

the Harp

her soul required

By Christine Thompson

Each of us requires a different solace from the daily grind. Some souls require a strong faith; others required a quiet evening. For Amy Kortuem, it's the harp her soul requires.

Kortuem's second album, "The Harp Her Soul Required," reflects just that. The album is dedicated to the man who gave her the gift of harp music and helped her realize what her life was missing. The friendship between Jack McGowan and Kortuem started when she was 10 years old, but it wasn't until 1988 that McGowan truly provoked her life's transition.

"It's a gift that still amazes and humbles me. A true Irish mystic, Jack had a knowing that the harp was exactly what my heart desired and my soul required. He generously and joyfully led me to my life's purpose of making beautiful music for people," says the dedication note on Kortuem's second album.

McGowan knew Kortuem was a skilled piano player and had confidence she would excel as a harpist as well. He bought a walnut Woodsong Fleurette 33-string harp and a Sylvia Woods' *Teach Yourself to Play the Folk Harp* book with the intention of learning to play together.

"From the minute I put my hands on the strings it just felt right," Kortuem said. I didn't even want to stop playing." Playing the harp involves much more than hands or even finger dexterity. Kortuem explained that it is actually a total body experience because as the harp leans up against the body, the vibration passes through the gives each note a resonance that lingers past the finger's pull.

The harp's unique sound takes on a Celtic flair in Kortuem's second album. While researching Celtic spirituality and Irish tradition, Kortuem discovered a newfound appreciation for her Irish roots. She also learned the language of musicians coming together in her second album. Martha Lindberg added skill and cheer with her recorder and Sena Thompson brought beautiful, sensitive music to me album with her violin and viola, Kortuem said.

"My first album taught me that, yes indeed I did have music gifts to share with an audience and the second CD gave me a chance to share that gift." For Kortuem, playing the harp has also become a way to make a difference in the lives of others.



Photo by Emily Spartz

"It's my job to play. Whatever affect it will have, it will have," says Kortuem. "Even if two or three people are moved, then I've done my job." Each time she plays, she goes into it with the same attitude. Like life, you just have to wonder how it will all turn out. She usually has a theme or a message she wants to get across with her music, but sometimes there is no other point than the music is exquisite and she wants to share it, Kortuem said.

The next chance she has to share this gift is 7:30 p.m., July 26, 2003 at Good Counsel Chapel in Mankato. She will perform songs from her new album, which will be for sale.

After July 26, CDs can be purchased by calling Kortuem at 507-387-2564 or from her website, www.amykortuem.com. CDs will also be found at McGowan Water Conditioning, The Peddler in Rapidan and a Twig in Time. In addition to concert performances, Kortuem is available for weddings, receptions, parties and special occasions.