



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents

**“American Anniversary”
The TCU Harp Ensemble**
With guest harpists from the TCU Music Preparatory
Kela Walton, Director

April 19, 2026

3:00pm

PepsiCo Recital Hall

Program

O’Carolan’s Concerto

Turlough O’Carolan (1670-1738)
Arr. Leone Paulson

Silvia Torres Rodarte & Kela Walton

O’Carolan’s Air

Turlough O’Carolan (1670-1738)
Arr. Gail Barber (1937-2017)

Madeleine Allen^{*^}, Gabbie Bernhard[^], Ian Davis^{*}, Harper Hook^{*^}, Atalia Terrell^{*^},
Laura Thielke^{*^} & Kela Walton

Crickets’ Song

Mary Kay Waddington
(b. 1952)

Atalia Terrell^{*}

London Bridge

Folk Song
Arr. Mary Kay Waddington (b. 1952)

Harper Hook^{*}

Quatre Preludes, Op 16
No. 3

Marcel Tournier
(1879-1951)

Silvia Torres Rodarte

~ short pause ~

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Simple Gifts

Traditional Shaker Melody (1848)
Arr. Daniel Burton (b. 1944)

Polka in C for Two Harps

Jacques Press
(1903-1985)

Silvia Torres Rodarte, & Kela Walton

Screwdriver Dances

Sonja Inglefield (2021)

III. Spring Polka

Madeleine Allen^{*^}, Gabbie Bernhard[^], Ian Davis^{*}, Harper Hook^{*^}, Atalia Terrell^{*^},
Laura Thielke^{*^}, Silvia Torres Rodarte[^] & Kela Walton

*Indicates harpists who are currently TCU Music Preparatory students

[^]Indicates participant in the 2026 AHSD Harp Ensemble Festival at TCU

Program Notes

This afternoon we reflect on the upcoming 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence as well as influences from other cultures that blend to create the American experience, with a concert featuring harp ensemble music composed and arranged by harpists from all across the United States.

In the later half of the 20th century, harp teacher and arranger Leone **Paulson** of New Jersey organized many summer trips to Ireland where she brought young American harpists to compete in traditional Celtic harp competitions. These competitions included music by Turlough **O'Carolan**, a blind Irish harpist, composer, and singer. For almost 50 years from the late 17th century to the early 18th century O'Carolan journeyed from one end of Ireland to the other composing and performing his music often named for his patrons. **O'Carolan's Concerto** is also known as *Mrs. Power* who was the mother of *Fanny Power* (another of O'Carolan's famous tunes). This tune arranged for two harps by Paulson demonstrates the influences of various Italian composers on O'Carolan including Corelli. **O'Carolan's Air** (also known as *O'Carolan's Welcome*) was popularized by the Chieftains, and this arrangement by the late Texas harpist Gail **Barber** was first published in 2005.

Mary Kay **Waddington** taught the first Suzuki harp lessons beginning in 1975 in Ohio and later in Colorado after her studies with many Suzuki piano teachers. In 1981 she attended the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan under the mentorship of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki and Dr. Toshio Takahashi, and upon her return to the U.S. the Suzuki Association of the America's adopted harp as an official Suzuki instrument. Waddington gave several of the first Suzuki harp curriculum teacher training workshops in the 1980s, including workshops at TCU. Her original composition **Cricket's Song** is a milestone for students in the Suzuki Harp Book 1 repertoire, as it is the first piece in which they perform an arpeggio accompaniment in the left hand, an idiomatic and signature harp technique. In contrast the left hand performs an Alberti bass accompaniment pattern in her arrangement of **London Bridge**.

French harpist and composer Marcel **Tournier** won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1909, and his compositions expanded the harp's technical and harmonic possibilities. He succeeded his teacher, Alphonse Hasselmans, in 1912 as the professor of harp at the Paris Conservatory. **Prelude No. 3** is part of the set *Quatre Preludes, Op 16* first published in 1903, and this prelude is both lush and delicate in texture. It demands the performer master harmonics, arpeggios, and precise yet quiet pedal work to achieve the chromaticism of the dense harmonies while maintaining the ethereal impressionistic atmosphere of the piece.

The melody and lyrics to **Simple Gifts** were originally composed in 1848 by Elder Joseph Brackett from the Alfred Shaker Village in Maine. Shakers are a millenarian restorationist Christian sect that practice

egalitarian ideals, pacifism, and simple living. The tune was unknown outside Shaker communities until Aaron Copland used the melody in his score for Martha Graham's ballet *Appalachian Spring* which premiered in 1944. Copland later published "Simple Gifts" again in his first set of *Old American Songs*, and used Brackett's original verse for the lyrics. This dancing song includes instructions in the lyrics - with each dancer ending where they started at the last line "Till by turning, turning we come 'round right." This arrangement for two harps by Daniel **Burton**, a California based organist, harpist, composer, and arranger of inspirational music, was published in 2000. The *Simple Gifts* melody remains enduringly popular and can be heard in many film and television scores including a prominent appearance in the 2023 *Bluey* episode "Relax." John Williams also composed a variation for cello, violin, clarinet, and piano titled *Air and Simple Gifts* written and performed for President Barack Obama's 2009 Inauguration.

Jacques **Press** was an American composer of Georgian origin, who studied in Paris and then emigrated to the United States in 1926. In his younger years Press played piano in cinemas for silent movies, later he worked as an arranger in New York's film scene before eventually moving to Hollywood in the 1940s to compose for film and television. Originally written for two harps, *Polka in C* follows the traditional polka style and form: an introduction to set the tempo, a bright and repetitive primary melody, a contrasting theme, a third more melodic section that modulates to the subdominant key, and a high energy coda to finish. Meanwhile a signature "oom-pah" accompaniment gives the polka momentum and a lighthearted character.

The ***Screwdriver Dances*** is a set of three short playful dances featuring extended techniques for harp and the metal shaft of a screwdriver or other metal plectrum. Composer Sonja **Inglefield** instructs that the dances may be performed as a set, or as individual pieces. The ***Spring Polka's*** signature "boing" vibrato effect is created by sliding a metal plectrum on the string as it is plucked. Widely recognized for her work in contemporary harp music and pedagogy, Sonja Inglefield is the harp professor at the State University of New York at Fredonia. Sonja began studying harp at the age of three with her mother Ruth K. Inglefield who revolutionized early childhood harp education with several volumes of original compositions for young beginners: *Songs and Solos for Sonja*, originally published in several volumes the 1970s and 1980s. Sonja Inglefield first began composing her own series of *Songs and Solos by Sonja* at her mother's suggestion as companions to the Ruth K. Inglefield series. Today Sonja continues her late mother's legacy by continuing to compose unique solo and ensemble music for young harpists that hones fundamental skills for the performers while also charming audiences.

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