



# Harp

## Orchestral Repertoire for Harpists

### A Graded List

by Saul Davis

Conductors and teachers should share a concern for helping young and/or inexperienced harpists make a smooth transition into orchestral playing. Assigning inadvertently a difficult work to a novice may lead to an unsatisfactory performance and prove damaging to the harpist's self-confidence. To avoid that scenario requires a little forethought and some knowledge of the relative difficulty of orchestral harp parts.

In general, harpists should receive their parts several days or even weeks in advance of first rehearsals. Harp parts generally have to be edited to pedal changes, fingerings, and even playability, which can take a substantial amount of time. It may be surprising to know that even the harp parts of such masters as Wagner or Strauss are riddled with errors and unplayable passages. Parts that are already marked may be confusing, with several layers of interpretations, and need correcting. Advance preparation will lubricate the rehearsal process. Harp parts can be very complex and demanding, needing time to be assimilated both technically and mentally. Every effort should be made to include the harp in every program, if not every piece, but it is best to avoid last-minute assignments for young players, and don't expect miracles if you must do so.

The following is a graded list of orchestral harp parts. They were evaluated for technical challenge, musical sophistication, and ensemble difficulty. They fall into three broad categories of increasing difficulty. Some require only basic technique such as chords, arpeggios, scales or single notes. Accordingly, even through they may be challenging, they are in an easier category as they require only adequate practice. Works that seem unlikely to be performed by students, such as Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra* are omitted, their difficulty being obvious. Some parts are marked

with = to designate their relative suitability for sight-reading.

If conductors or performers have additional pieces to add to these lists, please contact me, and an addendum will be published in the next issue: Saul Davis, 1929 Chestnut St, #2F, Philadelphia, PA 19103

#### Category 1 (easiest)

Malcolm Arnold, *Four Scottish Dances* =; Berlioz, *L'Enfance du Christ*; Bizet, *L'Arlesienne Suites* (except the *Menuet*) =; *Carmen Suites* =; Borodin, *Polovetsian Dances* =; Chausson, *Poeme for Violin and Orchestra* =; Copland, *Billy the Kid*; *Old American Songs* =; Debussy/Satie, *Gymnopedie #2* =; Faure, *Pelleas et Melisande* =; *Requiem* =; Grieg, *Lyric Suite*; Gluck, *Orpheo* =; Handel, *Operas* (various) =; Kalinnikov, *Symphony #1* =; Liszt, *Orpheus*; Massenet, *Meditation from "Thais"*; Moussorgsky, *Persian Dance*; Ravel, *Ma Mere L'Oye Suite*; *Menuet antique*; *Pavane*; Rimsky-Korsakov, *Procession from "Mlada"* =; *Suite from "Tales of Tsar Saltan"*; Rogers, *South Pacific* and other shows =; Saint-Saens, *Bacchanale* =; J. Strauss, *Waltzes*; R. Strauss, *Death and Transfiguration*; Tchaikovsky, *Romeo and Juliet*; *Waltz of the Flowers* (not as printed; must be an edited cadenza); Vaughan-Williams, *Fantasia on Greensleeves* =; Wagner, *Overture to "Die Meistersinger"*

#### Category 2

Adam, *Giselle*; *Overture to "Si j'etais roi"*; Beethoven, *Creatures of Prometheus Ballet*; Berlioz, *Damnation of Faust*; *Harold in Italy*; Bernstein, *Overture to "Candide"*; *Symphony #2*; Bizet, *Menuet from "L'Arlesienne"*; Borodin, *Symphony #2*; Brahms, *Hungarian Dances* =; *Nanie*; *Requiem*; Bruckner, *Symphony #8*; Chausson, *Poeme de l'amour et de la mer*; Chavez, *Sinfonia Antigona* =; *Sinfonia India* =; Chopin,

*Les Sylphides Ballet*; Copland, *Appalachian Spring*; Dvorak, *Rhapsodie #3*; Debussy, *Children's Corner Suite* =; *La Demoiselle elue* =; *Nocturnes*; *Petite Suite*; Franck, *Symphony in d minor*; Hanson, *Symphony #2*; Humperdinck, *Hansel and Gretel*; Mascagni, *Intermezzo from "L'Amico Fritz"*; Mahler, *Symphony #1*; *Symphony #4*; *Symphony #5*; Prokofiev, *Lieutenant Kije*; *Romeo and Juliet Third Suite*; Rachmaninov, *Symphonic Dances*; Ravel, *Daphnis and Chloe*; *Le Tombeau de Couperin* =; Respighi, *Ancient Airs and Dances, Suites 1 and 2*; *Gli Uccelli*; Rimsky-Korsakov, *Capriccio Espagnol*; *Scheherazade*; Sibelius, *Swan of Tuonela* =; Schubert, *Die Zauberharfe*; Shostakovich, *Symphony #5*; Smetena, *Moldau* =; Strauss, *Don Juan*; Stravinsky, *Firebird Suite (1919)*; *Fireworks*; *Symphony of Psalms* =; Tchaikovsky, *Capriccio Italien* =; *Swan Lake*; *Sleeping Beauty*; Thomas, *Overture to "Mignon"*; Wagner, *Siegfried's Rheinfahrt*; *Song of the Evening Star*

#### Category 3

Bartok, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*; Berlioz/Weber, *Invitation to the Dance*; *Symphonie fantastique*; Britten, *Four Sea Interludes*; *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*; Bruch, *Scottish Rhapsody*; Debussy, *L'Enfant prodigue*; *Iberia*; *Prelude a l'apres midi d'un faune*; *Clarinet Rhapsody*; Dukas, *Sorcerer's Apprentice*; Enescu, *Romanian Rhapsodies*; De Falla, *Three-Cornered Hat*; Ginastera, *Pampeana #3*; *Variaciones Concertantes*; Holst, *The Planets*; Janacek, *Taras Bulba*; Prokofiev, *Scythian Suite*; Ravel, *Alborada del gracioso*; *Bolero*; *Valses nobles et sentimentales*; Respighi, *Pines of Rome*; Sibelius, *Symphony #1*; Smetena, *Vysehrad*; Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben*; Stravinsky, *Petrouchka*; Verdi, *Overture to "La Forza del Destino"*; *Overture to "Un*

*Ballo Maschera*"; Walton, *Viola Concerto*

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