She has received international recognition as a pioneer and "exceptional soloist" by the *League of American Orchestras* for her premiere of the tango music of Astor Piazzolla marking history with the unique programming and use of harp in this musical style. As an advocate of contemporary music, Ms. Mendieta previously served a long tenure as the principal harpist with the nationally acclaimed *Women's Philharmonic*. With family roots in Flamenco, she was also the featured instrumentalist for several seasons with *Theater Flamenco of San Francisco*. A frequent winner of the San Francisco Symphony's *Adventures in Music* program, she continues to perform innovative outreach programs for the symphony. Ms. Mendieta has performed for motion pictures, television, and national radio. Her *Harp-Tango* project has become an international multimedia touring concert-show called "Tango del Cielo" (Tango of Heaven), an award-winning album and the focus of a documentary film. The show was featured at the 2019 World Tango Festival in Victoria, Canada and the album has won international awards and a #2 spot on the Billboard Charts.

Collaboration. Multi Grammy Award winners Jorge Calandrelli, Pablo Ziegler and Daniel Binelli, experts of the tango music of Astor Piazzolla, have composed music and arrangements for Anna Maria. This music is featured on her latest album produced at Skywalker Sound as the first of its kind of Argentine Tango music for harp & orchestra. Her latest collaboration has been with multi-Latin Grammy winner Claudia Montero in creating new music for the harp.

Discography. Ms. Mendieta's most recent album *Tango Del Cielo* has won several international awards including 3 Global Music Awards, the Clouzine International Music Award for Best Classical Crossover Album and Best Music Video (Libertango), and it reached #2 on Billboard's Classical Crossover Chart. Anna Maria can be heard on many recording projects and movie soundtracks produced at Lucasfilm/Disney's Skywalker Sound. The National Geographic Society featured Ms. Mendieta as a soloist representing the music of Spain on their album "Serenity – Songs of Peace and Enlightenment". Ms. Mendieta was a signed artist for many years with the *Sugo Music Record* label with successful releases of several albums.

Education. Ms. Mendieta began studying the harp at the age of seven at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Israeli harpist Efrat Zaklad. She continued her studies with Marjorie Chauvel and received her degree in music with honors from Notre Dame de Namur University, where she later served on the faculty. Extensive private study followed with San Francisco Symphony harpist Doug Rioth and renowned harp teacher Alice Chalifoux (protege of 20th century harpist Carlos Salzedo) at the Salzedo Harp Colony in Camden, Maine.

Awards and Honors. In recognition of her Spanish heritage, Anna Maria was invited by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to perform solo concerts for National Hispanic Week in Washington D.C. She has been honored to perform for Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican, the King and Queen of Spain, President Bill Clinton, President Gorbachev, Secretaries of State Colin Powell and George Schultz. Ms. Mendieta has been featured by the American Harp Society to perform for their National Conference and in 2013 was awarded a special grant commission for a concerto to be composed for her. Ms. Mendieta is the only harpist to have twice received the *Matz Memorial Award* from Lyon & Healy Harp Company for "Outstanding Achievement".

Celebrity Spotlight. Anna Maria enjoys performing concerts and shows with celebrity entertainers and is often given the spotlight. She has shared the stage with opera singer Frederica von Stade, performed with Andrea Bocelli, Josh Groban, Frank Sinatra Jr., Johnny Mathis, Olivia Newton John, Fernando de la Mora, The Moody Blues, and song-writer/entertainer Barry Manilow who calls her his "favorite harpist".