# NEW AGE NOTES MAGAZINE



## FEATURING:

BERNWARD KOCH

BRYAN QUINN

JAMES FILKINS

2002 (COPUS FAMILY)

PERPETUAL MOTION (JOSIE QUICK & TOM CARLENO)

JOHN ZECHIEL MUSIC TRANSCRIPTION

SYNC SUMMIT'S MARK FRIESER

WOLFSHEART (BERNHARD WEILGUNI)

AND MORE...

# A Grand Memoir

GRAMMY®-WINNING

# Darlene Koldenhoven

NOVEMBER 2026

# COVER STORY – INTERVIEW WITH DARLENE KOLDENHOVEN – NEW AGE NOTES MAGAZINE – NOVEMBER 2026

Grammy®-winning vocalist, composer, and producer Darlene Koldenhoven has spent her life and career inspiring audiences with her extraordinary voice, musical versatility and talent, and her passion for the healing power of music. With her new CD, "A Grand Memoir," she offers listeners a deeply personal musical journey, blending artistry and emotion in a collection of special solo piano songs that reflect her life and experiences. She also shares her amazing story and hard-earned wisdom in her new book, "Put Your Dress Down and Sing," an invitation to let go of insecurities, overcome adversity, embrace your authentic self, and discover the joy of expressing who you really are. Through both projects, Darlene celebrates creativity, courage, the transformative power of music and self-expression, along with life and love. We are honored to have her as our cover story this month. Let's explore. . .



Photo Credit: William Cloyd

**Darlene, you've been on quite a tour the past few months for your book and your album. Do you have a memorable experience or two you'd like to share with us?**

More than we have space for in this interview! Appearing on WGN-TV's *SpotLight Chicago,* being interviewed on camera for my book/ebook/audiobook, "Put Your Dress Down and Sing: A Memoir," and playing a lovely Mason & Hamlin grand piano live on set with music from my solo piano album, "A Grand Memoir," was a first for me. I've sung on live television several times, yet had not played piano on TV, much less with my own music.

Of around twenty podcasts so far and more to go, two stood out. In Jeffrey Mishlove's Albuquerque studio for his show "New Thinking Allowed," we talked about sound healing, sonic therapy, paranormal experiences in my book, and I played his beautiful Estonia grand piano on camera. On "Into the Parabnormal" with Jeremy Scott, we took a deep dive into several supernatural experiences I've had in addition to the ones in my book.

I sold a lot of books at my first festival, which was the 41st annual Printer's Row Lit Fest in Chicago, where a few of my friends surprised me at the Sibylline Press booth (my publisher), and some from high school!!!

There was the one incident where the zipper broke on my dress ten minutes before going on stage in Sedona. Another time, the electricity went out in the neighborhood, so I couldn't dry my hair before my on-camera interview. My friend found a gas station where I could plug in, but they didn't have a mirror!!!! And there was the 7-hour layover at Phoenix airport just to go from Burbank, CA to Albuquerque, NM. I could have driven all that way and made better time! But then I would not have the pleasure of eating all that gourmet food and relaxing in cushy seats in American's Admiral's Lounge.

Nashville/Brentwood Barnes & Noble forgot I was coming, but many of my friends and a cousin showed up. We laughed so hard over the stories I read to them from my book, and they even reminded me of a few. The store said they enjoyed our rambunctious behavior. I think the truth of that was that my friends bought more books than attendees. The store even had me autograph several copies and awarded them with a "signed by author" gold sticker.



Photo Credit: Cory Crock

In Evanston, IL my friend and I stumbled upon The Music Conservatory of Illinois, which had a "porch piano" set up with a Ring camera so they could check out who would stop in and play. The owner came out

when she heard my song “Impressions,” filmed me, and made a couple of social media posts about it. Random!

During my book presentation and sound healing talk followed by my solo piano concert at the Theosophical Society of America (my 5th time appearing there), I began playing their lovely Steinway grand piano in their unique two-floor esoteric library. Their organization brings together the religious, philosophical, and spiritual traditions of the East and West, emphasizing the Ancient Wisdom tradition—Theosophy. Suddenly, the drum-circle class outside started up in an entirely different rhythm than what I was playing. Then the clock chimed in every fifteen minutes. At one point in my piece, it was in the same key as the chord I was playing, so I lingered a few extra seconds longer on that chord until the clock concluded its merry tune. The evening was quite “theosophical,” shall we say.



Photo Credit: Joan Schutt

My favorite thing everywhere I went was being surprised by who showed up, literally and figuratively, and the special feelings I received from all my friends, former students, and family. It touched me deeply. Some even brought gifts. It was a most beautiful thing.

