

NEW AGE NOTES MAGAZINE

The image features a glowing white lotus flower in the center, with a golden spiral above it. The background is a teal color with sparkling lights and musical notes. The text 'NEW AGE NOTES MAGAZINE' is written in white, bold, serif font at the top.

**Interview with
Darlene Koldenhoven**

The bottom section of the image features a faded version of the lotus flower and spiral graphic from the top section, serving as a background for the text.

Darlene Koldenhoven is a GRAMMY® Award Winner with 3 GRAMMY® nominations. She is a vocalist, keyboardist/pianist, composer, songwriter, arranger, lyricist, producer, credentialed voice teacher, and certified sonic therapist. Darlene is known worldwide as the featured soprano soloist singing “Aria” in the PBS TV Special and Video, *Yanni, Live at the Acropolis* seen by over 1.5 billion television viewers and millions more now on YouTube, and most notably, as the tambourine-waving choir nun with Whoopi Goldberg in both *Sister Act* films where off-camera she was the production vocal coach and vocal contractor, music director and rehearsal pianist during their choreography rehearsal. The Los Angeles Chapter of The Recording Academy presented Darlene with an MVP Best Session Singer for singing on over 1,000 recordings in films, television, records, commercials, and charitable causes internationally.

Darlene, we are going to do a *much* longer interview in our July issue, and you're also our cover story in November, but your upcoming projects are so interesting, we wanted to include you preliminarily in our special May issue celebrating women in the New Age music genre. Let's start with your new album releasing August 7, 2026, "A Grand Memoir." The album is on [pre-order](#) starting May 7 through August 6. Why do you encourage people to pre-order?



Pre-ordering builds excitement, knowing something special will be coming someday soon. It also boosts my enthusiasm knowing that after all the hard work, I will be

rewarded with fan love, the best kind. Pre-ordering is the best way to support an artist because streaming, at .0006 cents per play, surely does not. It's cold and distant; whereas, a pre-order purchase is tangible for both the artist and the fan.

When a fan buys a CD at darlenekoldenhoven.bandcamp.com, they also get a free album download, an instant gratification track from the album, and they can request an autograph. Boom. Everybody wins. I also process every sale here at my TimeArt® Office and Studio, so each CD is sent with love. Personal, not a fulfillment factory.



I well remember your "Grand Piano Spa" and "Grand Piano Spa: Legacy" albums, which are both wonderful. How did those end up doing?

I was just looking at that this morning on my website because I just won a Silver Award for Best Classical Crossover Album from the Global Music Awards for *A Grand Memoir* and was checking up to see how my two previous solo piano albums did. I put all that information up on my website for every album.

The Grand Piano Spa won 2 Gold Medals in Classical Crossover Album, and in Composition,

and best of all, it got a hotshot debut at #4 on the Billboard Classical Crossover Albums Chart and an Amazon Hot New Release at #3.

The Grand Piano Spa: Legacy debuted at #8 on the same charts, both in 2021. It also got an Amazon Hot New Release at #4 and two Silver Medals in Best Classical Crossover Music and Best Composer from the Global Music Awards. I cannot complain and I can be proud.





Tell us a little about the kind of grand piano you recorded this new album on. I'm sure there's a story there.

I recorded live in my living room on a century-old Golden Era Steinway Grand Piano model L that was left in my care by some friends whose mother was the original owner and a national concert pianist. It still has the original strings and ivory keys. It tied right in with the whole memoir vibe.

There is so much to ask you, and I'm going to save a lot of it for our July interview, but is the music on "A Grand Memoir" similar to your other two "Grand" albums? In what ways?

They are all similar in that they are all solo piano albums. So, the notes I chose to compose and play must tell the entire story without the help of any other instrumentation, which a grand piano of 88 keys is capable of doing with the right composition and touch. As my roots were in classical piano, I tend to toss in some classical essence into my new age leanings. There is a tad more outpouring of emotion in the new album.

What inspired this beautiful new music?

All 10 compositions came to me in awakening dreams while writing my upcoming memoir, *Put Your Dress Down and Sing*. Writing a memoir, and dredging up all that "stuff," then deciding what to keep and what to toss, and how to make it palatable for the reader, is a huge emotional undertaking. Not for the faint of heart, at least in my case.

