

Harpist Dr. Alison Attar has enjoyed a rich and diverse artistic career. Experienced performing music in concert or accompanying dance, film, theater, and the visual arts, Attar is embraced by her colleagues as a vibrant, intelligent performer and educator. Dr. Attar specialized in contemporary and Baroque performance for many years. A champion of new music, Attar performed with numerous new music groups, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW, Fulcrum Point, Contempo (formerly Contemporary Chamber Players), and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (England). Attar especially enjoyed working and collaborating with living composers, including Osvaldo Golijov, Sofia Gubaidulina, Marta Ptaszynska, Bernard Rands, Laura Schwendinger, Augusta Read Thomas, Param Vir, along with the late George Crumb and Gunther Schuller, among others. She was a guest artist for the Chicago Symphony's 2014 Beyond the Score project *A Pierre Dream* celebrating the music of Pierre Boulez and one of the featured performers on the University of Chicago's contemporary music series *Project Incubator*. Attar's interest in historical harps, specifically multi-row instruments, led to performances with Boston Baroque, Boston's Handel & Haydn Society (including a US tour and performances at the 1996 Edinburgh Festival in Scotland, the late Christopher Hogwood conducting, Mark Morris choreography), Haymarket Opera Company, Chicago Opera Theater, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago's Music of the Baroque and Canada's premiere Baroque orchestra, Tafelmusik. Attar also performed and recorded with San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Opera Lafayette in Washington D.C. Her doctoral dissertation also focuses on Baroque performance practice: *Baroque Continuo: A Practical Manual for Harpists*.

Additional highlights of Attar's career include a 2017 tour of Cuba as guest harpist with the Chicago Harp Quartet and two productions (eight full cycles) of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has performed with the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra, Skylight Music Theatre, Midsummer's Music Festival (WI) and the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra (FL). Attar toured Taiwan with Chicago's Symphonic Pops Orchestra in 2000 and served as Principal Harpist for Arnold Roth's Chicagoland Pops Orchestra, where she performed with an extensive list of popular singers. She has played *The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses*, *Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy*, *NieR*, *Sonic Symphony*, *Genshin Concert* and *Classic Quadrophenia*, featuring Pete Townshend, Eddie Vedder, Billy Idol and Alfie Boe. Attar has also played numerous musical theater productions and is thrilled to have played for the premieres of Frank Galati's *Cry*, *The Beloved Country* (1993), Tony Award winning *Paradise Square* (2021), and Jeff Award winning *The Notebook* (2022).

Attar was a founding member of the new music quartet Pinotage. This ground-breaking ensemble of mezzo-soprano, flute, viola and harp performed at the Festival of New American Music in California, "Outside the Box" Music Festival in southern Illinois, Sonic Impact at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, as well as for new music festivals at DePaul University, Northern Illinois University and Northwestern University. Pinotage performed on concert series sponsored by American Women Composers, Chicago Composers Consortium, the Jewel Box Series, Mostly Music and Music in Small Places. The quartet recorded the works of Lawrence Axelrod, Kathleen Ginther, Eric Gross, Elizabeth

Start and the late Arnold Rosner. Attar was also a founding member of the Marinos Trio, which featured virtuoso mandolinist Dimitris Marinos and guitarist Paul Bowman. The Marinos Trio recorded works by Robert Lombardo and the late William Karlins, and they debuted at Carnegie's Weil Hall in 1994 with a program of contemporary music. At the onset of her career, Attar founded the popular folk harp duo Iris with colleague Lynelle Kirkwood. Iris, an innovative Celtic harp duo, received rave reviews from audience members: "a duo of extraordinary harpists... Their musical storytelling will send your imagination soaring" boasted one venue. Together as Iris, Attar and Kirkwood performed at the Venetian Festival, Michigan; Irish Fest, Wisconsin; Fox Valley Folk Festival, Illinois; Gebbhard Woods, Illinois and many other venues. They were regular performers and workshop leaders at regional and national folk harp conferences, and they appeared on several Midwestern radio shows. Their CD *Off the Path* is currently available.

Attar is highly regarded by her colleagues for her professionalism, leadership, versatility, vibrant and expressive sound and her uncanny rhythm. Dr. Alison Attar holds a B.M., M.M., and D.M. in harp performance and a B.A. in Italian culture, all from Northwestern University. Her primary teachers include Elizabeth Cifani, retired Principal Harpist of the Lyric Opera, and Elizabeth Borsodi-Wolkstein of Wisconsin. She can be heard on over 20 recordings under the Albany, Cedille, Hungaraton and Mayapple labels, among others, featuring music ranging from pop and jazz to Baroque opera and contemporary chamber music. A Harp Column Music Artist, Dr. Attar's historical editions, transcriptions and arrangements for modern pedal harp can be found at Harp Column Music. Attar resides in a unique conservation community outside of Chicago with her husband and a menagerie of rescued pets. She is the proud mother of two terrific young men.