

the
harpcolumn
practical news, for practical harpists

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**French and
Salzedo
techniques
—what's the
difference?**

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school
year off
right!**

A portrait of Victor Salvi, an older man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Victor Salvi



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"I feel that my work on this article is very important because people feel strongly about this topic," says Catharine Hintze, who wrote about French and Salzedo harp techniques in this month's article "Much Ado About Plucking." She adds, "It was satisfying to offer harpists a forum for expressing their views. Although I personally don't enjoy conflict, it was my hope that by starting a dialog on the topic of technique I could reduce the tension in some way. I held my breath as the surveys started pouring in. The thoughts that were expressed confirmed my hunch—we're growing up."

Catharine Hintze lives in Atlanta where she is a freelance harpist and creates accessories for her company, Harp-ware.

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on my mind

a mere technicality

What harp technique do you use? Do you think it's the only way to play?

—by Kimberly Rowe

Elbows up; elbows down; fingers rounded; fingers flat. What are the elements that identify a person's harp technique? Are they these kinds of physical elements, or are they a way of thinking? Is technique a function of sound and musicality, or is it the other way around: is our sound and musicality on the harp a function of our technique? Can any one person tell us how to combine these physical and mental aspects to create a perfect technique—the best harp technique in the world that will work for everyone?

Obviously, the answer is no, otherwise we'd never even have heard of different harp techniques, such as the "Salzedo" technique, the "Grandjany" technique, or the "French" technique. Too often, however, we hear these descriptions of technique used not to describe "what is right for me," but "what is not right for you."

When you read this month's article "Much Ado About Plucking," by Catharine Hintze (pg. 26), you will probably have one of two reactions: either you will be delighted that we're bringing up the sticky subject of opposing harp techniques, or you will be angry with us for highlighting a controversy that many of you think is an outdated non-issue. And either reaction you experience will probably be the right one. But before you whip out your pens and send in your mail, we ask that you consider honestly how our article reflects your views. What harp technique do you use, and what does it mean to you? Why is the subject of technique sometimes a divisive topic within the harp community? Have you ever encountered such a divide with another harpist? Why or why not?

We feel this month's article on technique is important, because despite the fact that many different playing techniques exist today (not just the ones we mention here), and that for many harpists the issue of technique *is* a non-issue, names like "Salzedo," "Grandjany," and "French style" continue to pop up in conversation, on Internet harp lists, and anywhere harpists are likely to gather. Unfortunately, confusion, misconceptions, and sometimes hostility about the relationship between these techniques abound. So rather than ignore the topic, we're presenting our article this month along with a challenge: we'd like you to use the thoughts and ideas we've gathered here as an opportunity to examine your own technique, how it works for you, how it relates to other styles of playing, and how your thoughts compare to those of the harp teachers whose comments appear throughout our article. Do you agree with what they have to say? Do you disagree?

In putting together this article, Hintze and I faced some tough questions: Should we print photos of Carlos Salzedo and Marcel Grandjany, two of the central figures in the debate about different techniques, which might possibly further the divisive thinking associated with the two men? Or will the historical information accompanying the photos help harpists put everything into context? What about including a list of the most common technical elements harpists associate with each technique? Is there any way a list like that could come close to explaining the differences?

Again, the answer is probably no. But it's a start, and we hope our answers to these questions will give harpists who are

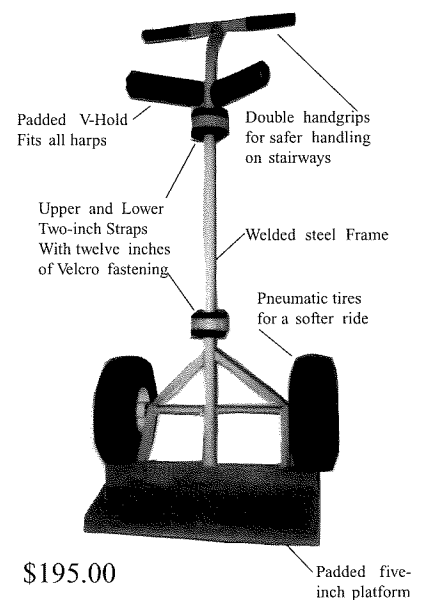
confused or unfamiliar with different techniques a place to begin to learn more.

Do the harp techniques we use today promote a divide between harpists, or do they share more similarities than they do differences? What do you think? Let us know. ■

Kimberly Rowe lives in Philadelphia where she edits the Harp Column, teaches, and performs throughout the mid-Atlantic region. E-mail her at krowe@harpcolumn.com with your thoughts about this issue of the Harp Column.

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LYON & HEALY TO OPEN NEW SHOWROOM

Lyon & Healy president Antonio Forero has announced plans for the opening of a new Lyon & Healy showroom in Salt Lake City, Utah, in late October, 2001. The new showroom will be called **Lyon & Healy West** and will carry a full line of harps by both Lyon & Healy and Salvi; the showroom will also offer an extensive inventory of music, strings, and harp accessories.

Forero said that Lyon & Healy chose Salt Lake City because "good things are happening for the harp in that part of the world." He went on to describe the new showroom, located in a house formerly owned by Mormon church leader David McKay, as a "comfortable place" where harpists can browse and try out harps; he promises that it will be "a different experience from [the company's] Chicago factory showroom." Forero also has plans to "put a harpist in every hotel" in time for the Salt Lake City Olympics.

Lyon & Healy has appointed Nora Wood as the Managing Director of Lyon & Healy West; ShruDeLi Ownbey will be the Artistic Director. For more information, call 800-621-3881, or visit www.lyon-healy.com.

KIENZLE BUILDS PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Kathy Kienzle, Principal Harpist with the Minnesota Symphony, has recently been appointed to the faculty of the University of Minnesota as Harp Instructor. The appointment follows the retirement of long-time instructor Frances Miller. Admissions coordinator Wayne Lu says that the university is "very excited" to bring Kienzle to their faculty, and that they "hope to draw in many new students

now that [she] is on board." Kienzle, who also has background in Suzuki training, stresses that there is "a lot going on in the Twin Cities for students to take advantage of. In addition to a weekly harp studio class, there are many perfor-

tive Secretary is Kathleen Moon, also of California. In a letter to the AHS, Remsen said, "I have many friends within the membership and will continue to actively support the Society and attend the national meetings." Dorothy, we'll look forward to seeing you there!

ANNE ADAMS AWARDS GIVEN

The winners of this year's Anne Adams Awards were chosen following an audition held at the the American Harp Society Summer Institute, in June. **Alyssa**

Michalsky, Songyee Han, and YiNuo Mu will each receive \$2,000, to be used for full-time study of the harp, along with a \$500 gift certificate from Lyon & Healy. Marguerite Lynn Williams was chosen as the first alternate. The Anne Adams Awards were established by Dr. Burton Adams in honor of his wife Anne.



Above: Antonio Forero, President of Lyon & Healy; right, Dorothy Remsen; bottom, (l. to r.) Anne Adams Awards winners YiNuo Mu, Alyssa Michalsky, and Songyee Han (Photo courtesy of Jan Bishop).



mance opportunities at school and in the community," she says. For more information about the program call 612-624-2847.

FAREWELL DOROTHY

Dorothy Remsen has retired as Executive Secretary of the American Harp Society after serving the organization for more than 30 years. Remsen, who made our list of "Most Influential Harp Forces of the Twentieth Century," has also had a successful career in Southern California as a studio and commercial harpist. The new Execu-



conference reports

American Harp Society Fourth Summer Institute June 24–28, College Park, Md.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2001

I'm balancing a stack of AHS signs, music stands, and masking tape. Institute Coordinator Rebecca Smith and I have just finished taping signs all over the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, in College Park. I'm here to assist with the American Harp Society Fourth Summer Institute. Registration and harp moving—why did I wear these shoes?

MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2001

Ed Galchick, master harp technician, keeps us laughing as we arrive at the Institute. The AHS 14th National Competition begins without a single mishap, and everyone involved is electrified. The day ends with an incredible recital by the Anne Adams Audition winners.

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2001

My day off. I'm home with my feet kicked up. No regrets, until I hear about the María Louisa Rayán concert I've missed. Heidi Tims, a competition participant, enthused, "Oh, she was unbelievable—she was really good. [The concert] was very inspirational." Ok, no more days off.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 2001

Workshops! We help Elzbieta Szmyt

prepare for her great workshop with Linda Wood Rollo called Teaching Beginners of All Ages. Myrna Paris leads a much-needed workshop on stage presence, followed by Constance Whiteside's fascinating Medieval Music lecture and concert. After lunch at the on-campus cafe, Ray Pool's workshop on writing your own music for harp ensembles is enhanced by Elizabeth Blakeslee and the Shenandoah Conservatory Harp Ensemble. Yolanda Kondonassis spends the next four hours enchanting listeners in her masterclass, emphasizing the importance of being conscious of the composer's intentions. The day ends with a rejuvenating concert, which included Elizabeth Blakeslee, Chantal Mathieu, Ann Yeung, Ray Pool, and the University of Maryland Harp Ensemble led by Rebecca Smith.

THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2001

Workshops galore: Lucy Scandrett's panel discussion on preparing programs for schools and churches; Ann Yeung on preparing twentieth century music for concerts and

competitions; Jack Scandrett on new technology, including Band in a Box; and Chantal Mathieu, straight from a harrowing journey from France, with her masterclass. An Afternoon with Eleanor Fell was very refreshing and she surprised us all with her birthday song to Ed Galchick. Finally, a recital featuring the winners of the AHS competition. The performances were both inspiring and humbling. Mrs. Smith and I go home exhausted, inspired, and ready for new challenges. Isn't that what the AHS Institute is all about?

—by Jamie Famula



AHS National Competition first prize winners (l. to r.): Angela Dastrup, Annabelle Taubl, and Heidi Gorton. Photo courtesy of Lucy Scandrett.

AHS COMPETITION WINNERS

The American Harp Society held its 14th National Competition at the AHS Summer Institute, last June. In the Young Professional Division (maximum age, 30), Annabelle Taubl won first prize (\$2,000); Cate Cannon Todd received second prize (\$1,000); and Adrianna Horne and Albertina Chan tied for third prize (\$500). In the Advanced Division (maximum age, 21), no first prize was awarded; Julie Smith and Nuiko Wadden tied for second prize (\$750); and Ruth Bennett and Heidi Tims tied for third prize (\$500). The Intermediate II (maximum age, 18) first prize went to Angela Dastrup (\$750); Kristie Withers

won second prize (\$500); and Lisa Spurloch received third prize (\$250). In the Intermediate I Division (maximum age, 15), Heidi Gorton won first prize (\$750); Clarke Carriker received second prize (\$500); and Cameron Huster and Elizabeth White tied for third prize (\$250). Additional prizes were the Malone prize (\$250), won by Heidi Gorton, and the Prix Rénie, won by Nuiko Wadden (Julie Smith received honorable mention). ■

What's News With You?

Do you have news the whole harp world should know? Send your press release to the Harp Column, Attn: News, 2101 Brandywine St., Suite 200B, Philadelphia, PA 19130, fax 215-684-1858, or visit www.harpcolumn.com where you can enter news items and upload a photo for display on our website.

concert report

hommage à joël garnier

Harpists gather in Paris to perform a concert in honor of the founder of Camac harps.

—by Mary Jane D'Arville

"And what is it to work with love? It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit."

These words of Kahil Gibran were read by harpist Marielle Nordmann at the memorial concert to Joel Garnier on Wednesday, June 20, 2001, at the Opera Bastille in Paris. The love and inspiration felt by the family and friends of Garnier, both musically and personally, were captured in this remarkable performance. It is truly one of the most memorable harp concerts I have attended. Each of the thirteen harpists offered a part of themselves along with their unique musical selections, and each Camac harp sang as if to the heavens.

"And he alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving."

Jakez Francois, president of Camac Productions, continues to carry on Garnier's dreams and aspirations. He introduced the concert by sharing a secret: Joel was actually a harpist himself! He frequently performed his signature piece, which was his entire repertoire, to test the quality of his instruments. Mr. Francois, also an extraordinary harpist, then performed Joel's song—an interval of a fifth in the left hand, followed by two broken octaves in the right—to the delight of the audience.

The concert proceeded with one outstanding performance followed by another: Florence Sitruck's effortless ornamentation of Bach Partita excerpts rendered a graceful interpretation that is often difficult to attain in harp transcriptions from the Baroque period; Isabelle Perrin

performed Bernard Andres' "Elegie pour la mort d'un berger" as only she can; Mahalia Kelz took the stage for "Himeji," extrait des 3 esquisses japonaises, by J.F. Zbinden, and "Impromptu" by Gliere; Ginastera's "Danza de la Moza Donosa," a duet performed by Germaine Lorenzini and Isabelle Moretti, followed, creating a beautifully lyrical change of pace; and for her solo, Ms. Moretti, played "L'Aloutte," by Glinka/Balakirev. Ms. Moretti, who is a renowned recording artist and the professor of harp at the Paris Conservatory of Music, kept the audience spellbound throughout her breathtaking performance. The communication between the performers with each other and the audience was touching and made M. Garnier's presence sensed.

Myriam Serfass and Armelle Gourlaouen changed the classical mode of the concert by marching in, with harps strapped on and steadied by the beat of a drum, playing a traditional "Suite de Polkas." They segued to "Worried Man Blues" on lever harps and then to Desmond's "Take Five", arranged by Jakez Francois, played on two Camac Electric Blue harps. It was obvious the audience had as much fun listening to

their performance as they did playing.

The first half of the program ended with the third and fourth movements of "Quatre Paysages," by A. Louvier. Harpist Martine Flaissier was joined by flutist Henry Vaude and percussionist Philippe Limoge to performing the piece, which uses the electric harp to its fullest capacity. The combination of masterful performers and a creative composition was a fitting end to the first half of this outstanding concert.

"Work is love made visible. When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music."

To begin the second half of the concert, Marielle Nordmann, unable to perform herself due to an injury, offered the



Joel Garnier (1940-2000) founded the French harp company Camac Harps in 1985; harpists remembered him at a tribute concert on June 20, 2001, in Paris.

selection from Kahil Gibran. The auditorium was silent throughout her reading as the audience contemplated the words and their relationship to the work and life of Joel Garnier.

Mariannig Larchantec continued the enchantment of the evening with excerpts of her own work "La Falaise de St. Efflam," a modern, classical piece that is a refreshing and much needed addition to the lever harp repertoire. It was an especially significant contribution to the concert in light of Garnier's great strides in establishing respect for the lever harp.

With his rendition of "Carnival of Venice," by W. Posse, David Lootvoet integrated a perfect combination of bravado and musicality in his truly magnificent performance. If this is the first time you've heard of this 19-year-old harpist, rest assured it will not be the last. He is certainly one of Europe's rising harp talents. The next piece on the program depicted the haunting jazz associated with the Parisian cafe scene of the deco period. Ghislaine Petit, harp, and Jean-Marc Volta, bass clarinet, were a perfect combination to portray "Cafe 1930," by

Piazzolla. You could almost taste the essence of French red wine before they were done! Harp virtuoso Marie-Claire Jamet offered the final classical selection of the evening with Roussel's "Impromptu." It was inspiring to hear the piece played in the hands of Jamet, one of the true French masters of the classical harp.

