The Emergence of the Double-Action Harp as the Standard Instrument: Pleyel's Chromatic Harp and Erard's Double-Action Harp

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE DOUBLE-ACTION HARP AS THE STANDARD INSTRUMENT:
PLEYEL’S CHROMATIC HARP AND ERARD’S DOUBLE-ACTION HARP

By

Lee-Fei Chen

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Coral Gables, Florida
May 2008

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The primary purpose of this essay is to provide comparisons between Pleyel’s chromatic harp and Erard’s double-action pedal harp, in order to find the factor leading to the emergence of the double-action harp as today’s standard instrument. This essay includes biographies of Gustave Lyon and Sébastien Erard, historical background, literature, criticisms, influences, performance techniques and as well as musical examples demonstrating written techniques of Pleyel’s chromatic harp and Erard’s double-action pedal harp. In addition, this essay also includes a list of earlier twentieth-century works for the chromatic harp.
To My Dearest Parents ~ We-Chuan Chen, Ming-Rong Yeh Chen
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my entire committee for their support and generosity in making this project possible: Dr. Dennis Kam for his careful editing, professor Thomas Sleeper, professor Gary Green, and professor Nancy Zavac for dissertation-related questions and especially, Valerie Von Pechy Whitcup for her endless support and encouragement.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

1. **INTRODUCTION**

   - Purpose of the Study
   - Rationale for the Study
   - Research Questions
   - Need for Study
   - Review of Related Literature
   - Related Dissertations

2. **A Brief History of the Pedal Harp**

   - Before Single-Action Pedal Harp
   - The Single-Action Pedal Harp
     - Sébastien Erard
   - The Double-Action Pedal Harp
   - Other Double-Action Pedal Harp Manufactories after Erard
Salvi Company ................................................................. 25
Lyon & Healy Company .................................................. 27
Wurlitzer Company ......................................................... 28

3 A Brief History of the Chromatic Harp ................................ 40
   Pleyel Company .......................................................... 40
   Summary of Pleyel’s Chromatic Harp Models ....................... 53

4 The Chromatic Harp: Its Criticisms and Influences ............... 59
   Compositions for the Chromatic Harp .............................. 61
   Classes of Chromatic Harp ............................................. 63
   Criticisms of the Chromatic Harp ................................... 66
   In Artistic Advantages ................................................. 66
   Other Chromatic Harp Methods ..................................... 72

5 The Double-Action Pedal Harp: Influential Harpists ............. 76
   The Paris Conservatory Harp Department ......................... 82

6 A Comparison of Performance and Composition Techniques for the
   Pedal and Chromatic Harps .......................................... 91
   Methods Use of the Performance Techniques ..................... 91
   Comparisons ............................................................ 92
Concerning Sitting Position..............................................93

Concerning Hand Positions..............................................94

Playing Scales..............................................................96

Playing Chords.............................................................103

Composition Techniques.................................................105

Solo and Chamber Music for Chromatic Harp......................106

Orchestral Music for Chromatic Harp.................................109

7 Conclusion........................................................................113

Bibliography.......................................................................117

Appendix............................................................................120
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example

1. Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique*, 2nd movement, mm. 341-345……………...41

2. Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie Fantastique* 2nd movement, mm. 341-345…………........42

3. The Fingerings of Eb major scale for the pedal harp from H. Renie’s *Complete Method* ………………………………………………………………………………………99

4. The fingerings of chromatic harp major scales……………………………………..100

5. Fingerings of minor scales for the chromatic harp……………………………………102

6. Fingerings of chromatic scales for the chromatic harp……………………………..103

7. Comparisons of fingerings differences of playing chords……………………………104

8. Comparisons of fingerings differences of playing chords……………………………104


10. Reynaldo Hahn, *Prelude Valse et Rigaudon pour Harpe Chromatique and String Quartet*…………………………………………………………………………...106

11. Mario van, Overeem *Barcarolle pour Harp Chromatique*………………………….107

12. Jean Risler, *Reminiscence pour Harpe Chromatique* .................................107


18. Richard Wagner, *LaWalkure* ..........................................................110

## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Pieter Lastmann, King David in the Temple painting, seventeenth-century</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The Mallagh Mast Harp, c. 1700</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>German Hook harp, extreme height about sixty-four inches in early eighteenth-Century</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The Lyon &amp; Healy Troubadour IV Harp</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Single action pedal harp made by Cousineau and belonged to Marie Antoinette in late eighteenth Century, height about sixty-five inches</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Single-action pedal harp with structural and mechanical details: engraving by Benard after Prevost from Diderot and D’Alembert’s ‘Encyclopédie’, v (Paris, 1767), pl.xix</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Modern double-action harp, showing the pedal-rod, tuning disc mechanism, pedal box, and the positions of forks and pedals for the sharps, flats and naturals</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Positions of forks and pedals, and corresponding keys obtainable on the new Erard double-action harp: engraving by W. Lowry after Pierre Erard from his ‘The Harp in its Present Improved State’ (London, 1821)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Double-action Erard Gothic Harp, height about sixty-seven inches in mid-nineteenth century</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Wurlitzer Company Style A, Automatic Harp</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.11. Wurlitzer Company Style B, Automatic Harp

2.12. Wurlitzer Style C "Orchestral Harp" as pictured in the 1913 general catalog from the Collection of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

2.13. The Lyon & Healy Louis XV Special Instrument

2.14. The Lyon & Healy Style 2000 CG Electroacoustic Harp

3.1. The apparatus built by Pleyel-Wolff Co. for simulating record on the same paper the lengthening and tension

3.2. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 2

3.3. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 3

3.4. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 3

3.5. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 9

3.6. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 9

3.7. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 11

3.8. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 11

3.9. Gustave Lyon’s lute-harp

3.10. Gustave Lyon’s lute-harp for Madame Wagner

3.11. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 1

3.12. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 1

3.13. Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 5
4.1. The chromatic harp class of Germaine Cornelis at the Brussels Conservator in 1942-43

4.2. The chromatic harp class of Jean Risler. First teacher of the instrument in Brussels in 1900-1903

6.1. Hand positions for the chromatic harp

6.2. Right hand position for the pedal harp

6.3. Left hand position of the pedal harp

6.4. Hand positions for playing scales on the chromatic harp

6.5. Right hand position for playing scales on the pedal harp

6.6. Left hand position for playing scales on the pedal harp

7.1. Francette Bartholomée gave a chromatic harp concert in Arles, France on October 16th, 2005

7.2. Francette Bartholomée’s Pleyel no. 420 chromatic harp

7.3. Close look of Francette Bartholomée’s Pleyel no. 420 chromatic harp
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The harp is considered to be one of man’s earliest musical instruments. Although the instrument has undergone numerous changes in size, shape, and construction throughout its long history, the basic shape of the harp remained the same.

For centuries, the harp manufacturers were determined to produce the ideal instrument which could be used as both a solo and orchestral instrument. In the early twentieth-century, the two leading harp manufacturers were the Erard, Co. (pedal harp) and Pleyel & Wolff, Co. (cross-strung chromatic harp).

In nineteenth-century France, the harp pedal mechanism reached what was considered at the time to be perfection. The famous piano maker, Sebastian Erard invented a single-action harp (prototype of the double action pedal harp). He used the same pedal mechanism as the hooked harp (seven pedals one for each note of the scale) but eliminated the hooks, crooks, and crutches and replaced them with a “fork mechanism.” This mechanism was a small metal disk with two short metal prongs protruding on opposite sides. Each string ran from its tuning pin to the sounding board passing over the center of the disk. When a pedal was pressed down, the corresponding disc moved. The action made the two prongs or forks press against the string, which raised the pitch one semitone.

In the late eighteenth-century, Erard improved the single-action harp, allowing it to create enharmonic tones. He added another set of disks, creating the double-action
pedal harp, which was able to be played in all keys and produce enharmonic tones for harp glissandos. This harp, with its new capabilities, attracted many composers. Many composers wrote more solo pieces that introduced the new harp into the salons of the bourgeoisie and aristocrats in Europe. At the same time, the pedal harp could not satisfy the demand of the new music composers, such as Wagner, Liszt, D’Indy, Charpentier, Faure, Richard Strauss and Debussy.¹ It is because of the increased use of the chromaticism and modulations requiring fast pedal changes, that it became difficult for chromatic music to be played on the pedal harp.

There were two ways to solve the problems: either the composer would rearrange and transcribe his music; or the harp part was split between two harps. Hector Berlioz says: “This instrument is fundamentally anti-chromatic, in other words semi tone progressions are almost out of its reach.”² Richard Wagner was forced to split modulations between several harps as the only means to execute his music. In addition, Wagner used several harps in the orchestra to produce more volume.

There are some technical problems as well. Because the double-action mechanism changes the tension of the strings in flat, natural, and sharp, it is difficult to keep the instrument in tune for a long time. For example, if a harp is tuned perfectly in all flats (the seven pedals are in the first level), and is not regulated consistently, it will be out of tune in natural and sharp positions (the second and third levels).

Gustave Lyon, director of the Paris piano firm of Pleyel during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, attempted to design a harp without pedals that also possessed the chromatic string range of the Erard pedal harp. This cross-strung


chromatic harp had two rows of strings that crossed in the middle. One was a C major scale or white key scale, the other the black key pentatonic scale. The Pleyel harp originally had a thin steel column and a wide metal neck. A row of tuning pins lined the right and left sides of the neck. The sounding board of the harp contained a steel plate to which was attached the double row of strings. From the top right hand side of the neck, white strings were threaded from the tuning pins to the eyelets (holes) of the left side of the sounding board.

Black or dark strings were grounded in alternating twos and threes, just like the black notes of a keyboard, were threaded from the left side tuning pins to the eyelets on the right side of the sounding board. The cross-strung chromatic harp, with a range of 6 1/2 octaves, was 74 inches in height, and weighed over 130 pounds. For the new music demand of chromaticism in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, Lyon’s ideal of the cross-strung chromatic harp was to eliminate pedal noise, and to create stable tuning. Most important it was to enable the performer to perform highly chromatic passages at fast tempos, as on the keyboard.

The Pleyel firm developed a course developed at the Brussels conservatory that was devoted to teaching their harp. As the result, the Pleyel cross-strung chromatic harp was not only successfully used in conservatory, but in orchestras as well. Favorable letters were written to Lyon concerning his invention. One was written by an associate of Wagner, Hans Richter, a well-known composer in his own right.³

Bowden (Cheshire) [sic], 14 January 1903.

For a long time I wanted to write to you about your excellent chromatic harps, but my trips and professional

obligations prevented me from doing so immediately. With your instrument there are now no more obstacles in the execution of even the most difficult parts of the magisterial works of R. Wagner. I was convinced of that while conducting the “Crepuscule des Dieux” [Twilight of the Gods] in Paris. It was a great joy for me to hear four female harpists play your instruments. The principal advantages can be summarized as follows: 1. impeccable sonority; 2. tuning stability as the strings are neither too taut nor too loose; 3. the complete absence of noise during playing. On pedal harps, pedal noise during rapid changes of harmony is absolutely inevitable. I was completely satisfied with the sound of the chromatic harp.

Hoping that your improvement will soon receive its sanction from all sides, I remain very truly yours.

Signed, Hans Richter

The Lyon, Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843-1907), Norway’s most important nationalist-Romantic composer, wrote:

Very Honorable M. Lyon,

I share completely Doctor, M. Hans Richter’s opinion. Your chromatic harp is an invention of utmost importance from a technical point of view. Now, almost everything can be written for the harp.

