Teaching Harp in America: Selected Print and Video Materials, an Annotated Bibliography

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TEACHING HARP IN AMERICA: SELECTED PRINT AND VIDEO MATERIALS, AN
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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This treatise is dedicated with love to

my son, John Eli Thompson.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................ vi
ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................ vii
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE ............................................................................................. 1
CHAPTER ONE: METHODS FOR CHILDREN ................................................................. 3
CHAPTER TWO: METHODS FOR ADULTS ................................................................. 20
CHAPTER THREE: SUPPLEMENTAL SOLOS ............................................................ 33
CHAPTER FOUR: INSTRUCTIONAL DVDS ................................................................. 51
APPENDICES
  A. Online Resources ............................................................................................................ 57
  B. Useful Terminology ......................................................................................................... 61
  C. Tables ............................................................................................................................... 67
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ................................................................................................. 69
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ....................................................................................................... 70
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Materials For Use With Small (26 String) Harps ......................................................... 67

Table 1.2 Materials For Use With Pedal Harp Only ................................................................. 68
ABSTRACT

When teaching music, selecting the right instructional materials for each student is tremendously important. This project is a bibliography of pedagogical materials currently available to harp instructors in the United States. The focus is on solo harp literature for lever and pedal harp players of various age groups who play at the beginner through early intermediate levels, or namely, the first through third years of study for the average student. Annotations provide an analysis of each item regarding its level and usefulness. Most of the listings consist of print materials, with an additional sampling of DVDs. The materials are categorized in four sections: harp methods for children, harp methods for adults, supplemental solos, and instructional DVDs. This project seeks to find a balance between newer materials and the older classics of harp literature. Due to the rapidly changing nature of the internet, useful harp websites are listed in an addendum, Appendix A. Appendix B is a glossary of practical harp terms that pertain to types of harps and common techniques used to play the harp. Appendix C contains tables of materials that can be used with small harps of 26 strings, and materials that can be used with pedal harp only.
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The harp has been played and enjoyed in the Americas since the days of the colonies. In recent decades, however, the number of players has grown immensely. Harp educational programs in the United States have expanded to keep up with this growth. Opportunities for study are varied, including private lessons, college programs, master classes, and workshop intensives. A natural side effect of this growth has been the creation of more harp teaching materials. Selecting the best options from this new abundance of materials can become overwhelming for the independent harp instructor.

Part of this increase has been made possible by the development of affordable instruments. No longer merely a bridge to the pedal harp, the folk or lever harp has taken its place as a legitimate instrument in its own right. The terms lever and folk are often used interchangeably for this type of harp. A whole community of talented folk harp builders, professional performers, and teachers has sprung up. The builders are producing lever harps of all sizes at a variety of price points. The performers and teachers are using these harps to create new music. Much, but not all of this newly published repertoire can be shared with the folk harp’s larger cousin, the pedal harp. Pedal harps also enjoy increased availability from dealerships around the country, with builders including Lyon & Healy, Salvi, Venus, and Camac. Pedal harps remain a significant financial investment. Despite this, the number of classical pedal harp training programs has also grown. There are rental programs, rent-to-buy programs, and trade up programs, all designed to help the student obtain an instrument. A more thorough explanation of the various types of harps can be found in Appendix B.

Simultaneously, the development of computers has aided the rebirth of the small printing press. Many of today’s harp teaching materials are self-published. These new materials are a great enhancement to what was previously available. The benefit to this is that the composers and arrangers are themselves harpists and harp teachers. They understand how to write for the instrument, and have first hand familiarity with the issues facing the teacher and student. In addition to printing, digital media has changed forever how music is recorded and distributed. Sound files can be self-recorded for CDs and downloadable mp3 files. Videos can be made for
DVDs, and be uploaded straight to the internet, for example, YouTube. Written music can be printed and distributed, or sold and accessed in an instant as pdf files. Being in the same location for lessons is no longer necessary, as teachers are increasingly meeting via Skype. The impact of these technologies has only begun to be explored.

In addition to this newly created work, the traditional pedagogical materials remain. The strongest influence on American harp technique comes from the French school, epitomized by the Paris Conservatory. Most students in the U.S. are exposed to the teachings of either Carlos Salzedo or Marcel Grandjany, if not both. Additionally there are underlying influences from German playing, and even an occasional Russian touch. The result of this is that there is no single “American” school of harp playing. Currently, many players are referred to as hybrids, having received instruction from multiple schools. It is necessary for today’s harpists to meld their instruction into a functional, healthy technique. Certain aspects of good technique are universal, including relaxation, strength, full tone production, and injury prevention. This study aims to present a balance of the schools without favoring any particular group.

The challenge for today’s teacher is in how to sort through all of this. The purpose of this study is to create an extensive sample listing of the instructional materials available to the typical teacher in the United States. Accessibility is key. Everything listed here is available through the major harp music dealerships. Nothing is out of print, or available only through academic libraries, as most independent teachers lack access to academic libraries. In fact, many of the newer publications can not be found in libraries at all; libraries do not acquire them.

I have examined the materials for their usefulness according to the following criteria: level of difficulty, playability issues with regard to size and type of harp, the need for levers or pedals due to accidentals, technical requirements, including repertoire, and age appropriateness. Often there is an overlap, such as repertoire being playable on lever and pedal harp, or a musical style that appeals to children and adults. In these cases I have tried to make clear all of the applicable uses. My judgements are based on the influence of my pedagogy and performance professors, my academic study, and my years of practical experience as a teacher.
CHAPTER ONE

METHODS FOR CHILDREN


34 Pages
Pedal or lever harp

*A Harp Primer Book One* is the first in a series of three books written by Suzanne Balderston to introduce very young students to the harp. The first several pages explain the musical alphabet with letters “A” through “G,” and numbering the fingers 1 through 4. This approach means that harp lessons can compliment the alphabet and counting lessons that a young child studies in kindergarten. Balderston gradually introduces the rudiments of music notation starting with the staff and middle C, and progresses through basic rhythms, time signatures, and a two octave range for note reading. All of the music is written on the grand staff. There are, however, no fingerings as the pieces are intended to be played by the second finger of each hand only. The pieces include original tunes such as “Sliding,” and “My Puppy,” and also familiar tunes such as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” and “Merrily We Roll Along.” The pieces are very short, averaging eight to twelve measures long, and each has an accompanying hand-drawn illustration. Only one piece requires that an F-sharp be pre-set. All other pieces can be played on a harp tuned in the key of C. This simplicity of key signatures combined with the limited note range of the pieces means that the book can be used with small, unlevered folk harps that are convenient and cost effective for small children.


28 Pages
Pedal or lever harp

*A Harp Primer Book Two* follows *Book One* in logical progression in technique and music notation. *Book Two* gradually introduces playing with the other fingers until all
four are used, although the bulk of time is spent on playing fingers 1 and 2. The student learns to place 1 and 2 together, then play them separately in alternating directions, or simultaneously in the interval of a third. Near the end of the book, the 3rd and 4th fingers are introduced, albeit very briefly. The student increases note reading knowledge with a larger note range, more rhythms, and an introduction to rests and triads. The average length of the solo pieces increases to twelve and sixteen measures. Unlike the first book, there are no illustrations. Most of the pieces are arrangements of familiar tunes such as “Little Brown Jug,” and “Up On a House Top.” Several pieces require an F sharp, and one piece requires a B-flat. It would be possible to help the young student to pre-tune these strings, but it may be more convenient to have a harp that is at least partially levered or has pedals.


28 Pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Book Three* completes Balderston’s series of beginner harp books for young children. The third book is consistent with the first two in that it presents a balanced combination of technique, music notation, and solo pieces. Technically the student gains some crucial skills such as rolling three note chords, directional placement, larger simultaneous intervals, and changing a lever or pedal during a piece. The music notation advances correspondingly, with dotted note rhythms, creation of intervals, increased note range above and below the staff, and half steps, whole steps and the major scale. Ample solos are provided to reinforce each new technical or musical skill. The pieces are sixteen measures, or one page long, and consist of arrangements of well known tunes such as “Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms,” “Going Home,” “Flow Gently Sweet Afton,” and “Alouette.” Each piece is clearly marked with fingering and placing brackets. To make full use of this book without modifications, a student would need to play a full size levered folk harp, or a pedal harp. There is a noticeable absence of pictures of hand position throughout the series. At first this may seem like a weakness, however, that allows the books to be taught by teachers of the Salzedo technique or
classical French technique with no conflicts. It simply remains up to the teacher to demonstrate the desired hand position.


18 Pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Primer Level 1* is the introductory book in a five book series by composer and former University of New Hampshire harp instructor, Stephanie Curcio. It contains comprehensive information for those new to the harp, including the range and layout of the harp strings, the parts of the harp, finger numbers, how to sit at the harp, and the musical alphabet. The book is written at a level appropriate for elementary school-aged children who have some reading ability. For the parents of these children, there is a section titled “Helper’s Appendix,” which explains to the parent how to tune the harp and how to change the strings. This is valuable since young children often need help with tuning, and also involves the parent in the learning process. The moderate note range and lack of accidentals in the book means that children can use a small harp with no levers. The only requirement is that the bass extends to the C below middle C.

In regards to note reading, Curcio employs a unique system. Notes are drawn as empty heads with letter names written inside. Stems up mean play with the right hand, and stems down play with the left hand, while dashes drawn after the note heads signify holding the note for extra beats. While there are no ledger lines, there are orientation lines for middle C, high C, and low C, and the notes rise and fall with the contour of the melody. Measures are indicated by drawing the notes within boxes. Double bar lines to end the piece and repeat signs are also introduced. Several familiar tunes are notated this way, such as “I’m a Little Teapot,” and “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” that a child will be able to play by ear, as well as entering the world of note reading.

Primer Level 2 is the second book in a five volume series by Stephanie Curcio. Intended to teach music reading as well as harp technique, the author employs the same notational devices as in Level 1. This means that the note heads are written stems up or stems down to indicate right hand or left hand, the note names are written into the note heads, horizontal lines indicate note range, and vertical lines mark the end of measures.

Level 2 advances the student through basic techniques such as placing in groups, replacing a finger to the same string after it has been played, setting sharping levers, and glissandos. Placing brackets clearly notate how to place the fingers. There are several short tunes to reinforce the new skills such as “Autumn Song,” “Pussycat, Pussycat,” and “Timothy’s Lullaby.” Like Level 1, the student can study Level 2 using a small harp that extends to the C below middle C. It would be beneficial for the harp to have levers for the section on setting levers, but the remainder of the book may be studied on an unlevered harp if necessary.


Student Harpist Level 1, despite its title, is actually the third book in a series of five by Stephanie Curcio. Students who already read music, especially those with a piano background, may begin their harp study with this level. Material is introduced very rapidly, however, so young elementary students may do best beginning with the Primer levels, whether or not they have played the piano. Students from the middle grades of elementary school and up probably can handle the pace of presentation. To this end, the book addresses finger numbers, how to sit at the harp, harp parts, stringing, and tuning. This material will be new to those starting harp study with this book, and a useful review to those continuing from the Primer levels.
The basics of music notation are explained quickly, including the grand staff, note values, and time signatures. Exercises begin with the 2nd finger and gradually add one finger at a time until the student uses all four fingers. Overlapping connections, crossing over for scales, and simultaneous intervals advance the technique. A large portion of the text addresses music theory. Curcio covers notation signs, how to create accidentals at the harp using levers or pedals, key signatures, and changing the unit of beat. The introduction of accidentals and larger note range makes having either a fully levered folk harp or a pedal harp necessary. There are a limited number of solos, but not enough to grasp the dense amount of information presented in this relatively short book. A teacher would have to supplement with additional solo material. Although written for children, the book is sophisticated enough to be used with adults as well.


30 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Student Harpist Level 2* is the fourth book in Stephanie Curcio’s series of instructional books. This volume builds on the harp technique and the music theory from *Student Harpist Level 1*. The topics include eighth notes, dynamics, scales, key signatures, glissandos, legato playing, triplets, dotted notes, sixteenths, left hand accompaniments in a root-5-8 pattern, and chords and arpeggios.