The concert that began with an introduction by Jakez Francois had a fitting ending with the performance of his own jazzy composition "Hot Cucumber." Harpist Elisa Mediero looked much too young to be playing jazz as a seasoned pro, but along with her trio of Philippe Noharet, bass, and Mathieu Chazarenc, drums, the piece was truly hot!

As the entire audience leapt to their feet and the 13 performers took the stage along with Francois for a final bow, there was no doubt that this was one of Joel Garnier's finest moments, and that he was smiling down on his friends and family and the remarkable performers that were part of this unforgettable evening.

"And when you work with love, you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God." ■

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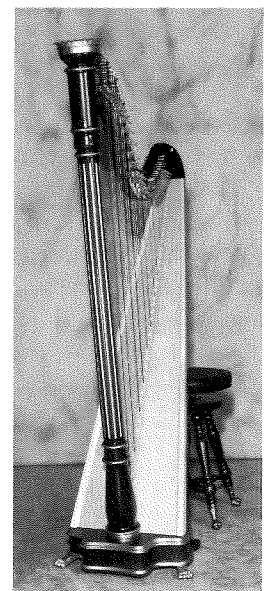
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USA international harp competition

Dan Yu, of China, wins first prize; María Luisa Rayán takes second; and Julie Smith wins third.

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Dan Yu, of the People's Republic of China, is the first prize winner of the USA International Harp Competition, held July 4–15, 2001, in Bloomington, Ind. We met with Dan the day after the competition, and she gave us her thoughts on competing.

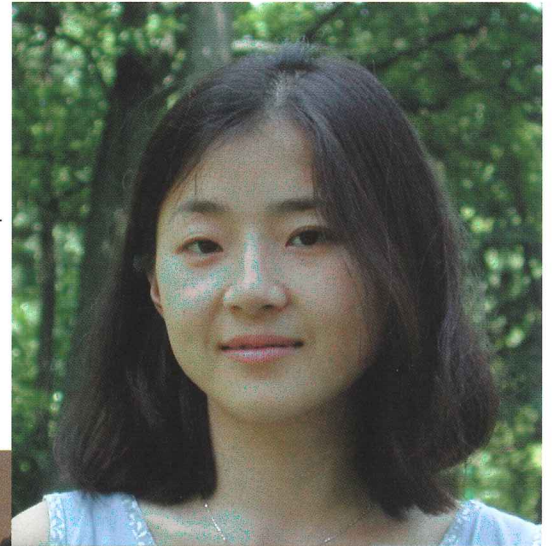
WHAT MOTIVATED HER TO ENTER:

"I came here in 1993, when I was 19, and I went to the Peabody Conservatory. I studied there for six years with Ruth Inglefield. After that, I had an opportunity to direct a children's harp ensemble in Roanoke, Va. I was there for almost two years, and I was wondering, 'Is this really what I want to do?' I was barely having time to practice, and it got to the point where I was really exhausted. I was 25, and it seemed like my solo career had just stopped. After a while, I thought maybe I should challenge myself a little more for another few years, before I get too old. I knew I could do the teaching a little bit later in my life. Right now I think I still need to go for it and see what I can do."

HOW SHE PREPARED:

"I had everything but the Ginastera Concerto [learned] before May. Not quite to the performance stage yet, but in my fingers. After May, my friends and I made quite detailed schedules: 'this week do the first stage, next

week do the second stage, and meanwhile, review the first stage.' Very detailed. In May and June I did very intensive back and forth practicing. Coming into July, I just started going over the first and second stage every day. My number was quite late, so I



Dan Yu, above right, and performing the Ginastera Concerto in the final stage of the USA International Harp Competition.

played on the third day of the competition. When people were competing on the first day, I was practicing for the second and third stage, because the time left for me was so little.

physically."

HOW SHE FELT AFTER PLAYING:

"I thought it was a little bit on the edge. I wasn't quite sure if I would be

After I came to Indiana last September, I maintained four hours of practice a day. After May, I was doing about seven. Coming into July, for a couple days I was doing ten. But that was really too much—I was so exhausted, both mentally and

chosen as a finalist. I thought the chances were about 50–50. I wasn't quite happy with my third stage performance, because I think I over-practiced that day, and by the time I finished the third piece, my arms were so tired I could barely control my fingers. I was happy with my first two pieces, but the rest I knew I could do better. When I was playing the last piece ("Carnival of Venice," by Godefrid), I was thinking, 'This is it—I've made it through this so far, and I think this is it.'

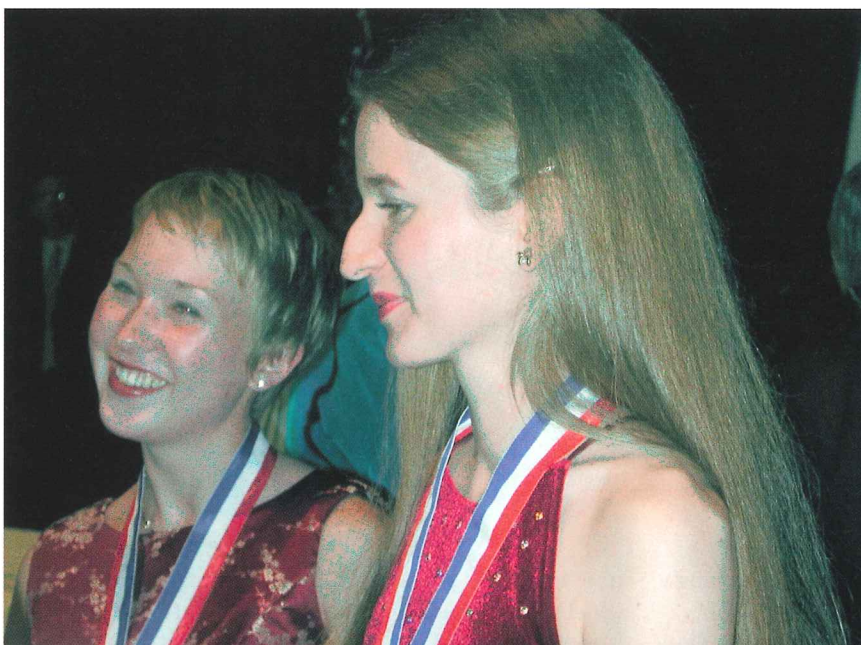
Later that night I had a friend whose car had a problem on the highway, so I had to drive 40 minutes to help. When I got back, everybody was looking for me: they were afraid I didn't know that I had made the finals. I came back and said, 'Oh wow, I'm really going for it.' I went back to the school and practiced until 6:00 a.m. After they announced the finalists, from that point until the end of the competition I felt like I could hardly breathe."

HOW SHE LIKES HER NEW HARP:

"I briefly tried it this morning when we were taking a picture. It's gorgeous. I've never had a harp. Of course I'm thrilled, but I still don't feel it's mine. I'm not scared to move it, but I just don't feel like it's really mine yet. I don't know why! I've never had one before, and it doesn't feel like it belongs to me."

WHAT SHE'LL DO NOW:

"I went back to school to study with Susann McDonald. I'm working on my Artist Diploma, which I'll start in September. I still feel like I have a lot to learn, like repertoire and some technique things. I know what my weaknesses are. I think it's much easier to keep a clear mind on what you're doing when you're a student; you don't have other things to distract you. I really treasure my time here being a student, and I can really focus on what I want. Now, because of all these recitals coming, I need to focus even more and try to improve myself." ■



Left, María Luisa Rayán (right) and Julie Smith celebrate following their final stage concerto performances.

...and the winners are:

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PHIA BERGHOUT MEMORIAL PRIZE: MARÍA LUISA RAYÁN, ARGENTINA

\$1,000 for the best performance of "Dilling Fantasy"

JAN JENNINGS PRIZE: DAN YU, CHINA

\$1,000 for the best performance of Ginastera's Concerto for Harp and Orchestra

a second opinion

Why teachers and students should seek out the advice of other professionals.

—by Lynne Abbey-Lee



I recently had the pleasure of coaching Diana, a young harp student, as she was preparing for a competition. The word “coaching” somehow seems more appropriate when I’m teaching someone else’s student. The usual boundaries of a standard lesson don’t necessarily apply. She had come from out of town, so we worked until we were finished, which was about three hours. Her teacher, a close friend of mine, and her mother sat in on this marathon. I think it was great fun for all of us, even though Diana worked very hard. I had her singing and counting out loud, saying “bum-bum” for the rests, and she didn’t even roll her eyes at me (something, it’s rumored, she may occasionally do in her lessons).

As part of the same trip, Diana had another three-hour coaching section with a different teacher and also attended a Suzuki seminar. Following the trip, her regular teacher reported that she came back to her next lesson inspired, on fire, and ready to work even harder than before. I probably didn’t give her any special insights that she hadn’t heard before, but I may have expressed some ideas in a different way. Her teacher mentioned one spot where she had been counting sixteenth notes to help Diana sustain a

note long enough—I suggested eighths, which made more sense to her. Not exactly rocket science!

The point is, however, just how beneficial getting a different point of view can be. This trip for Diana was successful for several different reasons: she was receptive and eager for our input, her parents

made the trip possible, and, importantly, her teacher felt it was a great opportunity for her.

Unfortunately, sometimes a teacher doesn’t view a situation like this as a great opportunity. One reason could be insecurity—worrying that a student will find the new

teacher to be more exciting, better in some way, and consequently become dissatisfied with their current situation. Another concern could be that another teacher may try to recruit the student for his or her studio. That’s not the norm, but if it’s a valid concern, look for someone else.

Embarrassment may be another factor. Diana’s regular teacher couldn’t help but interject at one point, “I *have* told her that a hundred times or so!” But as teachers, we want the best for our students, and occasionally this means putting our feelings aside. If we show enthusiasm for our students engaging in as many worthwhile musical experiences as possible, we

can even gain confidence in ourselves as teachers.

Another coaching experience I had was with Thea, a student whose youth orchestra was involved in a production of *The Nutcracker*. What an undertaking for a thirteen year old! It’s not that her teacher couldn’t have taught her the ballet wonderfully well. But she knew that I had performed it more times than I like to count, and would be more easily able to help Thea work through it. My experience was helpful in knowing where we could leave out some notes, or which places were most exposed within the orchestra. It turned out to be a great success for Thea, and a fun challenge for me as well. I wanted to teach the piece in such a way that if she performed it again in the future as a more advanced player, she wouldn’t have to relearn it from scratch because we had made too many changes this time.

Again, Thea’s willingness to work, her teacher’s openness to her student working with someone else, and her parents’ support had everything to do with the result. For seven weeks she had her regular lesson, plus a lesson with me. That’s definitely dedication on the part of both student and parents.

Getting a second opinion doesn’t have to mean taking a lesson with a new teacher. It could mean going back to play for a previous teacher. Or, if you’re in an area where there is only one harp teacher, playing for a chorus, orchestra, or band director at school, a choir director at a place of worship, or your friendly neighborhood piano teacher. Playing for someone new is good practice for perfor-

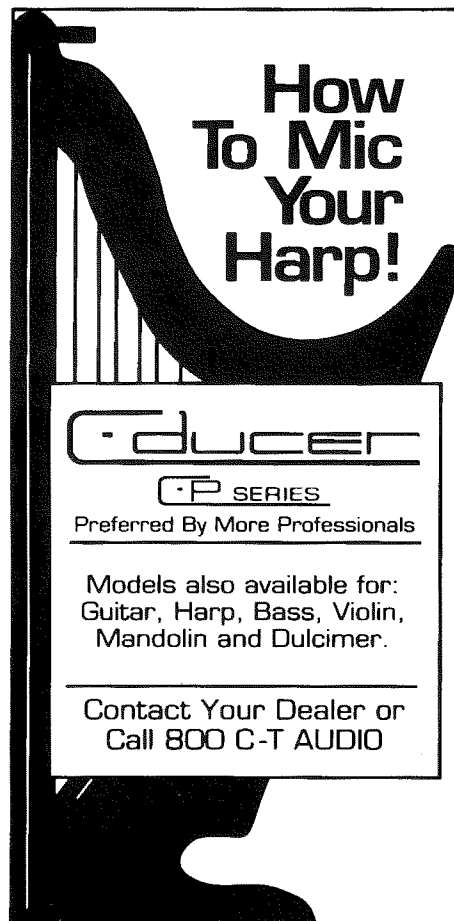
Teachers, push your precious students out of the nest from time to time. And students, take advantage of chances you have to get a second opinion. All of us can benefit.

mance, and these non-harpists may listen for or hear something other than what your harp teacher emphasizes. Often, non-harpists are a valuable resource just because they *are* non-harpists. They don't care what fingers you use, or what your hand position looks like, and may have some insightful musical input.

So teachers, push your precious students out of the nest from time to time. And students, take advantage of chances you have to get a second opinion. All of us can benefit! ■

Lynne Abbey-Lee has served as Principal Harpist with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and with the Richmond Symphony. She also teaches privately and at the University of Colorado, in Boulder.

"Sounding Board" is a place for your opinions and commentaries about any harp-related issue. (Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of The Harp Column editorial staff.) If you have an opinion about something affecting today's harpists, tell us! If we print your submission (800 words or less), we'll pay you \$75.



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nuts and bolts

a trilling adventure

When was the last time you sat down and practiced your trills?

—by Susan Brady



Learning to trill is not one of the fun things we love to do on the harp. You won't hear many harpists exclaim, "No, I can't go out to dinner; I want to spend endless hours this evening perfecting my trills!" But maybe more of us *should* forego the night out and spend some serious time working on trills. The truth is that nobody really likes practicing trills, but those who put in the effort develop a skill that separates them from those who avoid trills like the plague. A beautifully executed trill can be an exquisite finishing touch on a polished performance. A cumbersome, sloppy, or out of control trill can spoil an otherwise flawless performance.

To practice trills, you must first learn to do them slowly and evenly, and then increase your speed... A slow, even trill sounds faster than the quicker, less controlled version.

So how should you go about this both-erful study? Begin with a two-handed trill starting on the lower note (see Example 1). We'll use the notes B and C above middle C. Do not count the number of times your hands repeat the trill pattern yet (we'll call them "rotations") or worry about a particular note value. Using fin-

gers 2 (second finger) and 1 (thumb), simply alternate playing the B and C strings with each hand: right hand, B C, left hand, B C, right, B C, and so on. Begin with the right hand, very slowly, at about 60 on the metronome, one note per click.

After you play the first two notes, you will need to use a "walking" placement pattern to facilitate the desired effect of the trill without buzzing. "Walking" is achieved by placing the second finger and thumb consecutively, *not* simultaneously. You need to pluck one note while placing the next at *exactly* the same time. When done correctly, the tone of the string you are plucking will override the slight buzz of the finger that is placing. The length of every note in the trill should be the same. If you are doing your trill incorrectly, the C will sound clipped or short, and you will be able to hear the sound of your fingers placing between the notes. Use this same technique as you alternate hands back and forth throughout the trill. As each hand finishes playing, flick your wrist back a little, keeping your hand relaxed and your elbow stationary. As you gain speed you will need to use more and more wrist motion to keep from getting tight.