I am convinced that this completely successful innovation will bring you great satisfaction. Allow me to express to you my best congratulation.

Signed, Ed. Grieg

Although the cross-strung chromatic harp solved problems of pedaling, it did not allow for the glissandos, which are so characteristic of the pedal harp. For the

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4 Ibid., 40.
performer, there were major issues: the awkward hand positions for playing between the narrow spaces; and visual location of correct strings. In addition, the volume of sound was small compared to the pedal harp and could not project in symphony orchestras. Also, since most of the players were women, the awkward and heavy shape made it difficult to move around. Although Pleyel commissioned Claude Debussy to compose *Danse Sacree et Danse Profane* as an ensemble piece for the cross-strung chromatic harp, it was soon transcribed for the pedal harp. The Pleyel cross-strung chromatic harp is not forgotten today, but the instrument is seldom heard successfully transcribed for the pedal harp by Henriette Renie. Pleyel’s chromatic harp is all but forgotten today. The instrument is a museum oddity and is seldom heard. There is always the possibility of a new chromatic harp being developed that will catch the imagination of harpists in the future.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to provide historical documents, literature, abstracts, criticism of the pedal and cross-strung chromatic harps as well as analysis of important repertories. This study also compares the playing technique of the chromatic and pedal harps. In addition, there will be an introduction to how the cross-strung chromatic harp evolved in the twentieth-century.

**Rationale for the Study**

Comparing the popularity of the published literature, abstracts, historical background, and repertories for the pedal harp to only a few literary sources that have been published and completed for the cross-strung chromatic harp, it seems that the pedal harp is more accepted by the harpist and public in the early twentieth-century.
At the same time Claude Debussy’s (1862-1918) *Danses Sacree et Profane* was composed to promote the Pleyel cross-strung chromatic harp, his colleague, Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) wrote the *Introduction et Allegro* for the Erard double-action pedal harp. These two works were written to demonstrate each instrument’s potential capacities and have become two of the most important works in harp literature. The question is why the public and harpists eventually preferred the pedal harp instead of the cross-strung chromatic harp. This study describes the main issues, critics, discussions, and historical background in an attempt to answer this question.

**Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions when comparing the pedal and cross-strung chromatic harps:

1. What is the historical background of the cross-strung chromatic and the pedal harps?
2. What are the mechanical differences between the cross-strung chromatic and the pedal harps?
3. What are the performance technique differences between the cross-strung chromatic and the pedal harps?
4. What characteristics make the pedal harp as today’s standard harp?
5. What composers composed symphonic works for cross-strung chromatic harps?
6. What is the solo repertoire for the cross-strung chromatic harp?
7. Why was the cross-strung chromatic harp created?
8. Why was the pedal harp created?
9. What are the differences in the music composed form the cross-strung chromatic and the pedal harps?
10. What are the characteristics of the sound between the cross-strung chromatic and the pedal harps?

**Need for Study**

There are a limited number of printed materials available for inspection, especially that which is useful in comparing the cross-strung chromatic harp and the pedal harp. It is important to verify and understand the reasons why the pedal harp is becoming today’s standard, and not the chromatic harp. Also, it is necessary to organize and combine the information for use in further studies.

**Review of Related Literature**

Review of the literature revealed material relating to the history of the cross-strung chromatic harp and the pedal harp mechanism written by Bochsa, Dorette Spohr, Berlioz and Parish-Alvars; other composers writing for the European pedal harp from 1720 to 1910; and a brief history of American harp makers, such as the Lyon & Healy and Wurlitzer in America from late eighteenth-century to early twentieth-first century. Some information was found in The Harp: Its History, Technique and Repertoire by Roslyn Rensch. Biographical information about the composers and history of the harp were found in the Baker’s Biographical Dictionary and New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

**Related Dissertations**

In regard to the subject of this paper, it was valuable to review three dissertations related to cross-strung chromatic and pedal harps.

Elaine Christy Bejjani’s dissertation, *The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century*, focuses on details of the constructions of Pleyel’s cross-strung chromatic harp and contains translations from Lyon’s *The Chromatic Harp and Its Construction*, and translations from Renee Lenars *The Chromatic Harp and Its Technique*.

Martha Ruth Burwell’s *The History of the Pedal Harp and Its Influence on Composers and Their Music*, gives a brief history of the pedal harp and orchestral music with harp parts.
Chapter 2

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PEDAL HARP

Before Single-Action Pedal Harp

Before the eighteenth-century, the harp had a limited range of two octaves. The well-known representation of this harp is seen in the painting of King David playing the harp in the Temple (Figure 2.1) in the seventeenth-century. ⁵ Players of that time held the harp on their lap. The harp was tuned to the pitches of the desired scales.

Figure 2.1 “King David in the Temple” painting by painted by Pieter Lastmann, seventeenth-century.

In the 1700s, the Mullagh Mast harp was an interesting case: the instrument was a tall and high-headed Irish harp. This instrument was fifty-four inches in height, had thirty-seven strings and an extreme width of thirteen inches at the sounding board (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 The Mallagh Mast Harp, c. 1700

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6 Ibid., 93.

7 Idib., Plate 28b.
In the early eighteenth-century, the new music was written using many major and minor keys. The new double harp, or *arpa doppia* was not able to play in all keys. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century, the harp mechanism changed in development. An Austrian, Tyrol, improved the harp using a single row of strings next to a row of strong J shaped metal hooks. Players would turn the hooks with their left hands that raise a string a semitone. In the early eighteenth-century, only the first, second, fourth and fifth degrees of the scale in which the instrument was tuned were raised. Also, there was no guarantee that every pitch would be raised one semitone, since the hooks often bent after use. Tyrolean hook harp with thirty-two strings, had twenty-one hooks (Figure 2.3).

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8 Ibid., 97.

9 Ibid., Plate 33a.
During the seventeenth-century, the hooks were connected to, and operated by levers; which was easier for performers to operate. This system is still used today on Celtic lever harps and the Lyon and Healy Troubadour harp (Figure 2.4 and detail look for levers). In addition, the Lyon & Healy Troubadour harp is considered the most popular harp for a beginning student; the spaces between each string as the concert size pedal harp, reasonable price and its portability (sixty-five and half itches in height, and thirty-eight pounds in weight) make it an affordable alternative to a full size concert instrument.

Figure 2.4 The Lyon & Healy Troubadour IV Harp

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10 Ibid., 98.

During the early eighteenth-century, half step levers were turned by the use of pedal instead of the hooks. These pedals were set and strung through the bass of the harp to connect a link mechanism in a hollowed out recess along the length of the right side of the neck. When a pedal was pressed, it made contact with a hook which raised the string pitch a semitone higher.

**The Single-Action Harp**

Around 1720, Jakob Hochbrucker, a native of Donauworth in Bavaria, used the pedal system to create the first single-action pedal harp. He developed five pedals which controlled the hooks connected to the pedals with wires; these pedals controlled the C, D, F, G, and A strings. When the C pedal moved, all the C strings that were connected to the hooks moved accordingly and were raised a semitone. The disadvantage of this development was that the pitches were often out of tune because the hooks created pressure on strings, stretching them out of tune. Later, Hochbrucker gradually advanced his pedal system to seven pedals, one belonging to each note of the diatonic scale. However, only eight major and five minor keys could be played when the harp was tuned in E-flat major.  

Simon Hochbrucker (Jakob’s son) introduced his father’s invention to Vienna in 1729, and ten years later to Brussels. An early portrait depicting a single-action pedal harp was collected by Jean Baptiste Greuze’s of Ange-Laurent de LaLive de Jully playing the harp (Washington, National Gallery of Art) and exhibited in Paris in 1759. Unfortunately, the portrait does not show the column, pedal or the base of the instrument.

In the 1740s, the single-action pedal harp was introduced into Paris by Stecht, a

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German, and Phillip Mayer, a Strasbourgh musician. Around the same time, a similar single-action pedal harp was played by the German harpist - Goepfert(Gaiffre), who claimed to have invented it, and soon Paris took a leading role in the production of harps.13

The Cousineau harp makers and publishers were the foremost pedal harp company in Paris just before the French Revolution. George Cousineau (1733-1800) was born in Mouchamps, Vendée. Later, his son, Jacques-Georges Cousineau (1760-1836) joined the business, and the title of Luthier-in-Ordinary to the Queen was given to both. Their first harp was built in 1780. Jacques-Georges was a well-known harpist. He was a soloist at the Concert Spirituel in 1781 and became harpist to Empress Josephine in 1804. Soon, Cousineau published a catalogues of harp solos, ensemble music and methods composed or arranged by the Cousineaus and others.

They contributed several improvements of harp mechanism; the two most remarkable developments were à béquilles (‘crutch’) and a system of fourteen pedals. The à béquilles (‘crutch’) system was advanced of the earlier hook as a device for raising pitch. The bridge-pin slide made it possible to regulate individual string lengths. They also reorganized the connecting levers in the harp neck. According to P.J. Roussier’s Mémoire sur la nouvelle harpe de M. Cousineau (1782), the Cousineaus developed a harp which could be tuned in C♭ (rather than E♭) and played in all keys. 14

On the single-action pedal harp, each string only could be raised one semitone a pitch by pedal mechanism (from flat to natural or from natural to sharp), Cousineau

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added another seven pedals to double the pedal mechanism. Cousineau developed his fourteen pedal system during his association with Sébastien Erard, who established a pianoforte and harp factory in Paris. The pedals for D, C and B strings were normally placed to the left of the sounding board, and those for E, F, G and A to its right. The harp was strung with gut strings except for the bottom six, which were wire-covered. The C and F strings were colored respectively red and blue for ease of identification. The open strings were tuned in $E_b$ to give the widest scope for modulation, eight major and five minor keys being obtainable by different pedal combinations. For example, in $E_b$ all the pedals were in their open position, but in C, the B, E and A pedals were depressed and fixed into the lower notch so that $B_b$ became $B^\#$, $E_b$ became $E^\#$, and $A_b$ became $A^\#$.\[15\]

Cousineau made this harp as an art work to Marie Antoinette. Marie Antoinette requested a unique blue color harp and the description stated: \[17\]

“the harmonic curve of the harp, terminating at the scroll, appears quite sturdy in contrast to the slender fluted column of the instrument. In some examples, the entire altering mechanism was hidden within the harmonic curve. The sound chest of the pedal harp was composed of a staved body lidded by a thin flexible board. This board with the grain of the wood running horizontally was pierced by sound holes arranged in little patterns often circled by delicately painted wreaths of flowers” (Figure 2.5).\[18\]

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18 Ibid., Plate 34a.
Figure 2.5 Single action pedal harp by Cousineau, belonged to Marie Antoinette in late eighteenth-century, height about sixty-five inches (c. 165 cm)

In Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*, there is an illustration that shows a typical single-action harp of the period.19

“The resonator was composed of a ribbed back, lidded by a thin flexible soundboard of lateral grain. The curve of the neck varied slightly according to the number (generally 36 to 43) and pitch of the strings. A box to house the seven pedals was added at the base of the harp, and the pedal rods connected to the linkage ran up through the hollow fore pillar, now of necessity absolutely straight. In response perhaps to the taste of aristocratic patrons, the simply carved fore pillars were made highly ornate, sculptured and gilded. Soundboards were painted in the Vernis Martin style, and the harp itself became an important decorative element, indeed a requisite of the most elegant Parisian salons” (Figure 2.6).20

Figure 2.6 Single-action pedal harp with structural and mechanical details: engraving by Benard after Prevost from Diderot and D’Alembert’s ‘Encyclopédie’, v (Paris, 1767), pl.xix

20 Ibid., Plate 31.
Sébastien Erard

Sébastien Erard (1752-1831) was born in Strasbourg, the fourth son of a church furniture maker Louis-Antoine Erard (1685-1758). Sébastien’s father died when he was only six years old, but his training was taken over by his uncles, godfather, and older brothers who were employed as joiners, cabinetworks and gilders.