Curcio’s dense presentational style provides a great deal of information in a relatively short book. While there are ample exercises, there are only a limited number of solos. Some pieces are adaptations of famous classics such as a transcribed theme “From the New World” by Dvorak, or a snippet of a piano sonata such as “From Mozart,” while other pieces are originals by Curcio such as “Solace.” The pieces are valuable for advancing the technique, but due to their limited number, a teacher would need to supplement with additional solo pieces. By this point in the series, either a fully size folk harp or a pedal harp is needed. The book is paced appropriately for children from the middle grades of elementary school, approximately third grade and up, through adults.

26 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Student Harpist Level 3* is the fifth and final book in Stephanie Curcio’s instructional series for the harp. The style is consistent with the previous books, with compact explanations of music theory and harp technique. The topics include seventh chords, major and minor scales, the circle of fifths, complex intervals, modulations, voicings, and whole and half steps. While most of the book can be used with a lever or pedal harp, there is one exercise that addresses scale modulations that can only be performed on a pedal harp.

The solo pieces in this book increase in length and sophistication. They are original pieces that use the full range of the harp, with titles such as “Waveform” and “Mist.” Again however, the number of solos is limited and would have to be supplemented by the teacher. They require more advanced technique such as crossing over and under with both hands. The material is age appropriate for older elementary school children through adults. Upon completion the student will be prepared for standard intermediate classical harp repertory such as Naderman, Hasslemans, Grandjany, and Salzedo.


81 pages
Pedal or lever harp

The *Harp Olympics* is a set of comprehensive method books for school-aged children. The *Preliminary Round* can be used by children who do not yet read music, however, they must have the aptitude to learn quickly, and the physical ability to coordinate all four fingers from the start. Because of these challenges, the book may be more beneficial to children who have had at least one year of piano study before beginning harp. Also, unlike some of the other first books for children, this one requires a full size folk harp with levers, or a pedal harp from the start.
The book is clearly structured in five sections. Part one, “Equipment Check,” covers the parts of the harp with illustrations of pedal and non-pedal harps, levers and pedals, tuning, and replacement of strings. Part two, “Work Outs,” consists of exercises for all four fingers with technical skills that include directional placement, glissandos, and intervals of 3rds and 5ths. The “Games and Drills,” part three, are actually music theory study covering treble and bass clefs, time signatures, notes and rests, sharps and flats, and dynamics. Part four, the “Solos,” are short pieces, many eight bars long, that reinforce the technical skills and have enjoyable illustrations of bears to lighten the mood. The last section, part five, is the “Marathon,” a thorough test to prove that the student has absorbed all of the skills necessary to complete the book and advance to the next. The teacher can fill out the certificate of achievement on the last page to celebrate the student’s success.


105 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Harp Olympics Stage I* can be used as a follow up to the *Preliminary Round*, or can be the initial method book for children who already read music. It works especially well for those with a piano background. The structure of the book remains the same as the *Preliminary Round* and reviews much of the same introductory material, but then advances further in each area. Also like the *Preliminary Round*, the student can study on either a completely levered full size folk harp, or a pedal harp.

Part one, “Equipment Check,” covers the parts of the harp, pedals and levers, tuning, replacing strings, and the range of the harp. The “Work Outs,” part two, contains warm-ups for using one through four fingers, and an expanded set of intervals from the 2nd to the octave, as well as glissandos, harmonics, 3 finger arpeggios, and changing direction. Part three, the “Games and Drills,” explores some fairly complicated music theory including signs and symbols, notes and rests, time signatures, pedal and lever drills, sharps and flats, count and tap exercises, whole and half steps, intervals, triplets, key
signatures, and the circle of fifths. Pieces in the “Solos” section are mainly page length original works with titles such as “Dreaming,” and “The Cuckoo.” The final section, the “Marathon,” requires the student to demonstrate the ability to do the theory and counting exercises, technical exercises, and solo playing in order to pass to the next level.


87 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Stage II* continues the *Harp Olympics* series with the successful structure of the first two books. At this level, the majority of the book is playable as written or adaptable to a full size lever harp, however there is one piece, “Dragonfly in the Sunshine,” that must be played on the pedal harp. The “Workouts” section includes four finger warm ups and intervals, three and four finger chords, arpeggios, harmonics, glissandos, slides, scales, and directional placing. The “Games and Drills” section advances theory knowledge with ties, slurs, a 6/8 time signatures, key signatures, and major scales. The solo pieces are mainly one page long. Many are arrangements for harp such as “Barcarolle” by Offenbach, “Amazing Grace,” and a transcription of “The Entertainer” by Joplin. It is likely a teacher would want to supplement with additional solos to give the student enough opportunities to grasp the technique. The “Marathon” again is a comprehensive test to prove mastery of the skills for this level.


89 pages
Pedal harp

*Stage III* completes the *Harp Olympics* series. This fourth and final book maintains the structure of the previous three volumes. The “Workouts” section of technical exercises includes review of four finger warm ups and intervals, four finger chords and arpeggios, slides, glissandos, muffles, harmonics, cross under arpeggios, scales, and late placing. The “Games and Drills” section expounds on theory with the “Circle of Fifths” and key
signatures, chord inversions, major and minor thirds and triads, upbeats, minor scales, and an introduction to chord progressions using the IV and V chords.

The “Solos” section consists of one to three page arrangements, and two original pieces titled “Dreams” and “Fantasy.” At this level, the lever harp is no longer an option. It is assumed that anyone using this book is pursuing classical studies and playing a pedal harp. Several of the pieces require pedal changes, and there is an exercise on pedal changing in the “Workouts” section. The limited number of pieces makes it likely that a teacher would wish to supplement with additional solo material. Upon completion of the final “Marathon” test, a student would have the foundation to proceed to intermediate level material from the standard classical repertoire such as original works by Naderman, Hasslemans, and Tournier.


24 pages  
Pedal or lever harp

*Fun from the First!* has been used successfully by several generations of harp students. Originally written to be used with the Troubadour harp, it can be used with pedal harps or lever harps of medium size or larger with a minimum of levers on the F and C strings. If necessary, a harp with no levers could be tuned to create the F- and C-sharp accidentals, as these notes are not altered during the pieces. The book explains how to sit at the harp, the position of the hands, string replacement and layout, how to tune, and care of the harp. As the book does not teach note reading, it would be best for the student to have a musical background on the piano. The classical teacher will appreciate the methodical presentation of technical material in this book. Milligan starts with interval exercises of thirds and sixths for two finger placement in one direction, and progresses through three and four finger placements. Each exercise is followed by ample short solo pieces to reinforce the technique. Most of the pieces are arrangements of well known tunes such as “Lazy Mary,” “Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes,” and “Good King Wenceslaus.” Not just for children, the presentation is sophisticated enough to be used by adults as well.

24 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Book 2* continues Samuel Milligan’s classic set of introductory method books for harp. The technique advances with connecting groups of fingerings, also known as turnaround replacements in various directions, extended patterns, three finger chords, glissandos, and scales. There is a good selection of solo pieces following each group of exercises, mainly arrangements of traditional and early tunes such as “Robin Loves Me,” “Paván,” and “The Purple Bamboo.” The teacher may wish to supplement with additional solos to reinforce the serious elements of technique covered in this volume. *Book 2*, like *Book 1*, can be used successfully by adults as well as by children.


70 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Bonnie Mohr’s *Colorful Adventures on the Harp* is an introductory book for children as young as early elementary school. The title of the book is based on the author’s unique approach to note reading. The grand staff is used immediately. To make it easier, however, the C notes are drawn in red and the F notes are drawn in blue to match the color of the harp strings. This device is employed throughout the first half of the book to aid the young student in learning to read music notation. Bright illustrations also help to make the book enjoyable for children.

The book begins by explaining the finger numbering system and how to hold the harp. The description of hand position is consistent with classical French harp technique. The hands are held with high thumbs as the other fingers point down, the right arm allowed to rest lightly on the soundboard, if desired, with the elbow gently raised outward, and the left hand held freely above the soundboard. The book progresses through fundamental harp technique such as directional placing, intervals, chords, scales, and alberti bass.
Short exercises introducing the techniques are followed by solos that reinforce them. Some of the pieces are original compositions by Mohr such as “Fireflies” and “Sailing,” while others are transcriptions of famous tunes such as “Shenandoah,” “Skye Boat Song,” and “Amazing Grace.” The book also presents a great deal of theoretical information including quarter notes, half notes, eighth notes, bass and treble clefs, rests, tuning, chords, alberti bass, dotted notes, glissandos, scales, and intervals. The pace of presentation is modest, and a medium size folk harp with no levers can be used, making this book suitable for a young child.


83 pages
Pedal or lever harp

This second book by Bonnie Mohr, a follow up to her *Colorful Adventures at the Harp*, takes a slightly different approach than the first book. Instead of a straightforward method book, *Adventures on the Harp, Book 2* is a cross between a method book and a repertory builder. It contains a few exercises, such as “Hand Over Hand Warm-up” for two-hand arpeggios, and chord rolling practice for building technique. Most of the material, however, consists of solo pieces, many of which are transcriptions of classical pieces or arrangements of folk tunes.

The book is unique in that the repertory is divided into groups by key signature. Each key is introduced by practicing scale exercises at a minimum, with additional chord exercises for popular key signatures such as C major and D major. The repertory helps an advanced beginner to low intermediate student solidify basic harp technique while learning performance pieces. Due to accidentals and the note range of these arrangements, a full size folk harp with a complete set of levers or a pedal harp is necessary. The content such as Bach minuets, “Lascia Ch’io Pianga” by Handel, and folk tunes like “The Water Is Wide,” is sophisticated enough to be enjoyed by adults as well as young students.

27 pages
Pedal or lever harp

The *First Harp Book* is a classic of harp literature that students have used successfully for generations. The book follows a methodical progression, introducing each new technique with exercises followed by supplementary pieces. The student begins with the second finger only, gradually working up to all four fingers using directional placement, and then proceeds to intervals and chords. Most of the pieces are arrangements of European folk tunes such as “The Bluebells of Scotland,” “Hymn of Thanksgiving,” and “Drink to Me Only.” The pieces are clearly marked with fingerings and placing brackets. The book does not address music notation. After page one, the written music goes immediately to the grand staff, so a background in piano would be very beneficial due to the note reading skills involved. A few early pieces contain lyrics for children, but the overall presentation is not childish, and the book can be used comfortably by adults as well. While most of the content can be played on a full size lever harp, a few pieces near the end of the book must be played on pedal harp or adapted to accommodate lever changes.


44 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Christina Tourin’s *Rainbow of Sound* series of six harp instructional books for children presents an uncommon approach. Prioritizing creativity and improvisation over standard technique, *Book 1* can be used with very young children. The book is divided into three sections. Section one is “Dascha’s Adventures,” a fantastical story about animals and imaginary creatures traveling around the world, enhanced with illustrations. The teacher or the parent can read the story to the children while either the teacher or the child plays improvisations at the harp. Section two introduces note reading, the layout of the strings, how to hold the harp and position the fingers, and playing notes of the treble clef with the right hand. Section three contains short pieces for the right hand alone with titles such as
“Big Brown Bear,” “The Journey,” and “The Dragon,” that can be played to accompany the stories. Unfortunately, exercises of any type are not included. A teacher would have to teach technique, including placing and fairly difficult replacing in alternating directions, through use of the pieces only, or supplement with another book. What makes the book convenient is that the notational range of the pieces is small and requires no lever changes, so a comfortable child size harp can be used.


45 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Book 2* of Christina Tourin’s *Rainbow of Sound* series continues in the same style as her introductory volume. The book opens with several poems that stimulate the imagination, but the main story for this book is a repeat of “Dascha’s Adventures” from *Book 1*. The story is not reprinted, so it would be necessary to keep *Book 1* nearby for reference. *Book 2* introduces the study of the bass clef. A short tune is presented to emphasize each note. This book contains more formal education in notation with explanations of note rhythms, time signatures, and a long list of musical terms and symbols. These are followed by some brief but challenging exercises on scales and chords, moving quickly all the way up to four finger chords and triads in inversions. The book concludes with a long section of more advanced versions of original pieces from *Book 1*. The pieces are creative but the music rapidly becomes complicated. The technical skill and music reading ability required to play the pieces properly versus the amount of preparation the student has been given is a concern. The pieces demand the ability to read the grand staff, and a fluid harp technique in placing, scales, and chords. Such abilities just may not have been sufficiently developed at this point to adequately perform the pieces. While the arrangements contain more notes than *Book 1*, the note range remains small and there are no accidentals. That means that students can continue to use small harps with no levers.