To practice trills, you must first learn to do them slowly and evenly, and then increase your speed. Here is a procedure you can use to systematically increase your trill speed: Set your metronome to 60. Using the "walking" technique described above, play quarter note rotations of the trill beginning with B in the right hand. Listen to be sure that you are

playing with equal volume and equal duration on every note within the trill. Also be sure you do not hear any placing noise between the pitches. After you have mastered the quarter notes, you are ready to move on to eighth notes. Listen carefully and make sure they are even before moving on to triplets.

Triplets and other odd numbered beat divisions pose another issue: With these patterns, the second finger and thumb alternately occur on the beat (see Examples 2 and 3). Do not stress the finger on the beat. Remember, you are attempting to make every note equal in volume and duration. Continue in the same manner with four notes to a beat, five to a beat, six to a beat, seven to a beat, and eight to a beat. Be diligent about practicing threes, fives, and sevens, as they are the key to playing even trills without a measured feel to them.

It is also a good idea to practice trills with the emphasis on the beat. You may have a weak finger that needs work, or perhaps the music calls for one of the notes to be played more prominently. Practice the exercises above, but this time put an accent on every beat. Like before, pay close attention to the odd numbered rotations. They will help you alternate the emphasis and thereby strengthen your trill technique.

It may take days, weeks, or even months to work your way through all eight speeds. Or you may find that you have a limit to how many rotations you can actually do. Find your limit, and incorporate slow trills into your pieces until you are ready to play them fast.

Even after you have mastered a very speedy trill, you may find that few pieces warrant playing them so fast. Match your trill speed to the style and character of the pieces you are playing. Do not attempt to play fast trills in your pieces until you have dedicated hours of diligent practice on this technique and have a good grasp of a variety of trills at various speeds.

Here are some other ways to incorporate trill variations into your practice:

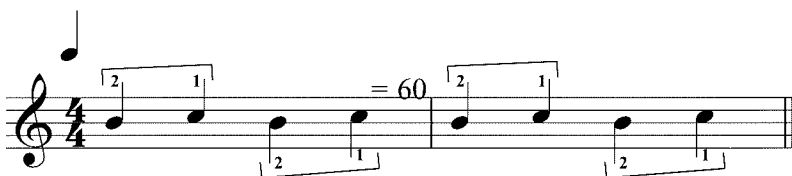
—Play trills at different volumes. *Piano* is much easier than *forte*, but playing trills *forte* will help you hear your placing errors.

—Use dynamic changes. Gradually increase and decrease the volume without letting any notes stick out. Try some drastic quick changes in volume too.

—Play trills in different ranges on the harp. High trills are much easier than low, but perfect the low ones first. The high ones will be a breeze after that.

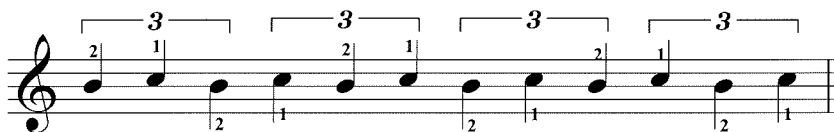
—Count the number of rotations in each trill, and be able to finish nicely after a certain number. Frequently, the music will tell you exactly how many rotations you need to do. If you cannot com-

Example 1:



Example 2:

(continue placing as in the previous example:)



Example 3:



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plete all the rotations in the desired amount of time, leave some of them out. Remember that an odd number of rotations will get you back to the same hand you started with; even rotations will leave you in the opposite hand.)

—Practice unmeasured trills. Turn off the metronome! You should also be able to play unlimited and uncountable rotations in your trill.

—Count only the note value of the trill, measuring it by rotations.

—Add a turn to the end of your trill for an extra touch. Turns are generally played on the note below; for example, trilling on B, the last right hand turn would include the notes B C B A B C (fingered 2 1 2 3 2 1).

—Begin the trill on the upper note. Play the trill beginning with your thumb: 1 2, 1 2, 1 2, etc., using the same walking placement. Or you could play the single C in the right hand and begin with B in the left.

—Increase your metronome's speed for even faster trills. However, remember that faster is not always better. Beautifully executed fast trills are something to behold, but an even, slow, and controlled trill can be equally as beautiful. Beginning players often try to trill as fast as possible, hoping it will create the desired effect. In actuality, I think that a slow, even trill performed by a beginning harpist is absolutely beautiful and actually sounds faster than the quicker less controlled version. Only trill as fast as you can play the trill perfectly and evenly. You'll be surprised how great you'll sound.

After you've practiced trilling exercises and feel comfortable playing them, you can begin to incorporate them into your pieces. Here are a few suggestions of woks that include a variety of two-hand trills: "La Gimblette," by Andres, "Chaconne," by Durand, "Variations on a Theme in Ancient Style," by Salzedo, Concerto for Flute and Harp, second movement, by Mozart, Concerto in B flat, second movement, by Handel, and "In Freezing Winter Night," from *A Ceremony of Carols*, by Britten. ■

Susan Brady lives and teaches in Atlanta, Ga., where she is Principal Harpist with the Atlanta Opera Orchestra; she also teaches and performs as Principal Harpist at the Brevard Music Center, in Brevard, N.C.

practically practicing

a change of seasons

Are you overwhelmed with learning new music? It can seem like there is just too much repertoire out there for any one harpist to begin to make a dent in it all. There are so many styles of music that it can even be difficult knowing where to start or which one to choose first. One of my students invented "seasons of the harp." She has one season each for working on classical, folk, holiday, and pop music. Your seasons can follow the seasons of the year, but they don't have to. Perhaps your seasons will be two, four, or six months long. And it doesn't mean that this season's genre is the *only*

kind of music you play. But using seasons could help give you a musical focus and assist in your long-range goals for learning repertoire. ■

—by Lynne Abbey-Lee

Have you and your teacher devised a way to make practicing easier? Let us know about it! Send us your tip, along with your name and your teacher's name; if we use it we'll pay you \$25. Send tips to Practically Practicing, The Harp Column, 2101 Brandywine St., Suite 200B, Philadelphia, PA 19130

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Question:

I hate playing outdoors! Is there anything I can do to make this situation more bearable?

18 september/october 2001 the harp column



Mary Fitzgerald
Bowie, Md.

Include the following provision in your contract, and remain firm in adhering to it:

"Shelter from all weather must be provided, including shade from the sun. An alternate indoor site at the same location must be available in case of inclement weather. It is solely the harper's decision and at the harper's discretion whether or not to perform outdoors. In no case will the harper's person, harp, or equipment be subjected to damage or risk from weather, and the estimation of such risk is solely the harper's prerogative."

In the event you have a cool-weather gig, include a temperature provision that gives you the right to move the event inside if the temperature or wind chill factor goes below 68 degrees.

Insist on a flat, level, dry playing surface (about four by five feet) on which to set up your chair, instrument, stand, and battery-powered amplifier. Frequently the caterer or the venue manager can provide a banquet table with the legs

folded under that will do. If you have to provide your own piece of plywood, charge at least \$20 more for the privilege. Insist on parking close to your playing site in case you have to hustle the harp to shelter quickly.

Here's a list of useful outdoor accessories:

1. Wind clip, clothespins, butterfly paper clips, or gaffer's tape to secure your music to the stand—even the kindest zephyr can turn pages.
2. A battery-powered amplifier, microphone, mic cable, tuner, and clip-on tuning microphone.
3. Spare batteries for everything.
4. Two kinds of bug spray: one for you and your and clothing, and one for the area around you.
5. Sunscreen, sunglasses, and a large bottle of water.
6. A cloth handkerchief to dab your face, a small towel to wipe your hands, and packets of moist hand-wipes—you'll need them to get the bug spray off your fingers, if nothing else.
7. A tarpaulin, huge plastic bags or ponchos, and bungee cords to secure around your instrument in case of a sudden shower. ■

Coming Up:

I'm on a tight budget, but I need some new gig clothes. Any ideas?
send answers to harpbiz@aol.com



Melanie Wiltse
Rudolph, Wis.

As a relatively new harpist, I have only been asked to play outdoors on three different occasions. None of them were particularly pleas-

Heat, cold, sun, rain, bugs, grass, sand, dirt—it's the great outdoors! As a Florida harpist, I have reluctantly become an expert at playing outside. The bride will *always* want the wedding to remain outside, despite the weather, so I prepare in advance by trying to cover every potential situation in my contract.

My main concerns are rain and heat. Thunderstorms can roll in during a wedding, even if the skies were clear during setup. My contract states the harp must be under shelter if it begins to rain, and it must be in the shade during intense heat. I include the phrase "at the harpist's discretion" so I am the one who makes the call regarding the weather.

I set up on a level spot, and I try not to walk away from the harp, especially on a windy day. I place a piece of carpet under the harp if I'm on the grass. I will not play outdoors anywhere near the beach; I

ant. Why anyone would want an outdoor ceremony in Wisconsin is beyond my understanding. Some professional harpists simply refuse to play outdoors; others charge a special fee or have specific criteria that must be met. I decided that clarifying my expectations with potential clients would be the most helpful thing I could do.

I developed a list of guidelines for outdoor ceremonies that is part of my contract, and I charge \$50 extra for an outdoor ceremony. My contract addendum states, "Outdoor weddings are problematic for musicians in general and harpists in particular. Keep in mind the following when you consider contracting services for an outdoor occasion:

1. To minimize the risk of damaging an expensive and fragile instrument, the location must be accessible and on a smooth path or surface to accommodate a wheeled cart. The set up area must be shad-

don't want sand in the harp! I've also put together a little survival kit to deal with the weather. I have a huge golf umbrella to place beside the harp so I will have protection as I move to shelter if it begins to rain. I also carry sunscreen, handkerchiefs for mopping my brow (it's hot here!), a paper fan, and bug spray.

When there's a nice light breeze, it's not too muggy, I'm not scanning the skies for rain clouds, there are no ants or beetles crawling up the harp, and no mosquitoes biting, I say to myself, "Wow, it's really pretty playing outside today."

I think that happened once. ■

ed and level.

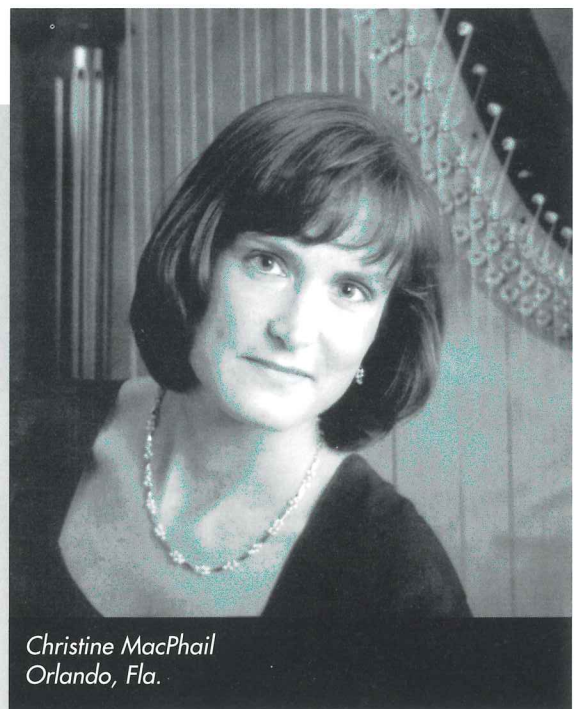
2. If your ceremony takes place in the evening, or you require amplification, a grounded source of electrical power must be provided.

3. In the event of rain or strong wind, I will provide music via a CD or cassette tape. Harps will not remain upright in windy conditions. (Even a light wind will cause string vibrations and produce a strong hum from the instrument that may distract from the quality of the sound.)

4. Temperature for live performance must be within the 55 to 85 degree range.

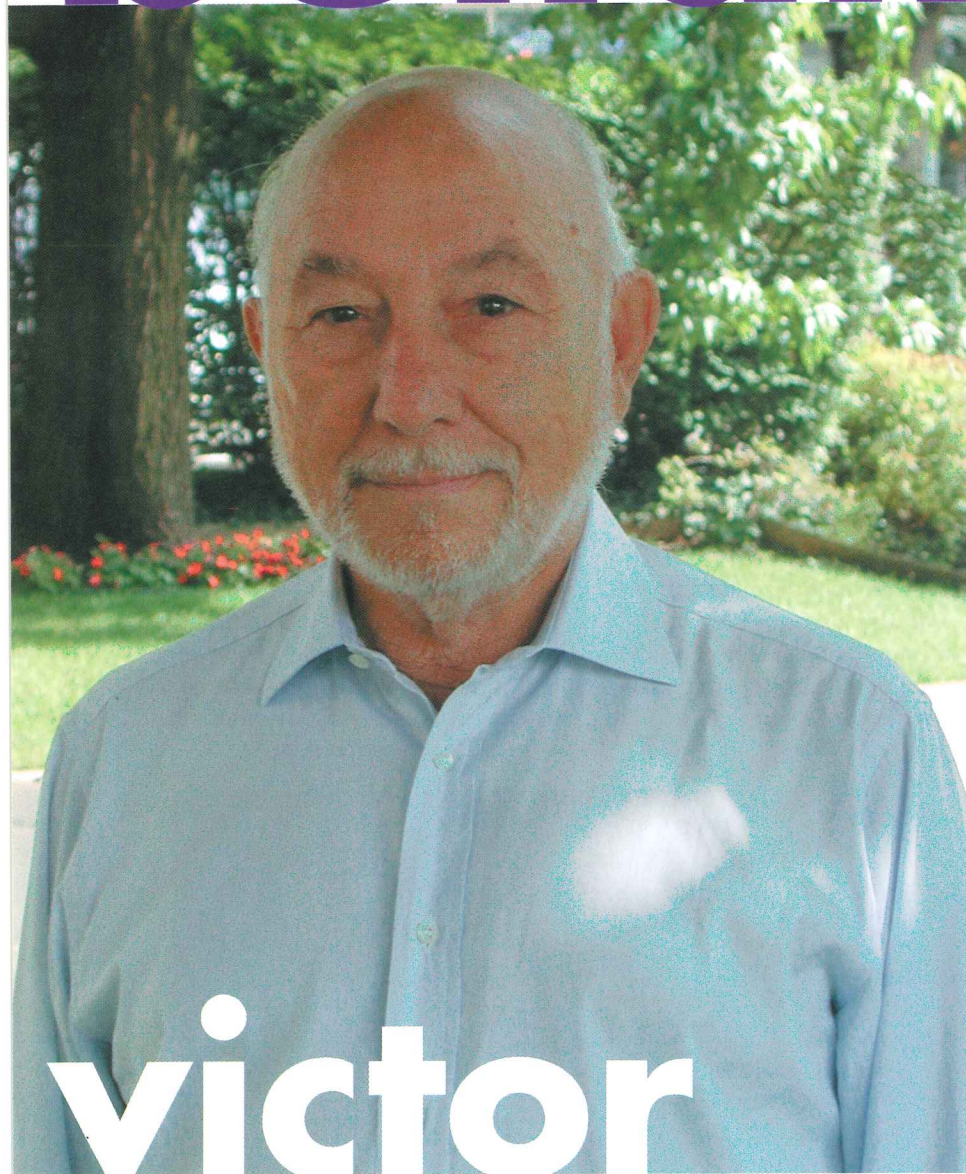
5. You cannot foresee all the things that can go wrong during an outdoor ceremony. I have dealt with swarms of hornets that made playing impossible, clouds of mosquitoes, noise from boats and motorized vehicles that drowned out the harp, and other unpleasant distractions such as children on bicycles riding through the ceremony."

