

QUARTERLY MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Method:

Suzanne McDonald - Harp for Today - All levels (lever and pedal)

This book is great for adult beginners and students of all ages because it is written very clearly and plainly and has color photos of what the hand should look like doing each of the technical exercises. There are also many exercises to practice, so if a student really needs to practice a technique, you don't run out of work for them to do.

Theory:

Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music - All levels (lever and pedal)

Other than the fact that the book has the British terms for note values, it is extremely well written for students. There are gradual steps through the books, and students understand them quickly if they read the text book, so a teacher merely needs to guide the student through the process instead of teaching every concept. The text book is in two parts, part one for grades one through five and part two for grades six through eight. There are eight workbooks, one for each level of the Associated Board grading. Practice tests can also be purchased for each level.

Harp Ensemble:

Marguerite Lynn Williams - Harp Scores Volumes I and II - Intermediate/Advanced (pedal and advanced lever with some editing)

The arrangements in these books are varied as far as content and level are concerned. Harp A and Harp B are very equivalent, and often mirror each other at separate parts of the arrangement, so the director can have everyone play the same part to learn it together and then go back to parts. The pieces also have rhythmic variation, technical concepts, and great melodic and harmonic lines.

Orchestral Studies:

Sarah Bullen – Principal Harp I and II - Intermediate/ Advanced (pedal harp)

These books are great as both an introduction to orchestral playing for young students and performance preparation for professionals. Because of the simple and logical nature in which the book was written, the text is easily translated into the playing of the part. The CD's of the repertoire in the book are priceless and allow for students to not only hear what the part should sound like by one of the best orchestral harpists in the world, but they also allow the students to play along. The books really make both students and professionals realize that orchestral playing is about much more than just playing notes.

Chamber Music:

Paul Baker – A Gershwin Sampler – Advanced

This piece, written for flute, harp, and voice, is very flashy and rhythmically interesting. The melodic lines pass between all three members of the trio and the arranging allows time for rubato passages as well as beautiful phrasing. There are some tricky parts, but the piece is definitely worth the time. It is very well received by both players and audiences. Absolutely fun!

Beginning Music:

Mildred Dilling – Old Tunes for New Harpists (beginning pedal, lever)

A great classic, this book is a great value and progresses easily through the basics of playing the harp while giving enough literature to master technique.

G. Pierne, trans. Mimi Allen – March of the Little Tin Soldiers (pedal, lever with cuts)

This is a fantastic piece for beginners who are getting to the intermediate level. The piece is a march, and teaches rhythm, use of ornaments, muffling, grace notes, and tapping on the soundboard. It also has pedal changes in it, though not frequent, so beginning pedal players will find it a good start for changing pedals that is not frustrating. Because it doesn't have many pedal changes, lever players can play it with some cuts. The melody is very pretty and the song has an upbeat, happy feel to it.

Intermediate Music:

Michael Amorosi – Scherzo (pedal harp)

The piece has a beautiful melody, and it is very happy in feel. There is good pedal work for an intermediate student. Both hands read on one staff for a couple of lines. It is a great extra piece for students who need to build repertoire, as the melody is gorgeous.

Intermediate / Advanced:

Raffaele Cecconi – Impromptu (pedal harp)

The edition is in manuscript, which makes it a bit difficult to read, however this is a contemporary piece you should add to your collection. There is a good mix of tonal and atonal sections throughout the piece, and it involves intricate rhythmic work and mixed time signatures. Double harmonics, and rhythmic glisses are involved.

Gigging Music:

Suzanne Balderston - My Wedding Book- Beginning (lever and pedal)

This book is an excellent addition to any wedding collection. It is suitable for both those who are just beginning to play gigs as well as professional harpists. Because most of the pieces are written over two pages or less, it is great for those windy outdoor weddings and eliminating page changes. Also, because just the basics are outlined, it allows for a bit of improvising and filling out chords.

Sharon Watson – Opera Music for Solo Harp - Intermediate (pedal)

This book never stops amazing. The arrangements are full, non repetitive, extremely melodic, and chordal for easy reading. There are many pieces in the book, so it allows for a large amount of time to be filled. The time will just roll by as you will be enchanted by the melodies.

Various Artists – The Salvi Pop Harp Series VOL 1-3 - Advanced (pedal)

This collection, written by some of the great pop/ jazz harpists has many classic pieces. It is not easy to say the least, so if you want to play these pieces, give yourself some time to learn them. They will definitely be worth the effort.