Sébastien Erard arrived in Paris around 1768, and was provided with a workshop on the premises for Duchesse de Villeroy (1731–1816) who was his early patron. He worked at her mansion on the Rue de Bourbon. In 1777, Sébastien constructed an impressive five-octave bichord piano modeled on a Zumpe square piano for the Duchesse. In 1779, he also built his only known harpsichord, the clavécin mécanique [clavécin à expression] which is now in the Musée de la Musique, Paris. After 1780s, he exhibited the new five octave pianos, which proved to be a great success. The great achievements of his career include a grand forte piano announced by the Annonces, affiches et avis divers on December 10, 1788, and the perfection of a double action harp (a modified version of Zumpe's improved action) in 1790. He also introduced prototype instruments, which he called fortepiano en forme de clavécin, in 1790 (for a private collection, France) and in 1791 (Musée de la Musique, Paris). These did not enter general production until after the Revolution. Sébastien also expanded the range of his fortepiano to five and a half octaves of around 1800s.21

Sébastien Erard made improvement to the piano paralleled by those he made in the reconstruction and mechanism of harps. He does not appear to have made many harps before being forced to leave revolutionary France for London, but he had already observed in a letter that “the mechanism of this instrument is too complicated; I have

changed and much simplified it; this means it doesn't break strings like before. Once I have obtained the right to show my discovery, I will bring out my harps.” In 1792 he arrived in London and lived at 18 Great Marlborough Street where he concentrated on the manufacture and improvement of harps. In 1794, he received the first ever British patent for a harp (*Improvements in Pianofortes and Harps*, patent no.2016).

He used the existing pedal mechanism, but took the hooks, crooks and crutches away and replaced them with a “fork mechanism.” The main component of the fork mechanism was a small metal disk with two short metal prongs protruding from opposite sides. Each string ran from its tuning-pin to the sounding board while passing over the center of the disk. When a pedal was pressed down, the corresponding disc moved. The action made the two prongs or forks press against a string, which raised the pitch one semi-tone. Also, he strengthened the neck by laminating the wood with the grain running in the same direction. His new rounded sounding board replaced the previous staved construction. The tuning mechanism, instead of being enclosed within the neck, was placed between two brass plates in order to give to the instrument additional rigidity.

The most remarkable development was the new fork mechanism. When players moved the pedal, it brought two forked pins into contact with the strings, shortening the pins by a semitone without pulling the strings out of the line. The strings in sharp position remained parallel with the others, causing fewer breakages. As a result, accuracy of intonation was greatly improved. The harp was tuned in Eb, and could be played in eight major and five minor keys. Erard introduced his new single-action harp to Paris on his return to France in 1795. His first French harp patent, however, dates only from 1798.
In London, the new single action pedal harp was a remarkable success. The sales took off in November, 1800, when the Princess of Wales paid £7512s for harp no. 357. For the decoration, Erard used the style of the day, but added a circle of rams' heads around the capital of the fluted column. The most popular model of the harp, as noted in the London Order Books (RCM, London), was ‘noire, bordures etrusques.’ The brass plate was engraved with the serial number, address and anglicized form of the maker's forename. Between February 2, 1807 and April 24, 1809, single-action harps amounting to £20,152 14s. 8d. were sold. By September, 1810 Erard's London outlet had sold 1374 harps.\textsuperscript{22}

The Double-Action Pedal Harp

In 1807, Sébastien Erard returned to London where he spent five years developing the harp. Although his single action pedal solved some issues of the tuning, the noise of the mechanism, the small range of octaves, and the limited number of major and minors keys were still the main concerns. Erard spent his time from 1801 to 1808 refining the improvements of the mechanism, but it was not until 1810 that he perfected the first double action mechanism based on the fork principle and simply added another disk to make the double action pedal harp (patent no. 3332) (Figure 2.7).\textsuperscript{23}

This invention made the harp more flexible than the keyboard (twelve pitches in one octave): the double action pedal harp is tuned in Cb and it could play fifteen major, twelve minor keys, and produced enharmonic tones (twenty-one pitches in one octave)

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 276.

for harp glissandos (Figure 2.8).²⁴

Figure 2.7 Modern double-action harp, showing the pedal-rod, tuning disc mechanism, pedal box, and the positions of forks and pedals for the sharps, flats and naturals.

²⁴Ibid., Plate 32.
Figure 2.8 Positions of forks and pedals, and corresponding keys obtainable on the new Erard double-action harp: engraving by W. Lowry after Pierre Erard from his ‘The Harp in its Present Improved State’ (London, 1821)
Erard’s first double-action pedal harp, made before he perfected the mechanism, wore a little crown of rams heads above the fluted column. Erard’s double-action mechanism created a need for a larger, deeper pedal box, so the instrument’s dimensions were increased accordingly. From a height of little more than five feet, the harp column rose to an average height of about five feet eight inches. The invention was such a success that in the first year Erard sold £25,000 worth of the harps. In 1831, Sébastien Erard died in Paris. His nephew- Pierre Erard (1796-1855) soon took charge of the business both in Paris and London. Their record states that there were eighty specialist workers employed in nineteen workshops, of which sixteen were devoted to the piano. At the remaining three harp workshops, four workers were employed for woodwork, one for assembly, and one for gilding. The stock of instruments included fifty completed pianos and thirteen harps.

In June 1836, Pierre Erard improved the double-action pedal harp, and received a patent for his ‘Gothic’ harp, so-called because of its decoration. This harp had a greater distance between the strings, wider and longer sounding board by four inches to accommodate forty-six strings. The wire-wrapped bass strings were introduced from E downwards to C. All Fs and Cs were also red and blue color coded. The Gothic harp had two new column styles. One featured angelic figures in pointed archways. In this design gilded plaster exquisitely was trimmed with black lacquered or highly polished wood (Figure 2.9).

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26 Ibid., Plate 34b.
Figure 2.9 Double-action Erard Gothic Harp, height about sixty-seven inches, (c. 170 cm) in mid-nineteenth century.

The other style was almost retrogressive in design since it featured a return to the elaborate scroll of French pre-revolutionary days. After Pierre Erard died in 1855, the business was passed to his widow Camille Erard (1813–1889). In 1883, she entered into a business agreement with Amedé Blondel, and the firm operated as Erard et Cie. An illustrated trade pamphlet of 1878 shows four grand pianos, four uprights pianos, and two models of harp, including the ornately carved ‘Louis XVI’, and a forty-seven string

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27 Ibid., 103.
Gothic model. From 1903 until 1934 the firm was known as Blondel et Cie (Maison Erard). From 1935 to 1956 as Guichard et Cie (Maison Erard), and from 1956 onwards as Erard et Cie S.A. It merged with Gaveau as Gaveau-Erard in 1959, continuing harp manufacturing on a small scale until the early 1970s under the name of Erard. In 1978, the premises in the Salle Gaveau and the good reputation of the harp-manufacturing section of Gaveau-Erard were acquired by Victor Salvi.  

Other Double-Action Pedal Harp Manufactories after Erard

**Salvi Company**

Victor Salvi (1920) was born in Chicago, Illinois. He is the youngest son of the immigrant Venetian instrument maker Rudolfo Salvi (1865–1943). His half-brother Alberto (1893-1983) and his sister Aida (1905-1996) were also harpists. Victor Salvi began his harp studies at a young age and began his career as a harpist in 1938. He was harpist for Menotti’s operas *The Consul* (1950) and *The Saint of Bleecker Street* (1954) on Broadway, and also played with the New York Pops Orchestra and NBC Symphony Orchestra with conductors, such as Toscanini, Monteux, Szell, and Mitropoulos. During that time, he opened his own harp repair shop in Chicago in 1945, then moved and established a harp factory in Genoa, Italy. He sold his first Italian made harp in 1957 and his business thrived. In 1969, he opened factories in Covent Garden, London, and Sainte Croix, Switzerland. His instruments were awarded first prize at Mostra del Artigianato held in Florence in 1970. In 2000, the Victor Salvi Foundation was established. Its goal was to “promote the harp to a wider audience through a variety of

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programs and activities related to the instrument and its music.”  

Salvi’s catalogue contained several contrasting styles of harps. Salvi celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his business by constructing two special harps, inlaid with fourteen different materials including precious woods, ivory and mother of pearl. One of the special carved models was bought by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 1978, Salvi company merged with Erard. The distribution of harps was facilitated internationally with salons in Paris (1970), Santa Monica (1975) and Tokyo (1981). In 1987, Salvi added an electronic harp to his catalogue, and acquired the major harp firm Lyon & Healy in Chicago. While Lyon & Healy harp continued to manufacture their harps under their name in Chicago, the Salvi harps continued to be made in Italy and imported to the United States.  

Lyon & Healy was founded in 1864 in Chicago, Illinois by George Washburn Lyon and Patrick Joseph Healy. They experimented and researched for almost two decades before manufacturing their first Lyon & Healy harp at the cost of about ten thousand dollars in 1889. This harp is still used at Morgan Park High School in Chicago. “This harp has a black lacquered neck and body but the column is without fluting and has been inlaid with wood in geometric patterns. Both the pedestal (in front)


31 Martha Ruth Burwell, “The History of the Pedal Harp and Its Influence on Composers and Their Music” (Master essay, Ball State University, 1969), 15.

and the base of the column are decorated with gold leaf. The harp column itself is topped with a true crown of gold.” 33

**Lyon & Healy Company**

Lyon & Healy, using the design of double-action harp from Sébastien Erard, added nine different woods and seven metals for the harps. The Lyon & Healy harp gained extra strength on the curved neck (the most fragile part in the harp) in order to hold the tension of the strings, by constructing the neck with seven laminations of maple with each layer alternating the grain of the wood. The column was gilded with more than twelve hundred square inches of twenty-four karat gold applied layer by layer over a period of three weeks. According to Hunzinger, writer of the *Harp News*, the harp’s mechanism as “numbering over two thousand in the pedal and action connections, are working by hand until they move with the most perfect precision.” 34

In 1893, Lyon & Healy exhibited at the Columbia Exposition, and was awarded the Grand Prize. In 1900, Lyon & Healy issued their first catalogue which included six basic models of harp. Their harps soon became the favorite of harpists. In 1909, Wurlitzer Company under directed by Emil O. Starke, an associate of George B. Durkee at the Lyon & Healy harp factory, began harp production in Chicago and later moved to North Tonawanda, New York. 35

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34 Martha Ruth Burwell, “The History of the Pedal Harp and Its Influence on Composers and Their Music” (Master essay, Ball State University, 1969), 16.

The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company was founded in 1856 by German immigrant Franz Rudolph Wurlitzer in Cincinnati. Rudolph (1831-1914) was born on January 31, 1831; he was educated in Schöneck, Plauen, and Leipzig. Rudolph's father, Christian Gottfried Wurlitzer, was a musical instrument craftsman who trained Rudolph. But, Rudolph decided not to remain in his father's business, and immigrate to the United States. His family did not provide him with any financial help, so Rudolph arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1853, penniless and without much knowledge of the English language at the young age of twenty-two. He worked several jobs to make a living, including a grocery store job in New Jersey where began to learn English. He moved to Cincinnati and sold products door-to-door. At the same time, he worked as a porter in a dry-goods establishment at a salary of $4.00 a week.