If, after reading the addendum the bride decides not to contract my services, that's fine with me. By the way, don't forget clips to hold music onto your music stand and bug repellent. ■



Christine MacPhail
Orlando, Fla.

building a



victor
salvi

The Victor Salvi Foundation, named for the builder of harps which also bear his name and now owner of Lyon & Healy, is commissioning new works and sponsoring harp concerts in an effort to raise public interest in the harp. We talk with Salvi about his life and his latest venture.

good foundation

—by Kimberly Rowe

Harpists throughout the world are familiar with the name Victor Salvi, a harp builder who made his first harp in 1954, started his own Italian-based harp factory in 1957, and surprised us all by taking over the century-old Lyon & Healy harp company in 1987. In addition to his role as a harp builder, Salvi, an accomplished harpist himself, has made significant contributions to the harp community by donating prizes (usually harps) to major competitions, and sponsoring masterclasses and recitals for harpists and harp audiences all over the globe. In 1996 the World Harp Congress recognized Victor Salvi's achievements by honoring him with the Award of Recognition for Service to the International Harp Community.

Today, Salvi keeps busy overseeing both of his harp companies while also working to build the Victor Salvi Foundation, an organization he recently established to help promote the harp and new harpists to a wider audience through CD sponsorship, recital debuts, and the commissioning of new works for the harp. The Harp Column talked with Salvi over breakfast one day at the USA International Harp Competition; he had just finished listening to almost all of the 39 competitors perform their first round.

Harp Column: Every harpist in the world surely knows your name, but I don't think they know much about you. Most people know that you are a harp builder, but I don't think they know you are a harpist, too. Can you tell us a little bit about your career as a harpist?

Victor Salvi: I started touring before the war with a little ensemble—a trio with a singer. We traveled and played concerts from the Midwest to the East Coast. And then the war came along and I joined the Navy.

HC: And you played in the Navy band?

VS: Yes—at first I was at Glenview Naval Air Station for one year. I did everything else but play the harp. I did all sorts of routine maintenance work, like warming up the airplanes... But then they heard that there was a harpist in Glenview, and they transferred me to Great Lakes, where there was a big, wonderful music department—people who had played with Toscanini, some members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, even Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller—all the great jazz players and all the best people from all the best orchestras. It was a wonderful group, and I was

there for three years.

HC: What kind of playing did you do with the band?

VS: We [played] all types of music. We had wonderful arrangers who arranged music for Andre Kostelanetz, who was a very famous conductor at that time—they arranged popular songs in a symphonic style.

HC: Did you enjoy your time there?

VS: Yes, because the quality of the musicians was very high. After four years in the Navy I [moved to] Chicago, where my family lived, and started [playing for] shows. I also played for radio stations. Then the conductor of the St. Louis Sinfonietta came to Chicago to hold auditions for a soloist to perform with the Sinfonietta. I got the job, and I toured the United States doing about 80 concerts a year for Columbia Artists.

HC: Can you tell us some of the music you played—what were the concerts like?

VS: They were standard [harp] concerts. I played the *Introduction and Allegro*, the Handel Concerto—all the standard repertoire.

That ended, and many of the musicians [I met] persuaded me to go to New York. First, I waited to get my union card.

The first job I got was actually in Chicago playing for *Anthony and Cleopatra*, which starred the famous actress Talullah Bankhead. I was one of four musicians in the background behind the stage. Then I received a call that they were going to do *The Consul*, by Gian Carlo Menotti, on Broadway. It ran for eight months and there were many fine musicians in the orchestra, such as Janos Starker, Thomas Schippers, who was the pianist and later became well-known as a conductor, and Aaron Rosand, who is now Professor of violin at Curtis. [After that] I got called to audition for the [New York] Philharmonic. I tried out and got the job. The manager later called up NBC and talked to the director of the NBC Orchestra, [and I began] playing with NBC also. We rehearsed for both orchestras in the same place, in Carnegie Hall. I did that for three years or so.

HC: Of all the performing you did, what was your most enjoyable job as a harpist?

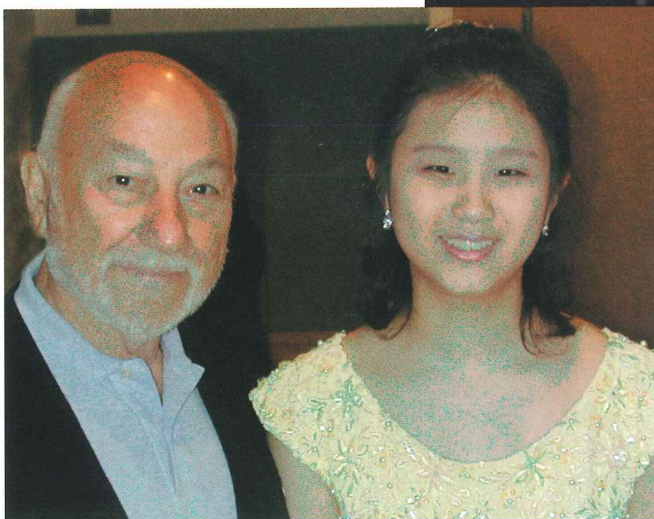
VS: When I was in New York, in the two orchestras, I was playing with conductors like Bruno Walter, Toscanini, George Szell, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Guido Cantelli, Pierre Monteux, Victor de Sabata—it was a great experience to play with the great figures of that era.

HC: We have a section in our magazine called “Strange But True Harp Stories,” where people write in and tell us funny things that have happened to them while they were playing. So do you have any “Strange But True Harp Stories?”

VS: I have a horrible story! My very first rehearsal with the NBC Orchestra was scheduled one day for 10:00 a.m., and I woke up at 10:00 a.m.! If the earth had opened up and swallowed me up I would have been very grateful at that moment. I started to run, putting on my clothes. I was living on 57th Street, near 8th Avenue, and fortunately Carnegie Hall was not that far. I got there and the cover was on my harp. Toscanini was very near sighted, and he didn’t know I was missing because my part hadn’t come up yet.

HC: Why did you have a desire to start building harps?

VS: It started in the Navy, actually. When you’re in an orchestra you have a lot of measures rest, and so I had time to start to really think about how the harp was constructed and to think about what



Right, Victor Salvi with his wife Julia; below, Salvi talks with Korean harpist Jane Yoon, winner of the 2000 Nippon Harp Competition



HC: Is that how you got started playing the harp?

VS: Well, I was born later, after the family had migrated to the United States—to Chicago. But both my brother Alberto and my sister Aida were very accomplished harpists, and so I also started to play the harp. My brother Alberto probably made the biggest career as a harpist of any of us. For many years he toured everywhere, performing over 80 solo concerts a year, and earning \$1000 a concert—an incredible amount for a concert in those days. Critics compared him to Casals, and even Liszt. Zabaleta used to say he was “the greatest harpist of all time.”

HC: What were your original goals when you started building harps?

VS: To make a better harp!

HC: Better in sound or better technically?

VS: Well, both. The sound is the first thing a musician looks for in an instrument—I was aiming at a different type of sound. I also developed a slightly different mechanism. Of course Lyon & Healy always has had a good sound and mechanism.

I wanted to find good craftsman to make my harps. I looked in England, then France, and then finally I went to Italy and found many excellent workers. So I started my first factory in Italy in a beautiful fifteenth century villa. It had a

could be changed—what could be done to make some improvements. Then I started a workshop in New York with several wood workers that I trained to make sound boards, necks etc, and so they gained experienced in making all the parts of the harp.

HC: I understand that your father was an instrument maker. What kind of instruments did he build?

VS: He made all types of instruments, from organs and pianos, to the string family, and also quite a few harps. He built instruments in a little village on top of a mountain in Italy—a village where there was no electricity and which you could only reach by carriage! The village is called Viggiano and had an incredible number of musicians. The whole economy of the town was based on music—in 1900 it had a total population of 3000, and had 35 harpists!

HC: Did he make pedal harps?

VS: Yes—single action mostly, because it was for a special type of music, and it had to be portable.

ballroom that was over 50 feet long! And so I was able to start experimenting with my ideas—with different types of wood and different materials in the mechanism. After about 15 years I decided to see if I could make an inexpensive instrument using some of these ideas, and came out with the Angelica model. It was a lighter weight, as it had an aluminum column, and it also had the pedal

springs at the top of the column instead of the base. Today people think this idea is a recent innovation, but I was already doing this many years ago. Then I dropped those ideas, because in reality the traditional pedal mechanism design of the harp has worked well for so many years and hardly ever breaks. But I also did a lot of experimentation in other areas. We created the first electric harp in 1979 and displayed it in the United States and Europe. The first ones had a solid body, like an electric guitar, but we now make electro-acoustic harps, which can be played either way.

HC: Tell us about your current factory.

VS: [The villa] was a beautiful idea, and it worked well at first, but I was there 12 years and finally we needed a more practical workplace as well as more space. So we moved with many of our workers to this place in the small town of Piasco in the Piedmont area in northern Italy where they are famous for Baroque furniture. They had lots of wonderful workers available. I went there first to make non-pedal harps so the workers could gain experience in making harps. Much later we started to make pedal harps, and we've been there ever since.

HC: How do you think Salvi harps are different from other brands?

VS: They have a musicality. How do I describe that? It's a warmer sound—the harp really responds to the touch and you can play *music* on it. Solo harpists like to play on these harps.

HC: Do you think the fact that you are such an accomplished harpist yourself has been a key factor in your success as a builder?

VS: Well, it's been a big help, because when we took over Lyon & Healy, I could right away point my finger at the problems.

HC: I have to ask this question: When Salvi acquired Lyon & Healy in the '80s, do you think people were surprised?

VS: Sure they were.

HC: Suddenly here you were with not one, but two harp companies. What prompted you to do that?

VS: I played a Lyon & Healy harp [for a long time], and it was a fine instrument. [It's a] Style 11 harp. But Lyon & Healy was going through many changes of ownership and its future was

looking uncertain. If I

hadn't bought [the company] it probably wouldn't exist today. When I bought it, it was with the idea to keep Lyon & Healy as Lyon & Healy, as it always was, and keep Salvi going in a different direction—[keep it] a different instrument.

HC: Why did you make that decision? Did the harp maker in you ever decide you might want to try to combine the two?

VS: No, that would have been arrogant on my part. I respected the Lyon & Healy harp. I wanted to bring it back to its old glory, and I think we've done that—now it is a magnificent harp.

HC: I've heard from other harp makers the concern that people are running out of good quality spruce wood for sound boards. Is that something that worries you?

VS: No. We get our spruce where Stradivarius got his, and fortunately that forest is plentiful, even today. We get beautiful wood. Some types of spruce are inexpensive, but the spruce we buy is extremely expensive; more than the most precious wood you can buy, because it's so selective, and then we must cure the wood for a long time before we start making a harp.

HC: I want to talk to you about the Victor Salvi Foundation. You started the Foundation to promote the harp and to promote harpists—what are some of your

immediate goals?

VS: One of the things we are doing is trying find composers to write new works and add to the repertoire—we've commissioned quite a few works for the harp already. One thing I've aimed for is expanding the violin and harp repertoire, which is very poor. And also [music for] cello and harp, which is even worse than violin and harp—there is very little.

HC: So commissioning new works is your number one goal right now?

VS: No—the other object is to try to get the harp back on the concert stage. What we're doing is to give as many recitals as we can to some of the winners of major competitions. We're also [sponsoring] debut CDs by these winners: Gwyneth Wentink, Catrin Finch, Anna Verkholtantseva, and Letizia Belmondo. We also have a series called Masters of Harp Composition, with renowned harpists performing the works of major composers. Natalia Shameyva recorded the works of the Russian masters, and Elisabeth Fontan-Binoche, who was a protégé of Tournier, recorded some of his most important pieces. There is also a series of standard repertoire pieces, per-

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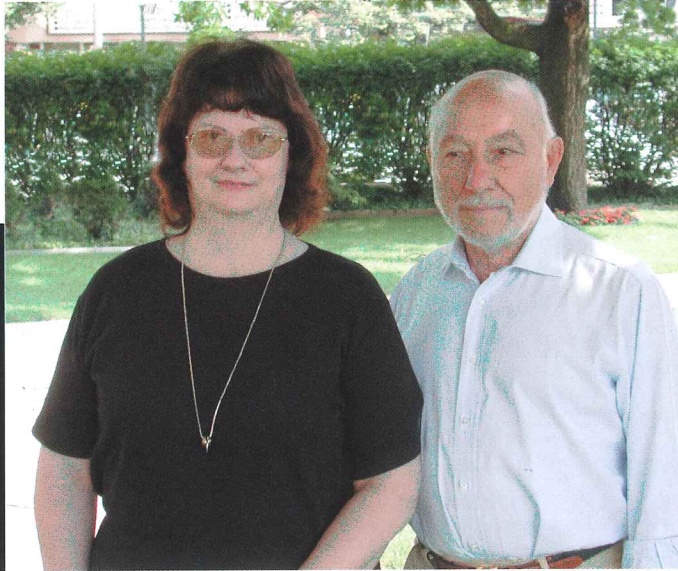
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"One of the things we are doing is trying to find composers to write new works [for the harp] and add to the repertoire."

Lyon & Healy's Moya Wright (left, with Salvi) is Director of the Victor Salvi Foundation.



formed by leading teachers and performers [such as] Sarah Bullen, Catherine Michel, and Xavier de Maistre, so students can listen to how [the music] *really* goes. I have many ideas to go in that direction. We [also] support other foundations, like Young Concert Artists Inc. of New York, so that they will want to include harpists in their programs.

HC: How do we get other musicians and these other foundations to take us seriously?

VS: Well, one thing is that we have to have good musicians. Today, with these young harpists coming up like Jane Yoon, who we heard [at the USA International Harp Competition], and who will certainly be a star in the future, and Xavier de Maistre, Gwyneth Wentink, Catrin Finch, Letizia Belmondo... Even then it is hard to get the press and critics to take notice.

HC: What new things can we expect from Salvi and Lyon & Healy in the near future?

VS: Why do some people expect harps to have new inventions? Violins, cellos, clarinets, [with] every instrument, the serious makers make them more or less

the same way. Even the Steinway piano is almost the same as it was 100 years ago.

HC: So I'm getting from you that you don't think there is a real need to mess with a formula that's worked for a long time.

