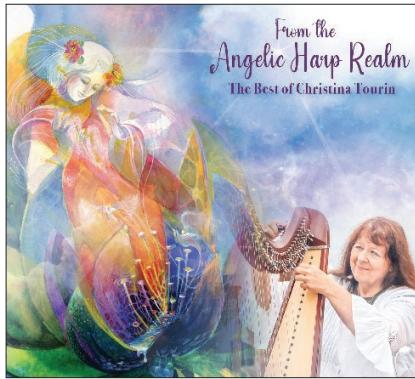


Artist: Christina Tourin
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Website: <https://www.playharp.com/christinatourin/>
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The Best of Christina Tourin-Angelic Harp Realm is a collection of twenty-nine diverse harp tracks, each with its unique sound that intrigues and fascinates. The pleasant sounds interspersed throughout the album create an optimal environment for relaxation or meditation. Despite the many tracks, the variation in the harp playing and added elements kept the experience enjoyable, sparking numerous thoughts and ideas about the music.

The first disc's track is "Harbor Cove," which begins with a soft, rhythmic harp accompanied by a floating background synth. Like a fluffy cloud, the synth harmonizes with Christina's heavenly sounds. With its soothing and healing powers, the delicate and precise harp invites you to pause, reflect, and relax.

"Tranquility" befits its name. The Harp starts slowly with purpose, then Christina plays some parts quickly, and you notice the emphasis. Then the pace, tone, and rhythm change again, sounding so comforting, like a lullaby.

"Gentle Souls" surprised me with its harp sound resembling a piano, a similarity I hadn't noticed before despite my years of listening to harp music. This shorter track exudes warmth and is sure to resonate with your soul.

"In the Glow" ironically begins with a piano! Then, the Harp joins in, and they come together nicely. A layer of synth enters, and then a flute begins. All the different parts start falling into place. An acoustic Spanish-flavored guitar comes into the mix for a more worldly sound, and then the flute returns. The composition gathers momentum, creating a gorgeous soundscape that delights the senses. The Harp brushes over the other instruments like a feather for the final touches.

The track "Passacaglia—Handel's Healing Harp" is a flavorful mixture of sounds that showcases the harp's diverse capabilities. At times, it sounds like an acoustic guitar, demonstrating that the harp is more than one-dimensional. This surprising diversity can bring a range of sounds to the listener, delighting and surprising them.

"Unité" is a magical combination of the harp and a lovely flute, creating a sound that transports you to a densely populated forest with the sun peeking through the trees. Its pleasing, melodic rhythm is sure to captivate your senses.

"Prelude in C" is just under three minutes; however, it makes an impression quickly with some adept playing with the synth layer for it to float over for a nice touch.

"Love of Creation—The Dove" starts with the bell ringing to begin your meditative journey. The Harp plays, and a background synth sounds like voices coming together, like a small choir. The harp magic creates another vision to complement its purity and simple beauty.

"Anam Cara" is another track that takes under three minutes. I liked the track's mixture of time frames, which always seems just right—neither too little nor too much. The sound was pleasing and rhythmic, not toe-tapping but more like a sync or flow that makes you feel like you are one with the music.

"Carrickfergus" is a large town in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, dating back to the 12th century. It is known for its castle and its walled town. The emerald isle gets a tribute that is as picturesque as its cliffs by the ocean and the lush green grass everywhere—a bit of history set to music.

"Music Is Love" is a true statement. If it's not, then what is? Its directness, purity, and simplicity soothe the soul and give us time to go inward to reflect or let the day's worries slip away—most of all, particularly with music like this, is spiritual and healing. You can hear all of that in every note.

"Geodepédie-Hidden Light" is a journey with wordless singing that is quite lovely and the perfect complement to the Harp. Christine plays the Harp the way a guitarist moves their fingers up and down the strings, effortlessly evoking images of serenity and joy. The complexity of her playing is fantastic on this track. A lot is going on with those fingers! It's such a lovely song.

"White Rose" has that synth layer again, which sounds like voices coming together and complements the harps' sound and colors. It is like a musical sermon that will engage you every time.

"Avondale" is like a satin sheet sliding across your skin; the flute calls you with a whisper in the wind. You follow willingly as the Harp has you hypnotized.

"Sky's Invitation" starts and gives you a look into the vastness of space, which is the intention to bring about that feeling. There is a whirling synth sound like cosmic winds that will carry you away on this cloud of enchanting music. Suddenly, there is a change of significance where the music takes a different direction, sounding slightly more pensive than usual, like a warning. Then you realize the awesomeness of the universe, and the feelings of the unknown rush over you. The Harp reminds you that this is a spiritual journey and nothing will harm you.

CD 2 begins with "Clair de Lune," written by French poet Paul Verlaine in 1869. It inspired the third and most famous movement of Claude Debussy's 1890 Suite Bergamasque. Bird sounds are in the air as the Harp serenades them, and the synth layer provides a solid launching pad for any other sound to land on, as it has so well in prior tracks. It is a classic composition, given some elegance and an ethereal mysticism that only the harp can provide.