In 1854, he worked with the private banking firm of Heidelbach and Seasongood in Cincinnati at a salary of eight dollars per week. When the bank foreclosed on a musical instrument business, he sent his entire saving of seven hundred dollars to his family in Schöneck, requesting instruments. He received beautifully-crafted clarinets, bass clarinets, oboes, bassoons, flutes, English horns, and oboes, which he sold directly to retailers. Rudolph bought a small flat on the top floor of the Masonic Building at 4th and Sycamore Streets in Cincinnati, and Rudolph Wurlitzer Company was born in 1856. For three years, he carried on the business of his new musical company from these rooms, while remaining cashier of the Heidelbach and Seasongood Bank. The Wurlitzer business grew rapidly. In 1858, it moved to larger quarters at 123 Main Street. The retailing began in 1860 and soon display rooms were added to offices and stockrooms.
In 1865, Wurlitzer was the largest outlet for band instruments in the United States. They opened a retail store in Chicago to the public. In 1868, Rudolph Wurlitzer married Miss Leonie Farny. Their first child, Howard, was born in 1871. Rudolph served as a president of the corporation from 1890 until 1912 and as a chairman from 1912 to 1914. Howard Wurlitzer joined the firm in 1889, and aggressively involved the firm of the popular automatic musical trade. In 1879, a two hundred sixteen pages hand-written catalog was published, which included the list of reed organs and other instruments.36

Beginning in the 1880s, America became interested in music boxes. Rudolph Wurlitzer secured a sales distributorship from the largest manufacturer of musical boxes in America, Regina Music Box Company of Rahway, New Jersey. Wurlitzer came to be the major sales outlet for Regina musical products. Today, the Regina Corporation is a leading manufacturer of floor care equipment. In 1891, Wurlitzer expanded the company and moved to 121 East 4th Street. In 1897, Rudolph developed a coin-operated automatic piano, the Wurlitzer Tonophone. The Tonophone won the Gold Medal Award at the Pan American Exposition in 1901.

In December, 1904, a disastrous fire completely destroyed Wurlitzer's Cincinnati headquarters. In 1906, a magnificent 6-story building at 121 East 4th Street was completed and rebuilt to house the retail operations and executive offices. Wurlitzer’s wholesale business had become so large that it was necessary to publish extensive catalogs.37


37 Ibid., 17-18.
Sometime in 1905, Howard Wurlitzer introduced a self-playing harp and soon, a new self-playing harp was immediately re-introduced as the Wurlitzer Automatic Harp from J. W. Whitlock and Company of Rising Sun, Indiana. This self-playing harp contained “sixty fingers (almost human in their operation), and produces a volume of soft, sweet music equal to several Italian harps played by hand. The face of the instrument is covered by a large harp-shaped plate glass, showing the interior lit up by electric lights and the wonderful little fingers picking the strings. This feature gives the instrument an exceedingly attractive appearance.”38

The Wurlitzer company had two styles of the automatic harp. Style A was placed in a rectangular oak case with a fancy fretwork surrounding plate glass cut in a harp-like shape (Figure 2.10).39

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38 Ibid., 17.
39 Ibid., 18.
Figure 2.10 Wurlitzer Company Style A, Automatic Harp

Style B automatic harps, introduced in 1906 were placed in cases “built on the lines of the original Italian harp,” complete with column and harmonic curve (Figure 2.11). Styles A and B were virtually the same from a mechanical standpoint, and both were lit from within by an electric light.

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40 Ibid., 19.
Approximately, eleven hundred of Style A automatic harps were made, of which fourteen are known to still exist. About four hundred Style B automatic harps were made, of which seven are known to survive. The Official Price Guide to Music Collectibles lists the value of surviving Style A automatic harps at anywhere between $7,500 to $12,500 in 1986.

Rudolph Wurlitzer was said to be “passionately fond of the harp and its music.” For many years the company had been importing European harps made by Erard, Erat, Dodd, Grosjean, and others. Wurlitzer repaired these imported harps in his Cincinnati
store. He came to the conclusion that there was a need for an American harp suited to the demands of contemporary music in United States. The first harps made at Wurlitzer's Chicago factory appeared in 1909. These instruments were made under the direction of Emil O. Starke, who had worked with George B. Durkee at the Lyon & Healy harp factory for 20 years.41

These early harps manufactured by Wurlitzer were similar to European models. Among the innovations mentioned in the 1909 Wurlitzer general catalog mechanical parts were all made by machine with all fittings removable and interchangeable, using standard screw threads. The action was free from any questionable innovations, and the general plans of the immortal Erard were followed. The harps used pivot-bearing and cone-bearing spindles, and the only springs used were in the pedals themselves. The pedal rod runways were bushed with piano felt, the column was solid. The early Wurlitzer harps were presented in three styles: I, II, and III. Soon, Starke made several important modifications in the design of his harps. He changed over to alphabetic model-name designations. The new Wurlitzer harps were sturdier than the European harps. The body ribs were made of maple. The Wurlitzer harp had a patented anchor and shoulder brace decreased the frequency of regulations to the harp action. Mechanical precision was improved, and the action mechanism was enclosed between the brass plates of the neck. The pedal rods were enclosed in individual brass tubes within the column which made the pedal movement easier and less noisy.

In the Wurlitzer harp, the pedal rods were changed to a parallel arrangement, making them less susceptible to breakage. The sounding board was strengthened by

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41 Ibid., 20.
covering the usual single cross grain with a veneer of vertical grain. On the larger model harps, the sounding board was extended to exceed the width of the body of the instrument at its lower end, where the heavier strings needed greater amplification. The pedals were wrapped in leather, and rubber shoes could be purchased to cover the pedal tips. The Wurlitzer harp had longer string length than other harps of comparable size. Because of the patented anchor and shoulder brace, “no regulation even in the slightest degree has ever been found necessary” by the professional harpists who endorsed the Wurlitzer harp. Both the Wurlitzer harps and the harps made by Lyon & Healy had much stronger wooden frames than European harps made previously. Brass action plates and pedals were used, the disc action was gold-plated and string pins were nickel-plated.42

According to Wurlitzer sales literature of 1924, the Wurlitzer harp claimed “pre-eminent superiority of tone over any other harp.” The Wurlitzer harp was awarded a medal of excellence at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Endorsements soon followed by conductors Walter Damrosch, Fritz Reiner, and Leopold Stokowski, as well as by European harpists Anton Zamara, Luigi Maurizio Tedeschi, Marcel Grandjany, and American harpist Harriet A. Shaw. An especially elaborate harp was made in 1914 for the Italian-born harp virtuoso Alberto Salvi.43

In all, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company made more than fifteen hundred harps. Between 1921 and 1935, the firm manufactured about five hundred forty harps. During this time period, the following styles were made: A, B, C, I, DX, DD, CC, AX, CCX, AA, DDX-D, Special GG-G, and Special DD. Although information is incomplete, the

42 Ibid., 22.
43 Ibid., 22.
firm apparently changed back to numerical model designations in the late 1920s, possibly to be more consistent with Lyon & Healy's numerical style designations. Wurlitzer's Style 20, which proved to be very popular, first appeared in 1928. Wurlitzer also made Styles 5, 10, 25, and 30. Styles 25 and 30 had forty-seven strings and an extended sounding board. Style 25 was seventy-three inches tall; Style 30 was seventy-two inches in height. The weight of the Starke model Wurlitzer harps ranged from sixty to eighty pounds (Figure 2.12). 44

In 1891, Rudolph Henry Wurlitzer traveled to Berlin to study the violin with Emanuel Wirth of the Joachim Quartet. Training from the violin expert, August Riechers gave him knowledge of violins and violin making. In 1894 he joined the company as a director. In 1918, his violin collection included over two hundred instruments with several by Stradivari and Guarneri. Rudolph Henry’s son, Rembert Wurlitzer joined the department in 1930. Wurlitzer became an ardent supporter of twentieth-century American violin makers. In 1949 the violin department was directed by Rembert, became independent of the parent company. In 1965, Anna Lee Wurlitzer purchased the Hottinger Collection, comprising some thirty outstanding Italian violins, including a dozen by Stradivari. The firm closed down in autumn 1974. 45

44 Ibid., 23.
Figure 2.12 Wurlitzer Style C "Orchestral Harp" as pictured in the 1913 general catalog (from the Collection of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County)

Now, the only remaining American marker Lyon & Healy produces eight different models, and six special instrument models, included the Louis XV Special, the Louis XV and the Prince William double-action pedal harp. "Without a doubt, the highest expression of the harp maker's art," reads a description of the 1916 Lyon & Healy harp that inspired today's glorious Louis XV Special concert grand harp.

“This masterpiece is superbly crafted, intricately carved and clad in lavish 23+ karat gold leaf. Inspired by the rococo style seen in French King Louis XV's time, the harp conveys a light yet
elaborate style of art, incorporating leaves, flowers, scrolled toes and shapes reminiscent of shells. The Louis XV Special has elaborate carving along its neck and kneeblock, as well as intricate carving along the soundboard edges, both on the sides and surface.” (Figure 2.13).46

Figure 2.13 The Lyon & Healy Louis XV Special Instrument

In the mid-1980s, the firm began producing lever harps. In early 2000s, the firm produces six different lever harp models. In 1993, the firm also introduced the electric harp in the market, which produces an electronic signal designed to imitate the sound of the acoustic harp. This harp looks like any classical harp, but it is a combination of both the electric and acoustic harp. This electro-acoustic harp was introduced in 1997. It is

also called the “blue harp” due to its color. The 2000 electro-acoustic harp is called “2000 CG Electroacoustic Harp”:

“produces this sound through the use of transducers on each of the harp's strings. The transducers, mixdown module and preamp, specially designed for Lyon & Healy, are constructed to transform the acoustical sound of the string into an electrical signal. The result of this technology is an amplified harp which emits a reproduction of an acoustic sound in its natural state - the classic Lyon & Healy sound. In craftsmanship and visual appeal, the Electroacoustic harp is very similar to the traditional concert harp and uses the same strings and pedal mechanism” (Figure 2.14).  

Figure 2.14 The Lyon & Healy Style 2000 CG Electroacoustic Harp

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The concert grand harp has forty-seven (0 octave G to 7th octave C). The semi-concert grand has forty-six strings (0 octave G to 7th octave D). Nylon is generally used for the upper register, gut strings in the middle registers and wire in the bass. Concerning repairs, which are almost always done at the factory, the replacement of a sounding board and neck takes about six months to a year. Currently, the time from the placement of an order for a new instrument to delivery is about one year to eighteen months.
Chapter 3

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHROMATIC HARP

Pleyel Company

Pleyel Company was founded in 1807 in Paris by the composer Ignace Pleyel (1757-1831). Jean Henri Page, a famous English piano maker, joined the firm and helped from 1811 to 1815. In 1815, Ignace’s son Camille Pleyel joined the firm, and fourteen years later, Frédéric Kalkbrenner. Chopin made his debut in Paris in February 26, 1832 at the Salle Pleyel and later owned an 1930 Pleyel grand piano (no. 7267) with a single escapement and a light touch. Chopin said “when I feel in good form and strong enough to find my own individual sound, then I need a Pleyel piano”. In 1855, Camille Pleyel died and the business passed to his son-in-law, Auguste Wolff (1821-1887). The firm became Pleyel, Wolff & Cie. After Wolff’s death, his son-in-law, Gustave Lyon (1857-1936), joined the development of the chromatic harp.\textsuperscript{48}

The chromatic harp began to inspire composers who used chromaticism, such as Claude Debussy (1862-1918), Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921), Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), and Maurice Ravel (1875-1905). The harp also inspired the two most celebrated as harp teachers and composers in the time, Alphonse Hasselmans (1845-1912), professor of the harp department in Paris Conservatory from 1884-1912 and Felix Godefroid (1818-1897), Belgian harpist and composer, to visit, Mr. Gustave

Lyon. Despite tuning problems due to humidity and temperature changes Gustave
Lyon set about solving the Erard harp’s tuning problems caused by heat and humidity.
His idea was the development of a chromatic harp without pedals, as well as a
keyboard, with stable tuning. Conductors and composers were eager to have such an
instrument.