## Was this mostly a book tour or more of a music tour? Tell us some more of your adventures.

Both. Where a bookstore had a piano, or I could bring one, I played about 25 minutes from the new album. My launch event in Studio City, CA on August 7 at The Last Bookstore was a blast. There were 80 people jammed into that store,

including several pianist colleagues I haven't seen in 30 years or more and lots of singer friends. It was like old home week with everyone reacquainting themselves. Lots of warm vibes all around.




**TOUR LAUNCH VIDEO – "PUT YOUR DRESS DOWN AND SING" ALONG**

First, my friend Gloria Loring interviewed me, then I presented my book and read several of the most hilarious excerpts. I surprised the audience with a call-and-response sing-along of the title song of my book that went over like gangbusters. Finally, I settled in to play about 6 pieces from *A Grand Memoir* on the electric piano I brought in. Ultra fun.

In Sedona, I got to play at the Mary D. Fischer Theater with Peter Sterling accompanying me on harp on a few numbers. He also interviewed me. They had a brand new sweet electric piano.




Darlene Koldenhoven, Peter Sterling in Sedona. Photo Credit: Jodi Floyd

Atticus Books and Music's Listening Room in Fountain Hills, AZ had a lovely old upright piano that belonged to the owner's mother-in-law, so it was very special for him. That concert-and-conversation event sold out two weeks prior. More old friends showed up.

In Hollywood at the Hang on to the Dream Theatre, I had a costume change from imitating my little girl on the cover outfit, which got a big laugh, to a beautiful green gown I made. Emmy-winner Christopher Ewing emceed; I showed big-screen video clips from stories in the book and about 50 career pics rotated on a big monitor. We celebrated the birth of my book, the birth of my album, and the birth of me! They also had a nice electric piano.

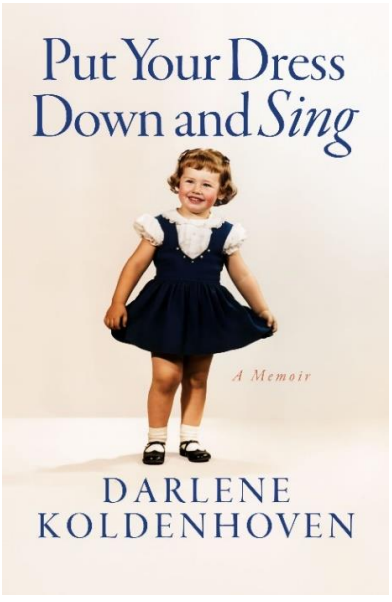


Book Signing Barnes & Nobel Racine WI.
Photo Credit: Gary Mertz

Of course, I did several Barnes & Noble stores and Barbara's Bookstores with no piano, and several sweet independent bookstores around Arizona, New Mexico, Los Angeles, and the Chicago area. Even some packed house concerts and book clubs.

