

# Anna Maria Mendieta

## Harpist

### Biography

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**“... an exceptional soloist, harpist Anna Maria Mendieta, was even more impressive. A charismatic player...” - *San Jose Mercury News***

**“Harp at its best! ... an extremely talented woman!” - *CD Review Magazine***

**“Performed the challenging piece superbly” - *Sacramento Bee***

**“Delightful, great flair ... a true artist.” - *Palo Alto Times***

**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 and was the featured soloist in 2006 performing Joaquin Rodrigo's Harp Concerto, "Concierto Serenata". Ms. Mendieta has performed as a soloist and as a member with many symphony orchestras and chamber music groups across the country. In 2007, she received national recognition for her performance of the music of Astor Piazzolla as guest soloist with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra, 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*. Anna Maria was also a featured instrumentalist for several seasons with *Theater Flamenco of San Francisco*. In 2006, Ms. Mendieta performed as a featured soloist for the National Harp Conference premiering her presentation of harp and tango music. Her concert-show "*Tango del Cielo*" is the focus of a documentary film.

Collaboration. 2006 Grammy Award winning pianist and composer Pablo Ziegler and concert bandoneonist/composer Daniel Binelli, experts of the tango music of Astor Piazzolla, have specially written music for Ms. Mendieta, which will be featured in an album, as the first of its kind, of Argentine Tango music presented on the harp. Ms. Mendieta has also collaborated with concert pianist and Latin American music specialist, Polly Ferman, to perform concerts with her and an international music and dance ensemble called, "*Leading Ladies of Tango*".

Education. Ms. Mendieta began studying the harp at the age of seven at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Israeli harpist Efrat Zaklad. Thereafter, she continued her studies with Marjorie Chauvel of Stanford University, and received her degree in Music with honors from Notre Dame de Namur University, Belmont, California, where she now serves on the faculty. Extensive private study followed with San Francisco Symphony harpist Doug Rieth and on the East Coast with renowned harp teacher Alice Chalifoux.

Discography. In 2001, in response to the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the National Geographic Society invited Ms. Mendieta to be a featured soloist representing the music of Spain on their album "Serenity – Songs of Peace and Enlightenment". Previous to that Sugo Records had signed her to a long-term contract and released her first solo album, "Enchanted Christmas", with record breaking sales, followed by the release of her second and third albums, entitled "Broadway – Center Stage" and "An Acoustic Christmas". Anna Maria has also participated on many other recording projects, most notably "The Women's Philharmonic" and "Florence Price", both on the Koch International Classic label, "The Music of Chen Yi", New Albion label, and "A Ceremony of Carols" with the San Francisco Girls Chorus.

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. In addition, she has been honored to perform for the King and Queen of Spain and other international dignitaries including President Gorbachev, Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Secretary of State George Schultz. Also of noteworthy mention, she received an invitation to play for then-President Bill Clinton. Ms. Mendieta has appeared as soloist for television, motion pictures, National Public Radio, and the Emmy Awards. Ms. Mendieta is the only harpist to have twice received the "Matz Memorial Award", sponsored by 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 programs with opera singer Frederica von Stade, performed with Frank Sinatra Jr., Olivia Newton John, Josh Groban, and was also the featured accompanist for a television special with Welsh singer Charlotte Church. Song-writer/entertainer Barry Manilow calls her his "favorite harpist".