VS: Absolutely not. The violin is a perfect example. In the seventeenth century when Amati made his first violin, he created the standard. Then Stradivarius came and made little adjustments.

Every violin maker of that period made adjustments, but [the standard was set] and these instruments have been unchanged for 300 years. The harp is the same. We have made minor adjustments, and still do through our research program, but the basic principles have stood the test of time.

Unfortunately, harps are self-destructive because of the tension directly on the soundboard, and they can't last forever, but despite this tension many harps survive for a long time. I have some harps that are very old in my collection.

HC: Tell us about them.

VS: I have harps going back to the

What has the Victor Salvi Foundation done so far?

—Sponsored concerts by international competition winners Gwyneth Wentink and Catrin Finch

—Given grants to the International Harp Archives, at Brigham Young University

—Presented masterclasses in London with Farice Pierre and Elisabeth Fontan-Binoche

—Comissioned works for violin and harp by Valeri Kikta, Thomas Rajna, and Dalwyn Henshall (a CD featuring several of these works is reviewed on pg. 42)

What will the Foundation do this year?

—Present concerts by Letizia Belmondo (winner of the International Harp Contest in Israel), Dan Yu (winner of the USA International Harp Competition), María Luisa Rayán, Gwyneth Wentink, and Catrin Finch

—Continue with support of the International Harp Archives and masterclass series in London

—Commission a new work by Kikta for cello and harp

eighteenth century. Also some early African instruments. I even have what I think is the first Erard harp in my collection.

HC: How many in all?

VS: Oh, 43 instruments, and I marvel at the magnificent workmanship of these instruments that are over 300 years old. They are all unique: the first Lyon & Healy harp, the first Erard—all of them have some unique historical importance. We are working on exhibiting them through the Foundation. That's a big project we're working on, and are always looking for more historic or unique harps to add to the collection.

HC: Where will they be exhibited?

VS: Eventually we will exhibit them in as many places as we can. We're working on trying to exhibit them through Europe first, then later the United States. It takes a lot of long-term planning! ■

"Why do some people expect harps to have new inventions? Violins, cellos, clarinets, [with] every instrument, the serious makers make them more or less the same way."



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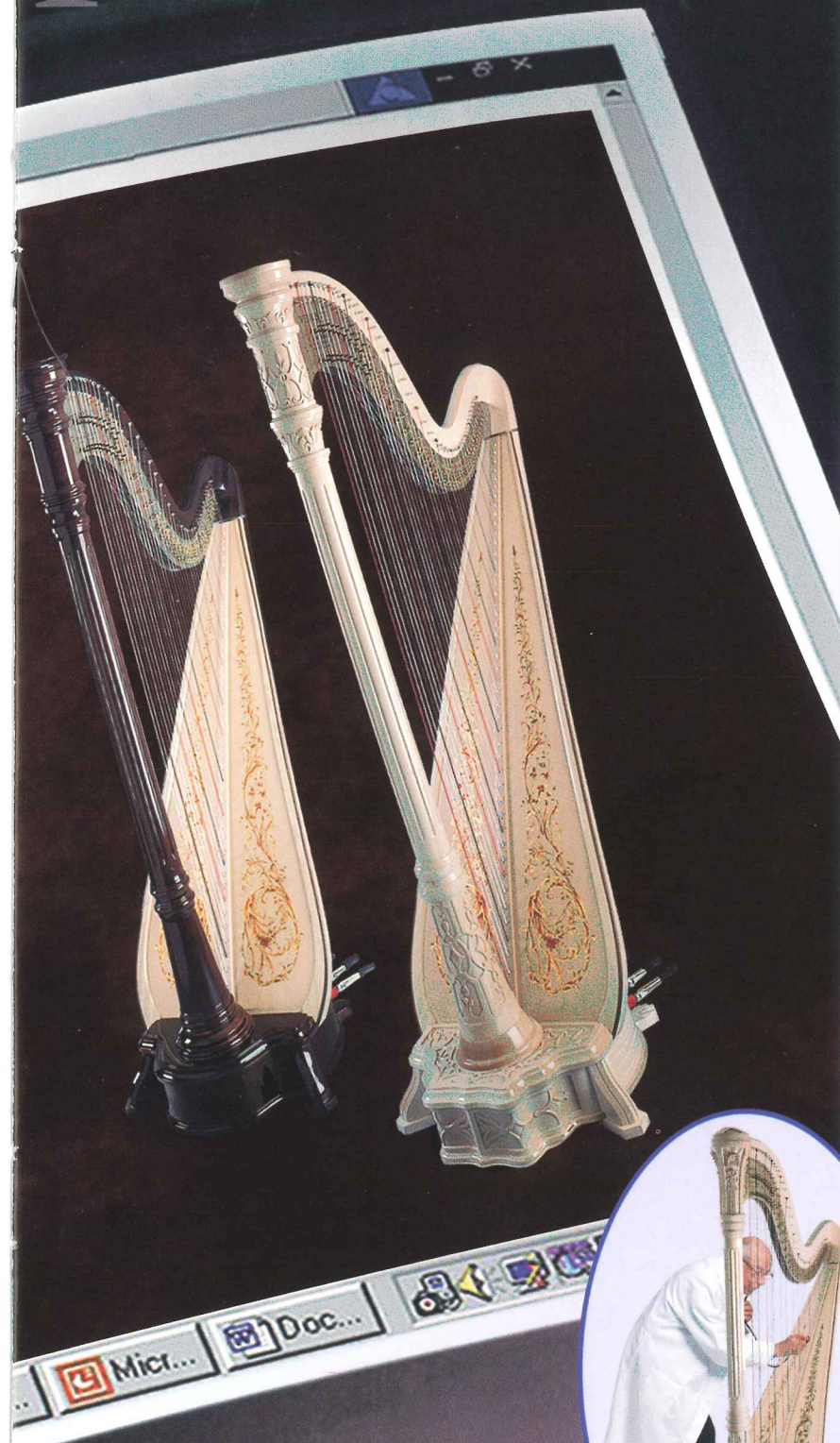
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What's the big difference between French and Salzedo harp techniques? Do harpists today know or care?

When I began studying the harp as a teenager in the late '60s, my teacher Marion Fouse made remarkable efforts to teach us the proper "French" harp technique. As a youngster, I was only vaguely aware of another harp technique. But later, when my daughter wanted to study the harp, I found an excellent teacher who was trained with the "Salzedo" technique. I still had questions about the real and perceived differences between the two techniques and mentioned to a harpist friend that I was curious about the current thinking among professionals, noting that I didn't think the issue was as big a deal as it had been in years past. "Oh, yes it is!" my friend replied with conviction. "Then why doesn't anybody talk or write about it?" I asked. "That topic is taboo. Nobody would dare discuss technique in a public forum," she replied.

I believe there are many harpists, particularly beginners, who may be confused about the differences between French and Salzedo harp techniques and what it all means for today's harpists. When I mentioned this issue to the *Harp Column*,

they asked me to conduct a survey of harpists in the U.S. to find out the current thinking on this topic. (See sidebar, pg. 34 for more information on how we conducted our survey.) Here is what we discovered:

BASIC ELEMENTS AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS

For the benefit of harpists who are unfamiliar with these schools of technique, a short synopsis may be helpful. Surprisingly, even some experienced harpists that responded to our survey admitted that they had little specific knowledge of the "other" method, except as their new students demonstrated techniques from previous teachers. We asked teachers, "What would you list as the essential elements of your preferred harp technique?" The most frequently listed answers appear in the chart on the following page.

It's interesting to note that players of each technique listed several of the same essential elements: good finger articulation, thumbs high, and relaxed body. The differences they pointed out include placement of the elbows and forearms,

the way a harpist's fingers address the strings, and the nature of the follow-through arm gesture (see photos, pg. 31).

Each school claims clear benefits. Miriam Gentle, of Maitland, Fla., describes the results she experiences using Salzedo's technique: "I think it produces a big sound—clean and clear. It is an elegant way of playing. It looks polished and stylish." Jordan Donley, harpist with the Paducah Symphony, lists "quick scales, good tone, and less buzzing," as Salzedo advantages.

"One note I can make," claims Lucille Lawrence, co-author with Salzedo of his *Method for Harp*, in a comment to the author, is that "those who understand and faithfully follow Salzedo's concept of harp technique will never have tendonitis, nor develop carpal tunnel problems."

Harpists who prefer the French technique also describe its benefits. Gail Lyons, harp instructor at Syracuse University, lists the advantages as "melodic playing, full sound, and the ability to play fast passages articulately." Other respondents claim the French method

enhances the ability to play for long periods without straining or tiring. Tamara Bischoff-Oswald, harp instructor at Weber State University, mentions "less stress on the shoulders and upper arms" as a benefit of the French style.

Time and again harp players on both sides of the fence mention playing stress and injury-free, while creating wonderful tone, as benefits of their technique. With these goals in mind, is it possible to get to the same destination while taking different paths? In a recent master class, my daughter received thoughtful instruction from Juilliard harp instructor Nancy Allen, who illustrated the universality of good technique. She taught that proper hand mechanics are necessary in order to execute difficult passages cleanly, and that outstanding harpists have a remarkable similarity of technique.

SOUND DIFFERENCES

Many harpists are curious to know whether players who use each school of technique produce a unique or different sound. About half (52 percent) of the harpists we talked to said it is possible to

determine what technique is being used "just by the sound." Some said they could detect subtle sound differences between techniques during a live performance, but not while listening to a recorded performance. Elizabeth Cifani, harp professor at Northwestern University, describes her theory, which seems to represent the views of many harpists who responded to our survey. "Broadly speaking," says Cifani, "Salzedo is a bit more percussive, French a bit mellower. Individual differences among players matter more than [the] method

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Harpists named the following characteristics as the most essential elements of their chosen technique:

FRENCH

- relaxed hands, arms, shoulders, and body
- good articulation with fingers closing fully into the palm
- right wrist rests lightly on the sound board
- wrists stay fluid
- Thumbs stay high on the strings
- Dedication to musical nuances

SALZEDO

- Forearms parallel to the floor with the elbows high; relaxed shoulders
- rounded fingers with good finger action
- wrists remain above the sound board
- expressive gestures
- high thumb position
- precise pedaling, rhythm, and special effects

[they use]."

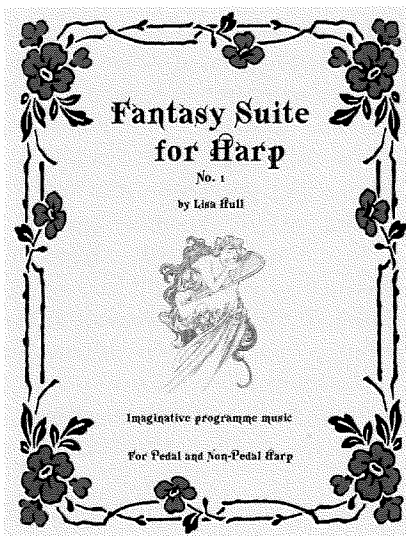
HOW GREAT THE DIVIDE?

Our survey established, at least among experienced professionals, that there is still some division among harpists based on technique. Only one of 70 harpists said there was no division (defined as a separation or segregation) at all. Another respondent downplays the issue, saying, "If there is a division, it only exists in a small number of people. Out here in the 'real world,' nobody would even know what you're talking about." However, overall, 40 percent of respondents acknowledged a "non-significant" division. A majority of 58 percent surveyed said the division between the two schools of thought was "significant." And, for whatever reason, Salzedo respondents (68 percent) were more likely to say the difference was significant, compared to non-Salzedo harpists (52 percent).

How wide is the division over technique? Forty-two percent of harpists said the gulf represented an "unhealthy disharmony." Nineteen percent said the differences were "neither healthy nor unhealthy," and a minority of nine percent said the division was a "healthy difference of opinion." Salzedo harpists were most likely to label the division as a

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The harpist in the black shirt is using a "French" technique; the harpist in the blue shirt is playing with a "Salzedo" technique. Many harpists we spoke to feel the differences are subtle.

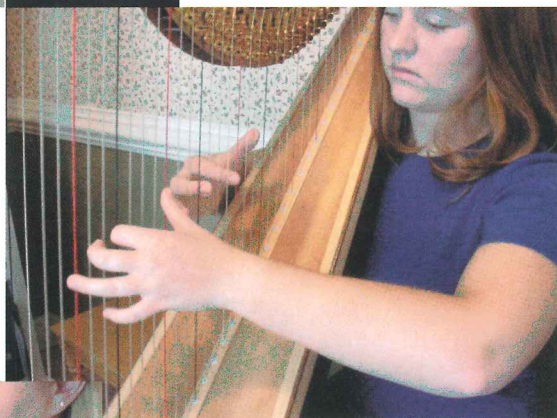
"healthy difference of opinion."

We noticed that there seemed to be a correlation between years of harp experience and devotion to a particular technique. This makes sense, as several harpists had personal relationships with founders Renie, Salzedo, and Grandjany (see Historical Overview), whose greatness as teachers fostered loyalty to both the person and the technique. This loyalty appears to be represented in what division remains today.

"When there is divisive sentiment," explains Elaine Cook, harpist with the Lexington Philharmonic, "it is more likely to be misplaced loyalty [among] followers than the attitudes of forerunners...I like to think there was a mutual respect between Grandjany and Salzedo. Their disciples are more likely to harbor 'unhealthy disharmony'."

Many harpists, including Ruth Myers, who teaches harp at Eastern Michigan University, find that differences based on technique represent an unhealthy disharmony between players. Myers describes the situation as an "attitude of non-acceptance based on a name — how sad!"

But Christine Holvick, instructor at Westmont College, thinks attitudes are changing. "I was keenly aware of the lack



of conflict at the 1996 World Harp Congress in Tacoma in regards to technique, unlike earlier Harp Weeks in Holland. In Tacoma it was a non-issue, as it should be every-

where. In fact, I observed that the similarities between hand positions from harpists all over the world far outweighed the differences. This is most assuredly not only due to modern students studying with several teachers in their lifetime, but also due to the sensible tolerance toward various hand positions by the teachers in my generation of baby boomers."

Despite these positive thoughts, it's clear that a certain amount of discrimination among harpists remains based on technique: "I've had students audition for me at the University," illustrates Kathy Bundock Moore, who teaches at the University of Northern Colorado,

"and when they find out I'm from the Grandjany school, they shudder. I have to play for them to prove how subtle the differences are. Other students call the school, ask me what method I teach, and hang up when they hear the answer."

Although our survey results indicate that a division between techniques definitely still exists, most harpists are looking toward the future. "The harp world is too small to be divided—it doesn't matter!" reasons Maria Casale instructor at Pepperdine University and Cal State Northridge. "I hope one day it will not

matter what technique we play with."

"To me the division seems to be decreasing with time," explains Diane Evans (Indianapolis Symphony), "It is unhealthy because it seems self-evident that there is insight to be gained through

open-mindedness."