In *Book 3* of the *Rainbow of Sound* series, Christina Tourin collaborates with author Barbara Yule to create a musical storytelling experience. The fanciful tale about a young girl, fairies, and a magical harp is interspersed with musical interludes of Celtic tunes such as “Maids of Mourne Shore” and “Mary, Young and Fair,” plus original tunes by Tourin such as “Gathering Primroses.” The tunes are arranged in a straightforward manner at an advanced beginner to low intermediate level. They require the ability to read the grand staff, to place cleanly, and to play rolled chords. Some of the tunes use levers, but offer the option of substituting a different natural note for harps with no levers. With very few adaptations to the bass, they can be played on a small 26 string harp. The construction of the book also lends itself to group performance, allowing many children to narrate or act out the story and take turns playing the tunes.


*Book 4* in the *Rainbow of Sound* series by Christina Tourin continues in the same style as *Book 3*, a mystical story enhanced by music. Tourin collaborates with author Joanna Vale on the tale “Gabriel and the Bear.” Tourin provides a brief one page explanation of sharps and flats for pedal and lever harps. Many of the harp arrangements in this book require that pedals or levers be set to create different key signatures and modes at the beginning of the piece, but not moved during the piece. The pieces are a combination of traditional tunes such as “All Through the Night” and “The Ash Grove,” plus original pieces by Tourin such as “Annwvyn” and “Magick.” The arrangements are advanced beginner to low intermediate level, requiring the ability to play intervals, directional placing, and chords. There are two arrangements of many of the pieces, one for large harps with a wide range of bass strings, and one for small harps that do not extend beyond the C below middle C. All of the small harp arrangements can be played on 26 string harps. It would be beneficial to have a folk harp that is at least partially levered or a
pedal harp in order to understand the material on how to use pedals or levers. All of the pieces, however, have suggested melody note substitutions to accommodate harps with no levers. This book is another that can lend itself to group performance with students narrating or acting out the story while taking turns playing the tunes.


37 pages
Lever or pedal harp

*Book 5* in the *Rainbow of Sound* series is not a technique book, but rather a book on improvising at the harp. It would be good for use with students of all ages who would like to compose, but need some guidance on how to begin. It encourages them to write their own music by teaching compositional techniques. Pages of manuscript paper with grand staves on which the student can write compositions are provided. The fairy theme continues the creative vein with an explanation and musical example that designates fairy music as a traditional branch of Celtic music. Tourin provides a sample of a motive, and how to play with that motive using improvisational techniques such as repetition, sequence, retrograde, and inversion. Inspirational suggestions are given each time such as “The Birthday Song,” and “The Telephone Song.” For “The Anniversary Song,” each digit in the date of the anniversary is assigned a note. Other compositional ideas such as colors, shapes, games, and sound effects are suggested to create additional tunes. As most of the music is created by the students, they can use harps of any size, with or without levers or pedals.


37 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Book 6*, the final book in the *Rainbow of Sound* series by Christina Tourin, is an eclectic collection of winter holiday tunes for Christmas, Chanukah, and Kwanzaa. The string range of most of the arrangements goes no lower than the C below middle C, thus the
tunes can be played on small 26 string harps, and only a few require lever or pedal changes. The technical level is low intermediate, requiring skill with scale passages, intervals, chords, and directional placing. While this collection does explore the music of different traditions, the reality is that most of the pieces are for Christmas, such as “Away in a Manger,” “Good King Wenceslas,” and “Silent Night,” which are common to most holiday harp books. There are only two Chanukah songs, and one Kwanzaa song, “Thula Kleyziyo,” as well as “If The People Lived Their Lives,” a Russian folk song about light, and one original piece by Tourin. The collection is suitable for harp students of all ages, but contains only a modest amount of unique repertory for holidays other than Christmas.


32 pages
Pedal or lever harp

The *Suzuki Harp School Volume 1* is meant to introduce young children to the harp. The tenets of the Suzuki method are explained, such as emphasizing playing by ear and from memory rather than teaching the child to read music, and parental participation. A few pages near the beginning of the book illustrate the layout of the strings, and how to string the harp. Unlike most harp methods, there are no illustrations of how to sit at the harp, or of hand positioning. The book can be used by a pedal harp student, or a student with a medium size folk harp. The vast majority of the pieces are in C major, and there are no accidentals that must be changed within any of the pieces.

From the beginning, there are some problematic issues with the Suzuki harp book. The “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star Variations,” a staple of the method for other instruments such as the violin, is a piece that does not adapt well to the harp in this form. Playing rapidly repeated notes with one finger on the same string is not crucial to harp technique. In fact, it is something that contemporary composers for harp are asked to avoid. Solo pieces are presented in this book without the corresponding technical exercises to support them. For example, an arrangement of “Silent Night” is written in thirds, with no preparatory interval exercises whatsoever. Many of the pieces seem as though they were
borrowed from a piano book. It may be a case of the popular but false assumption that what works for piano always works for harp. They are two different instruments.

Perhaps the largest impediment to using this harp method is that it is intended to be used by certified Suzuki teachers. The process to achieve certification is long and too expensive for many harp teachers. Only a handful of Suzuki harp training modules are offered each year around the country, and can necessitate travel of thousands of miles to attend, in addition to the tuition and membership fees. For many harp teachers, excessive cost makes this a non-existent option. The result is that there are pockets of Suzuki harp teachers in regions of the country with local access to the training modules, and few to no Suzuki harp teachers most other places.


29 pages
Pedal or lever harp

This ensemble book contains accompaniments to the pieces in the *Suzuki Harp School Volume 1*. The arrangements are very pianistic, which may be explained by the fact that Barbara Meixner is also the author of many Suzuki ensemble books for piano. Repeated notes on the same string, large leaps, and awkward replacement patterns are some of the issues that make this book problematic on the harp. The pieces should be manageable by professional teachers who play the harp well enough to accompany the student. They are not suitable, however, for student ensemble. While some pieces are playable on lever harp, several require a pedal harp, or may simply be best on piano if that instrument is available.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODS FOR ADULTS


86 pages  
Pedal or Lever Harp

Although subtitled “A Self-Teaching Book,” *Play the Harp Beautifully!* works very well for adult and teenage students under the guidance of a teacher. The book is clearly divided into eight chapters. Each chapter begins with exercises to introduce a new technique, followed by several short pieces to practice its implementation. The first chapter introduces the parts of the harp, string layout, how to sit at the instrument, how to tune it, and how to pluck the strings and close the fingers. In chapter two, the technical material begins with playing the 2nd finger only. The following chapters progress slowly and methodically, introducing intervals, triads, and chords using up to four fingers by the end of the book. An appendix at the conclusion details such basics as reading notes on the staff, counting beats, and musical terms. Enough solo material is provided so that a beginner could use this book exclusively, for an average time period of a couple of months. Most of the pieces are originals by Bruner, with titles such as “Scampering” and “Skating Away.” The pieces at the beginning of the book start with a very limited note range which gradually expands over the course of the book. This aspect facilitates the simultaneous learning of how to read music notation and how to play the harp. The note range presented in this book is limited enough to be played on harps with as few as 26 strings, a common size of beginner harp, and no levers are necessary.


98 pages  
Pedal or lever harp

Level 2 of the *Play the Harp Beautifully!* series for the adult beginner harp student continues in the same manner of organization as *Level 1*. The note range of the pieces
increases, meaning that the student should be playing a folk harp of at least medium size or a pedal harp. The introductory pages review how to sit at the harp, the basics of note reading, hand position, and musical terms. Although the author, Pamela Bruner is a folk harp player, the hand position she demonstrates in the illustrations is the same as that encouraged by many classical harp teachers, and her approach to developing technique is orderly and progressive.

The remaining chapters 2-10 systematically cover fundamental harp technique including intervals, crossing over and under, left hand patterns, glissandos, placing brackets, rolled chords, harmonics, lever changes within the piece, and grace notes. Each chapter begins with technical exercises to introduce the new skill, followed by several solo pieces to solidify it. Most of the repertory consists of arrangements of well known folk tunes such as “All Through the Night,” “The Ash Grove,” and “Greensleeves.” The positive aspect to these selections is that students will develop a repertory that is enjoyable to play while simultaneously developing their skills. An appendix provides practical information on levers, how to tune, how to change a string, practice tips, and music theory. The book is comprehensive enough to be used on its own, if necessary, to guide students to the advanced beginner level. Additional solos, however, may be desirable to reinforce skills or for personal interest.


60 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Old Tunes for New Harpists* is an eclectic collection of arrangements of European and American folk tunes. The book consists of two sections, a twelve page introductory portion, followed by forty-eight pages of harp solos. The introduction provides brief but useful explanations of the workings of the pedal and lever harps, string layout, ranges of different types of harps, and a table of contents that lists all solo pieces in the book. Technical aspects include illustrations of sitting position at the harp, hand position,
fingering, key signatures, accidentals, tuning, and notational signs. The solos are brief, most less than one page in length. They are arrangements of traditional tunes such as “Robin Adair,” “Go Down Moses,” “Aloha Oe,” and “The Harp That Once Through Tara’s Halls.” The book progresses technically from straightforward, easy pieces with simple placement groups, to intermediate level pieces with challenges such as full chords, harmonics, and arpeggios. While the early portion of the book can be played on lever or pedal harp, the later solos require accidental changes during the piece that can only be performed on pedal harp.


60 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*The Complete Method for Small Harps* is a one volume beginner harp instruction book for adult students. Although “for Small Harps” is in the title, the bass register of several arrangements near the end of the book moves below the range of the 26 string harp, the most commonly used small harp today. While the table of contents divides the book into two sections, the reality of the presentation is not quite so distinct. “Part One” briefly covers basic music notation and how to hold a lap harp, and then presents seven technical lessons. The lessons cover placement, glissandos, scales, and chords. Charlene Drake is an alumna of the Salzedo Harp Colony that ran for many decades in Camden, Maine. Her method book reflects this training as she places special emphasis on the Salzedo technique of raising the arms away from the strings during measures of rest. This emphasis on raising makes this book more appropriate for teachers who wish to teach Salzedo technique than for those who employ classical French technique, or even a hybrid style of playing.

“Part Two,” after an introductory section on musical terms, consists mainly of solos of increasing difficulty. The pieces are predominantly arrangements of famous tunes such as “Amazing Grace,” “Ode to Joy,” and “We Three Kings,” with a few original pieces by Drake appearing at the end. There are, however, additional technical exercises scattered
throughout this section such as slides, triads, triad inversions, and intervals. There is a lack of continuity in the book as all of the “Lessons” are in “Part One,” and all of the solos are in “Part Two,” with the aforementioned additional technique. This structure is awkward. It necessitates a great deal of jumping about in order to make the best use of the material. As well, this format would require a great deal of fore-planning by the teacher, and possibly cause some confusion to the student.


156 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Although an Italian book, the Grossi *Method* is a staple of American harp instruction. It covers the essentials of harp technique in a progressive and comprehensive manner that can be used by students of any school. The large note range requires a full size folk harp or pedal harp, however there are very few accidentals, meaning levers are not needed. The text is in Italian, which can be a minor drawback. The illustrations and very clear bracket markings, however, allow the book to be quite useable by anyone with a qualified instructor. Also, a background in Latin or the romance languages makes it possible to translate enough of the Italian to understand the general meaning, even if a literal translation is not possible. The book is organized into sections comprised of a brief introduction to the harp followed by two major parts.

The first major part contains the exercises by Grossi. These exercises cover basic placement for finger independence and strength, chords, arpeggios of all types, scales, trills, harmonics, slides, octaves, muffling, glissandos, and pedal movements during scales. The one section requiring pedals can easily be skipped by lever harpists. The second major part of the book contains two levels of etudes by Ettore Pozzoli, *I. Grado,* “1st Grade”, and *II. Grado,* “2nd Grade.” These etudes revisit much of the technical material covered in the *Method,* but are short - no longer than one page in length. This comprehensive book is meant to serve as a reference for basic technique, as well as most
of the advanced technique encountered in the classical harp repertoire. Consequently it can be used for many years.