## Your book and CD have won some great awards already. Tell us about that.

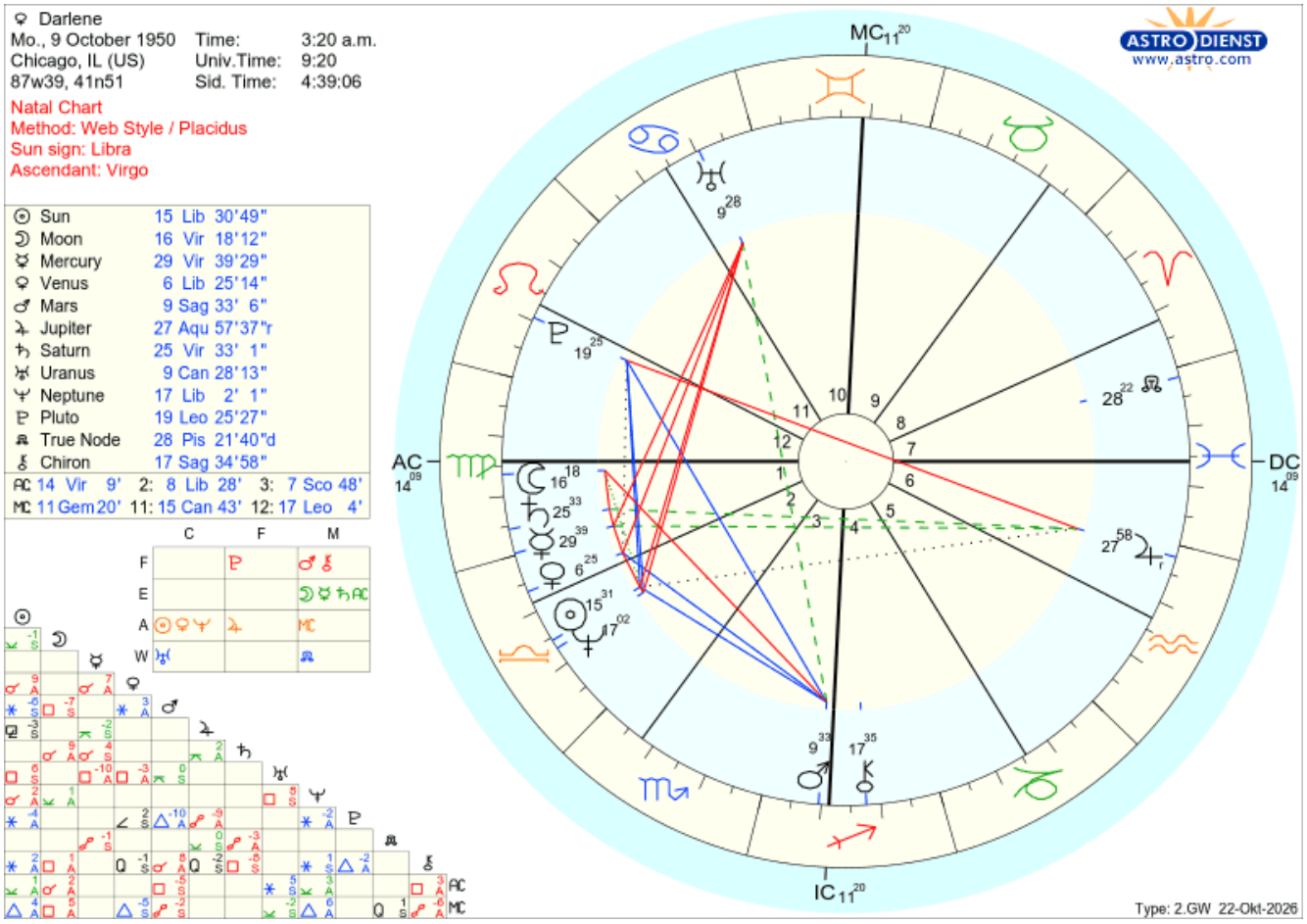
The paperback book has been getting rave reviews, and I just found out it won first place in the Pencraft Awards for Literary Excellence: Best Book for Non-Fiction Music Entertainment. The audiobook won three awards. The album has won a total of 7 gold, platinum, and silver awards. I'm waiting to hear about two more nominations in addition to the several nominations I have received so far. I list them on my website and display them in the studio.






I sincerely enjoyed your book. You're quite an interesting person who has had a full and fascinating life. Since you included your birth information in your book, I ran a quick astrology chart out of curiosity. I must say that I'm not an astrologer by any means, but I find it helpful, and I think it can bring us to a greater understanding of a person. I'm including your natal chart here for those who may also find your astrology interesting and can probably offer more insight than I can. I hope.

**Natal Chart for: Darlene Koldenhoven**




Some basic observations I made: You are a Libra sun sign but have a lot of Virgo in your chart, which makes you practical and detail oriented. You have Virgo rising, as well as a Virgo moon, and your Mercury is in Virgo too. I think that Virgo moon can lean toward a certain shyness, hence the "Put Your Dress Down and Sing" aspect of your life. Do you agree with that assessment that you can sometimes be a little shy? Or maybe that has worn off as you've gotten older?

Now it is more introverted than shy. I learned my lesson about shyness when I was 3 1/2 and mom had me sing my first solo on Easter Sunday morning. Mom and her father had me singing quite well for a 3-year-old, but when I got up on the platform and saw 200 people looking at me, my shyness kicked in. I hoisted my dress high over my head so I couldn't see them. But they certainly could see me! Mom bolted from the front pew, flapping her hands down and, with a harsh whisper, said, "Darlene, put your dress down and SING!" So, I did, and I learned that by taking that action, I overcame my feelings and was never shy about singing in front of people ever again. I also learned to keep my dress down when I sing in public. That lesson has really served me well. I have also been told that all that Virgo is what helps with my teaching, speaking, organization, and attention to detail.