Emily Mitchell, winner of the Seventh International Harp Contest in Israel, responded, "So many of my colleagues are close friends. We don't debate technique. We don't let personal and professional choices get in the way of working together. These are harpists who are secure in their own abilities."

Although most of us have witnessed aspects of an unhealthy division in the past, our survey suggests that these feelings are fading. Most harpists have had exposure to both French and Salzedo ideas, but claim to have a preferred technique. They generally minimize the party ideology, placing greater emphasis on the end goals: helping a student establish solid technique using natural hand positions, and playing the music cleanly and expressively.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Mary Brigid Roman, professor of harp at the Florida State University School of Music, gave us some background on the origin of harp techniques: "Historically speaking, there is a consensus that Alphonse Hasselmans [1845-1912] is the

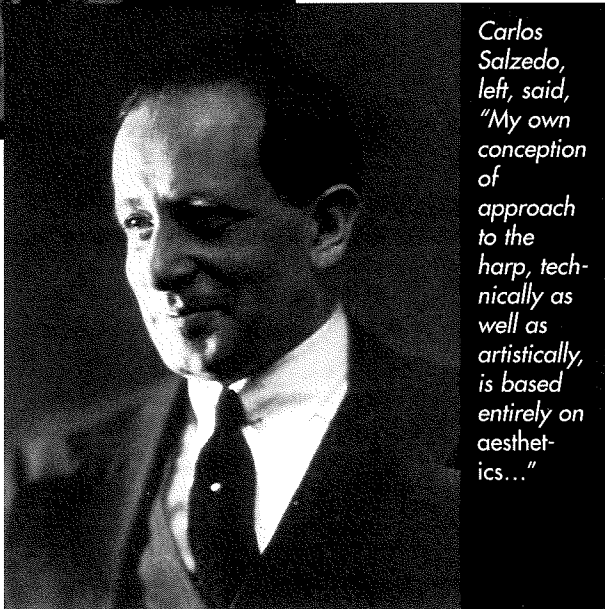


Marcel Grandjany, left, said, "It is by means chiefly of his tone that the harpist is able to state the color, the warmth, [and] the sensitivity of his musical thought."

founder and developer of the French method. Considering the fact that Grandjany, Salzedo, and Renie all studied under Hasslemans at the Paris Conservatoire, I feel that the schools they founded are basically variations on a theme. Each approached the harp with different philosophical and technical emphasis and adapted the French method, to match their own unique physiques and artistic temperaments."

By today's definitions, "French technique" generally refers to the techniques taught by Henriette Renie (1875-1956) and Marcel Grandjany (1891-1975), with subtle differences between the two. Renie's ideas are carefully outlined in her two-volume *Complete Method for Harp*. She states the essential element in the forward of Book I: "The entire basis of my method lies in one fundamental principle: *suppleness*." Renie spent her adult life performing, composing, and teaching in Europe.

In a 1940 interview with Stephen West for *Etude* music magazine, Grandjany presented his views on teaching: "Contrary to the general belief, the harpist's first problem is not his technique, but his *tone*... It is by means chiefly of his tone that the harpist is able to state the color, the warmth, [and] the sensitivity of his musical thought."



Carlos Salzedo, left, said, "My own conception of approach to the harp, technically as well as artistically, is based entirely on aesthetics..."

method, his carefully edited original pieces and transcriptions, with fingering and preparatory placing unusually well marked, as well as the frequent and calculated employment of symbols for damping, muffling, etc., all of which should be carefully observed by the performer, indicate the technical skills required for an approximation of his interpretation of the music." (See *Harp & Harpists*, by Roslyn Rensch, pp. 242-243)

Carlos Salzedo, born Charles Marcel Léon (1885-1961), was a

In 1938 Marcel Grandjany became the head of the harp department at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. In 1943 he organized the first harp department at the Conservatoire in Montreal, and from 1956 to 1966 he also headed harp studies at the Manhattan School of Music. "While Marcel Grandjany published no harp

renaissance man when it came to technique. According to Alice Chalifoux in a speech at the 2001 Baltimore Harpfest, Salzedo refined his technique after coming to America in the early part of the twentieth century and observing a lack of technique among harpists of that time. In the January, 1952, issue of *Etude*, (and later reprinted in the Spring, 1971, issue of the *American Harp Journal*), Salzedo explained, "My own conception of approach to the harp, technically as well as artistically, is based entirely on *aesthetics*... The proper angle of the elbows brings about the right curve to the wrist which, in turn, assures the necessary opening between the thumb and second finger. When this opening is correct, the fingers have the proper curve. The start of the whole procedure therefore lies in the elbow position."

In 1924 Salzedo founded the harp department at the Curtis Institute of Music, in Philadelphia, and in 1931 he established the Summer Harp Colony of America, in Camden, Maine. Salzedo's ideas regarding technique can be found in his *Method for Harp*, written with Lucile Lawrence. His *Modern Study of the Harp* includes explanations of the various harp effects he discovered or developed, plus information about the appropriate gestures to be used in producing them.

MELDING TECHNIQUES

Eighty-two percent of the harpists we surveyed agree that some level of melding of techniques is possible. As the number of harpists and harp teachers grows, and the frequency of exposure to more than one technique increases,

melding becomes more of a pragmatic necessity. Like a person living in a bilingual world, melding techniques is often a necessary skill and helps the artist more effectively communicate musical ideas. We noticed that some younger harpists described themselves as "mutts," saying they practiced a mix of techniques that

Most teachers agree that it is best to approach harp study with a definite technique in mind. Begin with a basic recipe, and then make variations as needed to accommodate the needs of each student.

best suited their physical need, performance style, and musical preferences. Respondents universally agree that a solid technique, whatever the school, is absolutely essential as a foundation for advanced study.

"Both French and Salzedo [techniques] have great qualities. I have no idea why harpists don't explore them both!" encourages Janice Ortega, instructor at Cal State Hayward. "The division is based on lack of knowledge, fear to explore other methods, or lack of curiosity."

Kathleen Moreno Dorkin, who teaches at the New England Conservatory Extension School, summed up the comments of several respondents when she wrote, "This is something that I am constantly trying to work towards. I believe that every person's hand is physically different, and this must be considered at all times. The best of the tone-producing aspects of Salzedo in combination with the aspects of French that lead to quick, facile techniques are all beneficial."

"I do not believe that hand position must be absolute," explains Stephanie Curcio, harp instructor at the University of New Hampshire. "Sometimes it is better to lean the right arm on the sound board, especially in the upper ranges of the harp, to achieve a fluid sound. Other times the free-floating right arm is better because it allows for more power and a different quality of tone production. Yes, one must have basic principles, but depending on the type of sound one wishes to produce, it might be better to roll the hand, tip the fingers up or down more, or alter the angle of the palm from almost facing the strings to perhaps a 45 degree angle toward the floor. Everything depends on the type and period of the music [we are playing] and the quality of sound we wish to achieve."

Several harpists we heard from said that the kind of music they are playing dictates their preference for one technique or the other. Elizabeth Cifani says, "Just alter the angle of the hands slightly — more 'Salzedo' for *The Ring* [Wagner], more 'French' for Debussy!" One harpist said that her teacher told her to "Do what works! So if I need to curve my fingers to negotiate a difficult passage, I do."

One aspect of technique that seems

to be controversial is the issue of elbow position. "My students tease me that they want to study with a French teacher, because they won't be bugged about their elbows...finding a middle ground on elbow placement is a lot more comfortable for many people" says Pamela Eldridge, harpist with the Colorado Ballet. Some harpists feel it is a black-and-white issue, not to be compromised. "Either your arms are on the board or off. You close [your fingers] or you don't close. You raise or you don't. The reasons you do those things are essential,

and they are different" says Ruth Myers.

Whatever the differences, the melding of techniques is becoming more common. Many teachers still maintain definite preferences for French or Salzedo technique, but are showing an increasing willingness to combine some aspects of both techniques to accommodate the individual needs of their students.

TEACHING CHALLENGES

Most teachers agree that it is best to approach harp study with a definite technique in mind. Begin with a basic recipe,

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ABOUT OUR SURVEY

We started our quest with a short survey designed to gather information from experienced American harpists. Because our objective was to gather information fairly representing what is being taught in universities today, we first went through the directory of teachers listed in the back of the *American Harp Journal*, choosing to send surveys to those who were affiliated with universities or colleges. Secondly, we went through the American Harp Society (AHS) directory of members and sent surveys to local chapter presidents who were listed as both teachers and professionals, assuming that they are knowledgeable about issues of technique on the local level. And finally, we scanned through the AHS Directory again, choosing one name at random from each page, the criterion again being that the person was both a teacher and a professional harpist. We felt it was important to include independent teachers in addition to well-known harpists. At least one survey was sent to an AHS member in each state, so that the results would be potentially representative of the nation as a whole, not just pockets of influence here and there. We sent out 200 surveys that included self-addressed, stamped return envelopes.

FEEDBACK

We were amazed to discover how eager harpists were to be heard on this issue. Seventy-two surveys were completed, a return rate of 36 percent, which, according to the author's market-researcher husband, is much higher than expected from the average questionnaire. Many of our respondents wrote in the margins and on blank spaces on the sur-

vey. Despite the fact that the survey consisted of mostly open-ended questions, our respondents often included personal letters giving more complete and detailed explanations and included valuable material from other publications. Some expressed gratitude that the issue was being addressed. However, one energized respondent returned a reply letter saying, "I believe this questionnaire and the questions on it further serve to divide the harp world... I teach anyone who is an accomplished and serious harpist, regardless of this 'method' issue, which I find irrelevant, divisatory, and tedious."

There was a fairly even mix of techniques represented in the responses. Twenty-nine respondents (42 percent) said they preferred the Salzedo technique, 23 people (33 percent) said they preferred the French school, and 17 harpists (25 percent) said they used a combination, or had no preferred techniques.

We were impressed with the number of years of experience of the survey respondents. Thirty-seven years was the average number these harpists had played the harp. Almost a quarter of respondents had played more than 50 years. The sum total of years played for the survey respondents was an amazing 2,172 years.

Many of the harpists who responded to the survey know harp history well because they had the privilege of studying with Renie, Grandjany or Salzedo. Several of them studied with more than one famous teacher. One respondent, Geraldine Ruegg, was clearly a Renie enthusiast, noting that she was the translator of Renie's "Complete Method."

ion: "I believe that beginning and intermediate students should be given the kind of structure and guidance a single method provides, but students at the advanced level should be encouraged to explore all the options and find out what best serves their interests. No single method is going to work for all people. Harp teachers should be more open to letting advanced students have more input in their instruction and let go of the innate desire to create someone in their own image."

"I feel that everyone can learn from each other in a variety of ways," concludes Yolanda Kondonassis, who heads the harp department at the Cleveland Institute of Music, "but, I do believe that it is best to learn one method in a whole sense and make it your own. Otherwise, the result is often a hodge-podge with many gaps in understanding and execution."

Our survey asked for additional comments or suggestions regarding the importance of developing good harp technique. Patricia Vaeth Croke, of Colorado Springs, Colo., added, "I have told my students they can play with their feet as long as their tone is good and they are truly musicians, not just players, and I don't have to watch them."

Gillian Benet Sella, harpist with the Cincinnati Symphony, adds, "It doesn't matter which technique a student studies as long as they are relaxed, have good sound, can play loudly without harshness, and can play a true *piano* [dynamic] when necessary."

"A healthy technique is the foundation for musical expressivity," explains Lynn Aspnes, harp instructor at the University of Michigan School of Music. "Healthy technique varies on some level from student to student. Fundamentals are the same regardless of physical approach: body awareness, sound, and musical imagery can only happen through a healthy, consistent, and organized technical approach."

"Good technique is fundamental," writes Mary Cecile Graham, of Concord, N.H. "It is a valuable tool to enable the player to express themselves musically. It is not an end in itself, but is developed to serve the music."

and then make variations as needed to accommodate the individual needs of each student. Students can benefit by studying with a teacher of another technique, but it can be very traumatic when they are asked to change everything.

"Each person has differences in hands, body, and mind," explains Stella Chaloupka Buscemi, a harpist from Arlington, Va. "The trick for a teacher is to find how to approach all of these things. I do not challenge a student who

learned using a different technique, but I gradually explain how something could possibly be made easier."

"I have had students who were not Salzedo trained," writes Ann Hobson Pilot, instructor at the New England Conservatory. "The challenge is to find areas of their technique which need to be improved, while not imposing the strict Salzedo method."

Ted Nichelson, a graduate student at Ball State University, expresses his opin-

METHOD

There were numerous responses to the question, "What specific method books and solos best support the technique you teach?" (We are using the word "method" to identify the actual books teachers use as a course of study, and the word "technique" to describe the manner in which one plays.) Naturally, the proponents of each technique listed the books and solo music by Renie, Salzedo, and Grandjany as teaching resources. There was, however, substantial crossover in this area, with many composers being cited as providing valuable materials for serious study. Those mentioned most often were Pozzoli, Grossi, Holy, Bochsá, Naderman, Larivière, Hasselmans, Dilling, and Milligan. Several contemporary composers were listed including Andres, Bundock

"I feel that everyone can learn from each other in a variety of ways," concludes Yolanda Kon-donassis. "but, I do believe that it is best to learn one method in a whole sense and make it your own."

Felice Pomeranz, who teaches jazz harp at the Boston Conservatory. "A well-balanced diet is more than just good advice for eating!"

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

A harpist friend, knowing that I recently gathered a wealth of information regarding technique, asked me, "So, what is the answer?"

The answer is not a simple one. Clearly there is still a division of harpists and

Moore, Curcio, Friou, McDonald/Woods, and Waddington (Suzuki method). "Any book will do," states Elizabeth Panzer. "The technique is not on paper."

"My hope would be that in a student's education all styles and sources might be used in some degree," noted

harp teachers between the French and Salzedo schools of playing. And technical bigotry still occurs, though most harpists believe such unprofessional behavior is based more on personality differences. As time passes from the era of the founders, and harpists learn from a broader diversity of teachers, the divide is clearly narrowing. All harpists agree that good technique is an essential foundation for a lifetime of performance excellence. And many harp teachers agree that the end goals can be met by either the French or Salzedo method, or a combination of techniques.

From the individual harpist's viewpoint, answers are of a more personal nature and must be found by each student and teacher through dedication and hard work. For me, answers were found in the French method taught by a teacher with an extraordinary dedication to bringing her students the best: her summers spent studying with Pierre Jamet and Catherine Michel in France, and master classes organized for us with the best performers of the French style. No matter where one begins, there is a path that leads to good technique. ■

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30 smart start smart

starts

30

tips for students and teachers to help get your harp year off to the right start.

—by Kimberly Rowe

Pack up the swimsuits and the camping gear, get out the tuning key and the nail clippers; It's September, and it's time to get serious again about the harp. We all know learning to play the harp is a year-round pursuit, but since Fall is the time when most students and teachers begin their school year, as well as other extra-curricular activities, it's also a good time to examine how harping priorities fit into the schedule.

What can you do to start this school year off on the right foot? (Or should we say "string"?) We asked *Harp Column* staff members, writers, and friends to give us their best teaching, learning, and organizational tips. Some tips are for students and some are for teachers. All of them will help you jump start your year.