148 pages
Pedal harp

*On Playing the Harp* is a comprehensive harp method book that is most commonly used with high school and college aged pre-professional students, although adult amateurs can benefit from its use as well. It is written for pedal harp only and is divided into three sections. “Part I: On Building the Foundation” consists of twenty-five chapters of information on a variety of topics. The subjects include the parts of the harp, a brief history of the harp, technical issues, effective practicing and approach to lessons, performance issues, and maintaining the harpist’s health. Kondonassis is a proponent of the Salzedo school of technique. This is demonstrated through the photographs of hand position in this section, the emphasis on raising the arms away from the harp as an essential playing motion, and the portion explaining many special effects popular in Salzedo’s writing.

“Part II: On Strengthening and Condition” contains basic technical exercises for finger strength, pedaling, scales, arpeggios, harmonics, trills, chords, and raising the arms. “Part III: On Warming Up” discusses healthy stretches for harpists to do each day before they play, followed by three “warm-ups” to be used at the start of practice sessions. The “warm-ups,” which are several pages in length, are designated “beginner,” “intermediate,” and “advanced/professional.” Each can be played in its entirety or in excerpts. This book can be introduced to beginners, but is often used by advanced harpists for the upper level technical exercises.


69 pages
Pedal harp
The ABC of Harp Playing is a unique method book in that its emphasis is not necessarily to build harp technique, but rather to understand how the harp works. This is probably due to the fact that the intended audience includes conductors and composers/arrangers, rather than exclusively harp students. In “Part One,” the student spends the vast majority of the time playing with the second finger only. In contrast to the technical simplicity, the theory presented is complex. It includes key signatures through seven sharps and seven flats, and note reading is heavily drilled. The book is written about the pedal harp only, not lever harps. Pedal charts are explained in the introduction, and included at the start of every note reading drill, study, and piece. Each of the six chapters shares a similar structure, containing first note reading practice, followed by a playing exercise, and finally some solo pieces. The solos consist mainly of well known tunes such as “Home on the Range,” “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” and “The Old Folks at Home.” Not until Chapter Six does the music require using more than one finger per hand at a time. Compared with the lengthy material on note reading, key signatures, and pedal settings previously presented, the brief introduction to thirds, octaves, and chords in this chapter seems to be an afterthought. This is probably based on the presumption that supplemental material is required to further develop and master these skills.

“Part Two, The Use of the Harp in the Orchestra” is a separate section, included in the single volume. While the writing is ostensibly for the harp student, much of the material presented is intended to educate conductors and composers/arrangers. The author’s goal is to reduce the unreasonable demands placed on harpists regarding unplayable passages in orchestral works and new compositions. Ms. Lawrence addresses issues of speed, orchestral density, and tuning as they affect the harp in the orchestra. She goes on to discuss how most harp parts must be edited to make them playable, such as cutting out notes or changing pedaling. She gives many examples of editing from well known works such as Chabrier’s España, Tchaikovsky’s Capriccio Italienne, and several excerpts from operas by Wagner. The point of this is to educate conductors on the effective use of this instrument in their ensembles as well as to educate harpists.

Lawrence, Lucile, and Carlos Salzedo. Method for the Harp: Fundamental Exercises with
71 pages
Pedal harp

This *Method for the Harp* is co-written by two of the best known harpists of the 20th century, Lucile Lawrence, and Carlos Salzedo. The first section of the book contains extensive technical explanations in English and French, illustrations/photographs of hand position, and how to string the harp. Also included are explanations on the proper use of hand gestures in a section entitled “Instrumental Esthetics - Gestures,” as well as explanations of special effects and many introductory exercises.

Section two, although called “Fifteen Preludes for Beginners,” is too advanced for true beginners. It is better for intermediate players who are strong note readers. The preludes are fairly challenging short pieces that focus on specific techniques such as octaves, scales, and trills. Each prelude is in a new key, and employs many pedal changes. The last four preludes are given titles, which are “Fanfare,” “Cortege,” “La Désirade,” and “Chansons dans la nuit.” They can be used as recital pieces and illustrate special effects, some created by Salzedo, and others simply renamed by him. “Chanson dans la Nuit” in particular has become a favorite concert piece. In order to use this book, a student must be a very strong note reader and play a pedal harp.


41 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Pathfinder* is one of several harp method books co-authored by Lawrence and Salzedo. The book begins with a long introductory section on scales, key signatures, and pedal exercises. Each scale with its key signature is presented with a corresponding pedal chart. A one page explanation of harpistic symbols is included. The technical material covered consists of intervals, arpeggios, chords, enharmonics, scales, glissandos, trills,
and playing the rhythm two against three. There are twenty intermediate level exercises each ranging from one half to one full page long. The exercises contain some pedal changes. The authors make a sincere effort, however, to make this book useable by folk harpists as well. There is an eight page supplement for troubadour harps, or other full size folk harps with a complete set of levers, on how to tune, adapt the scales, and adapt some of the exercises. This supplement is a 1962 addition, written by Lucille Lawrence when the Troubadour was new to the harp world. This book is serious in its presentation, so it would be best for high school students or adults.


182 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Harp for Today* by McDonald and Wood Rollo, is an extensive harp method for teenage and adult students of the pedal or lever harp. The first section, “General Information,” briefly covers the parts of both pedal and lever harps, how to tune, and how to replace strings. The second section, “Basic Techniques,” is the longest part of the book. Many photo illustrations are used to show how to sit at the harp and the classical French hand position. The extensive technical exercises include intervals, chords, connections, glissandos, pedaling, harmonics, scales, arpeggios, slides, trills, muffling, and special notations. The third section, “Supplementary Advice” is moderate in length and aimed at the pre-professional student. The advice, based on Susann McDonald’s decades of experience as a teacher and performer, includes practical tips on practicing, programming concerts, orchestral auditions, preparing for school presentation programs, and competitions. While portions of this book are suitable for the beginner, the serious nature of much of the material makes it a practical reference source for classical harp teachers and pre-professional students. For this reason, although the book can be used with a full size folk harp with levers, it is more practical for use with pedal harp.

Pedal harp

_Thumbs Up!_ is an introductory level technique book written expressly for college students and adults. The book begins with an explanation and illustrations of the parts of the harp, including the pedals, and instructions on how to care for a harp. There follows many drawn illustrations of classical hand position, and how to close the fingers when playing. The bulk of the book contains many technical exercises covering intervals, scales, three and four note chords and arpeggios, and how to place and replace four fingers. From the beginning, the exercises require strong note reading ability on the grand staff, making this book a better choice for students with a previous background in music such as the piano. It would be difficult for a non-reader to use. Part way through the book, the student must start making pedal changes during the exercises. This version is written specifically for pedal harp students, but there is a similar alternative version, _Levers Up! Thumbs Up!_, that presents the same material edited for folk harp students. There are occasional short pieces interspersed among the exercises, but very few. It would be necessary to supplement this book simultaneously with other solo material. The “Appendix” introduces a few more advanced techniques such as slides, harmonics, and glissandos that the student will study more fully in the future. Over all, the book provides a concise and efficient introduction to playing the harp.


55 pages

Pedal and Lever harp

_3’s a Chord_ is a harp book by Ray Pool that teaches practical music theory with the aim of training the harpist to improvise harmonically at the harp. A primer for his following books, _Clever Levers_ and _Blazing Pedals_, it is structured so that either a folk harpist with a large, fully levered instrument, or a pedal harpist can use it. Rather than technique, the book focuses on theory exercises that are to be played at the harp as well as intellectually studied. These exercises include scale steps, chords and inversions, cadences, and the circle of fifths. The group of exercises is presented in the eight keys possible on a lever
harp tuned in E-flat major. The goal for the students is to become comfortable playing in each key, before applying their new harmonizing ability to pieces already in their repertoire.


61 pages
Lever harp

*Clever Levers* is a specialty book that expands on the material first presented in *3’s a Chord* for the proficient lever harpist. It is not a standard method book. Rather it has been written to explain the elements of harmony in depth. Scales, including the chromatic and whole tone scales, triads, seventh chords, chord progressions, and chord voicings are presented. Lead sheets are also included. These elements are presented more succinctly in a variety of keys for easy reference and practice by the student. The book is based on Pool’s successful workshops in harmony at the harp which he has presented at various festivals for many years. It is necessary for the student to have a fully levered harp tuned to E-flat major to make proper use of this book. This book is written especially for lever harpists only. The corresponding version of this book for pedal harpists is *Blazing Pedals, A Guide to Harmonic Structure and Lead Sheet Playing on the Harp*.


128 pages
Pedal harp

While technically a French harp method, Renié’s *Complete Method for Harp* has been incredibly influential in the development of American pedagogy. Many harpists from the United States, such as Mildred Dilling and Susann McDonald, traveled to Paris to study with Renié and brought her valuable teachings back to the United States. The book begins with the parts of the harp, advice on tuning, an explanation of the pedals, how to hold the instrument, and illustrations of hand position. While the lessons begin simply
with rudimentary exercises such as four finger placement and intervals, they progress rapidly through arpeggios, slides, scales, *pres de la table*, muffling, chords, and harmonics. In the early part of the book, musical examples such as *Petite Berceuse* by Hasslemans are quoted as playable by beginners. In the later part of the book, however, the examples are excerpted from advanced concert pieces such as *Impromptu Caprice* by Pierné.

Renié includes very detailed explanations of exactly how to perform each exercise. Her writing style is to address the teacher rather than the student, often referring to what “the pupil” will do. This book provides modern teachers access to her insights on how to create the most beautiful tone on the harp. The comprehensive presentation, however, would be rather intimidating to today’s average beginning student. The early exercises and pieces could be done by beginners, but as the book progresses the material becomes increasingly out of reach. Today this book is rarely used as a true beginner’s method, but rather as a reference source on classical French harp technique for advanced students and teachers.


228 pages
Pedal harp

Renié continues her in depth explanation of classical French harp technique with *Volume 2*. She covers different articulations and use of the wrist, placing rules and exceptions, legato, muffling, harmonics, positioning the hands on the strings, and buzzing, as well as advice on practicing and performing for the advanced player. To illustrate technique, she quotes extensively from the classical concert repertoire including the Debussy *Danses*, *Sonatine* by Tournier, and many excerpts from her own compositions such as *Légende*. All of the examples come from virtuosic pieces and mainly represent the French school as epitomized by the Paris Conservatory. An “Appendix” section contains extremely demanding technical exercises, advice to concert performers, and suggestions on how to play difficult orchestral excerpts such as the cadenza from Ravel’s *Tzigane*. In general
the material in this volume is far too advanced for the beginner harp student. It is written
as a guide for a professional harpist or collegiate harp performance major. It provides
excellent reference material for the harp teacher. A teacher who understands the concepts
covered in this book can find ways to introduce them to a beginner in an appropriate
manner, and help them to attain a solid foundation in harp.


80 pages
Pedal or lever harp

For several decades, Sylvia Wood’s *Teach Yourself to Play the Folk Harp* has enjoyed
immense popularity as a beginning harp book for adults. The vast majority of the book
can be played on a 26 string harp, but students have the option of using any size harp up
to a pedal harp. All of the pieces are in C major or A minor, requiring no lever or pedal
changes. The book is organized into three sections, “Information,” “12 Lessons,” and
“Appendix.” The “Information” section includes the parts of harp, how to hold a harp,
note reading, hand position, and a brief history of the harp. The focus of the book is on
the “12 Lessons.” Each lesson begins with a technical exercise, followed by several
appropriate solo pieces that reinforce the new skill. The book does require that the
student use all four fingers immediately, which can be a challenge for some. The early
lessons, however, use only one hand at a time which reduces the impact of needing to
place four fingers. The technique covers most basics such as directional placing, chords,
and scales. Additional instruction in reading notation is included as the pieces become
more challenging to read and play. Most of the solos are arrangements of famous tunes
such as “Greensleeves,” “Ode to Joy,” “Cockles and Mussels,” and “Shenandoah.” The
large number of tunes is a good resource, although the printed fingerings often do not
reflect classical harp technique. For this reason, teachers may find themselves editing the
printed fingerings when assigning the pieces.