"Colors of the Season" is a personal invitation to whatever season of the year you may love or would like to focus on. The Harp's exquisite sound of tenderness is like a flower opening with the first rays of the new rising sun.

"Amethyst Of Avalon" starts with angelic, wordless vocals as the Harp's notes dance around the vocals like a graceful ballerina telling a story with physical movements alone. That picture came to my mind rather quickly.

"Willow" begins with a running stream and birds singing, a perfect scenario to start a meditative state. The flute makes itself known after being absent from several previous tracks. The flute has an affinity for an organic setting that fits so well with nature and its surroundings. The flute playing is exemplary. I will use this one to help with relaxation and meditation.

"Fingal's Cave and The Sea" is a cave on the uninhabited island of Staffa, in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland, known for its natural acoustics. Once again, the connection between nature and the sounds you will hear is significant in these compositions. As the harp moves along like a metronome setting the pace, the flute gives us another look at its versatility and pleasant sounds.

"Canon In D" is Pachelbel's Canon, which was initially scored for three violins and basso continuo and paired with a gigue, known as Canon and Gigue for three violins and basso continuo. The Harp begins with light steps of plucking to introduce the choir of wordless vocals, creating a scenario of angels singing in heaven. The Harp's history has that connection to heaven and artwork across the centuries and in many other instances. Six minutes of perfection in music and clarity to enrich one's soul.

"Shadow Spirit" features some complex playing in a more compact track in under three minutes. Everything one would want to hear from the Harp is accomplished in those few minutes. The artistry is perfected on this consistent canvas of beauty.

"Light of Life" quickly adds the flute's spellbound abilities, and something new I had not heard yet is a cello. Cellos typically have a longing, sad tone; however, this track sounds more like a lower-toned violin, which complements the composition's melody and feather-like atmosphere.

"The Swan" is a beautiful and graceful creature. The Harp is the appropriate instrument to mirror that kind of natural beauty. And it does so with the grace and preciseness you have become accustomed to hearing throughout this compilation. The flute is here to add to its overall ambiance and is always a welcome addition.

"Reminisce"- Most people enjoy "reminiscing," consciously or subconsciously. Reminiscing is a sweet reminder of our past and what we hold dear. The Harp is all alone and nicely sets the atmosphere for that frame of mind.

"As Above, So Below" is a prevalent term I think most people have heard. Regarding tarot cards, for instance, it is a popular modern paraphrase of the second verse of the Emerald Tablet. This short Hermetic text first appeared in an Arabic source from the late eighth or early ninth century.

Clocking in at 8:40, it is the longest track of the set. The Harp is efficient in its approach, and the synth plays a significant role in shifting sounds and textures. The timing of each sound is purposeful and measured. Gorgeous layers of sound fall on you like a light and warm rain washing over, beautiful. Another track that would be an excellent meditation guide.

"Birch" differs significantly from all the previous tracks, and I enjoyed it. The drums sound like a tribal rhythm, and a pleasant flute accompanies its auditory brilliance. The Harp comes in, and you start to hear rain. Here again, the sounds of nature form a patchwork quilt of sound and living beauty.

"Adante" is Mozart's sonata 13 andante. Many of these songs are influenced by classical music, and I like this one in a literal sense, as it is the actual composition and tribute to its creator. It sounds so regal and enchanting. The music will cast its spell upon you and take you back to another time and place.

"Cherubim" refers to a Cherub, known in the plural form as Cherubim, an angelic figure repeatedly mentioned in the Bible. Cherubim is described as serving the will of God and performing divine duties in the earthly realm. The heavenly sounds of this magnificent instrument called the Harp end this lovely compilation and variations of sounds with the most appropriate reference that it could. This music indeed performs the divine will of God. It is the shortest track to close the curtain at 2:24 and the most magnificent way.

The Best of Christina Tourin-Angelic Harp Realm is an expansive career retrospective for one of the world's most accomplished Harp experts. There is so much music contained here and many choices to for relaxation and meditation.

Keith "MuzikMan" Hannaleck-NAMR Reviews Founder
January 7, 2025

Tracks:

CD1

1. Harbor Cove-4:56
2. Tranquility-7:03
3. Gentle Souls-3:29
4. In the Glow-6:21
5. Passacaglia - Handel's Healing Harp-5:01
6. Unité-3:59

7. Prelude in C-2:46
8. Love of Creation - The Dove-4:41
9. Anam Cara-2:47
10. Carrickfergus-2:39
11. Music Is Love-2:11
12. Geodepédie - Hidden Light-4:52
13. White Rose-2:56
14. Avondale-3:01
15. Sky's Invitation-5:52

CD 2

1. Clair de Lune-3:37
2. Colors of the Season-2:57
3. Amethyst Of Avalon-3:29
4. Willow-5:49
5. Fingal's Cave and The Sea-4:25
6. Canon In D-6:00
7. Shadow Spirit-2:46
8. Light of Life-5:30
9. The Swan-3:50
10. Reminisce-3:57
11. As Above So Below-8:40
12. Birch-4:56
13. Adante-5:55
14. Cherubim-2:24