Conductor, Mr. Laloy said in the *Revue Musicale*: “When a modern orchestra
needs to remain limpid to incorporate the luminescence represented by the harp, and
modern music needs to develop its richness by using the chromatic scale more and
more.” In his *Treatise on Instrumentation*, Berlioz wrote, “When a melody, already
executed by other instruments is reproduced by the harp and contains impossible or
dangerous chromatic passages, one must astutely modify it by replacing one or several
of the altered notes with other notes taken from the harmony. Thus, instead of giving it
the harp the following melody played by the violins (Example 1) the author must
write as follows: (Example 2) the nature of the harp mechanism dictated the sacrifice
of the four successive semitones in the third measures.” This project soon became
Lyon’s main research project in an attempt to solve construction problems.⁴⁹

Example 1. Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* Second movement, mm. 341-345

⁴⁹ Elaine Christy Bejjani, “The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century” (DMA essay,
The Manhattan School of Music, 1993), 11.
Example 2. Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* Second movement, mm. 341-345

The main construction of the chromatic harp used two separate sets of the strings and was based on the black and white keys on the keyboard. The two sets of strings cross in the center of the harp, so that the ‘black note’ strings passed between ‘white note’ strings much like the white keys of a piano surround the black keys of the keyboard. When Lyon registered his patent in German and America, he was surprised to find that Jean Henri Pape, a well-known French piano marker, had a similar idea in 1843. After reviewing Pape’s idea of a chromatic harp, Lyon’s was satisfied that his harp was a new invention.

According to Lyon: “Pape’s idea only complicated the system. The harp proposed by Pape was not given serious consideration and ultimately never realized.” In fact, Page was aware of a balance problem with the harp, which he attempted to solve by placing levers on both sides of the neck. The strings attached to these levers would connect to alternate sides of the sounding board. These pitches would change by semi-tones so one plane of strings would have the following note: C-natural, D-natural, E-natural, F-sharp, G-sharp, A-sharp, and the other string row, C-sharp, D-sharp, F-natural, G-natural, A-natural, B-natural. (The two whole tone scales beginning on C-natural and C-sharp.) The idea of the cross-strung string harp was not entirely new; a fifteenth century Scottish harp exists in the museum of South Kensington. Also, according to *The Chromatic Harp and Its Construction* by Gustave Lyon, “double strung harps were not original with Lyon or Pape. In the early
seventeenth-century, Monteverdi wrote for the double-strung *arpa doppia* in his opera *Orfeo*. A triple-strung instrument is described by the French music historian Marin Mersenne in his *Harmonie Universelle, 1636*.”

Lyon’s idea of the chromatic harp was to place the two rows of strings to correspond to a keyboard so that the ‘black strings’ appear to be grouped by twos and threes. Therefore, the center strings in a group of three will be represented as G-sharp (A-flat), G-natural and A-natural. The construction of the chromatic harp included a wooden neck between two steel plates screwed and bolted together, and a sounding board tied to the edges of the body which were made of three thin wooden layers. The strings were connected to the sounding board by ‘buttons’ and on the top, strung threaded through the neck pins.

Lyon tried to solve the two major problems of this harp: tuning instability and heaviness of the harp. He needed to determine the exact tension limit that could be safely used on a string of a given thickness, and the weight per meter of a string which is strung to its tension limit. He needed to find the changes of diameter in a gut string before it was strung and after it was as its desired tension (pitch). In his book *The Chromatic Harp and Its Construction*, he mentioned: “I designed an apparatus which recorded successive lengthening of a consistently increased load. This apparatus, built by a Pleyel-Wolff & Co. factory, simultaneously recorded on the same paper the lengthening and tension”(Figure 3.1). He also studied the effect of humidity on the gut strings. His experiment exposed a gut string to moisture by surrounding it with

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51 Ibid., 16.

52 Ibid., 17.
wet cotton, so that the moisture remained constant, causing the string to lengthen. After the string stopped lengthening, the cotton was removed and the string continued to lengthen while drying. Lyon connected each of these lengthened strings to the back of the sounding board in one straight line. The lengths of the strings determined the curve of the harp’s neck.\(^{53}\)

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\(^{53}\) Ibid., 20.
Lyon’s also added a wooden support strip, which connected strings of all the tensions to the back of the sounding board (Figure 3.2).\textsuperscript{54}

This connected the strings behind the board, rather than attaching them to the sounding board by buttons, replacing the use of the micro-metric screw. In Lyon’s no. 3 harp (Figure 3.3 and 3.4), he added a damper, such as the one for the piano. It was composed of two felt bands, which rotated around an axis inclined at fifteen degree off the sounding-board, and was operated by a pedal. The felt pressed against the white strings at the neck and against the black strings at the sounding board.\textsuperscript{55}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 2}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 25-27.
In August 1895, one year after his project began, Lyon took his harp to the seashore at Villers-sur-mer to test its tuning stability. He discovered that the harp did not retain its pitch. Many strings broke. In an attempt to solve the problem, Lyon built an apparatus holding six rotating cylinders with three pins. These pins were affixed to
the sides and top center of the harp, with three more pins occupying similar positions on the attachment supports inside the body in order to keep the harp in tune and reduce the number of string breakages.\textsuperscript{56}

In his pursuit of perfection, Lyon’s next contribution was an all steel harp:

“The neck was all melted steel and calculated as for a bridge beam, with the arched area connected to a column made of stretched steel. The converse side was fitted between two plates carried by the attachment support, also of melted steel and placed inside the wooden body of the harp” (Figures 3.5 and 3.6).\textsuperscript{57}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figures/3-5-6.jpg}
\caption{Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 9}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{56} Elaine Christy Bejjani, “The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century” (DMA essay, The Manhattan School of Music, 1993), 28-29.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 29.
\end{flushleft}
Lyon shipped three harps, at the same time, to the seashore: a gothic double-action pedal harp, a *circa* 1840, a small Pleyel pedal harp, and his own new model. Lyon’s was strung with strings purchased from the same manufacturer as the other harps. During their stay at the beach, the harps experienced a fierce hurricane which destroyed over twenty large trees on the estate. The next morning, Lyon discovered that fifteen strings were broken on the Pleyel pedal harps, fourteen strings were broken on the Gothic double-action pedal harp, but none missing from his steel harp. This convinced Lyon the solution to stable tuning lay in an immovable and strong metal neck, with a metal attachment support, a metal column and micrometric screws for the tuning pegs.58

Lyon was concerned about the problem of transporting his steel harp which weighed more than one hundred thirty-five pounds (sixty kilograms). To solve this mobility problem, Lyon added small rollers hidden under the anterior side of the base. By bending the harp slightly forward, it could easily be rolled from place to place. He was pleased that his harp had performed well in the tuning stability experiment. His ongoing test showed that his harp only broke thirteen strings in eighty three days, compared to twenty eight string breaks in thirty six days with standard pedal harps.59 He was also pleased with his harp’s excellent sound qualities. His new all steel harp was completed in May 1897 and named Model no. 11.60 (Figures 3.7 and 3.8).61

58 Ibid., 30.
59 Ibid., 33.
60 Ibid., 31.
61 Ibid., 32.
Figures 3.7 and 3.8 Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model No. 11

Tuning this steel harp was like tuning the chromatic scale of the piano, using equal temperament. Lyon included tuning blades in a small light-weight box, with one blade for each note of the sixth octave. In 1907, Gustave Lyon crated a lute-harp, a chromatic harp strung in wire. This lute-harp was designed to play harpsichord music of composers, such as Rameau, Daquin, Scarlatti, Handel, and Bach. Lyon’s hope
was that this new instrument with metal strings would match the dry sound of harpsichord. Lyon wrote the following lines which were published in “La Revue Musicale” 1907: “All that was needed was to design an instrument based on the cross strung chromatic harp (therefore involving fingers) to produce a true “lute” in the shape of a harp (Figure 3.9). Strung with metal strings, with a special soundboard, it would generate the whole sound spectrum the great Bach was wishing for... This is how the lute-harp was born. Our calculations must have been right, only fourteen days after its construction, Miss Renee Lenars, First Prize Winner of the Paris Conservatory (cross strung chromatic harp), played the new instrument in a public reception at La Salle Pleyel, hosted by Camille Saint-Saens and attended by several Russian music composers and artists.”

This lute-harp was built in varies sizes. A small five octave version was requested by Cosima Wagner, Richard Wagner’s widow, to be played in Beckmesser’s serenades in the opera Die Meister Singer von Nurnberg. “When Wagner wrote this opera, he expressed the view that the sound needed for this part should be that of a ‘cracked lute.’ ” Madame Wagner wrote to Lyon regarding the lute-harp (Figure 3.10):

Bayreuth, 2 July 1899

Sir,

The lute that you had the extreme kindness of dedicating to the performances of Bayreuth was shown to three

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62 Ibid., 66.


65 Ibid., 67.
conductors and the harpists of our orchestra. They were all unanimous in their recognition of the beauty, advantage and merit of your invention. This instrument, ravishing by shape as well as by sound, will decorate our music room and I could not tell you, sir, how responsive I am to your kind attention.

Please, dear sir, receive along with my thanks and those of my son, the assurance of my careful consideration.

Signed, C. Wagner

Figure 3.9 Gustave Lyon’s lute-harp
The success of Lyon’s lute-harp in Bayreuth, interested other opera companies in Paris, Berlin, Mr. Mancinelli in Francoise de Rimini (1907), Mannheim, Amsterdam, Hague, Venice, La Scala of Milan, the theater Regio of Turin, the theater of Bologna, and the theaters of Lisbon and Buenos Aires. After a brief period of success, this instrument fell out of favor and was no longer used.66

Figure 3.10 Gustave Lyon’s lute-harp for Madame Wagner

One of the major limitations of the chromatic harp is its inability to play glissando in keys other than C major. So, again Gustave Lyon designed a new harp. The “harpe integrale” was designed to satisfy opera directors and composers who preferred the chromatic harp, but also need the color of some of the pedal harp characteristics. Although this harp didn’t have pedals to produce glissando, it was possible to replace the effect with fast arpeggios and scales. Compared to his

66 Elaine Christy Bejjani, “The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century” (DMA.essay, The Manhattan School of Music, 1993), 68.
chromatic harp, the strings were deliberately made much longer. They were made so to be lowered a semitone under the same tension. This harp had a magnesium column and magnesium and aluminum neck. Steel wound gut strings insured the harp’s tuning stability. The performer pushed pressure studs that locked the stings to the center of the sounding board when the instrument was not in use. There is no extant ‘harp integrale’ due to a fire in Pleyel’s work place during World War II. His archives, containing building plans for his harps, his production records and many instruments were destroyed, making information about his instruments difficult to find.67

**Summary of Pleyel’s Chromatic Harp Models:**

Gustave Lyon designed eleven prototype chromatic harps, each successive model an improvement upon the previous one.