The book concludes with the “Appendix” section which contains additional practical
information on tuning, harp care, changing strings, musical symbols, and an alphabetical
index of all the solo pieces contained in the book. There are also lists of magazines, books, records of folk harp music, and the range of common folk harps at the time the book was published. Some of this information, such as the list of books, is still relevant, but much has become out of date. Vinyl records are not sold anymore, making this information irrelevant. Also, folk harp building has become a niche industry with an increasing number of contemporary folk harp builders, producing harps of all shapes and sizes. Although this information has become irrelevant from a practical point of view, it does provide an interesting record of folk harp history over the past several decades.
CHAPTER THREE

SUPPLEMENTAL SOLOS


6 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Marelles Volume 1 is a book of beginner harp solos by French contemporary composer, Bernard Andres. Each of the six brief one page pieces is numbered rather than titled. The note range is modest, rarely extending above or below the grand staff. This is beneficial to students learning to read musical notation, as well as to those with folk harps as small as 26 strings. A couple of the pieces require an F-sharp or B-flat key signature setting. With no lever changes within the piece, however, it would be possible to tune a folk harp with no levers to these keys. There are no published fingerings or placement markings in any of the pieces, so a student of this level would benefit from markings added by a teacher. The writing includes small two note intervals, but no chords or large stretches. Placing and replacing techniques are also presented. With no illustrations and a sophisticated sound to the music, the book is well suited to adult beginners.


6 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Marelles Volume 2 is the companion to Volume 1 by French composer Bernard Andres. Similar to Volume 1, the pieces in Volume 2 are numbered 7 through 12, but are not titled. The pieces also continue to be one page in length with a modest note range that rarely extends beyond the grand staff. While the key signatures range from one flat to two sharps, there are no accidentals within the pieces, so a medium size harp with no levers could be pre-tuned to accommodate the required accidentals. It would be more convenient, however, to use the book with a pedal harp or a folk harp that has at least
some levers. The technical challenges build slowly throughout the book, focusing mainly on two note intervals, placement, and replacing in different directions. Some three note chords and crossovers for short scale passages are also included. This book does not contain any editorial markings, so a student would benefit from a teacher’s markings of fingerings and placement brackets. Like Volume 1, the sophisticated presentation and sound of the pieces makes this book appealing to adult beginners.


10 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Ribambelle* is a volume of advanced beginner harp solos by Bernard Andres. Students may begin their study of Andres with this book, or may progress to *Ribambelle* after studying *Marelles, Volumes 1 and 2*. In the style typical of Andres, the untitled pieces are numbered 1-10. They are each one page in length. The style and mood varies from piece to piece, and each one is marked with tempos such as *Assez allant, Gaiment, or Lent*. The technique includes directional placement, three and four note chords, larger arpeggiated chords requiring two hands, repetitive *ostinato* figures, and scale passages. It may be beneficial for the teacher to add placement brackets and fingerings for the student. With a modest note range, the pieces can be played on a medium size lever harp of 30 or more strings. The key signatures range from two flats to two sharps, but there are no lever or pedal changes within the pieces. This book can be used by students of all ages, but its style and presentation is particularly well suited to adult beginners.


40 pages
Lever harp

*Basically Bach* is a collection of thirteen of Bach’s best known compositions, arranged for lever harp by Rhett Barnwell. The pieces include works such as “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” from Cantata BWV 147, and “Prelude No. 1” from *The Well Tempered Clavier, Book 1*, BWV 846. These pieces are an intense study in lever changing for the
intermediate level student due to the chromatic nature of Bach’s writing. The arrangements require a full size lever harp with a complete set of levers. In addition to lever flips, the music requires skill for playing scale passages, arpeggios, chords, and a strong, independent left hand. These pieces are best studied by students who are mature enough to handle their complicated nature, but that age will vary from student to student.


Pedal or lever harp
21 pages

Kathryn Cater is known for writing student harp books with entertaining animal themes. With titles such as “The Arabian,” “The Horse in my Dreams,” and “Prancing Pony Rag,” *Forever in Love With Horses* is especially appealing to children who love horses. The average piece in this volume is a modest two pages in length. Cater incorporates many techniques central to the advanced beginner to low intermediate level student. These include two note intervals, four note chords, scales, glissandos, and *pres de la table*. The book contains no fingerings or placing brackets, so a teacher may wish to add those for the student. Several pieces contain accidentals, so a pedal harp or a full size folk harp with levers is required. The pedal and lever changes are clearly marked.


24 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Another original book for young students by Katherine Cater, *Harping Cats and Dogs* contains some of the easiest material of her animal themed collections. There are eight distinct solos. Several are presented in two different keys to accommodate folk harps tuned in the key of C-natural or E-flat. Pedal harpists may use the arrangement of their choice. While the book can be used by pedal harpists, a full size lever harp is ideal. Pedal harpists may play the same arrangements, but are required to make several pedal changes during the pieces to accommodate the accidentals. The lever harpist can simply pre-set the required levers for such modal solos as “Baron’s Blues,” and “Walkin Wally.”
This element makes these pieces more complicated for the pedal harpist than the lever harpist. Technically the writing contains small intervals, directional placing, and many glissandos such as in “Grumpy Dreams of Flying.”


23 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Bugs are the theme of *Singing Wings*, one of the four animal themed harp books for children by Kathryn Cater. Technical requirements include directional placement, intervals ranging from a third to a sixth, three note chords in both hands, descending arpeggios in alternating hands, *pres de la table*, and harmonics. A number of the pieces are published in two versions, one for lever harps tuned in C, the other for lever harps tuned in E-flat. A pedal harpist may chose which key they prefer. Some pieces, like “Bumble’s Boogie” require swift changes of levers or pedals; the difficulty level remains the same. “Bumble’s Boogie,” however is the only one that requires any lever or pedal changes during the piece. Several of the pieces, “Moon Spinner,” “Golden Swallowtail,” “Busy Bees,” and “Little Moth” are in the key of C, while the few remaining pieces can have levers or pedals set, or pre-tuned strings, if necessary. With very limited edits of a few very low bass notes, the music is playable on a medium size folk harp.


24 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Soaring Strings* is one of several books of harp solos with animal themes by harpist composer, Katherine Cater. For this volume she employs a bird theme. The pieces average two pages in length with titles such as “Mourning Dove,” “Flying South,” “Swans at Sunset,” and “Crows in the Corn.” The writing emphasizes technique such as arpeggios, two note intervals, and directional placing, with some additional work on crossing over and under, glissandos, and *pres de la table*. There are a few accidentals in some of the pieces, with the lever or pedal changes clearly marked. Again, the solos are
more difficult for the pedal harpist, who must change pedals during the piece to accommodate the accidentals. The lever harpist with a medium size folk harp can pre-set the levers for the entire piece.


8 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Nightfall Suite*, composed by long time harp teacher and composer, Stephanie Curcio, is an advanced beginner harp solo in three movements. Students benefit from the fact that each movement focuses on a different aspect of harp technique. The opening movement, “Lullaby,” requires directional placing, and the technique of finger control to apply enough pressure on the strings for a singing tone that emphasizes the melody. Movement two, “Star Shine,” makes an excellent introduction to the essential harp technique of playing descending arpeggios with alternating hands while creating a melody with the top thumb. The last movement, “Reverie,” focuses on left hand harmonics and right hand rolled chords. The music is written in three flats, but there are no accidentals within any of the movements. It can be played on a full size lever harp tuned in the key of E-flat major, or on pedal harp. The gentle but sophisticated style makes this suite especially appealing to adult students.


2 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Solace* is a separately published extended version of a harp solo that originally appears in the method book, *Student Harpist Level 2* by Stephanie Curcio. A specially composed B section increases the length of the piece to two pages. The first page, taken directly from the *Student Harpist*, opens with a pretty, melancholy tune, followed by scale passages for the right hand. The left hand accompaniment is a common, repetitive root – fifth – root pattern with the fingering of 4-2-1. By using the optional ending included at the bottom of the page, this piece is accessible to advanced beginners. Low intermediate students
can continue to the second page, which is significantly harder. The student is required to play in the high register of the harp in a faster eighth note rhythm, and perform many cross under fingerings with the right hand. The opening theme returns at the end of the second page to create an overall ABA form. *Solace* is in the key of E minor which requires F-sharps, however, there are no lever or pedal changes during the piece. It can be played on a pedal harp or a full size lever harp. The note range does not go extremely low, but actually sits in a very high register of the harp during the B section. This piece affords lever harpists the opportunity to learn key classical harp techniques, and is also playable on the pedal harp.


22 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Stage One Solos* is a collection that blends original compositions and arranged pieces for beginning harp students of all ages. In the early portion of the book, many of the pieces are written on only one staff, alternating between the treble clef and the bass clef. This is useful to the student who is simultaneously learning to read music notation and harp technique. The remaining pieces are written on the grand staff. The direction of the note stems designates which hand to use, with stems “up” for the right hand and stems “down” for the left hand. In addition to the note stems, there are many clearly marked placing brackets and fingerings to guide the student. To insure that both hands are equally developed, Curcio writes left hand passages which are as technically challenging as those for the right hand. The average length of the pieces ranges from half a page to one page. Many are originals by Curcio such as “Lament for Summer,” and “Harriet’s Waltz.” Others are modifications of famous tunes by classical composers such as “A la Bach,” “Almost Amadeus,” and “Sort of Ludwig.” Technically the pieces emphasize directional placing and two note intervals. The note range is restricted enough to be played on a small lever harp. A number of pieces require a setting of B-flat or F-sharp, however, no accidentals occur during the pieces. So it is possible to pre-tune the required accidentals on a harp which lacks levers.

Pedal or lever harp
10 pages

*Stage Two Solos* is a collection of eight classical pieces arranged for harp by Stephanie Curcio. Although it follows *Stage One Solos* in format, it differs in that there are no original compositions in this book. Some examples of pieces include “A Winter Tale” by Bartok, and “Minuet #1 & Variation” by Scarlatti. The pieces emphasize advanced beginner technique such as directional placing and two note intervals. There are very few fingerings or brackets provided. Consequently, the teacher is required to add markings for the guidance of the student. With one exception, the pieces are one page in length. Some of the pieces contain a B-flat or F-sharp in the key signature, but no lever or pedal changes are required while playing. As the note range is modest, all of the pieces can be played on a medium size folk harp, and many are possible on a small folk harp with little or no modification.


39 pages
Pedal harp

*Thirty Little Classics* is an intermediate level collection of harp solos compiled and transcribed by the famous 20th century American concert harpist, Mildred Dilling. The book consists entirely of transcriptions of classical pieces such as “Dance of the Blessed Spirits” by Gluck, “Such Chiming, Melodious” by Mozart, “Minuet in G” by Bach, and “Bridal Chorus” from *Lohengrin* by Wagner. The pieces are a modest one to two pages in length. Pedal changes are clearly marked, in addition to a moderate amount of fingerings and placing brackets. The pieces, which include intervals, chords, scales, arpeggios, and pedal changes, help the student develop a strong technical base. Due to the abundance of accidentals, this collection is more appropriate for a pedal harp than a folk harp.

15 pages  
Pedal or lever harp

*A Bouquet for Young Harpists* is a book of short original pieces for beginner students. The writing is geared towards children with enjoyable titles such as “Carrots for April the Bunny,” “Somersaults,” “Japanese Lanterns,” and “Bee Keeping.” The length of most pieces is brief, from one half to one page long. The compositional style is straightforward, but ability to read the grand staff is required. The writing emphasizes techniques including intervals, directional placing, and three finger arpeggios. Fingerings and placing brackets are provided for every piece. There is one issue with the editing of accidentals within a few of the pieces. There is a list of sharpened and flattened notes of the scale that must be set for the piece, effectively creating a mode. The accidentals are neither notated properly in the key signature or within the piece itself however, which causes confusion about whether or not the piece is in a major or minor key. This hinders students from developing the ability to recognize key signatures, or identify accidentals within the music. Many, but not all of the pieces may be played on a 26 string harp with levers. Editing a few bass notes in select pieces would make most of the material accessible on the small harp.


