

## Introduction to Early Harp Technique

### Summary

- **Posture:**

People & harps are all different, experiment to find the best position

*You should be confident that the harp is stable, without help from your hands*

*Then rest your hands on the soundboard, as if you playing: don't hold the pillar*

- **Hands:**

Rest your hands on the soundboard,

*Feel their weight (thru the harp) against your shoulder*

*Play glissandos, let your hands slide as if on "railway tracks" on the soundboard*

- **Finger-position:**

Practise away from the harp

*Hands relaxed, thumb & fingers in gentle curves,*

*Only enough strength to hold tuning-key, for example*

- **Finger-movement:**

Practise away from the harp, to confirm simple, uncomplicated movements

*Start with thumb and index in O-shape, other fingers imitate index*

*Thumb into the hand, fingers wrap around*

- **On the strings:**

Fingers on the strings (test by pushing), not behind the strings ready to pull

1. *Place your hands on the harp first,*

2. *Form the O-shape with thumb, index and middle finger,*

3. *Then put your fingers on strings*

- **Best sound:**

Slow movement of thumb/finger, steady pressure, full range of movement

*Place thumb, index and middle finger on strings before playing*

*Slow finger-movement continues smoothly as the string resounds*

*The hand, supported on soundboard, remains still*

- **Scale up [Italian technique]:**

32 32 32

1. *Place both fingers on the strings before playing*
2. *Play two notes*
3. *Slide the hand up, replace fingers*
4. *The movement of the hand delivers your fingers to the correct strings*
5. *The hand moves in discrete 'steps'*

- **Scale down [Italian technique]:**

12 12 12

1. *Thumb plays, passes (under index) to the string the thumb will play next*
2. *Index slides down its string, plays, moves to the string it will play next*
3. *Thumb plays again, etc*
4. *Hand slides continuously down the harp, always in contact with soundboard*
5. *Index slides lightly down its strings*
6. *Thumb moves directly from string to string, as if in 'gapped glissando'*
7. *Practise with the Cuckoo exercise*

- **Gruppo**

Rhythmic 'trill' 12121232 ①

1. *Small movements for quick notes*
2. *Slow, complete movement for long note*
3. *Place all 3 (thumb and fingers) just before playing the long note*

- **Fingering for melody:**

Good finger on good note, bad finger on bad note

1. *Thumb and middle finger are good, index is bad*
2. *Decide good/bad notes by analysing two or three notes at a time*
3. *Or like Frank Sinatra: doo-be doo-be doo*
4. *Keep the hand still, resting on the soundboard*

- **Fingering & phrasing:**

Choose your fingering to correspond to the phrasing:

1. *Good/bad fingers for good/bad notes*
2. *Synchronise changes of hand position with gaps between 'mini-phrases'*
3. *Join 2 notes in legato by placing both fingers in advance, keeping hand still*
4. *Place all 3 (thumb and fingers) just before important notes, long notes etc,*