*The first Pleyel harp:*

The first Pleyel harp was the example following the principle construction of the pedal harps; it was built a wooden neck with two steel plates. The strings were attached to the sounding board through wooden pegs and held to the neck with regular tuning pins. The main concern of this harp was the instrument would not stay in tune for any long period of time (Figure 3.11 and 3.12).

*Harp Model No.2:*

In the second model, strings were no longer attached directly to the sounding board, instead, but to a metal plate inside the sounding board. The strings were securely attached to coil springs, set between the end of the string and then attached to the pins on the metal plate. This innovation gave the sounding board flexibility and

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67 Ibid., 68-70.
gave the instrument a pleasing timbre. Lyon’s concern was that the springs would
over stretch and affect the sounding board. He solved his problem by using a spring
that would stretch approximately three millimeters (See Figure 3.2).

Figures 3.11 and 3.12 Gustave Lyon’s Chromatic Harp Model. No.1

_Harp Model No. 3:_

This harp was the new improvement of model No.2 that included the new strings
system and also equipped the new micro-metric screws (also called Alberti screws)
which greatly improved tuning stability. Lyon also equipped with a string damping
system, like the piano. The system was composed of two felt bands, and the damper
rotated around an axis inclined at fifteen degree angle off the sounding-board, and was operated by a pedal, and the felt pressed against the white strings at the neck and against the black strings at the sounding board (See Figures 3.3 and 3.4).

*Harp Model No. 5:*

This harp had an essential structural change; it had a split column. Instead of the traditional “I” shape, it had an inverted narrow “V” structure. All the former improvements remained the same including the damping device, and micro-metric screws. Although the modern structure of the column had not reached Lyon’s expectations which set a new trend in Pleyel’s main production, it was the vision in the construction of the lute-harp (Figure 3.13).\(^{68}\)

Harp Model No.7:

Instead of the traditional wooden neck and string bars (back of the sounding board), Lyon added several layers of laminated oak in hopes of helping the instrument hold its tune and eliminate the breakage of the strings. In Lyon’s quest to perfect this instrument, he experimented next with an all steel harp, inspired by the piano’s inner
Harp.

**Harp Model No. 9:**

This was Lyon’s ultimate harp. This harp was made entirely out of steel. This harp was superior the hurricane next to the double action pedal harp and another of Pleyel’s harp made in 1840 (See P.48). The neck was made of cast iron, steel column and steel string bar plate where micro-metric screws were everywhere inside of the sounding board. There was determination that this harp would resolve all the issues of humidity, strings breakages and tuning (See Figures 3.5 and 3.6).

**Harp Model No. 11:**

Model no. 9 eliminated the problems of traditional harps. The biggest disadvantage of this instrument was the weight; it weighed more than one hundred thirty-five pounds (sixty kilograms). To solve this mobility problem, Lyon added a set of small rollers hidden under the anterior side of the base. By bending the harp slightly forward, it could be easily rolled from place to place. This model had a damper system like no. 2 and 5, which provided better string breakages. Tests showed this harp had thirteen strings break in eighty three days, compared to twenty eight strings break in thirty six days with standard pedal harps (See Figures 3.7 and 3.8).

Descriptions of Lyon’s chromatic harp Model Nos. 4, 6, 8, and 10 were destroyed during World War II.

Lyon’s invention received a warm reception from composers and conservatories. In October 1900, Mr. Gevaert, eminent director of the Conservatory Royal de Belgique, founded a chromatic harp class at the Conservatory under the direction of Mr. Jean Risler. Risler composed for the chromatic harp and authored a small manual entitled *Etude des qualités artistiques et partiques de la Harpe Pleyel Chromatique*
sans pedales ‘System G. Lyon, 1908. It included the performance technique methods, musical examples, illustrations and complete lists of the repertoire. On April 18, 1903, a class of chromatic harp was established at the Conservatoire National de Musique et de Declamation in Paris, the director was Tassu-Spencer but it was abandoned in 1908. One of his pupils, Renee Lenars reinstituted it in 1912 and it continued until 1933.  

Chapter 4

THE CHROMATIC HARP: ITS CRITICISMS AND INFLUENCES

Gustave Lyon’s new invention-chromatic harp received a lot of attention from Saint-Saens and Wagner. Letters of support for the instrument were written by two conductors associated with Wagner, Hans Richter (1843-1916), and an Austro-Hungarian conductor, Felix Mottl (1856-1911). Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), Norwegian composer, pianist and conductor also wrote in support of the chromatic harp.

Hans Richter to Lyon: 70

Bowden (Cheshire) [sic], 14 January 1309

For a long time I wanted to write to you about your excellent chromatic harps, but my trips and professional obligations prevented me from doing so immediately. With your instrument there are now no more obstacles in the execution of even the most difficult parts of the magisterial works of R. Wagner. I was convinced of that while conducting the “Crepuscule des Dieux” [Twilight of the Gods] in Paris. It was a great joy for me to hear four female harpists play your instruments. The principal advantages can be summarized as follows: 1) impeccable sonority; 2) tuning stability as the strings are neither too taut nor too loose; 3) the complete absence of noise during playing. On pedal harps, pedal noise during rapid changes of harmony is absolutely inevitable. I was completely satisfied with the sound of the chromatic harp.

Hoping that your improvement will soon receive its sanction from all sides, I remain very truly yours.

Signed, Hans Richter

70 Elaine Christy Bejjani, “The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century” (DMA.essay., The Manhattan School of Music, 1993), 39.
Felix Mottl to Lyon:  

Carlsruhe, 25 January 1903

The chromatic harp built according to Lyon’s design renders possible accurate and conscientious execution of the most difficult parts from modern works written for this instrument. The noise generated by the old harp, inevitable during the rapid change of pedals, disappears completely.

The sonority obtained by Lyon is so successful that I cannot understand the critique that it does not have a characteristic harp sonority. We thus must recognize with great joy that we are in the presence of an absolutely perfect and practical invention that will soon be adopted everywhere.

Signed, Felix Mottl

Edward Grieg to Lyon,  

Very Honorable M. Lyon,

I shared completely Doctor, M. Hans Richter’s opinion. Your chromatic harp is an invention of utmost importance from a technical point of view. Now, almost everything can be written for the harp.

I am convinced that his completely successful innovation will bring you great satisfaction. Allow me to express to you my best congratulation.

Signed, Ed. Grieg

71 Ibid., 40.
72 Ibid., 40.
Gaston Carraud, Prix de Rome winner of composition, wrote about this new invention in *Musica*:

> It will triumph one day inevitably because it answers the real needs of music and extends the limits of tonality and because there is a law that rules the world; the law of progress, simplification, beauty, and good put in the hands of the largest number.

**Compositions for the Chromatic Harp**

The invention of the chromatic harp, without pedals enabled composers to write for the harp as they would for the keyboard. It also allowed harpists to play the organ, harpsichord and piano repertoire. Some particularly difficult piano pieces were transcribed entirely for solo or harp duos. Two piano works were playable on two harps or transcribed without modification for four harps. The possibilities were unlimited. The following examples were able to be played without modifications from the piano to solo and duo: *Scherzo* by Saint-Saens for two pianos, *Bourree Fantasque* by Chabrier, and *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saens.

Chromatic harp students at the Paris Conservatory chromatic harp students could now study the classics of the keyboard repertoire as well as the harp literature of the day. Some of the students played Chopin, Liszt, Bach, and even Beethoven. Their repertoire included keyboard works by Rameau, Couperin, Scarlatti, Daquin, Haessler, Handel, J.S. Bach, C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Schubert, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, Saint-Saens, Widor, Charpentier, D’Indy, Faure, Bruneau, Richard Strauss, Ravel, and Debussy. Students played all works in

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73 Ibid., 41.
their original keys without transpositions, perhaps allowing the soloists to get closer to
the original intentions of the composer. Mr. Geveart remarked while listening to
Madame Lenars play a Handel Chaconne on the chromatic harp: “I had never yet
heard a beautiful piece of music played on a harp.” Lyon countered with: “obviously
then, music universally considered as beautiful (Handel, Bach, Beethoven, and more)
is impossible on harps other than the chromatic, and works playable on them (Oberthur,
Bochsa, Parish Alvars, and more) are of no interest.” 74

Composers who wrote for the chromatic harp felt free to write as if they were
writing for a keyboard, without wondering if their work needed special modification,
or revisions to be played on a pedal harp. Renaldo Hahn (1874-1947), a French
composer and conductor/director of Paris Opera from 1945-1946 said: “Thanks to the
Pleyel chromatic harp, composers will not need to break their heads to spread light and
glory on the whole instrumentation, nor wonder in those moments of beautiful
madness, if the sol flat is possible or is the si has time to become natural.” Gustave
Lyon spoke of how the chromatic harp would benefit the harpist/singer: “In fact, the
chromatic harp does not lean on the shoulder, but on the knees. The chest remains free
and high. The whole body remains free and completely detached from the instrument.
Breathing is not hindered by an awkward position and no longer continuously
preoccupied with the pedals, the singer can concentrate entirely on the inspiration and
interpretation of the piece being sung.” Thus, a singer also can accompany herself, just
like pianist-singer, even playing a most modern music. 75

Chromatic harp ensembles formed in early twentieth century: The Quartet

74 Elaine Christy Bejjani, “The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century” (DMA.essay, The
Manhattan School of Music, 1993), 49.

75 Ibid., 41-43.
Mary-Louise Casadesus and Sextet Lina Cantelon in Paris and Quartet Germaine Conelis in Brussels. These ensembles had great success in France, Switzerland, Spain and Belgium. In Vevey, Switzerland, a group of sixteen chromatic harpists participated in Gustave Doret’s work, *La Fete des Vignerons*. Twelve chromatic harpists in the group, Lina Cantelon, performed the following works in the amphitheater of Berizers, in the south of France:

- 1922 Penthesilee by Marc Delmas;
- 1923 Dejanire by Camille Saint-Saens;
- 1924 Dieu Sans Couronne by Marc Delmas;
- 1925 Zorriga by Francis Bousquet;

The Lina Cantelon harp ensemble was featured as a special act in European music festivals. The chromatic harp gained great success in the early twentieth century.\(^{76}\)

**Classes of Chromatic Harp**

In October of 1900, F.A. Gevaert began a chromatic harp class in the Conservatory Royal de Bruxelles. The instructor of the class was Jean Risler, who taught a class in 1898 in Lille, France. This class contained three weekly scheduled courses of learning.\(^{77}\)

*First Course:*

Tuning the instrument

Exercises: scales, arpeggios, special effects; exercises from Czerny, Cramer, Godefroid, and more

Studies: such of those Bochsa, Bovio, John Thomas, Schucker, Stephen

\(^{76}\) Ibid., 43-44.

Heller, and more

*Second Course:*
Focused on classic music works such of those J.S. Bach, Rameau, Daquin, Couperin, Scarlatti, Handel, Hessler, Ph. E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and more

*Third Course:*
Focused on exploring the romantic classics, concertos, as light pieces for piano and harp light pieces (past and modern).

