

# Darlene Koldenhoven

## Biography Highlights

What sets GRAMMY® Award winner and three-time nominee **Darlene Koldenhoven** apart from the rest? It could be her worldwide 1.5 billion viewing audience on PBS as the memorable soprano soloist in *Yanni, Live at the Acropolis*, her work in the war-torn jungles of Sierra Leone where she coached musicians and singers whom she took on tour in the US and Canada, or her recent donation of time and performances in India with U.N. humanitarian ambassador and Grammy Winning-composer **Ricky Kej**, for his concert and videos *Shanti Samsara*, to raise awareness of climate change and animal cruelty causes she holds dearly.

Her new and 9th album **Color Me Home**, a CD with coloring book, is the culmination of years of deep devotion to her craft and association with some of the world's greatest musicians and recording artists including the 17 for whom she wrote all the arrangements; some are **Tom Scott, Charlie Bisharat, David Arkenstone . . . .** Combining music and art, this album was produced from a place within Darlene to create beautiful music that is inspirational and healing, integrating her sonic therapy principals, which has resulted in its own sound. With **Color Me Home**, the dynamic sound of Darlene's 5-octave range comes home to rest comfortably and we hear the soul of a true artist manifesting itself in every nuance of her album. Darlene produced, wrote all of the music and lyrics, vocal & instrumental arrangements, played piano, keyboards & solos, programmed, engineered and performed *all* the solo vocals, vocal improvisations, and all choir parts on the album, except for the distinctive background vocal work of Grammy Nominee **Rocky Dawuni** from Ghana on "Kalahari Calls." It debuted #1 on the ZMR Radio Charts and to date, has garnered 9 awards and 31 nominations in various competitions.

Darlene performs internationally with her concerts and workshops. She has sung on over a thousand recordings, for and in films, television, albums, commercials and charitable causes. Highlights include singing with **Robin Williams** on the 2000 *Academy Awards*; in three *American Idol* specials; the 2010 *Academy Awards*; and her role as the tambourine-waving choir nun and real life vocal coach/musical director for Disney in both *Sister Act* films with **Whoopi Goldberg**, leading to singing for **President Clinton** during his last election stop in 1992. Darlene's voice has graced a plethora of albums from pop giants **Barbra Streisand, Whitney Houston** and **Rod Stewart** to jazz legend **Ramsey Lewis** to progressive rock icons **Pink Floyd** and rocker **Neil Young's** CD *Living With War* to soloing with London's **Royal Philharmonic** and debuting at age 19 with the **Chicago Symphony Orchestra**. A sampling of her vocal contributions include, solo vocal improvisations on films and popular TV shows: *Surrogates* with **Bruce Willis**, *2012*, *Internal Affairs*, and a Halloween episode of TV's popular *Grimm*; a song with her ethnically diverse children's choir (Young Vocal Artists of Los Angeles) by rapper/producer **will.i.am** for the soundtrack *Freedom Writers*; her soaring vocals on the popular video game *Baldur's Gate* (for **Sony PlayStation II**) and *Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets*.

With all of that and much more one would marvel that Ms. Koldenhoven has any time left for anything else, yet she has produced nine albums, **Infinite Voice** went to #1 on the radio charts *and* was voted by Broadcasters worldwide as Best Vocal Album, with **Heavenly Peace** debuting #2 and winning Best Holiday Album. **Tranquil Times** (instrumental only) went to #1 and won Best New Age Album from the Independent Music Awards and a nomination for Best Piano Album with Instrumentation by the Broadcasters with several tracks featured in the C.A.R.E. Channel Network and in **Don Campbell's** music therapy sound systems, both played in hospitals and hospices nationwide. **Solitary Treasures** was Nominated Best Vocal Album. **Angel on Ivories** was Finalist Best Classical Art Song Vocalist – pro division.

In addition to her career as a recording artist, Ms. Koldenhoven is a credentialed teacher with a Master in Voice, *magna cum laude* and B.A. in Music Education *cum laude* from Chicago Conservatory College. She is certified in audio-psycho-phonology from Integrated Listening Systems as well as an internationally renowned, credentialed sonic therapist and lecturer. Darlene's own blend in sonic therapy practice focuses on the ear, voice, and health connection. In the vein of empowerment for all as a way to express oneself and improve physical wellness through music, Darlene has created a music education program incorporating a 94-page book with 7 instructional CDs with worldwide sales titled **Tune Your Voice: Singing and Your Mind's Musical Ear** that has been endorsed by faculty and students from **Juilliard, NYU, to American Idol**. *It is Darlene's sincere wish to make the earth a better place, to live in harmony with and within.*

## Supplemental Darlene Koldenhoven's Biography

Darlene Koldenhoven was born in a mixed neighborhood on the South side of Chicago to a family with an extensive musical lineage, but hearing only the singing of her mother and grandfather. Darlene could hold her own harmony part by age 3, making her Easter Sunday debut in church singing a solo, "Low in the Grave He Lay." Her initial emphasis of formal training was classical piano, which she began studying in earnest at age 9. Two years prior, she learned sewing from grandmother and continues to carry on the tradition to this day, sewing and occasionally designing her clothes and concert gowns. Her father, awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, died from malaria complications contracted during his "tours of duty." The family suffering from the financial hardship, a single mother, and her sister being born deaf, didn't allow her hard working mother to afford formal singing lessons for Darlene until age 16. The product of a strict Dutch Christian Reformed/Calvinist family, Darlene was only allowed to listen to or play religious or classical music, not allowed to improvise, and never really listened to pop music until college where she absorbed everything from the Beatles and Middle Eastern music to jazz. But the fierce work ethic and discipline she learned from home and her schooling made her an outstanding scholarly achiever, thus preparing her for the ubiquitous and enviable career she now relishes in the entertainment capital of the world, Los Angeles. Arriving in Los Angeles with only a leap-of-faith, \$400, her car, 6 wool turtleneck sweaters (she's from Chicago) and *no contacts* – therein lay the story of how hard work and perseverance pays off . . .

Ms. Koldenhoven revealed an early sensitivity to teaching and nurturing when she assisted in the early speech therapy of her only sibling, a sister 9 years younger who was born deaf with bilateral aural atresia. Experimental surgery created some hearing capabilities for her at age 4. Revelations from that experience impacted Koldenhoven three-fold, sparking her intense interest in how vocal sound is created by the smallest gestures of the structures of the mouth, sound vibration as a source of healing and restoration, and the expressive possibilities of vocal sound without words - a signature element of her singular style.

Darlene Koldenhoven's first two albums are her debut *Keys to the World* (an adult contemporary pop work with an emphasis on positive lyrics), *Free to Serve* (an eclectic gospel soundtrack, commissioned by the Christian Reformed Church of North America and lifted from a World Missions multi-media concert that she co-directed, wrote all the music for and performed in, featuring musicians and singers she brought back from the impoverished Sierra Leone, West Africa). When asked about the future, in addition to her regular activities, Darlene is looking forward to touring with her concerts and workshops and is in the process of developing a unique music education program for those with special needs.