16 pages  
Pedal or lever harp

With titles like “Lullaby for Violet,” and “Midnight Stars,” this collection of seventeen pieces for beginners by Grandjany and Weidensaul is geared to young children. The book moves progressively to develop both technique and note reading. The first several pieces can be played with the second finger only. The student gradually adds fingers throughout the book until playing with all four on the final two pieces. Notationally, nearly half of the pieces are written in treble clef only, with the remainder on the grand staff. The pieces are particularly well suited for a child’s small hands, as none of the
intervals are larger than a sixth. The technical demands remain basic, emphasizing group placement and small intervals. The last two pieces are significantly more complicated than the rest. “Melissa” requires directional placement, while “El Numero Uno” introduces *pres de la table*, rhythmic tapping on the soundboard, and muffling. Most pieces are one half to one page in length, the exception being “Melissa” which covers two pages. There are no levers or pedals to be moved within any of the pieces, but there are some key signatures that require either setting the levers or pedals, or tuning the strings of a folk harp to accommodate them. The note range is limited. With limited editing to just one piece, the entire book can be played on a small folk harp.


12 pages
Pedal harp

The *Suite* is an original multi-movement harp solo by Marcel Grandjany. In each movement, Grandjany intentionally imitates the compositional style of famous composers such as Handel, Purcell, and Lully. Each of the six movements, such as “Gigue,” “Gavotte,” and “Bourree” is in a different tempo, mood, and style. The *Suite* introduces students to the mental concentration and physical stamina required to play a multi-movement piece. All movements except for the “Siciliana” require pedal changes. The technical demands including directional placement, scales, and varying interval sizes, will challenge students at an advanced beginner to low intermediate level.


7 pages
Pedal or lever harp

For *Short Pieces from the Masters*, Grandjany has transcribed three pieces by classical composers, “Lullaby” by Schubert, “Dance from ‘Alceste’” by Gluck, and “Rondo” by Passler, for lever or pedal harp solo. Each piece is two pages in length and the technical challenges are at a beginner to advanced beginner level. When playing these arrangements the students learn chords, intervals, and simple arpeggios. All three pieces
can be played on a pedal harp or a medium size folk harp. There are no pedal or lever changes within the pieces, however, “Lullaby” requires that a lever harp be tuned in the key of E-flat.


8 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Trois Petites Pièces* is a set of three advanced beginner harp solos composed by Grandjany. Entitled “Rêverie,” “Nocturne,” and “Barcarolle,” the pieces are very delicate in style, and can by enjoyed by children or adult students. Technically the pieces, which range in length from two to three pages, concentrate on directional placement, intervals, and chords. While “Barcarolle” is written in the key of C-flat major to allow for the richest sound quality on the open strings of pedal harps, there is no reason that the piece cannot be played in C major on lever harps. This should create no issues whatsoever as there are no accidentals requiring lever or pedal changes within the piece, or in the other two pieces for that matter. The note range, particularly in the bass, is small enough such that all three pieces may be played on a harp as small as 26 strings.


12 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*The Magic Road* contains a combination of original pieces by Nancy Gustavson, and several of her transcriptions for lever or pedal harp. The level of difficulty varies widely among the pieces of the book. This makes it a challenge for teachers to know when to introduce the book to students. Three one page long pieces are advanced beginner level, in contrast to the other three longer pieces which are more of an intermediate level. Of the three advanced beginner pieces, “Mexican Wedding Song” emphasizes simultaneous intervals in both hands, while “A Magyar Lament” and “Sakura” both emphasize directional placement and independent use of the two hands. Of the three intermediate
pieces, the “Minuet” is the most classical in style and contains many arpeggios, while the other two pieces are exotic sounding. “A Moorish Garden” contains glissando clusters and left hand ostinato, and “The Jade Temple” is a study in sound effects such as pres de la table, and xylophone sounds. Teachers who use this book may skirt the problem of the split level of difficulty by teaching the easier pieces early in a student’s studies, then temporarily retiring the book until the student has progressed to the intermediate level. A year or more may pass before the student advances enough to return to the book. There are no lever or pedal changes within any of the pieces, but the note range requires a full size folk harp or pedal harp.


12 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Pacific Sketches* is a collection of low intermediate harp solos inspired by the sound of the ocean. The pieces range in length from one to three pages. The book is edited for lever harp with the necessary lever changes having been marked. There is no reason, however, that a pedal harp student could not play the pieces as well after adding the pedal markings. “Path to the Sea” develops chord playing skills. “Rippling Water” teaches the indispensable harp skill of playing a sustained melody on top of running arpeggios. “Frolic” encourages dexterity in the crossing of the hands. The music consists entirely of original compositions by Nancy Gustavson.


12 pages
Pedal or lever harp

The book *Songs Without Words* contains four original solos for intermediate level pedal or lever harp students by Nancy Gustavson. Each solo is two to three pages in length, and the titles reflect gentle themes such as “Cradle Song,” “Riding on the Wind,” and “Love Song.” A full size lever harp is required, but only one piece, “The Blue Rock,”
requires lever or pedal changes. The technical demands of the writing include advanced
skills in directional placing and left hand patterns.

1971.

7 pages
Pedal harp

In *Trois Petites Pièces Faciles*, Hasselmans has written a set of three pieces for advanced
beginner pedal harp. The first piece, “Reverie,” emphasizes two handed rolled chords and
arpeggios. The second piece, “Rouet,” teaches the rapidly descending two handed
arpeggios so characteristic of harp music. The third piece, “Ronde de nuit,” is another
study in two handed rolled chords. Each solo requires smooth pedal changes to be made
within the piece and is not adaptable to the lever harp. The delicate nature of the music
introduces students to the style of French harp music from the Romantic era.


8 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Songs for Sonja* was written to introduce very young children to the harp. Dr. Inglefield
states that the eight to sixteen measure pieces may be taught by rote or read by the
student as they learn notation. The book advances from simple pieces that use only the
second finger, such as “Up and Down” and “Fun Song,” to works that feature the
placement of two fingers, hands alone and parallel. Bringing the collection to a close are
such pieces as “Three Finger Dance,” “Somersault Song,” which use three fingers and
introduces the interval of a third. All of the pieces are written in the key of C, although
B-sharp and E-sharp must sometimes be set to create glissandos. The limited note range
is useful. It allows the students time to learn note reading, and also to play small folk
harps appropriate for the size of a young child. It would be more convenient to have
levers on the small harp. Cartoon illustrations that turn notes and clef signs into characters with expressive faces make the book more enjoyable for the children.


8 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Part 2 continues Dr. Inglefield’s progressive series of books for very young harpists. All of the pieces in this collection require a minimum of three fingers per hand and introduce the use of four fingers. The technique advances from using two hands in parallel motion in “Up and Down the Mountain,” to two independent hands in contrary motion such as “Lullabye,” and “Skipping Along.” The brief length of the pieces, most no more than eight measures, and the illustrations help to make this a child friendly book. The limited note range of Part 1 continues so that young children can continue to play on small folk harps.


7 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Solos for Sonja by Dr. Inglefield continues the series of beginner books for young children begun by Songs for Sonja. Although the Solos book continues technically where the Songs leave off, the Solos books also may be used independently. While still intended for young children, the technical complexity increases as does the length of the pieces up to two pages. A larger note range and the need to set levers to create modes advances students’ note reading ability. For example, “Elephant Parade” requires B-flat and F-sharp levers to be set. To use this book, it is necessary to have a medium size harp folk harp with levers, or a pedal harp. Technical challenges in the music include more complex placement patterns in “Spinning Top,” harmonics in “Falling Leaves,” and the coordination of playing glissandos with one hand while plucking strings with the other hand in “Rain.” There are enjoyable illustrations for children throughout the book.

12 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Solos for Sonja Book 2* is the fourth and final book in the set written for young harp students by Dr. Inglefield. Although still intended for children, the author has dispensed with illustrations and significantly increased the musical and technical sophistication of the content. For example, “Berceuse” requires hand over hand arpeggios, “Psalm” is full of rolled chords and tone clusters, and “Lament” is composed with two handed and single handed scale passages. “Improvisation” at four pages is the longest piece, with the others ranging from one to two pages. The music can be played on either a pedal harp or a fully levered full size folk harp.


7 pages
Pedal or lever harp

*Volume I* is the first book of harp solos in a series of five by McDonald and Wood. Although this is the first book, the music is too advanced to be played by true beginners. Teachers should note that the levels of *Harp Solos* book do not correspond to the levels of the *Harp Olympics* books. For example, *Volume I* of the *Harp Solos* would correspond in difficulty to *Harp Olympics Book 2* rather than *Book 1*. The pieces are short, mainly one page to slightly over one page in length. They have descriptive titles such as “Moonlight,” “Little Prelude,” and “Stars.” The techniques required include intervals, glissandos, and a heavy emphasis on arpeggios which are prevalent in almost every piece. The music of this volume can be played on a medium size folk harp with levers or pedal harp. Some of the pieces require levers or pedals to be set before playing, but there are no changes during the pieces. These solos are enjoyable for students of all ages to play.

Volume II is a set of four advanced beginner to intermediate solos by McDonald and Wood. The length of the pieces in Volume II increases substantially over Volume I, with some of the solos up to four pages long. This longer length demands increased concentration and stamina from the student. The pieces titled “Interlude,” “Serenade,” “Ballade,” and “Processional,” require a technique that is significantly more advanced. The student works on directional placement, large rolled chords for one and two hands, glissandos that change direction, a variety of ascending and descending arpeggios, and the ability to change pedals within the piece, sometimes with both feet simultaneously. Due to these pedal changes, this book is not adaptable to the lever harp. Overall this book provides significant challenges for serious students.


Volume III continues the series of harp solo collections by McDonald and Wood. This book includes original compositions titled “Russian Lullaby,” “Alpine Waltz,” “Koto in the Temple,” and “Bagpipe Jig.” In addition to standard techniques for the low intermediate student such as intervals, left hand accompaniment patterns, and directional placing, these pieces employ special sound effects to stylistically enhance the music. For example, “Koto in the Temple” uses a tremolo effect, striking the soundboard, a gong effect, and short glissandos on the bass wires to create an exotic sound. “Bagpipe Jig” employs a left hand drone and pres de la table playing for a Celtic sound. These expressive techniques encourage the student to engage in more creative and imaginative playing. Due to the pedal changes required, these compositions are not appropriate for lever harp.

Volume IV of the *Graded Recital Pieces* series by McDonald and Wood provides solo pedal harp material in a sophisticated style for the intermediate level student. “Sonatina in Classic Style” is a complete, small scale sonata with three movements, *Allegro cantabile*, *Minuetto*, and *Rondo spiritoso*. The “Sonatina” contains traditional techniques of the classical period such as *alberti bass* and scale passages. The other two pieces, “Two Guitars,” and “Toccata (Sabre Danse),” are more exotic in tone. “Two Guitars” is impressionistic with lush arpeggios, dramatic pauses, left hand melodies, and *pres de la table* playing to imitate the sound of the guitars. “Toccata (Sabre Danse)” goes against the stereotypical lyrical harp style, instead emphasizing strong rhythms in sixteenth notes and a heavily accented melody. These pieces make excellent performance material for intermediate pedal harp students.


9 pages

Pedal harp

*Volume V* completes the series of *Graded Recital Pieces*, harp solo collections by McDonald and Wood. “Crystalis” is a stylistic three page study in glissando effects. “Nocturne,” a two page piece, returns to a more traditional style with a lyrical melody and arpeggios. “Petite Suite” is a miniature suite in five movements, “I. On Vacation,” “II. Worship,” “III. Back to School,” “IV. Arithmetic,” and “V. Playing in the Park.” Over the three pages of music, the movements encompass a variety of tempos and styles including dignified large chords in a *lento* tempo, and alternating two handed descending arpeggios in an a lively *allegro* tempo. When a student completes this series, he or she will be well prepared for intermediate classical pedal harp concert repertoire.