At the end of the three courses, the students’ progress were evaluated. These progress evaluations were held from 1901 to 1908. None of these students had any harp training background before the beginning of the program, but some of the students were pianists. It is interesting to note that a first prize was awarded as early as June, 1901.

In 1903, Germaine Cornelis received her First Prize, and became director of the chromatic harp classes after Jean Risler in the Conservatory Royal de Bruxelles from 1929 to 1948 (Figure 4.1). At the same time, Cornelis organized a chromatic harp Quartet. The First Prize winner in 1923, Myriam Moens, took over the classes in 1949 and kept the programs alive until she died in 1953.

During the 1950s, her students were switched to the pedal harp. Then, in 1978, Francette Bartholomew, who won a First Prize for chromatic harp, reopened the program which paralleled her pedal harp class. Later, Paola Chatelle, who won First Prize in 1981, joined with Bartholomew, directing the chromatic harp program. As of 1998, Francette Bartholomew and Paola Chatelle were still teaching the chromatic harp

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*78 Ibid., 78.*
in Brussels. In 1998, Paola Chatelle taught classes focused on beginners and advanced harpists at l’Acadamie de Musique. Francette Bartholomee taught professional harpists at Conservatory de Bruxelles. Students were required to qualify through a certain number of music theory courses before they were accepted to study the chromatic harp.

In France, Mrs. Tauus-Spencer was the director of a class which was created in the Conservatory National by the government. The class started on April 15, 1903 and ended in 1908. Renee Tournier-Lenars reopened the program in 1912, and closed it in 1933.79 (Figure 4.2).80

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Figure 4.1 The chromatic harp class of Germaine Cornelis at the Brussels Conservatory ca. 1942-43. The harp shown is a maple Pleyel with metal neck. The students are (left to right) Odile Tackoen, Jacqueline Pieyens, Emmy van Ruischensveld, and an unidentified participant.

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79 Ibid., 77.
80 Ibid., 78.
Figure 4.2 The chromatic harp class of Jean Risler. First teacher of the instrument in Brussels, ca. 1900-1903. Three of the students are unidentified; second at left is Annie van Overeem, and standing behind Risler is Germaine Cornelis.

**Criticisms of the Chromatic Harp**

*In Artistic Advantages*

In Gustave Lyon’s “The Chromatic Harp and Its Construction” the Pleyel Chromatic harp is said to have the following artistic advantages regarding interpretive qualities:\(^81\)

1. The dispensing of pedals eliminates this preoccupation from the performer’s mind and restores absolute independence. The use of pedals requires considerable memory effort, especially in the chromatic music that

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\(^81\) Elaine Christy Bejjani, “The Chromatic Harp of the Late Nineteenth Century” (DMA.essay, The Manhattan School of Music, 1993), 44.
requires several pedal movements. This constant preoccupation may interfere with emotion, interpretation of music, and the inspiration of the performer. In addition, the messages sent from the brain to feet take more time than simply use of the finger tips. On the chromatic harp, the most complicated harmonies and most chromatic traits are no more difficult than the simplest diatonic passages. The performer can focus on the strings, music and music interpretation.

2. This harp has an independent string per note, giving each string consistent tension and length. Thus, the harp will have better unity and equality of sonority, tuning consistency, and the elimination of the pedal noise.

   In Felix Mottl’s letter “the noise generated by the old harp (double action pedal harp) which is inevitable due to the rapid change of pedals, disappears completely on the chromatic harp.” The disappearing noise of the pedal changing is credited to Gustave Lyon’s construction of the chromatic harp. The discs which pressured each string to flat, natural, and sharp on the top of the double action harp were removed from the chromatic harp. Gustave Lyon also presents the following material and practical advantages.82

   1. Tuning is made easier and more stable, following the equal temperament tuning of the piano, organ, and keyboard instruments. Even for the youngest student from age ten to twelve, tuning is quite easy and requires only five minutes per day to maintain its intonation.

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82 Ibid., 45-46.
2. The tempered tuning of the chromatic harp corresponds to the tuning of the modern orchestra. Tuning is very precise due to the constant accuracy of the instrument.

3. Strings on the chromatic harp break less often because they are not crunched, twisted, or consistently worn off by the forks (discs), and string tension remains constant as they always keep the same length.

4. Little maintenance cost is required of the chromatic harp due to its simple and robust construction.

5. The chromatic harp rests on the knees rather than on the shoulder (chest). This is of importance to the health and physical well-being of younger or growing young students (ladies).

This issue can be solved with the chromatic harp. Bochsa, a well-known professor, harpist and composer in his *Method de Harpe*, comments on this issue: "Many mothers refuse to give their daughters a master of harp, although it is their preference above all others, for the only reason that it constantly leans against the right shoulder. This constant pressure, always on the same side, can cause twisting in the waists of young girls."

Gustave Lyon also presented two criticisms of his chromatic harp from over twenty years of experiences: 83

1. “If the harp could be chromatic, it should not be, since it is contrary to its nature”. Chromaticism is contrary to the nature of the pedal harp, because it presents inequalities in sonority, a permanent state of ill-tuning, incurable pedal noises, hissing against the forks when activated, strange sounds

83 Ibid., 46-49.
during the tightening of the forks, stops in the course of the vibration, and the absolute impossibility of rapidly executing chromatic scales and successions of chromatic chords. “Thus, either chromaticism is non-executable on the pedal harp, which happens the majority of cases, or when it is executed, it has a detestable, unbearable effect.” For these reasons Berlioz and Geveart called the pedal harp an essentially anti-chromatic instrument.

Lyon also stated:

“chromatic sonority is an as beautiful as diatonic, as pure, with the same equality, unity and accurate tuning, if the instrument allows the same freedom of interpretation and inspiration, the same tranquility of soul, then one can say that chromaticism is as natural to the harp as to the piano, organ or harpsichord and surpasses diatonicism by its novelty, variety, spice, color, and possibilities of expressing all human feelings states of mind.”

2. “Bach’s fugues were not made for the harp and harps were not made for fugues. It is a sacrilege to play the piano pieces on the harp.” The preludes and fugues of J. S. Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier were written for the harpsichord but are now almost always performed on the organ. Is it a sacrilege? Saint-Saens affirms that it is not and what voice has more authority than his in terms of ancient music? In Saint-Saens’s preface to the Durand edition of the works by Rameau, he states:

“takes all its value from form (nuances which we now achieve on our modern pianos were then impossible),

84 Ibid., 47.
85 Ibid., 47.
86 Ibid., 48.
87 Ibid., 48.
and the expression which is everything, or almost everything in modern music, is nothing or almost nothing in the ancient. Accordingly, Handel could write a concerto for organ or harp, whose concertante part could be played by either of these instruments, or also by the harpsichord.”

Nothing is clearer and more accurate. This is to say that ancient harpsichord music is as convenient to the harp as to the harpsichord, and for the same season could be performed on the piano or organ. In the same preface, Saint-Saëns says in reference to nuances on the harpsichord: “It was impossible to gradually change from piano to forte on the harpsichord and to practice the knowledgeable art of infinite nuances and touch variation that gives the modern piano its utmost attraction.”88

Lyon’s defense in the critique section of his book is naturally quite biased. These two criticisms that chromaticism is contrary to the nature of the harp and that fugues were not meant to be played on the harp fall into the realm of philosophical discussion. Apparently, however, Lyon was responding to specific allegations directed against him by proponents of the pedal harp. The following quote taken from the Symphony Society Bulletin of New York, December 27, 1919, and reports on this exchange:89

The harp players of the old school began to grow uneasy. [Following the successful exhibition of the chromatic harp in 1897.] The Nestor of French harpists, Alphonse Hasselmans, for many years professor of the harp at the Paris Conservatoire (from which position he retired in 1912 at the age of sixty-seven), Took up the

88 Ibid., 48-49.

89 Ibid., 50.
cudgels in defense of the pedal harp, and a lively polemic ensued between him and the inventor. Hasselmans insisted that the innovation “completely denatured the character of the instrument and made it scarcely a reduction of the piano.”

Modern harpists continue to question the practice of performing piano transcriptions. In the case of Lyon’s chromatic harp, there was no repertoire from which to draw, so piano and keyboard literature were the only alternative for chromatic harp.

Lyon’s *The Chromatic Harp and Its Construction* does not address the most noticeable technical disadvantages of the instrument. Visual difficulties are the most obvious: seventy-six strings with a center crossing create an added dimension requiring extra care for correct finger placement due to the smaller spaces between each string. Cross stringing made looking through the string difficult, often leading to “crossed eyesight”. Although Lyon demonstrated that performing piano works on the chromatic harp presented no significant technical problems, harpist use only four fingers of each hand, while piano music is written for ten fingers. “Intervals of a tenth are common to piano as well as pedal harp literature. On the chromatic harp, due to the added strings, the same stretch spans only an octave.” 90

The most major criticism of the chromatic harp was the difficulty of playing chord glissandos that became the typical sound of double-action pedal harp. Diatonic C major and pentatonic glissandos are possible on the chromatic harp, but because of the intersection of strings, those glissandos are uneven.

90 Ibid., 51.
Other Chromatic Harp Methods

Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz (1650- unknown) was best known as a Spanish guitarist, harpist, composer, and priest. In his *Luz y norte musical* he stated that he began his musical studies after his ordination while in the service of the Counts Lemos and Andrade and their patron Don Fadrique of Toledo, Marquis of Villafranca which may have implied his possible association with the Spanish Court. The count’s entourage at the time included not only Ruiz de Ribayaz but also the distinguished theatre composer Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco.

Ruiz de Ribayaz is known only through his *Luz y norte musical para caminar por las cifras de la guitarra española y arpa, tañer, y cantar a compás por canto de órgano; y breve explicación del arte* (Madrid, 1677), which contains detailed studies for the Baroque guitar and an *arpa de dos ordenes strung* an instrument with twenty-seven diatonic and fifteen chromatic strings. This was the first published book on tablature designed for this instrument.  