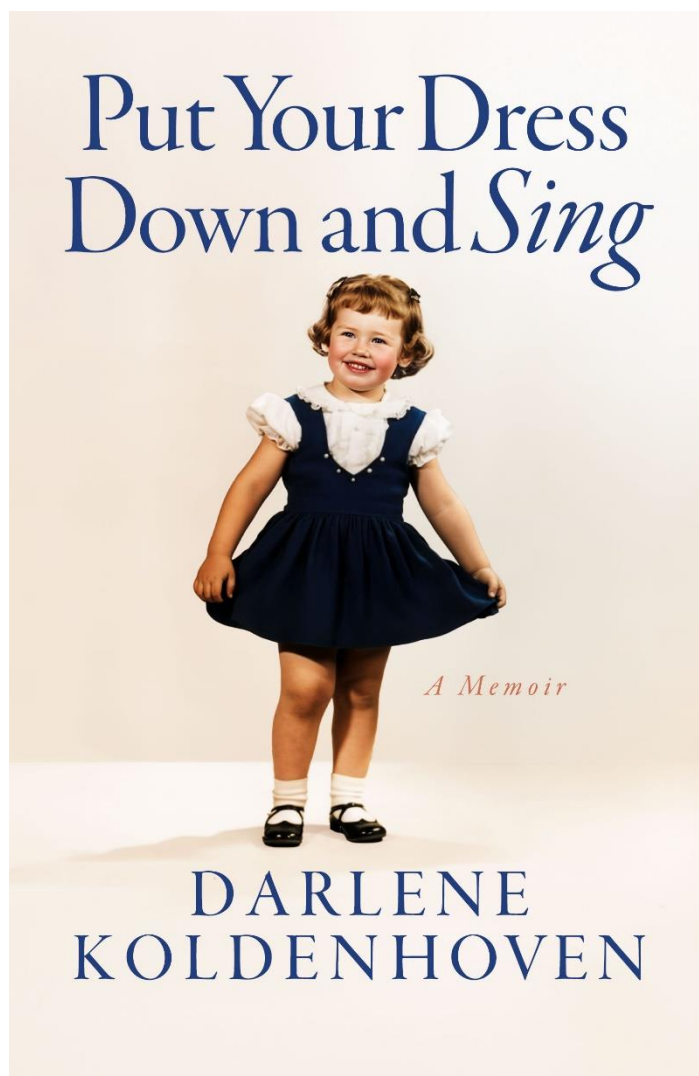
My dreams had to process all that and erupted in these melodies that would wake me up. I'd quickly sing them into my voice memo on my iPhone, then when I'd officially get up, I'd head straight to the Steinway and jot them down and expand on them.

I will say that one piece was improvised at the recording session as the final outpouring of emotion. That one is "Wright's Romanza," inspired by my visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House in Los Angeles. (I used to visit his Chicago-area houses as a kid.) He called his style of architecture for that house, "California Romanza," a more freeform style. So, as mine was improvised freely, I named it after him.

Give us a little more information on your book, "Put Your Dress Down and Sing."

Themes of female empowerment run throughout this full-life memoir meant to inspire and motivate others to manifest their dreams, no matter what. To change one's feelings, one must take action. I learned that at age three, when my mother put me up on the platform in church on Easter Sunday morning, and I sang my first solo. I could sing in tune and had a big range, even way back then, so handling the song with a big range, mood, and tempo changes, and high note finish was not a problem.

The problem arose when I got up there and saw 200 people looking at me, and my shyness kicked in. So, I hoisted my dress high over my head so I couldn't see them, thinking they couldn't see me. But they sure saw ALL of me! There I stood in all my glory. Thank goodness I had a whole bunch of frilly petticoats under there.



Anyway, Mom rushed to the platform, flapping her hands down and with a harsh whisper said, “Darlene, put your dress down and sing!” So, I did, and loved it. Since then, I’ve learned to keep my dress down when I sing in public.

I also learned to overcome my shyness by taking the action of putting my dress down and singing, and it changed me forever. Therein lies the crux of every matter in life and the secret to overcoming obstacles, and whatever life throws at you.

You have such an amazingly beautiful voice. I think it’s one of the most beautiful voices in the world. Do you also sing on the album? And do you still sing?

Thank you for your most kind compliment. I have been blessed, and I worked very hard at developing and maintaining it. I used to vocalize 6 octaves with a usable 5, e.g., my featured solo in *Yanni, Live at the Acropolis*. Then the pandemic hit, my hair turned grey, and I had no place to perform for a few years, so my ultra-high notes took a hike along with my previously blond hair!



VIDEO - YANNI, LIVE AT THE ACROPOLIS - FEAT. DARLENE KOLDENHOVEN

I still sing, just not those long, sustained high notes I was known for. I do not sing on the piano albums. The last two album projects I sang solo on for others were a moving album by Assia Ahhat, the Ukrainian violinist, titled *Born in Kiev*, and a very spiritual chant album, *AUM Sweet AUM* for Pandith Somesh Mathur, Ashish Rego, and Anup Jalota from India, where one

of the eight tracks I sang on was in Sanskrit. (Making it the 24th language I’ve sung in during my long career.)

You've been so successful in our industry. Do you have any advice for artists in this genre in this day and age?

Yes, [read my memoir](#). People will learn a lot from it, especially women. I spell it all out because I have lived it.

Okay, now I have to know your opinion... who has the best Chicago-style pizza and what makes it so?

Growing up in Chicago, I am partial to Chicago deep dish at Gino's East, where you could write on the walls back in the day. The crust, the sauce, the cheese, the density is luscious. Lucky me, a few years ago, the same owners opened up Gino's East in Sherman Oaks, just a ten-minute drive from my house in Studio City, but no wall writing. Not so lucky, now I must be gluten-free and dairy-free, so I save that for a once-a-year celebration and take a lot of special digestive enzymes. That said, I do also love an excellent flat crust. Occasionally, I make them at home in a manner I can digest, and to quote a Tammi Terrell and Marvin Gaye song, "Ain't nothin' like the real thing, baby."



Anything you'd like to add?

Stay tuned for more. I'm putting together a tour now, starting in August in the Los Angeles area. I'll be heading to Chicago, via Arizona's big cities and more. If anyone would like me to make an appearance, contact me through my website. And check out my new book and album websites, which you can access from my main website. For an appetizer, the plethora of photos I dug up and organized for my readers is quite an eye full. And remember, when times get tough, just put your dress down and sing!!!

**Official artist website: <https://www.darlenekoldenhoven.com> + Much more
Darlene Koldenhoven in our July 2026 issue and on our November cover.**