6 pages

Pedal or lever harp
According to the composer, Samuel Pratt, *The Little Fountain* allows lever harp players to participate in the classical tradition of the harp imitating the sound of running water. Technically, the piece emphasizes the critical harp technique of playing rapidly descending four finger arpeggio patterns alternating between the left and right hands. A lyrical middle section requires good tone production, before returning to an abbreviated section of the signature arpeggios. The piece concludes with glissando chords. The student can play these chords by setting the E-sharp lever to create the enharmonic equivalent of the F strings, while simultaneously dampening either the B-flat or the A strings with the left hand while playing the glissandos with the right hand. *The Little Fountain* is a successful recital performance piece as well as a useful technical study. Although written for a medium size folk harp, it can also be played on a pedal harp.


7 pages
Pedal harp

*Feuillets D’Album* is a set of three pedal harp solos composed by Renié in the French style of the early 20th century. Each of the pieces is two pages long and emphasizes intermediate level techniques. “Esquisse” consists largely of chords and arpeggios. “Danse D’Autrefois” requires the student to play chords, scales, and intervals. “Angelus,” which uses harp effects such as glissandos, harmonics, and special pedal settings to create enharmonics, mimics the sound of church bells and is the most famous piece in the set. Each piece requires multiple pedal changes which must be edited by the teacher or the performer. These popular recital pieces can be performed independently as well as in a set.


2 pages
Pedal or lever harp
Grand'Mere Raconte Une Histoire is a two page harp solo for advanced beginner students composed by French harpist, Henriette Renié. The piece, while intended for the pedal harp, can be played on a medium size folk harp tuned in E-flat. No pedal or lever changes are required during the piece. Technically the writing covers a variety of material, including intervals, directional placing, chords, scales, and harmonics. No one technique is particularly stressed. The sharp dynamic contrasts encourage the student to play with musicality, and to develop the strength and control to pluck the strings at different volumes at will.


35 pages
Pedal or lever harp

Plums is a collection of melodic harp solos written in a lyrical style. The pieces range in length from three to five pages, but the music is set in large print. This large print can aid older adults who sometimes have vision problems while alternating between looking at the strings and the music stand. The technical level is for beginner to advanced beginner students. The demands include group placement, replacement while changing direction, two note intervals, and slides. There are many fingerings and brackets printed in the music, however more will likely need to be added. The pieces have delicate names to match their mood, such as “Ballerina,” “The Music Box,” and “Scottish Twilight.” The music can be played on any size instrument from a medium size lever harp up to a pedal harp. Most of the pieces are in C, or require F-sharp or B-flat to be pre-set or tuned. There are no lever or pedal changes during these pieces. One piece, “Holding Court,” is written in three flats but consistently requires a B-natural on one string. To create this accidental, lever harpists can set the raised lever on that note, but pedal harpists would have to practice moving the B pedal, making the piece slightly more difficult for them. The pieces can be enjoyed by students of all ages from child through adult.
CHAPTER FOUR

INSTRUCTIONAL DVDS


Running Time 1 hour, 46 minutes

*Play the Harp Beautifully Level 1* is the companion DVD to Pamela Bruner’s introductory harp method book of the same name. As the video exactly follows the book chapter by chapter, it is necessary for the student to own the book in order to make use of the DVD. Bruner references the book constantly in her presentation, and corresponding page numbers are flashed at the top of the screen so that the student can follow along at home.

This DVD is not intended to be used in one sitting. In fact, it may take several viewings of each chapter, just as it would take several private lessons, to absorb the material. The information covered includes string layout and tuning, hand position and how to pluck a string, gradual addition of each finger, placing, overlapping brackets, intervals, triads, contrary motion, arpeggiated chords, and crossing the hands. Bruner demonstrates every exercise and plays each solo piece two times. The first time she plays a solo slowly while counting the beats aloud. The second time, she plays it at a real performance tempo.

Also, she repeatedly emphasizes a key technical issue, that no hand position should ever cause the harpist pain. There is an additional segment at the end of the video to learn rhythm via clapping and counting. Although she uses a folk harp throughout the video, the technical material is provided clearly and thoroughly enough to provide a foundation for classical harp study as well. The seriousness of the presentation makes this DVD appropriate for dedicated students middle school age and up.

Bruner, Pamela. *Play the Harp Beautifully Level 2*. DVD. Produced by Pamela Bruner and

Running time 1 hour, 54 minutes

The DVD *Play the Harp Beautifully Level 2* follows the study begun in *Level 1* with more advanced repertoire and technical information. Like the first DVD, *Level 2* is not intended to be viewed in one sitting, but rather to be used as a supplement to the chapters of the method book. Each chapter contains a significant amount of information. Pamela Bruner advises reading the printed material first, then watching the corresponding section of video.

*Level 2* covers a great deal of advanced beginner harp technique, including intervals, cross overs and unders, left hand patterns, glissandos, fingering and brackets, rolled chords, harmonics, lever flips, and grace notes. Most of the solos are arrangements of folk tunes such as “Danny Boy,” and “Scarborough Fair,” but some are original compositions such as “Grace” and “Gliss Bliss.” Bruner demonstrates the difficult spots in each piece that are isolated in the book under the heading, “Playing Guidelines.” She also plays each complete piece, first at a slow practice tempo, and then at a performance tempo. This DVD is recorded using a folk harp, but could be used by classical harp students as well, thanks to the thoroughness of the technical coverage. It is not for young children, but could be used by any serious student middle school age or through adult.


Running time 1 hour, 32 minutes

*Play the Harp Today* is a DVD for beginning folk harp players by Laurie Riley. The video starts with an explanation of the basics of harp playing including tuning the strings, how to sit at the harp, naming and numbering the strings, and hand position. Hand position is achieved in a healthy, natural manner by relaxing the hands first, then holding the thumbs up, and finally turning the hands sideways, taking care not to pop the wrists outward. Students are repeatedly reminded to play in a relaxed manner by pulling the
fingers all the way down into the palm. There is a great deal of attention paid to chords, theoretically how to name them by letter and number, and technically how to play them on the harp.

A great deal of the DVD’s content focuses on chords. Riley teaches that harmony consists of groups of notes that project sound qualities. Music theory includes major and minor chords, especially the crucial chords by number I, IV, and V. Tunes such as “Greensleeves” and “Brian Boru’s March” are taught by rote, first learning the melody slowly in short phrases, then adding left hand chords on the strong beats. Each portion of the tune is demonstrated several times, allowing the students enough repetitions to absorb the material as though they were in a live class. The style of teaching folk tunes by rote with right hand melodies and left hand chordal accompaniment is best for folk harp students specifically, rather than classical harp.


Running time 53 minutes

*Beginning the Folk Harp* is a DVD that can be used on its own. There are no accompanying books. Kim Robertson presents a brief introduction to harp basics such as string tuning, closing the fingers, and numbering fingers 1-4. Then she plays and teaches a set of exercises. The first is a four finger warm up exercise. After that, she launches into a series of exercises that travel up and down the harp, first combining fingers 1 and 2 as a pair, and gradually adding more fingers until all four are working. She swiftly teaches additional technical information, intervals, chords, replacement of the fingers, and scales.

The solo pieces on the DVD are folk tunes such as “Brian Boru,” “Scarborough Fair,” and “Simple Gifts.” She teaches each tune rapidly, and then focuses on adding left hand accompaniments in a variety of patterns. She does not play with standard classical harp.
technique, as she picks out many of the melody notes with her thumb. While beginning technique is presented to the folk harpist, it is covered so swiftly that many students will not be able to maintain the pace. A true beginner may require assistance from a teacher to grasp the material and avoid frustration. Rather than a generalized instructional beginning for harp DVD, this seems to be more of an introductory video on how to improvise at the harp. For this purpose it can be used by harpists of any level who need practice and ideas for improvisation.


Christina Tourin’s *Rainbow of Sound Learn to Play the Harp Volume 1* DVD accompanies her method book by the same name. The fanciful story, “Dascha’s Adventures,” is read aloud by a male narrator. The story is about a traveling dove who flies around the world. Each time she lands in a new place, she makes an animal friend like the bear or the seal who helps her out of a potential crisis, usually by sharing something that they like to eat with her. A soundtrack of harp sound effects and tunes from the book enhance Dascha’s interactions with her new friends.

The story is followed by the instructional parts of the video. Tourin covers harp basics such as tuning, levers, string technique, how to sit properly, and hand position. She teaches how to create the sound effects for the story, such as glissandos for the dove taking flight, and playing high notes for the icy, frozen land of crystals. The sound effects are simple but effective, within the capabilities of a beginning harpist, and encourage creativity. The technique is also taught in relation to the story, for example hand position is created by making the shape of a dove with the thumbs held high for the head, and the fingers extended as wings. A section on note reading addresses the notes of the C major scale on the treble clef. Each note has at least one tune connected with it, which can be found on the corresponding page in the book. The pages are the colors of
the rainbow, hence the name, *Rainbow of Sound*. For example, the note F is on the green page, and has a tune titled “Far in the Forest.”

The section called “The Songs” completes the DVD with two renditions of each song. The first time through each piece, the student can watch Christina’s right hand as she plays, while the second time the student will see the printed music and hear the lyrics sung. It may be beneficial to watch the DVD out of order since Dascha’s story is presented first, and the technical and theoretical information afterwards. This DVD is intended mainly for young children, but could be used by anyone who enjoys fantasy stories and imagination.


Running time 1 hour, 53 minutes

*Rainbow of Sound Learn to Play the Harp Volume 2* is a continuation of *Volume 1*, but with the learning focus shifted to the bass clef. In fact, the DVDs are so linked that *Volume 2* repeats the story, “Dascha’s Adventures,” from *Volume 1* to illustrate the musical concepts. While this video contains significantly more technical instruction than the first, including scales, intervals, and triads, some techniques are noticeably absent. There are no exercises on rolling chords or replacement of the fingers, both of which are fundamental harp skills needed to play the pieces in this volume.

Students do learn the triads and their inversions, using the most important chords, C, F and G chords, in the key of C major, as examples. The note reading development uses the notes of the C major scale in the bass clef, following the book page by page in the same manner as *Volume 1*. New to this video, however, is the accurate teaching of note rhythms by clapping and counting. This portion is brief, however, and students are told to refer to their books for more information. “The Songs” section repeats the tunes from *Volume 1*, but the arrangements are significantly more difficult. The right hand melodies
contain intervals of various sizes, and the left hand plays an accompaniment. Just as in
the first video, Tourin demonstrates them all. Again, this video is intended for small
children, but could be used by anyone with an appreciation for fantasy stories.
APPENDIX A

ONLINE RESOURCES

1. General Resources


www.esm.rochester.edu/community/handbooks/student/student-curriculum/harp/ (accessed

The Royal Conservatory. “Syllabi of the Royal Conservatory.” https://examinations.rcmusic.ca/
publications-0 (accessed July 28, 2014).

2014).


Trinity College. “Strings: Bowed Strings and Harp.” http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk/site/?

University of Illinois. “Roslyn Rensch: An Inventory of the Roslyn Rensch Papers at the
University of Illinois Archives.” http://archives.library.illinois.edu/ead/ua/


2. Significant Harp Music Catalogues


*Note- Lyra is now distributing through Vanderbilt Music.


APPENDIX B

USEFUL TERMINOLOGY

Types of Harps

Folk harp- also known as lever harp, celtic harp, non-pedal harp

Folk harps are a type of non-pedal harp. They are relatively small compared to pedal harps. They are traditionally made of wood, however, some of today’s builders have branched into using carbon fiber which creates amazingly light but strong harps. Their basic shape is a triangle, modified to suit structural needs and aesthetic design. Folk harps are strung with one row of strings that can be nylon, gut, wire, or a combination of materials. Harps that are exclusively wire strung harps are a specialty type of instrument that requires a different technique to play.