1 GO TO CONCERTS

"Attend three to five harp concerts over the next school year, and write a report or review about the concert. Listen to the performance and evaluate the repertoire, the style of playing, the interpretation of the music, and even the presentation of the concert. Go to more live harp performances!"

—Therese Honey, Houston, Texas

2 START A JOURNAL

"Write down your harp-related questions, observations, and accomplishments throughout the week. This will provide for a more productive lesson and help you foster awareness and observation of the harp in different ways. Did you see a harpist on TV or in a movie? Did you hear a harp on the radio? Write about it."

—Denise Grupp-Verbon, Toledo, Ohio

3 LISTEN TO RECORDINGS

"Buy two radically different harp CDs to broaden your horizons."

—Joanna Mell, Sellersville, Pa.

get organized

6 TAKE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR HARP GEAR

"Do an inventory of harp supplies: strings, batteries for your tuner and metronome, an extra tuning key, and even your music. There may be some forgotten gems in your pile already. You can also check out your closet for performance attire. Is it time for a new black blouse? Do you have plenty of nylons or socks without runs?"

—Lynne Abbey-Lee, Denver, Colo.

7 RE-ESTABLISH YOUR STUDIO POLICIES

"It's helpful to have your lesson policies in writing for students to review prior to their first lesson. You might include the cost and length of each lesson, payment arrangements (must they pay in advance, at the beginning of each

4 MEET OTHER HARPISTS

"Last year I hosted a back-to-school harp gathering for my students. For lack of a better name, I called it a 'harp hootenanny.' I invited my students to bring their harps to my house, and we watched the *Celtic Harpstry* video and had some snacks. Afterward, I taught them a few Irish tunes. It was a highly motivating evening for my students, and it got things rolling for the year. They played the Irish tunes they learned that night for a performance in December at a local nursing home. I think it is extremely important for my students to feel that they are part of a harp community. The camaraderie they experience during our harp gatherings helps them aspire to higher levels of playing."

—Laura Dishong, Moorestown, N.J.

5 JOIN AN ENSEMBLE

"Find a way to get some ensemble experience this year. Finding a harp partner or other instrumentalist to play duets with will develop your rhythm and general musicianship."

—Louise Trotter, Houston, Texas

8 KEEP TRACK OF WHAT YOU LEARN

"I encourage students to keep a running tally of every piece they learn. The best selections can be made into a permanent repertoire list, which can be divided into categories such as classical, folk, sacred, and pop. This helps prepare students to play in public in a variety of situations."

—Louise Trotter, Houston, Texas

9 UPDATE YOUR STUDENT RECORDS

month, etc.), and scheduling policies (do you charge for lessons cancelled less than 24 hours in advance, except in the case of illness or inclement weather?). This simple tool will help prevent any misunderstandings."

—Sarajane Williams, Bethlehem, Pa.

get motivated



Denise Grupp-Verbon, of Toledo, Ohio, asks her students to write down their weekly harp thoughts in a practice journal.

"At the beginning of the academic year, I like to update my index file with information about each student. Include such things as their grade in school, parents' names and work phone numbers, and current addresses and phone numbers. It's also a good time to remind students of your studio policies."

—Jan Jennings, Orlando, Fla.

10 ANTICIPATE BUSY TIMES

"If you are in demand, as so many students are, for playing in church, school, or other ensembles, it's important to find out in September what your performance obligations will be for December. That way you can reduce a great deal of stress, and you and your teacher can methodically and thoroughly prepare for the hectic Christmas "crazies."

—Felice Pomeranz, Boston, Mass.

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set goals

11 WRITE DOWN YOUR MUSICAL GOALS

"At the start of the Fall season, I discuss what goals my students have, as well as make some of my own suggestions. We write them down and try to look at them now and then to keep on track. With young students, the goals usually have something to do with preparing for an upcoming competition or learning an orchestra part for school. Adult students will have their own goals depending on the type of repertoire they enjoy and what kind of performing they plan to do."

—Louise Trotter, Houston, Texas

12 IMPROVE YOUR TECHNICAL WEAKNESSES

"Set goals not only for repertoire to learn, but also for specific harp skills you need to improve. If you have a weakness in some area, such as memorization or sight-reading, try to set deadlines for accomplishing some work in the area that needs improvement."

—Jan Jennings, Orlando, Fla.

13 CHOOSE AND PREPARE MUSIC

"With your teacher, make a list of all the music you want to learn this year. Then order it and copy your teacher's markings into it so it's ready to go when you need it."

—Kimberly Rowe, editor, Harp Column

14 LOOK FOR PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

"In addition to asking students if there are any pieces or orchestra parts they would like to learn, we discuss possible performance opportunities for the upcoming semester and year. I encourage both high school and college students to talk with the ensemble directors at their school and church; for example, if I think a student is ready to learn Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*, I ask that they mention it to their choral



To help set and stick to musical goals, Maryanne Meyer, of Bloomington, Ind., likes to plan a recital date.

director. There is no substitute for the added enthusiasm and willingness to practice and improve when a performance beckons!"

—Rebecca Smith, College Park, Md.

15 PLAY ON A RECITAL

"Learn music for a recital, and set a recital date. This will force you to have things ready by that time."

—Maryanne Meyer, Bloomington, Ind.

16 FIND OUT WHAT COMPETITIONS YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO ENTER...

"Gather information on competitions that are going to be held during the next year. American Harp Society competitions are always good to aim for, since the repertoire is probably music you should learn anyway. It's also good to look into general music competitions; There are a lot of music clubs and community orchestras out there that hold annual competitions for students."

—Therese Hurley, Collingswood, N.J.

17 ...THEN ENTER THEM!

"Last September, I challenged my students to prepare for an Irish harp competition. The competition was scheduled to take place in June, so they had plenty of time to practice. Two of my students did compete, and one took second prize. The competition was a great motivator for these particular students."

—Laura Dishong, Moorestown, N.J.

how to get to Carnegie Hall

18 MAKE A DAILY COMMITMENT

"Remember that learning to play a musical instrument is a daily commitment. Even though your lesson is once a week, or once a month, you must set aside a block of your time each day for learning."

—Mary Schafer, Vorhees, N.J.

19 FIND A PRACTICE TIME THAT WORKS

"For the 'morning person, it might be before school. This gets one daily responsibility out of the way early on, and working when you are fresh allows for amazing achievement. For others, immediately after school (and a snack) is best. Music can also create a nice break in the day before it's time for homework to take over, and for many, practicing right after supper works well. But the later in the day you do it,

the more oppressing it becomes and the more likely you are to skip it because you are just plain tired."

—Stephanie Curcio, Stratham, N.H.

20 CREATE A COLOR-CODED PRACTICE SCHEDULE

"Get an eight-by-ten sheet of paper and create a column for each day of the week; across the other side of the page write in times of the day, in half-hour blocks, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (This can also be done on a computer or with a scheduling planner.) With a black marker, write in all the things you have to do that are non-negotiable, like classes or work. This will be your master schedule that you can re-edit each week. Next, take a colored pen (say, green) and write in the times you plan to study each day. This will change each week, according to the requirements of your classes and whether you are in an exam week. With another color (say, red), mark in your

practice times for each day. Make sure to space your practice up over the whole day, and give yourself short breaks every 45 minutes. Finally, and this is very important, use another color (perhaps purple) to mark in your rest and recreation times. Don't cheat yourself. You will practice more effectively if you have some fun elements in your life. Also, it is easier to practice at 9:00 a.m. if you know that at 7:00 p.m. you are going to a movie with a friend. At the end of each week, take out your colored pens, and re-invent your ideal schedule, altering those scheduled times that didn't quite work. Post your schedule where you see it constantly, and be proud of yourself when you make it work."

—Dr. Carol McLaughlin, Tucson, Ariz.

21 MAKE A PRACTICE LOG

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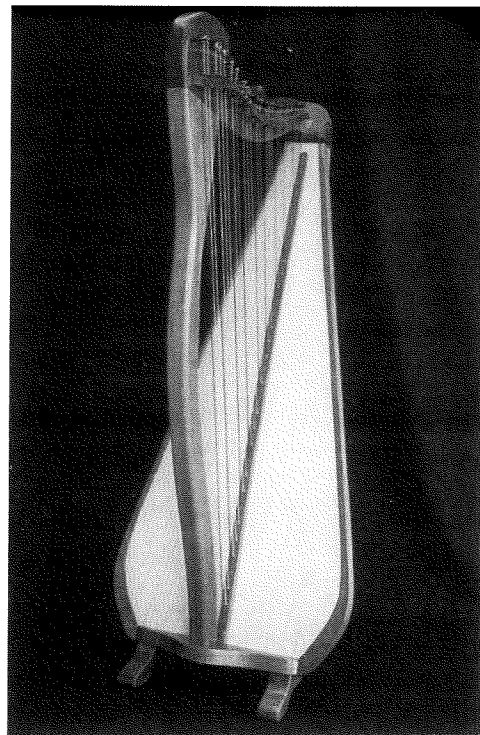
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Ann Yeung, of Urbana, Ill., advises students to “focus on your goals.” If you want to accomplish something, says Yeung, you are the only one who can do it.

how much practice time is needed per week helps provide a clear indication of how much time they really spend practicing.”

—Felice Pomeranz, Boston, Mass.

22 WORK ON ONE SKILL AT A TIME

“For beginning harpers, there is so much to think about at once: hand position, placement, bracketing, timing, note accuracy, musicality, etc. I tell my students, ‘This time, play with only the thought of making beautiful music. It doesn’t matter what your hands are doing.’ You would not believe how differently the music comes out. Then I tell them to add only one skill to what they are playing. Each time they play, they are to concentrate on a different skill, but only one at a time. For example, if their skill is rhythm and timing, they are to keep the beat no matter what notes get played. Likewise, if they are working on note accuracy, they should play every note perfectly and are not worry if the timing is not perfectly executed. I ask them to do this with each harping skill, concentrating on one at a time, as they play through their assignments. I find that this alleviates some of the stress of having so many things to think about at

once while practicing. Then when students try to put all the skills together, it happens with more ease and less stress.”

—Bonnie Pullman, via the Internet

23 WORK OUT THE TRICKY PARTS

“Work out the tricky parts of each piece, without playing through the entire piece. Repeat those sections several times, then back up a few measures and try to connect the easy part smoothly with the tricky part. Usually, by the end of the week you will have accomplished your goal. Save the fun stuff for last—something to look forward to at the end of your practice session.”

—Mary Schafer, Vorhees, N.J.

24 BUILD UP YOUR ENDURANCE

Much as your teacher would love to hear that you’ve been practicing consistently all summer, if you’ve been away from the harp, be realistic and pace yourself until you build up your endurance and facility. That way you won’t injure yourself by going from zero hours a day to four or more hours a day trying to cram a summer’s amount of work into one week.”

—Ann Yeung, Urbana, Ill.

25 DEVELOP OTHER INTERESTS

“Practice, practice, practice! But find an interest outside music. It will help to keep you refreshed and balanced as a person.”

—Kathleen Bride, Rochester, N.Y.

26 HAVE FUN

“I always tell my students they need to have fun with their harp, which to me is the most important part of taking lessons. Not only should they practice the exercises and pieces I assign them, but they need to play with wild abandon—try different chords, arpeggios, and melodies of their own making—not just from the printed page.”

—Bonnie Pullman, via the Internet

27 HAVE AN OPEN MIND

“Keep an open mind as you begin study with a new teacher. Your teacher is adjusting to you as a new student as well.”

—Kathleen Bride, Rochester, N.Y.

28 INSPIRE SOMEONE

“The most important part of my job as a teacher is to inspire and encourage students so they will race home to practice. I always try to end the lesson very upbeat and optimistic.”

—Sunita Staneslow, Israel

29 FOCUS ON YOUR GOALS

“Be focused—if you want to accomplish something, you are the only one who can put in the work towards that goal.”

—Ann Yeung, Urbana, Ill.

30 EXPERIENCE THE JOURNEY

“As the slogan says, ‘Life is a journey, not a guided tour.’ Curiosity about your new performance life (especially for those in college), coupled with a sense of humor, will serve you very well in most situations.”

—Kathleen Bride, Rochester, N.Y. ■



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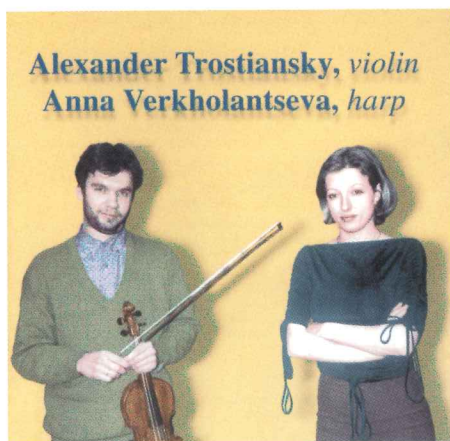
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—by Darin Kelly

ALEXANDER TROSTIANSKY, VIOLIN AND ANNA VERKHOLANTSEVA, HARP
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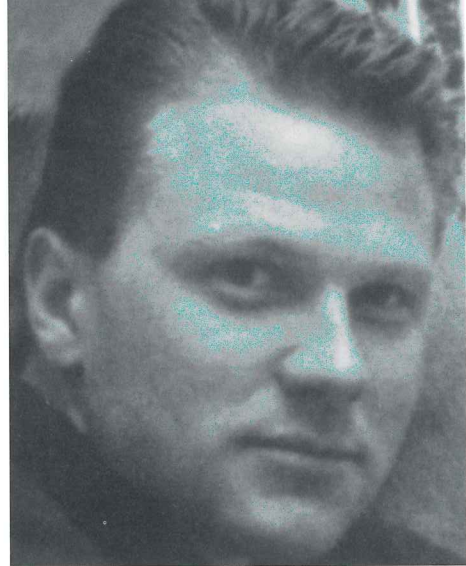


Considering that the balance of violin and harp duos leave the impression of a harpist trying feverishly to cover a piano score, the A & R folks at Egan records made two brainy decisions with regard to a violin and harp disc. First, they included only works written for that instrumentation, shunning the usual transcriptions. Second, they found a violin and harp duo that can flat-out play. The two young Russians Trostiansky and Verkholtantseva are equally brilliant, displaying a near-perfect balance of jaw-dropping technique, heartfelt expression, and flawless

ensemble. With a musical maturity that belies their years, these two make the disc's program sound natural, unforced, and refined.

The duo's familiarity with each other comes as no great surprise: they performed the premiere of two of the four pieces on the disc at the 1999 World Harp Congress in Prague. These two pieces, one by Ukrainian composer Valeri Kikta and the other by Hungarian Thomas Rajna, are written in a way that embraces the unorthodox nature of the violin and harp ensemble, instead of attempting to obscure it. What really makes these two pieces work, however, are the dazzling performances of Trostiansky and Verkholtantseva. Trostiansky's violin acts as an extension of his voice, with flawless intonation and a rich sound that both soars and shimmers when either timbre is called for. Verkholtantseva plays in much the same way, with a keen sense of drama and expression. These two players' performances are thoroughly convincing, especially on the Kikta and Rajna works they know so well.