**Another thing I find interesting — well, all of it really — is that you have Saturn in your first house (and also in your 7th and Venus square Uranus which I think would speak to unpredictable relationships). To me, Saturn in the 1st would indicate "hard work" that maybe other people never really even see. And also, I think it speaks to a certain unwavering strength in the face of adversity. And Saturn in the 7th might indicate difficult relationships, which you touch on in your book. Of course, I'm generalizing here, because you have so many other things going on in this chart, but what do you think of those observations?**

I totally agree, even the difficult relationship part. I've been curious about the Jupiter retrograde part too.

**[*You have Jupiter Rx in your 6th house, which I think would explain all those big physical maladies you've mentioned in your book that you've had to overcome.*]**

**Now, again, keep in mind that I'm definitely not an astrologer, but something that really caught my eye in your chart is that you have Pluto in Leo right up there on your Midheaven. I think this speaks to a successful career in the spotlight, and perhaps a bit of having to reinvent yourself in that space, maybe way more than once. However, you also have the Sun sextile Pluto, which helps a lot, I**

**think, along with the Sun trine your midheaven. I seriously think this speaks to a super successful career. What are your thoughts about this?**

I'd like to learn more about that, and I'd have to agree.

**There's so much more a real astrologer could delve into here, and I hope some will leave comments for us online, but let's get back to talking about your book. As a memoir, do you feel like you left anything out? Will you be perhaps adding more as time goes on?**

Ha, I laugh because I wrote so much in 4 months that it took me to write this memoir; I had to cut out 102,500 words to make this book. Sadly, a lot of cool stuff had to go, reducing the word population to a manageable number. I thought it prudent to leave out the chapter about my dating life in the 80s. Maybe that chapter will show up as an essay one day. I found writing that part particularly humorous.

**You had a strict Dutch Calvinist upbringing. There's such a juxtaposition between that and your "California/Hollywood" lifestyle that came to be, plus the "New Age" kind of music, plus, not to mention, your Grammy® Award. I'm wondering if you and your mother ever made peace between you regarding these kinds of things? Did she live long enough to see you so successful and prosperous?**

Yes, there is a dichotomy. In some cases, it's an actual chasm deeper and wider than the Grand Canyon! Nevertheless, all was resolved. Mom passed in September of 2013, so she did get to see me thrive. In fact, when she was in the old people's home in her final years, she would talk about my achievements around the lunch table so much that they accused her of being delusional and sent her for a complete psychiatric evaluation! It just wasn't heard of in the Dutch Calvinist communities for anyone, much less a woman, to win a GRAMMY® Award or sing for presidents. Because of me, she got to meet her hero, President Reagan. I sang for President Clinton. That's probably the one that got her in trouble! Haha!

## Let's talk about this new music on "A Grand Memoir." It's just gorgeous all through. When did you first learn to play the piano? Is it your favorite instrument?



Photo Credit: Cory Crock

I began formal classical piano lessons at age 9 through college, and yes, it is my favorite instrument, especially if it is a beautiful, dynamic-friendly grand piano. I love the sustained resonance of the piano, as well as the percussiveness. All the music on *A Grand Memoir* came to me in "awakening dreams" while writing the memoir. Sometimes the melodies provided by my subconscious processing an entire life's worth of memories were so loud, they would startle me awake. I'd whip out the voice memo on my iPhone and sing them so I could remember them. Later in the day, I'd use the craft of composition and create the pieces you hear on the album. I love to play with sensitive dynamics.

## What is your favorite song from the album and why?

Well, I'd say "Impressions" because it is more technically challenging. Is that the Virgo talking? I love playing that whole tone scale when it shows up, and the emotional and dynamic range is so expressive. It's a piece with many musical surprises as well as balance. That must be the Libra talking now.



Darlene Koldenhoven playing "Impressions" on Spotlight Chicago

## I agree — great song! — and yes, the Virgo and the Libra! Darlene, if there was one thing you could go back and change about your life, what would it be?

I would not have wasted precious time on men who didn't appreciate me for me. I was warned but blame those darn hormones. Haha.

## You've accomplished so much in your lifetime. It's truly a life well lived. What else is on your list to do?

Thank you. At least I lived a life to its fullest because ever since Spotify came along, I now live on the right side of that decimal point. I hope I sell lots of books and albums so I can earn enough to write and record a fully epic orchestral album as my final dénouement. There's also a gorgeous stone necklace I found while visiting Sante Fe this tour that I'd love to buy, but that would cost me 10,833,333 streams!!! The clerk practically fainted from shock when I brought it up. I think of the higher costs of everything recently in terms of how many streams I would need at .0006 cents per stream. Sick. Glad there's more to life than Spotify. My biggest discovery on these trips was the depth of my dear friends and their love.

**Official artist website:** https://www.darlenekoldenhoven.com