

Stage fright can't stop Stoney Creek harpist from sharing her music

Virtual concerts, such as those sponsored by the Hamilton Public Library, allow Lisa Warren to reach a wide audience

Playing virtual concerts as part of the Hamilton Public Library's virtual Noon Hour Concert Series, have allowed harpist Lisa Warren to play her music and reach new audiences without the stage fright.

By Cara Nickerson
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Lisa Warren has been playing her harp "Serenity" at virtual concerts in order to bring relaxation to listeners. She recently recorded a performance for the Hamilton Public Library's Noon Hour Concert Series. - In the Moment Photography photo

The first time harpist Lisa Warren got on stage at an open mic, the audience went silent for her and she became very nervous.

"In my head, I went, 'You can keep talking! Don't watch me, don't look at me!'" she said.

However, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual concerts — such as the Hamilton Public Library's Noon Hour Concert Series — have allowed her to play her music and reach new audiences without the stage fright.

"I find I'm definitely a little more comfortable in virtual because I've done it more now. People can't see you," she said, then laughed. "But I've done a lot of stupid stuff on screen."

Last spring, a YouTube video of [Warren breaking a harp string and cussing in surprise](#) went viral with almost three million views. While that clip isn't what Warren wants to be known for, watching the numbers go up on her video was exciting.

"I was like you've got to be kidding me," Warren said. "Of course, I got monetized by YouTube and then it slowed right down."

Warren said she [isn't looking for online stardom](#). In fact, she said her true goal is to help people with their mental health. She is a holistic clinical musician, and before the pandemic, often played for elderly people in long-term-care homes as part of Hamilton Public Library's relaxation and movement class, and in private sessions to help people decrease anxiety and stress.

Director of program development for the library, Lisa Weaver, said that local music like Warren's will play a key role in the community's recovery from COVID-19.

"Hamilton is a music city," Weaver said. "Music is great for literacy and numeracy, but also important for mental health."

[Warren's latest Noon Hour Concert Series performance](#) can be found on the [library's YouTube page](#), in the [Noon Hour Concert playlist](#).

"It's really helped me and I want it to help others," Warren said.