

Improvisation

Getting Started and Making It Your Friend

Facilitator: Dee Sweeney

Note: All exercises are played using a key of C tuning (C is the first note of the do-re-mi scale)

C D E F G A B C

Warm-up – Connect to your harp and yourself

Margot Krimmel shared this one with me and I love it. It helps me get into the space of my harp (be here now), to breathe and relax, and to really listen to my tone. This is not an exercise to develop finger dexterity, so slow down.

1. Notice your state (Are you relaxed, tight, worried, etc?)
2. Using finger 2 (index finger) of your right hand, play from middle C to G in the octave above middle C and back down to middle C. Each note gets 4 slow beats (1-Mississippi, 2-Mississippi, etc.). Take your time and really listen to each note. Repeat with the left hand an octave lower.
3. Using fingers 2 and 1, repeat the same notes, giving each note 1/2 beat. Just place each 2-1 without doing cross-unders and overs. At the top, play the F-G, then replace your 2nd finger on F, and come back down to middle C. Repeat with the left hand.
4. Using 4 fingers, repeat the same notes, giving each note ¼ beat. At the top, play the D-E-F-G, then replace the F-E-D and play. Again, no cross-overs or unders.
5. Now notice your state. I bet you're more relaxed and present and you've noticed an improvement in your tone.

Copyright 2012 Harp for Healing LLC

Hints for pleasing sounds

1. Slow down, listen and enjoy the sounds you're making, even the ones you don't like so much.
2. Create a phrase or thought with each group of notes.
3. Leave space – let strings ring.
4. Change the rhythms.
5. Keep your hands near each other.
6. Expand your fingering options.
7. Play more than one note at a time creating harmony.

Basic Triads – arpeggiated using with both hands

C Chord – C E G

Dm Chord – D F A

Use other chords in sequence. Listen for what sounds good and not-so-good to you. Relax and slow down.

Pentatonic Party – white strings only invited

C D E F G A B C

- Play only the notes D, E, G, A and B in any octave with either hand.
- Play in any order.
- You can use just your index fingers to start with, OR,
- Play D and E with your index finger(2) and thumb(1); and use your middle finger on G, 2 on A, and 1 on B.

Copyright 2012 Harp for Healing LLC

- Play single notes or harmonies – any two notes together sound good.

With the left hand, play 1-5-8 of the G and Am chord and move around the white strings with the right hand.

G chord – G D G

Am chord – A E A

Then, with the same chords, change the order in which you play the notes to be 5-1-8, adding a pause at the end of each chord. Again, wander on the white strings with the right hand.

G chord – D (low)G (Octave)G

Am chord – E (low)A (Octave)A

Four-note Talent Show

Ascending pattern:

F **G** **A** skip **C** – Left Hand

F **G** **A** skip **C** – Right Hand, one octave higher

Play F with the 4th finger, G with the 3rd, A with the 2nd and C with the thumb.

Descending pattern:

C skip **A** **G** **F** – Right Hand

C skip **A** **G** **F** – Left Hand, one octave lower

Fingering is the same as for the ascending pattern. Simply play the strings in reverse order.

Variations:

Copyright 2012 Harp for Healing LLC

1. Waterfall – Use descending pattern with right and left hand once. Then move the right move each hand down one octave only, play descending pattern. Repeat.
2. Growth burst – Do the same thing with ascending pattern.
3. “Encounter of a Third Kind” – Play fingers in this order: 1-3-2-4
4. Twister – Play fingers in this order: 4-2-3-1 or 4-1-2-3 or 4-1-3-2 or 1-4-2-3 or 1-4-3-2
5. Change the neighborhood (The underline strings are the ones you play. You’re simply moving the same finger shape up one note and playing. You’ll probably discover some likes and dislikes.) You can ascend or descend with the pattern, change the order in which fingers are played and move up and down multiple octaves.

C D E F G A B C
 C D E F G A B C
 C D E F G A B C
 C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C
 C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C
 C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C