The smallest harps can have as few as eight strings, but due to their limitations these are not often used for teaching. For practical teaching purposes, a small harp should have at least 26 strings. On these harps, the bottom note is equivalent to C one octave below middle C on the piano. These harps can be held in the lap, worn on a strap, or set on a stand to play. A few models come with legs that can be screwed on and off. These harps possess the minimum number of bass notes required for the student to practice optimal use of the left hand. Small harps as a group can range from 26 to 29 strings. The smallest of harps can be held in the player’s lap while being played, and are known as lap harps. An increase in size typically comes with an extension into the bass range. Medium size harps of 30-33 strings typically extend down to the G or F, one and one half octaves below the piano’s middle C. These are flexible instruments that can handle most repertoire while remaining reasonably portable. Full size folk harps range 34-38 strings. They can be up to 5 feet tall and weigh over 40 pounds, needing a harp cart for transport. All folk harp repertoire can be played on these instruments, but they tend to be the most expensive, the most difficult to transport, and may be too large for the student to handle. Overall, folk harp weights vary widely depending on the size and materials used in building, from 4 pounds to over 40 pounds.
The other main issue when dealing with folk harps is that of levers. When engaged, levers shorten the string to raise the pitch by half a step, creating a sharpened note. Flats cannot be created on folk harps without retuning the string. Most models of folk harps have at least some levers, but the number may vary widely, and can typically be customized for a full or partial set. It is popular to tune a fully levered harp in the key of E-flat which provides the most flexibility in accommodating key signatures up to three flats or four sharps. It is not common for folk harp music to be written in keys beyond those requirements. Levers can be set before playing a piece, but to create accidentals during the music they must be flipped up with the left hand while playing. Skilled players can do this very quickly, but it takes much practice and skill. For that reason, the amount of chromatics in lever harp music is usually limited.

Folk harps are more accessible than pedal harps in terms of size and affordability. For these reasons, most beginners start with this type of harp. They are beautiful instruments in their own right however, and many players, amateur and professional, play folk harps exclusively.

**Pedal harp**- also known as concert harp, orchestral harp

Pedal harps, also known as concert harps, are used to play classical solo, chamber, and orchestral repertoire. Modern instruments are known as double action pedal harps and are tuned in the key of C-flat. Double action refers to the complex mechanism inside the harp that allows the harpist to change the pitch of each string twice and play chromatic music. The word pedal refers to the seven pedals located near the bottom of the harp which harpists move with their feet. The pedals are divided between the two sides of the base, three on the left, and four on the right. The pedals are connected to either metal rods or cables inside the harp, which run up through the column and down the neck where they connect to the discs. Each pedal alters one corresponding note of the scale. Moving a pedal affects all the members of that pitch class, for example, moving the C pedal to C-sharp changes the C strings in every octave of the harp. This is fundamentally different from the lever harp, where a lever affects only the individual string. There are two sets of discs along the neck of the harp. When rotated, a set of prongs on each disc shortens the string half a step. The discs are engaged by moving the pedals, which each have three notches. The top notch is for flat, which means that no discs are engaged. The middle
notch engages the first disc which creates a natural pitch. The bottom notch engages the second
disc which raises the pitch to the highest extent possible, for a sharp note. Double flats and
sharps are produced through the use of enharmonics rather than playing the printed note.
Pedaling must be done smoothly, quickly, and always at the right moment. The study of pedaling
is a significant portion of a harpist’s training.

Pedal harps are the largest type of harp available. Although based on the triangle shape like
the folk harp, the shape of the pedal harp has been exaggerated, especially in the height of the
column and the harmonic curve of the neck. These adaptations of the triangle shape have
developed over the years to increase volume, power, tone, and durability of the harps. Pedal
harps come in a range of sizes from petite or 3/4, to semi grand and concert grand, but the
smallest pedal harp is larger than the largest folk harp. The note range of a pedal harp is from 40
to 47 strings. The heart of its range is similar to a piano, however it lacks the piano’s extremely
high and low notes. Typical height is from 5.5 feet tall to over 6 feet tall, and it is a heavy
instrument, weighing from 56 pounds to over 90 pounds. The lighter end of that scale is due to
some builders who have experimented with carbon fiber materials rather than the traditional
entirely wooden instrument. Weight is a significant issue, as struggling to play an oversize
instrument can cause injuries to the back, shoulders, arms, and hands, as well as transportation
problems.

Pedal harps are challenging but gratifying instruments to play. Their size and high cost make
study a serious commitment, even for the amateur student. For these reasons, while pedal harps
are played by all ages and levels of skill, they are more common for young students who are
considering a life in music, and advanced students who have already decided on that path.

Other Types of Harps

Other types of harps include double strung, triple strung, cross strung, wire strung, and
Paraguayan. These kinds of harps are played by specialists in the United States, but they are not
commonly used. They are more popular in other countries in Europe and South America, where
they have a long tradition of use. Their playing techniques are quite different from those
discussed in this project.
Glossary of Fundamental Harp Techniques Discussed in this Study

**Arpeggios** - refers to playing chords that are written out as individual notes. There are various arpeggio patterns. They can be played by one hand, or by alternating hands ascending, descending, or changing directions. A common harp writing pattern uses two handed descending arpeggios with the melody in the top note, emphasize by the right hand thumb.

**Chords** - refers to playing three, four, or more notes as a group. Chords can be played by individual hands or by two hands together. Students are typically introduced to single hand chords before attempting the coordination required for two handed chords. Chords can be played rolled, cracked, or flat. Rolled is the most common style for harp. It means that the notes are played rapidly one after the other from the bottom to the top. In the case of two handed chords, the bottom note of the left hand begins the roll, ending with the top note of the right hand, usually played by the thumb. Rolls can range in speed from slow to fast depending on the style of the music. Cracked chords are very fast, sharp rolls with a strong rhythmic sound. Flat chords have all of the notes played simultaneously. Flat chords are played occasionally for stylistic reasons.

**Closing** - refers to closing the fingers flat into the palm immediately after plucking the string. It allows the hand muscles to relax. Relaxation is key to injury prevention and good tone production.

**Cross over and under** - refers to reaching over the hand with the thumb or reaching under the hand with the 3rd or 4th fingers to play scale passages.

**Enharmonics** - refers to producing a note equivalent to another note on a different string. On the folk harp this is created by raising a lever, while on the pedal harp this is created by moving a pedal. For example, raising the lever on a B string or setting the B pedal in the lowest notch will
create a tone that sounds identical to a natural C string. Harpists play enharmonics to avoid problematic harmonic passages, and to create glissandos with different sound characteristics.

**Glissandos**- refers to running the fingers up and down over a range of strings. For the basic version, ascending is normally played by the 2nd finger and descending is played by the thumb.

**Harmonics**- refers to producing a bell like tone one octave higher than the string normally sounds. The string must be cut in the middle with the side of the palm (left hand) or the knuckle of the 2nd finger (right hand), and be released immediately after playing. The two biggest challenges are finding the middle of the string on the first attempt, and timing the release of the string.

**Intervals**- refers to playing two notes simultaneously with one hand. Usually the top note is played by the thumb while the bottom note is played by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th finger. Intervals up to one octave are common in beginning harp music.

**Muffle**- refers to dampening the sound by pressing a flat hand against the ringing strings. It is most commonly done in the lower range of the harp by the left hand, although it can be done to any strings by both hands.

**Placement**- refers to placing the tips of the fingers onto the strings in preparation for playing one string or a group of strings. Directional placement refers to placing all of the fingers as a group within ascending or descending passages. When changing directions, the fingers are replaced for the opposite direction before completing the first direction. The fingers do not become completely detached from the strings until the end of the long phrase.

**Pres de la table**- refers to playing near the soundboard. Literally it means “near the table.” The harpist must drop the arms and hands close to the soundboard. The angle of the hand is altered
back and up towards the harpist to pluck the strings. This creates a dry, percussive sound, very different from the tone produced in the middle of the strings.
## APPENDIX C

### TABLES

**Table 1.1 Materials For Use With Small (26 String) Harps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Composition or Book</th>
<th>Harp Needs Levers Y/N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andres</td>
<td>Bernard</td>
<td>Marelles Vol. 1</td>
<td>No but recommended*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balderston</td>
<td>Suzanne</td>
<td>Step by Step: A Harp Primer Book One</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruner</td>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Play the Harp Beautifully! Level 1</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Curcio</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>Primer Level 1</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curcio</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>Primer Level 2</td>
<td>No but recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curcio</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>Stage One Solos</td>
<td>No but recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodrich</td>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>Bouquet for Young Harpists</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandjany</td>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>First Grade Pieces for Harp</td>
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<td>Grandjany</td>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>Trois Petites Pièces Op. 7</td>
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<td>Inglefield</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Songs for Sonja Part 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inglefield</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Songs for Sonja Part 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourin</td>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>Rainbow of Sound Book 1</td>
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<td>Christina</td>
<td>Rainbow of Sound Book 2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Christina</td>
<td>Rainbow of Sound Book 3</td>
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<td>Christina</td>
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<td>Tourin</td>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>Rainbow of Sound Book 5</td>
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<td>Tourin</td>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>Rainbow of Sound Book 6</td>
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<td>Woods</td>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>Teach Yourself to Play the Folk Harp</td>
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*No but recommend refers to music which can be performed by retuning strings, but using levers would be more convenient.*
Table 1.2 Materials For Use With Pedal Harp Only

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Composition or Book</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dilling</td>
<td>Mildred</td>
<td>Thirty Little Classics for the Harp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grandjany</td>
<td>Marcel</td>
<td>Petite Suite Classique</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hasslemans</td>
<td>Alphonse</td>
<td>Trois Petites Pièces Faciles: pour la harpe</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kondonassis</td>
<td>Yolanda</td>
<td>On Playing the Harp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>Lucile</td>
<td>The ABC of Harp Playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence and Salzedo</td>
<td>Lucile and Carlos</td>
<td>Method for the Harp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald and Wood</td>
<td>Susann and Linda</td>
<td>Harp Olympics Stage III</td>
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<td>McDonald and Wood</td>
<td>Susann and Linda</td>
<td>Harp Solos: Graded Recital Pieces Volume II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald and Wood</td>
<td>Susann and Linda</td>
<td>Harp Solos: Graded Recital Pieces Volume III</td>
</tr>
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<td>McDonald and Wood</td>
<td>Susann and Linda</td>
<td>Harp Solos: Graded Recital Pieces Volume IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>McDonald and Wood</td>
<td>Susann and Linda</td>
<td>Harp Solos: Graded Recital Pieces Volume V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore</td>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Thumbs Up! Beginning Harp for the Adult and College Level Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renié</td>
<td>Henriette</td>
<td>Complete Method for the Harp, 1st Volume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renié</td>
<td>Henriette</td>
<td>Complete Method for the Harp, 2nd Volume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renié</td>
<td>Henriette</td>
<td>Feuilletts D’Album</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A native of New Jersey, Tula Ruggiero earned the BM in Harp Performance from Montclair State University, studying with André Tarantiles, and a BA magna cum laude in American Studies from Rutgers University. As a Douglass Scholar full scholarship holder, she was awarded the American Studies Prize for writing while only a sophomore, and was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society. After moving to her adopted home state of West Virginia, she earned the MM in Pedagogy- Harp from the Shenandoah Conservatory, where she studied with Elizabeth Blakeslee of the National Symphony Orchestra. Along the way, she also trained at The Boston Conservatory, and in the full scholarship Performer Resident Program at Carnegie Mellon University with teacher, Gretchen Van Hoesen of the Pittsburgh Symphony. She completed her music studies with the DM degree in Harp Performance and the Certificate in Music of the Americas from the Florida State University College of Music, where she studied with Mary Roman. As a graduate assistant, her performances varied widely from Principal Harp of the University Symphony Orchestra and Wind Orchestra, to celtic harpist for the Irish Ensemble, and pianist, washboard and ukelele player, square dancer, and clogger for the Old Time Ensemble.

Performances include chamber concerts, solo recitals, and concerto performances on the Church on the Hill Concert Series, Berkeley Springs, WV, and Sundays at Four Concert Series, Thomasville, GA, and principal harp with Sinfonia Gulf Coast. She has done masterclasses and workshops with Robbin Gordon-Cartier, Astrid Walschot-Stapp, Dominique Piana, Kim Robertson, Christina Tourin, Pamela Bruner, and Dr. Ann Yeung. Instructor positions have included the Shenandoah Conservatory Arts Academy, Morgan County Schools, and Morgan County Adult and Community Education.