

Eleanor Turner

Full Biography, March 2026

Eleanor Turner is a harpist and composer. Her musical life centres on creating intriguing and meaningful live experiences, as well as contributing to other artists' projects, e.g. accompanying Voces8, creating harp parts for the UK artist Dave and making soundscapes for visual artist Lucy Cade. Her western classical technique informs, but does not inhibit, her choices as she carves a unique path through her life and career. Eleanor has enjoyed a ten year partnership with tabla player Mendi Singh in their duo Tāla Tarang, and she performs across the UK (and online) as soloist and with cellist Clare O'Connell, soprano Caroline Salmon and flautist Lisa Nelsen.

Eleanor is a passionate advocate for new music; she won 2nd Prize in the Gaudeamus Interpreters Contest 2011 and she features new work in every concert, regularly performing her own compositions and works by female composers living and historic. With her harp book 'Lullabies for the Land', co-created with Scottish-Palestinian artist Dima Nowarah, Eleanor set lullabies from indigenous nations and the SWANA region alongside lesser-known European lullabies, to oppose cultural erasure whilst supporting Palestinian children's charities.

Eleanor's background is in performance and composition, having studied harp, piano and composing at the Royal College of Music Junior Department for eight years before making her concerto debut as a harpist, aged fifteen, in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. This performance was with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, conducted by Daniel Harding and broadcast live on Classic Fm. Since then, she progressed to winning national and international awards, including First Prize in the 2007 European Harp Competition in Cardiff and Second Prize in the 2011 Gaudeamus Interpreters Contest in Amsterdam.

Eleanor's acclaimed harp playing has taken her to Shanghai for the International Computer Music Conference in 2018, the World Harp Congresses in Vancouver, Hong Kong and Sydney, the American Harp Society Conference in New Orleans and to Berlin to perform solo at the Philharmonie's Kammermusiksaal. Eleanor has been invited to perform at One Harp World in Toronto this summer; an event that brings together the World Harp Congress and the American Harp Society, celebrating the harp community worldwide.

As a composer, Eleanor has written music for contemporary ballet (Independent Ballet Wales 2007) and concerts; works such as 'I have no wish to say goodbye' for harp, lyre and cello (2005, funded by PRS Foundation for New Music) and cross-disciplinary

compositions such as 'The Wood and the Water' for electric harp and MYO armband, with gesture controlled effects and sound spatialisation (2017, funded by Royal Birmingham Conservatoire) – a work that uses British Sign Language as a poetic and meaningful basis for the chosen gestures. During Eleanor's five-year tenure as Head of Harp at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, she became Research Active and collaborated with Dr Balandino Di Donato in the Integra Lab to look deeply into common use of gesture in classical harp playing. Eleanor is recognised for pushing boundaries of harp performance and presenting thrilling programmes of music that cement her reputation as one of more technically exceptional and innovative harpists of the 21st century.