

Healing harpists delight Del Norte

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The sun gleamed through the library windows, resting on fraying book covers and catching dust midair. Soft sounds tickled listeners' ears as Lisa Lynne's fingers picked the harp strings.

For one afternoon, the Del Norte County Library was transformed into an ethereal concert hall, as musician Lisa Lynne led two free harp workshops.

Groups of residents young and old came to hear the music on Monday and take a curious look at the strings themselves.

Lynne and her husband, Aryeh Frankfurter, are a multi-instrument musical duo based in Oregon. They took the week to tour three different libraries – in Crescent City, North Bend and Gold Beach – before performing

at the Yachats Celtic Music Festival this Friday.

In an intimate performance at the Crescent City Cultural Center, hosted by Friends of the Del Norte Library, the couple played original and historic Swedish and Irish tunes on an array of instruments, including the nyckelharpa, a traditional Swedish instrument.

Before the evening performance, Lynne lead two harp workshops at the library in which she taught the basics of playing the instrument. “I’ve been doing it for such a long time, I know exactly how to get people to feel comfortable right away,” she said.

Harp workshops are her specialty, especially those for healing purposes. Not that that was always the case. In the 1990s, she traveled the country street performing, and making her way in the competitive world of music, before signing with a record label.

It wasn’t until 1999 that her focus switched to music as an avenue of healing. In April, she received a phone call from a family in Colorado, the Hocchalters. The shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado had just occurred, the first mass school shooting of its kind.

The Hocchalters called her asking for more of her music – it was the only sound that could soothe their daughter, Anne Marie, a Columbine student who had survived two gunshots.

Lynne did more than offer more music. She played for Anne Marie in person and ended up giving her a harp of her own.

This experience inspired Lynne to help others heal through music. She tried it next at her grandmother’s retirement home, then at hospitals, schools and mental health facilities.

The more places she visited, the more press she got. The more press she got, the more people donated harps.

Now, her trailer carries about 20 harps that she takes with her to workshops. She likes teaching others the harp because it sounds good as soon as one begins to play, unlike, say, the violin. With her collection of harps, she believes she can “show everyone that they have music in them.

“My goal is just to show everybody, just remind everyone, of the universal language [of music] and to use music in your life. We don’t want to lose touch with how important music is,” Lynne said.

She and her husband, who also has an extensive musical history, now live on a farm in Monroe, Oregon, where they play music together and where she continues to provide healing services through music.

“All of these programs, all of this music ... it’s all because of [Anne Marie Hocchalter] and how brave she was, and I never forget her,” Lynne said during Monday’s concert.