

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS**  
**Get to Know the WVS Musicians**  
**Paula Provo, Principal Harp**



**Tell us a little about yourself:** My parents, two brothers and I enjoyed water skiing at Saguaro and Roosevelt Lakes and camping at the First Estuary, near Rocky Point, Mexico. On an interesting note, we rode dirt bikes where the Princess Resort now resides.

I am currently a freelance harpist and I also play the harp at Mayo Hospital for cancer patients as part of their *Sonata del Sol* music program. I have been married for 25 years to Rick Martinez.

**My musical journey began** in Phoenix, Arizona. I was inspired to take piano lessons after my Grandmother taught me a couple of fun and easy songs on the piano and my Grandfather played the banjolin. Then came formal music lessons with a traveling music teacher. At the age of 10, I took up the trombone and played in my elementary and high school bands. I discovered the harp after meeting the harp teacher, Margaret Slaff, in elementary school. I was also inspired by a fellow classmate who played the harp.

In this photo, I am on the grounds of the Music Academy of the West, in Santa Barbara, California.





After high school, I attended Arizona State University on a full academic scholarship. During my sophomore year of college, I transferred to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While attending Curtis, I studied with Marilyn Costello, the principal harpist of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The photo to the left is at the Field Concert Hall at Curtis. During my time at Curtis, I performed in Europe and at Carnegie Hall with the Curtis Institute of Music Orchestra.

After graduation, I decided to move back to Arizona to be close to family...and I did not like the cold weather and wanted to avoid moving my harp in the snow! A few years later I pursued graduate studies at the University of Arizona. While attending the University of Arizona, I traveled to Japan with the harp ensemble, Harp Fusion.

**I have performed, as Principal Harpist,** with the West Valley Symphony, since the mid 1980's. In the early 2000's, I performed Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* with Maestro James Yestadt and the West Valley Symphony at the Sundome in Sun City West and at the Arizona State University West Campus in Glendale. (For those who are unfamiliar with the Sundome, it was located on RH Johnson Blvd and the property was repurposed as the Fry's grocery store.)

**Professional work highlights:** I have been involved with a number of Arizona organizations including:  
Phoenix Symphony Orchestra-Principal Harp for 14 seasons  
Ballet Arizona-Principal Harp for 14 seasons  
Glendale Community College, adjunct faculty-2 years  
North Valley Chorale  
Phoenix Boys Choir  
ASU Grady Gammage Broadway Tours including: *The Producers, My Fair Lady, The King and I, Evita, and Beauty and the Beast*



I have been fortunate to perform with many notable entertainers, some with very familiar names: Luciano Pavarotti, Olivia Newton-John, Johnny Mathis, Tony Bennett, Ray Charles, Josh Groban, and John Denver

Among the Music Festivals I have participated in are: Interlochen National Music Camp in Michigan, Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara California, as soloist with both the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado and with the Tanglewood Fellowship Orchestra at the Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts. In Arizona, I have performed for the Flagstaff Festival of the Arts and Arizona Musicfest. I've also done some TV specials: Mannheim Steamroller Christmas Special, The Texas Tenors and Phoenix Chorale for PBS fundraisers.

**What is one of your most memorable concerts?** One of the most memorable concerts that I participated in was with John Williams conducting the Phoenix Symphony. Both John and Steven Spielberg were the guests of honor and spoke about their careers.

I also had a very memorable rehearsal with The Curtis Symphony. We were rehearsing for a concert with guest conductor, Sergiu Celibidache and the maestro shaped the phrases and dynamics so beautifully that the trumpet player forgot to play! At that same moment I remember thinking that it was some of the most beautiful music that I had ever heard. Time stood still. It was otherworldly.



**What are some of your Favorite things:**

**Movies and TV:** For drama, it's Somewhere in Time. For comedy, Napoleon Dynamite. I just love the decor in Napoleon Dynamite because my parents' home interior looked very similar to the living room furniture and the appliances they used in the movie! Plus, the characters are so memorable.

Also, I like home renovation shows such as Ugliest House in America with the hilarious host, Retta.

The photo above was taken at an Easter Brunch Performance at the Scottsdale Conference Resort.

**Color:** Fuschia

**Foods:** Italian, surf and turf, and my mother-in-law's homemade tacos, enchiladas, salsa and German chocolate cake! Also, when my husband's side of the family gets together in December to make tamales.

**Do you have any Hobbies?** Traveling, reading, and shopping! Here is a photo of me and my husband, Rick, at the Dole Plantation in O'ahu, Hawaii.

