

## C. CONTROL THE INSTRUMENT

### 1. SCALES

Playing a *C Major* ASCENDING SCALE: place *C, D, E, G*. Establish the open distance between 2<sup>nd</sup> finger and thumb. Then place *C, D, E, F* – articulate 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> fingers – replace 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> fingers simultaneously onto *G, A* by reaching low and under the hand (do not move arm and thumb remains placed on *F*).



15. Right hand ascending scale

Articulate thumb playing *F*, then **pull slightly back and up with elbow** just enough to open hand and replace 2<sup>nd</sup> finger and thumb onto *B* and *C* – continue articulating all fingers completing the scale. There is a single shift in position and not a gradual travel. This, obviously, becomes one smooth action. But it is important to understand its construction.



16. Right hand ascending scale at cross under

Although, in the beginning, there may be an awkward moment before playing *F*, preparing *G* and *A* together will eventually give welcome stability to the hand position at the moment of ascending up the scale.

## D. FIRST LESSONS FOR BEGINNERS – WITH MUSICAL EXERCISES

These are figures and little tunes that I created for beginners over the years. They serve just the first few lessons and are meant to indicate the type of material needed for beginners. They pass through many different keys to familiarize the student with the pedals. Although pedal changes during playing should not be introduced until the hands are under control, I have written the material in various keys to acquaint the beginner with the pedals. Actual pedal changes should be introduced not later than the second month of study, or as soon as possible! In the meantime the following exercises can be played in many different keys to enhance the students' awareness of the integral function of the pedals in playing the harp.

Our opening premise is *MUSIC IS SOUND*.

Experience has proven to me that breathing, **playing one note at a time**, articulating, taking the sound into the fist, raising, and relaxing and opening the hand as you return to the strings, is the sure way to teach hand position and sound production. Gradually add more fingers to this routine.

When presenting the following material to beginners, please refer back to *MUSIC IS SOUND*.

### 1. LET'S PLAY THE HARP

#### ONE FINGER

Place fingers on *A, B, C, E*. Remove all but index finger. Articulate all fingers together, playing only *C* with index finger and raise the fist parallel to the vibrating string. Relax the fist, open the fingers and return to the strings *B, C, D, F*. Repeat the placement and articulate all fingers, playing only *D* with index finger. Raise, relax and return to prepare *C, D, E, G*. Soon this harpist will be able to replace only the index finger while the hand assumes a natural relaxed and open position (something like a handshake).

Help a beginner to understand the process of articulation by putting a golf ball into his or her small palm. Have the student close the fingers holding that ball, which represents the sound, in the fist. The bigger the hand, the larger the ball must be. It serves to establish the physical sensation of rounded fingers and curved thumb that hold a fist full of sound. Please refer to relevant photographs: B. SOUND PRODUCTION, No. 3. Hand position and Placement and No. 4. Articulation and release.

#### 27.

#### Establishing hand position and articulation

The musical notation for exercise 27 consists of three staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a 2/4 time signature, showing a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, with 'simile' markings above the first three notes and a fermata over the last. The second staff is a bass clef with a 2/4 time signature, showing a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, with 'simile' markings above the first three notes and a fermata over the last. The third staff is a treble clef with a 2/4 time signature, showing a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, with 'simile' markings above the first three notes and a fermata over the last.

### III

## THE HARP IN THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

I was an orchestral harpist for 37 years. As a student, this was not my dream. I had fantasies of being a soloist. “Who wants to sit in a group of musicians and do what a conductor says? Not I! I want to do my own thing!!” But this was not my destiny. I entered a marvelous symphony orchestra at age 23 and after one month I knew that I had found my place in music! THE SOUND of the orchestra that embraced me from all sides gave me a sense of musical belonging. **To be part of this SOUND is to be part of great music.** Being an integral part of the tapestry of symphonic sound is a unique experience. Performing Beethoven, Mahler, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, Wagner, Stravinsky, Berg, Bartók, Berlioz – a few of the “greats” who wrote no solo repertoire for harp, not to mention Debussy and Ravel who wrote so little – is THE complete musical experience.



49. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta conducting  
Mahler *Symphony No. 8, Symphony of a Thousand*  
Tel Aviv, Mann Auditorium, June 1996

(Note: 4 harps)

The role of the harpist in a symphony orchestra is multiple. The harpist is a soloist, a chamber music player and a *tutti* player. An orchestra harpist must have the personality, confidence, technique and sound production of a soloist demonstrating clear articulated rhythm and a great musical personality. He or she can never relax a well disciplined practice routine. A sharply honed technique must be maintained. While nurturing a soloist's identity, the harpist must be sensitive and both willing and able to put his or her ego aside when playing chamber music passages. We must listen to others and with extreme flexibility adjust our performance to blend. There are other moments when we must surrender our individuality to the will of the conductor and play as one with the entire ensemble. During the first years