The Kikta Sonata explores rich harmonies and varied colors but is substantive enough to satisfy the chamber music devotee. Rajna's Suite is perhaps a bit more transparent, but its well-conceived structure and interesting, tuneful quality are more than enough to make this a fitting finisher for the disc. Both pieces are worthy additions to the repertoire. In perhaps the ultimate compliment to the purist, the strikingly natural technique displayed here—especially by harpist



Verkholtantseva—prompts favorable comparisons to the best violin and piano duos.

Rounding out the disc are a few chestnuts by Rossini and Saint-Saëns, also well-played and enjoyable. But harpists will find the most interest in the two new works, expertly composed and thrillingly performed. This isn't just another harp record; this is chamber music at its best, with two young stars providing some serious fireworks.

CHORDS IN BLUE
CAROL ROBBINS, HARP
JAZZCATS RECORDS



Those of you who have read this column in the past know that one of my pet peeves is the harpist (or any instrumentalist, for that matter) who

releases a disc of an alternative genre of music just for the heck of it. Often, the results of a predominantly classical harpist recording a jazz or Celtic disc are catastrophic—the lack of true understanding of style eerily manifest. Happily, some discs come by which are terrific representations of these styles. The difference is that these discs are invariably recorded by actual jazz musicians who might happen to play the harp. Such is the case with jazz veteran Carol Robbins' latest offering, *Chords in Blue*.

Robbins can swing. Long a fixture in the Los Angeles jazz and pops scene, Robbins' playing deserves to be heard.

The arrangements of a few standards and some original tunes are fresh and clean, and Robbins herself displays her big-time jazz chops. Her playing is unforced and natural, and she voices chords with a nice flair for logical progression. And, let it be said, Robbins can swing. Long a fixture in the Los Angeles jazz and pops scene, Robbins' playing deserves to be heard. Her first-rate rhythm section lends additional credence to what really should be a rule of thumb for all harpists out there: don't make a jazz record if you really don't know what you're doing. No question here; Robbins knows what she's doing, and she's doing it as well as anybody. ■

Trumpeter Darin Kelly plays classical, contemporary, and Celtic music in Philadelphia, Pa.; he is also a composer and arranger.

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your holiday shopping guide

Some new music to learn for the holiday season, plus a collection from Barbara Brundage to add to your wish list.

—by Jan Jennings

It's too early to drag the Christmas lights out of storage, but it's not too early to start thinking about holiday music. Since we play many of the same traditional carols each year, finding new combinations or ways of playing them helps keep them fresh. Volume 1 of Ray Pool's self-published *Hymn Accompaniments for all Harpists* series provides lots of options for harpists of all levels, especially those looking for music to perform with their church choir, organist, or handbell ensemble. This first volume focuses on Advent and Christmas. (There is also Volume 2, which contains music for Lent and Easter.)

The four titles in Volume 1 are "Veni Emmanuel" ("O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"), "Mueller" ("Away in a Manger"), "Three Kings" ("We Three Kings of Orient Are"), and "Adeste Fidelis" ("O Come All Ye Faithful"). There are three verses of each hymn. The arrangements are diatonic and are suitable for either lever or pedal harp. Beginners will find this music accessible. More advanced players may want to embellish by expanding the chord voicings.

The arrangements in this series are designed for congregational singing with harp and organ accompaniment. In addition to a pullout organ part, there is an optional pullout part for handbells. No more than four handbell players are needed with two bells each. However, permission is granted to photocopy bell parts for additional players. The handbell part also provides a melody line and

chord symbols to use with another optional instrument, such as guitar. The organ part includes handbell cues. No lyrics are included because of variations in text from one denomination to another.

This collection offers maximum versatility with minimum preparation. You do not need to be an advanced player or hold lengthy rehearsals to make these arrangements sound beautiful. There are several possible performance combinations of each hymn, and Pool offers some suggestions in his introduction. Make your choir director aware of this hymn assortment—you'll both enjoy using it!

If you want something new to play this winter, or just want to expand your trio repertoire, try [Stephanie Bennett's] "Michigan Winter."

Stephanie Bennett has written an original work that makes an engaging seasonal piece. Published by Harpworld Music Company, "Michigan Winter" is for pedal harp, flute, and cello. It is also available using viola instead of cello.

This composition has a contemporary style, featuring some syncopated rhythms, atonal passages, and double



pedal slides. All pedal markings are included. The composer describes the music as "haunting and nostalgic," and that is an accurate depiction of the piece.

Intermediate level players can sight-read this music. The typesetting is somewhat small but easy to read. The harp part is seven pages in length. Although the theme is repeated, there is enough variety to keep it interesting.

If you want something new to play this winter, or just want to expand your trio repertoire, try "Michigan Winter."

Lever harp players will be delighted with the latest offering from Barbara Brundage. This is not a holiday collection, but you'll want to add it to your Christmas wish list! *By Popular Request* contains seven standards arranged for the advanced lever harp player.

The spiral-bound book is published by Seaside Press for a lever harp tuned to E flat. Do not assume that if you can play these pieces on pedal harp, you can also play them on lever harp. It takes practice to execute the lever changes quickly.

"Misty" is the first (and probably the easiest) selection. It is written in B flat and has the fewest number of lever changes. Brundage deftly moves you through a series of accidentals in the introduction to "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes." She also makes the key change in the B section very smooth by going to the key of B flat. (The standard piano version goes a half step higher to B major.) You'll never hear the difference.

"Stardust" features some glisses in the

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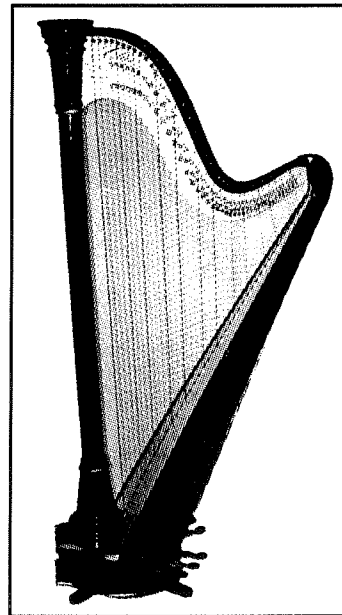
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upper register and optional lever slides. "Moonlight in Vermont" has the most lever changes and includes two verses. The second verse uses a triplet accompaniment. There is an omission in measure 52: middle C should have a sharp sign, just as it appears in measure 24. The C natural (3rd octave) against the C sharp (4th octave) is intended, and the lever settings are correct.

There are more beautiful harmonies and lots of arpeggios in "Night and Day." This is a fairly chromatic piece, but it works very well on lever harp with frequent lever maneuvers.

Robert Maxwell should be very pleased with Brundage's adaptation of his "Ebb Tide" for lever harp. The listener gets the full effect of the arpeggios as there are only minor adjustments to the voicing.

The final selection is "Evergreen," written in the original key of A major. The arranger acknowledges this may not please lever harp players in the performance notes included in the front of the book; however, she also explains her rationale behind this choice.

It's important to mention that a good quality instrument is crucial to play the

tunes in *By Popular Request*, as a harp with poor intonation or dull tone will not do justice to the lush harmonies in these pieces. Barbara Brundage is a master at turning music that can be challenging on pedal harp into something that works beautifully on lever harp. These arrangements are challenging, but well worth the effort. Start dropping hints now so you will find this book waiting for you under the Christmas tree! ■

Jan Jennings performs and teaches in Orlando, Fla. and gives workshops and performances throughout the U.S. She is the author of The Harpist's Complete Wedding Guidebook and is Music Review editor and Assistant Editor of the Harp Column; E-mail her at harpbiz@aol.com.

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Sunday, July 4, 1988, was to be a full day. I had to leave at 6 a.m. for a three-hour airport run to pick up a friend. At 11 a.m. I had to leave for a two-hour drive to a rehearsal and Fourth of July concert on the Ohio River in Owensboro, Ky. So the night before, I dutifully went to bed early for a good night's sleep, unsuspecting of the incredible day that awaited me.

I was awakened around 3 a.m. by a very loud bang. Our house was on a corner at the bottom of a hill, and after a quick look around on the front porch, I decided it was a small sound that I mag-

nified in a dream and went back to bed. At 5:30 a.m. I was awakened by my alarm and a strong smell of gas. A more thorough examination outside revealed an unoccupied VW bug crashed into the side of the house and a utility line spewing gas everywhere. We called the police and they told us to get away from the house immediately. Fire trucks and police cars arrived within minutes. Huge amounts of gas had been leaking for hours and we were informed that had some passer-by lit a cigarette, we all would have been blown sky high.

After an uneventful trip to the airport, a grateful friend, and a quick shower, I loaded my harp into the early 1970s "hippie" van that I drove as a college student. Nicknamed TDV (That Damn Van), this puke-brown, wooden-bumpered beauty looked like it had just

returned from Woodstock. I picked up a fellow musician and we got on the road. Now TDV, in addition to requiring a soda can under the brake pedal when parked (or the brake pedal would sag, turning on the brake lights and draining the battery), had an annoying habit of sticking in first gear. The fix required climbing underneath the van and working the gears free. My normally chivalrous friend was in his tux and refused to help me when TDV decided to be repeatedly troublesome on the way to the gig. So dirty, greasy, and a little behind schedule, I arrived in Owensboro and got cleaned up and tuned up in time for the rehearsal.

After the rehearsal, about eight or nine of the musicians who had been bussed in from my college town piled into TDV and we headed to the local mall for dinner. Our waitress was new and very slow. It took her about a half hour to separate our checks, which put us behind schedule. One musician who was very worried about the late hour sprinted across the mall parking lot to change into his tux before the rest of us got to the van. Discovering the van locked, he gauged our pace and decided to change in the parking lot. This required stripping down to his underwear in full view, thus answering the "boxer or brief" question that was on *none* of our minds. (Briefs.)

After frantically stopping at a gas station and literally throwing a five dollar bill at the attendant before racing off, we arrived at the staging area in time for the police escort. A police escort was necessary to get the orchestra down the embankment, through the crowds, and to the stage next to the river. The escort consisted of shiny police cars and motorcycles with their sirens blaring, a couple of big buses for the orchestra, a fancy car for the maestro, and of course, That Damn Van. Needless to say, we turned a lot of heads and raised a lot of eyebrows before arriving at the river. As I was unloading the harp, I noticed a couple

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of tanks lined up about 30 feet away from the stage. "Hmm, a military theme," I thought to myself.

Now July in Kentucky is hot, humid, and buggy, and being so close to the river only made it worse. I was horrified to discover that I was mashing insects in the pedal slots as I moved pedals, though I must admit that I took a kind of twisted pleasure in rattling the brains of unsuspecting aphids that had landed on my bass wires.

The last piece on the program was, of course, the "1812 Overture." As I sat qui-

etly at my harp and listened to this always-exciting masterwork, I still didn't "clue-in" about the tanks. Yep, you guessed it: they were there to provide the cannon shots toward the end of the piece. If you have never been next to a firing tank, say a quick prayer of thanks. My ears were rattling so much I barely heard the roar of the Blue Angels flying overhead as the piece finished. (OK so they don't fly B-52s, but what do I know.)

The concert finally over and the crowd thoroughly ensconced in watching the fireworks, I loaded up my harp

A quick look at the posters on the wall confirmed that we were in an adult book-video-paraphernalia store.

and worried about the two-hour drive home in my quirky old rust-bucket. Other musicians, who would have to wait a long time for the buses, saw me loading up and suddenly, I was the most popular person in the orchestra. So with a full load of people and instruments TDV slowly made it's way up the embankment and out of the crowd.

And boy did we need a bathroom! By this time it was about 11 p.m. on Sunday night and nothing was open. We stopped three times before we found a little nondescript roadside shop with a "fireworks" sign out front. The first thing I noticed when we walked in were the strangely shaped pipes and clips in the display case. A quick look at the posters on the walls confirmed that we were in an adult book-video-paraphernalia store, which also happened to sell fireworks. At that point, it just didn't matter; we could cross our legs no longer, and the proprietor kindly let us use his facilities.

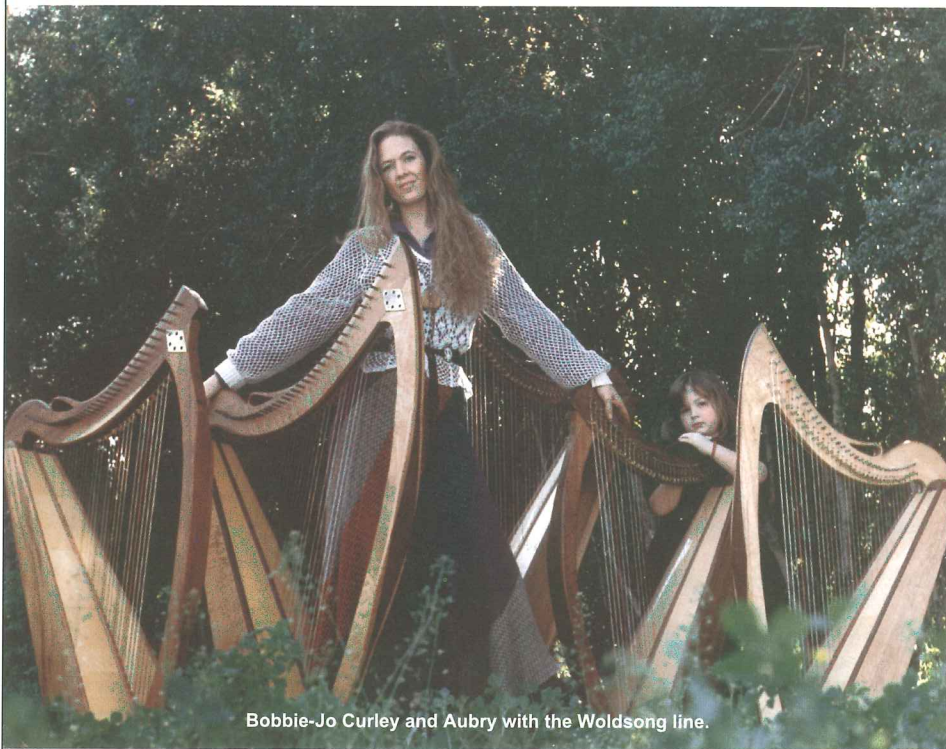
Believe it or not, TDV's gears didn't stick once on the way home, and after dropping off what seemed to be the entire orchestra, I got home safely for a well-deserved sleep. And the car that crashed into our house? It seems some college pranksters were moving it onto someone's lawn at the top of the hill and forgot to study the effects of gravity and momentum on heavy objects. ■

—Tisha Murvihill
via the Internet

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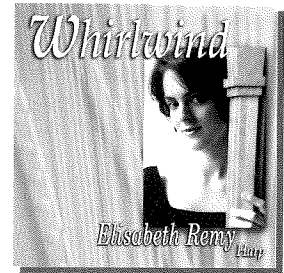
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