

# Karen Marshalsay launches new album

**Internationally acclaimed Scottish harp player [Karen Marshalsay](#) launched her new album, *The Road to Kennacraig* at St Peter's Church in Linlithgow last Friday.**

Karen, who has appeared at festivals across Europe, in the U.S. and Australia as well as here at home, joins an impressive list of musicians to have featured at the church since the Red Door organisation began promotions there towards the end of last year.

Poet and guitarist Don Paterson, singer-songwriter Chris Wood and saxophonist Laura Macdonald have all performed for Red Door (with English folk legend Martin Carthy and his daughter, Eliza due in June) and Karen has seen for herself the appeal of playing in the attractively refurbished building.

"I came to see a friend of mine, the Indian violinist Jyotsna Srikanth's concert in St Peter's and loved the atmosphere," she says. "It not only looks great, very Greek with those blue finishes against the white walls, but the acoustics are ideal and the intimacy of the room really made an impression. So when the Red Door people asked if I'd like to play there, I jumped at the chance."

With *The Road to Kennacraig* nearing completion at the time, Karen decided that St Peter's would make the perfect venue to launch the album, which was overseen by Robin Morton, producer of award-winning albums by Dick Gaughan, Cilla Fisher & Artie Trezise (of the Singing Kettle) and Battlefield Band, among others.

“It’s been some time in coming,” she says. “I really wanted to work with Robin, who produced the landmark Scottish harp album, Alison Kinnaird’s *The Harp Key*, and he’s always very busy. But he made time at the beginning of the year and has been a fantastic help in shaping the finished item.”

Karen also had to fit recording sessions into a busy diary that has included concerts with piper Allan MacDonald, of the famous Glenuig family, and as a member of Irish music legend and *Boys of the Lough* founder Cathal McConnell’s trio. She also made her debut with an orchestra at the Edinburgh Fringe last year when she was invited to orchestrate and play her own compositions with Herald Angel-winning Russian String Orchestra.

*The Road to Kennacraig* features tunes Karen has written in the traditional style alongside favourite traditional airs, marches and reels. The title comes from a favourite journey she has made often, to the isle of Islay.

“It’s a beautiful drive to and from the ferry, which leaves from and returns to Kennacraig, near Tarbert in Kintyre,” says Karen, who plays all three Scottish harps – gut-strung, wire-strung and the buzzing medieval bray harp. “I’m really looking forward to playing that tune, and other tracks from the album, in St Peter’s and sharing them with the audience who’ll be pretty up close and personal.”



Karen Marshalsay