

Maria Christina Cleary (349 words)

The world-renowned harpist Maria Christina Cleary has been described as “a true virtuoso”, a “brilliant player” and “a pioneer of period harp practice” and is noted for her improvisatory skills and ingenious basso continuo playing, combined with a particular care to create a beautiful sound on a perilous instrument.

Native of Ireland, Maria grew up with both Irish music and Classical music. She was part of the inter-disciplinary Renaissance ensemble *The Capriol Consort* Dublin, directed by Doris Keogh. She studied harp at the College of Music Dublin with Mercedes Garvey, and later studying Psychology at Trinity College Dublin. Other studies include at the Koninklijk Conservatoriums in The Hague and Brussels (Susanna Mildonian) and a PhD, carried out in-and-through artistic practice from (ACPA) Leiden University and Orpheus Instituut Gent. The title of her thesis, “*Harpe Organisée, 1720-1840: Rediscovering the lost pedal techniques on harps with a single-action pedal mechanism*”, is the only monograph on pedalling techniques in the world.

Maria performs on one-rowed medieval harps, the *arpa doppia*, the *arpa de dos ordenes*, the *Davidsharffe* and Welsh Triple harp, and *harpes organisées*. Soloist with orchestras all over the world, (Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Arion Ensemble Montreal and the RTE Concert Orchestra), she was a featured soloist at The World Harp Congress in Sydney in 2014 and will be featured in the forthcoming Congress in Cardiff in 2022. As a *basso continuo* player, she has performed in most festivals in the world with historically-informed orchestras and ensembles.

Her eclectic career includes performing at Knappogue Castle, the Playboy Mansion in LA and the Eurovision Song Contest. She loves to play electronic and experimental music with non-tonal and micro-tonal tuning systems. Partners for nearly 20 years, Maria performs regularly with Davide Monti under the name **Arparla**, a violin and harp duo specialising in repertoire from the 17th to the 19th centuries. She holds teaching positions at Verona Conservatory and at the Haute École de Musique de Genève.

She publishes regularly in peer-reviewed journals and is a sought-after coach, academic tutor (BA, MA and PhD) and sits on international competition and exam juries.

<https://arparla.it>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCk6R3QIC6dVU3wiv_HOSS6A

Here are links to her views on teaching:

https://arparla.it/media/docs/Teaching_Manifesto_2018.pdf

<https://arparla.it/en/activities/teaching/8/>

Other links

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-maria-christina-cleary/>

<https://cmusge.academia.edu/MariaCleary>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maria_Christina_Cleary

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