Pablo Nassarre (1654-1730) was best known as a Spanish theorist, composer and organist. Blind from infancy, at the age twenty-two, he studied the organ with Pablo Bruna, entered the Franciscan order and had a career as organist of the monastery of Francisco at Zaragoza. He is best known for his book, *Escuela música segun la*

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Practica Moderna which was already in preparation but finally published until 1723–4. It had over a thousand pages and was divided into two volumes. Each volume was divided into four books of twenty chapters. The content includes examples of plainchant, meters and modes of polyphonic music, an exhaustive description of instruments (proportions of chromatic harp’s sounding board, tuning methods), harmonic combinations, strict counterpoint, free composition, and performing practices (particularly embellishment). 93 These volumes are well respected as a prime resource of early Spanish music.94

Gustave Lyon’s Methode pour la Harpe Chromatique sans Pedakes, systeme G. Lyon (Paris) was published in 1898. This method was produced with Mrs. Tassu-Spencer, Professor of National Conservatory, Madeleine Lefebure, and Jean Risler, Professors of Bruxelles Conservatory. The book begins with a short overview of the history of the harp, followed by Lyon’s coverage of advantages for chromatic harp, along with some technical and constructive details. He also provides a maintenance guide with instruction for stringing the instrument. The book covers performance techniques, hand positions, fingerings, how to play scales, arpeggios, chords, intervals, and various special effects. Lyon includes some written music examples for chromatic harp. At the end of the method, there are fingering exercises, and a list of musical pieces performed at la Salle Pleyel between December 1897 and July 1998.95 Wurmser-Delcourt’s Methode de harpe chromatique, published in Paris, 1907, is dedicated to Gustave Lyon. The introduction covers the chromatic harp’s

95 Ibid., 63.
range, playing positions, and tuning. This book briefly focuses on exercises but does not cover musical works for the chromatic harp.\footnote{Ibid., 63.}

Bruno Hilpert’s *Methode pour la Harpe Chromatique* (Hannover) covers some basic performance techniques, such as how to hold the harp and a proper hand position. In the preface, he gives special thanks to Helene Zielinska from Paris and Jean Risler from Brussels. This book, written in both French and German, contains exercises illustrated with short musical examples. Chapters cover new techniques. Each new technique also provides an overview of intervals and Italian terminology. In the appendix is a list of recommended musical works.\footnote{Ibid., 63.}

Ben Brown’s *The Little Cross Strung Harp Book* (1994) is the most recent book. Mr. Brown teaches and performs the cross strung chromatic harp in the Chicago area. This book speaks briefly about Pleyel’s chromatic harp, overview of the diatonic harp, as well as the cross-strung chromatic harp. In the performance technique section, the book provides some fundamentals such as how to hold the harp, how the place the fingers on the strings, hand positions, scale fingerings, and other useful sources. This book also comes with a cassette *Introduction to Multi-Course Harps*, and a videotape Mr. Brown made by Laurie Riley (teacher of the double harp). This sixty-five minute video shows playing techniques on both the cross-strung chromatic and double harps.\footnote{Ibid., 63.}

\footnote{Ibid., 63.}
Unfortunately, two important method books: Johannes Snoer’s method book, *Methode de Harpe pouvant servir a la Harpe Chromatique*, published in Leipzig, 1908 and Mrs. Tassu-Spencer’s *Methode de Harpe Chromatique* and *Etudes de Bochsa, doigtes pour la harpe chromatiques sans pedales* are lost.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Ibid., 63-64.
Chapter 5
THE DOUBLE ACTION PEDAL HARP: INFLUENTIAL HARPISTS

Sebastian Erard’s double action pedal harp first appeared in 1810 and soon gained great success. His mechanism remains the same as today’s pedal harp. This new instrument attracted a large number of composers and became a popular instrument in symphonic and chamber music, solo compositions, and film scores in Hollywood.

When the new mechanism for the double-action pedal harp appeared, composers and harpists had to be taught how to utilize the new techniques, especially, the operation of the pedals. The most established institution was the Paris Conservatory in France where the harpists not only spread the fame of the harp in concerts, but through teaching, compositions, and method books: Alphonse Jean Hasslemans (1845-1912), Marcel Grandjany (1891-1975), Henriette Renie (1875-1954), and Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961).

Nicolas Charles Bochsa (1789-1856), a French harpist and composer entered The Paris Conservatory in 1806 and studied composition under Catel and studied the harp with Naderman and Marin. Bochsa was a well-known harpist and performed for Louis XVI in 1813. During his lifetime, he composed seven operas for Opera Comique. La lettre de Change had a long run and became famous outside of France. In 1816, he was commissioned to compose a work for Louis XVIII. In 1823, Bochsa became professor of harp at the Royal Academy of Music. Bochsa wrote many etudes for the harp as well as a method book, five harp concertos, sonatas, and chamber music. These included:
included: *Twelve leçons élémentaires, op.16; Méthode de harpe en deux parties, op.60*: part one translated as *A History of the Harp, from Ancient Greece down to the Present Time* (New York, 1853); part two translated as *General Course of Instruction for the Harp* (London, c1820), which included fifty lessons, three sonatas, eight préludes, *Fifteen Brilliant and Short Preludes*, two sets (London, c1820); *Petite Méthode pour la Harpe, op.61* (c1830); *Bochsa's Explanation of his New Harp Effects and Passages* (London, 1832); *The Harp Preludist- Sixteen Lessons* (London, 1833); *Panorama Musical: a Fantastic Sketch intended to give an Idea of the Various Styles of Music from 1500 down to the Present Time*, *Etude pour la Harpe Fifty Exercices, op.34; Twenty-Five Exercices Etudes, op.62; Forty Etudes Faciles, op.318* all edited by R. Martenot (1946–50); twenty sonatas, and more. His etudes and especially his method book became important sources for generations.100

Harpists and composers such as Jean-Baptiste Krumpholtz (1747-1790), Henry Horn (1789), John Thomas (1826-1913) although not well-known, greatly contributed to harp literature pedagogy. Krumpholtz, known as the “father of the harp”, was not only the most gifted and acclaimed harp virtuoso of the late eighteenth century and a productive composer for the instrument, he was involved with design, and the development of the pedal harp mechanism. In 1773, Haydn took Krumpholtz on as a composition pupil and as solo harpist in Count Esterhazy's court. In 1776, under Haydn's recommendations, Krumpholtz undertook a long solo concert tour of Europe. He performed in Leipzig on a ‘harpe organisée’, which was one of the earliest of his improvements to the instrument.

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(‘harpe organisée’ was later marketed by Cousineau in Paris). In 1785, the firm Naderman of Parisian built an instrument to Krumpholtz's specification (described in the preface to his *Sonatas Op. 14*); the instrument had 24 strings, eight of which were metal. The harp had an eighth pedal which opened five shutters in the sounding board. This instrument is now in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum. Krumpholtz's four concertos, sonatas, and variations for harp mostly appeared in Paris from about 1775 (many were later reprinted in London), and later became the standard repertory for harp students in conservatories. The repertories contributed to the instrument's promptly developing techniques. Krumpholtz wrote six concertos for harp and orchestra, a duet for two harps, a symphony for harp and chamber orchestra, fifty-two sonatas entitled *Sonatas Pathetiques*, and many short harp compositions.101

François Joseph Dizi (1780-1847), a Flemish harpist and composer, was a self-taught on the harp. At the age of 16, while boarding a ship for England, Joseph dived overboard to rescue a sailor who had fallen into the water. The ship went on without him, taking all his belongings. He arrived in London penniless and unable to speak any English. He found his way to the London house of Sébastien Erard. Erard introduced him to Clementi who helped him to establish himself. Soon he became the most renowned harpist in London, and a reputation he maintained for the next 30 years. He was highly regarded as a composer and teacher. His most famous student was Elias Parish-Alvars. Dizi also contributed some improvements to the pedal harp. These included the vertically strung ‘perpendicular harp.’ None of his inventions remain. In 1830, Dizi left London for Paris, where he became a harp teacher to the

daughters of Louis-Philippe. One of Dizi’s harps was used at these lessons. This instrument is now in the museum of the Brussels Conservatory. His most important work for the harp was a series of 48 studies which are the standard etudes for harpists today. They are equally valuable in musical and melodic as well as technical elements.  

Elias Parish-Alvars (1808-1849), “The Lizst of the harp” was one of the most virtuoso harpists and also a composer. He studied with both Dizi and Bochsa. In the 1830s, Parish-Alvars lived in Vienna, but he also performed in Germany, Italy, Scandinavia and Russia. In 1836, he was appointed first harp at the Imperial and Royal Opera of Vienna. In May 1842, Parish Alvars bought his first new ‘Gothic’ model double-action harp from Pierre Erard. The instrument inspired him enormously, and appeared to have been significant. He developed many techniques for the new harp, such as chordal glissandos, double, triple and quadruple harmonics, and the combination of harmonics with glissandos. In *La danse des fées* Op.76, used the enharmonic effects; in *Sérénade* Op.83, used the glissando with tuning key and pedals, and in *Mandoline* Op.84, he imitates the sound of the mandolin by brilliantly applied enharmonic repetitions. His last significant public concert of his own compositions was in Vienna in January 2, 1848. Parish-Alvars published over eighty works for solo harp. Many of them are phenomenally difficult: three harp concertos with orchestra; two concertinos (duos for harp and piano), one for solo harp and one for two harps exist in print. His unpublished works included the fantasia *Sounds of Ossian* that is the most demanding solos ever written for the harp, a symphony, an overture inspired by Byron's *Manfred*, an opera *The Legend of Teignmouth*, and two piano concertos. His

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contributions to the harp pedagogy affected many conservatoires in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna.\textsuperscript{103}

John Thomas (1826-1913) was a well-known Welsh harpist and composer in nineteenth century. In 1852, he performed his \textit{Harp Concerto in }\textit{E} at a Philharmonic concert – the only work by a Welsh composer to be presented by the Philharmonic Society during the first hundred years of its existence. In 1871, he became harpist to Queen Victoria. His compositions included \textit{Scenes of Childhood} for two harps, \textit{Cambria} (1863), \textit{Forty-Eight Studies for the Harp} (1895), two harp concertos with orchestra, a cantata, and a \textit{History of the Harp}. He is best known for his transcriptions of Beethoven, Handel, and Mendelssohn.\textsuperscript{104}

Louis Spohr (1784-1859), German composer, violinist and conductor was born into a family of pastors, doctors, and a heritage of musicians. In 1797, Spohr became a pupil at the Collegium Carolinum and studied the violin privately with Gottfried Kunisch. He became a member of the ducal orchestra, and later with the Konzertmeister Charles Louis Maucourt Orchestra. In the early 1800s, he participated in a variety of musical activities: the operas of Cherubini and Mozart and the quartets of Haydn. Both Mozart and Beethoven’s music made a powerful impact on him. In April 1802, the duke engaged Franz Eck who was one of the last direct representatives of the Mannheim School who soon took Spohr as a pupil on a concert tour to St. Petersburg. During the tour, Spohr finished \textit{Violin Concerto Op. 1} and the \textit{Violin


Duets Op.3. In 1806, he married the brilliant harpist Dorothea (Dorette) Scheidler (1787–1834). The following year, he produced a series of works for violin and harp which had their premiere performance during periodic concert tours October 1806 – April 1807, October 1809 – March 1810, October 1812 – April 1813.105

Before 1820s, Dorette played one of Naderman’s harp, a single-action pedal harp. In 1820, Dorette and Louis visited Erard’s showroom in London, and Erard offered to lend a small double-action pedal harp to Dorette. This change posed problems for both Dorette and her husband. The double-action was larger in size than the single-action pedal harp, and more strongly strung. In order to play the new double-action pedal harp, she had to master the new double-action pedal system, which required greater strength. On June 18, 1820, after several months of practice, her debut with Erard’s double-action pedal harp was a success. After the debut, both Dorette and Louis’s were very impressed with Erard’s double-action pedal harp’s superior tone and the excellent pedal system.106

Spohr’s works for harp include seven sonatas: Sonata in C minor woo 23 (1805), Sonata in Bb Op. 16 (1806), Sonata for Harp and Violin woo 27 (1806); Sonata for Harp and Violin in D/ Eb major Op. 114 (1811); Sonata for Harp and Violin in G/Ab major Op. 115 (1809) and Sonata for Harp and Violin in G/Ab major woo36 (1819) which was lost. He composed nine trios: Harp Trio for harp, cello and violin woo28 (1806); Rondo in D/ Eb major woo 33 (1813) which was lost; Fantasia for Harp and Violin Op. 118 (1814), based on the themes by Handel and Vogler. Solo harp works


included: *Fantasia in C minor Op. 35* (1807); two variation sets- *No. 1 Méhul's 'Je suis Encore Dans Mon Printemps'*, *Op.36* (1807), *No. 2 in Eb major* (1808) which was lost.\(^{107}\)

François (Jean) Joseph Naderman (1781-1835) French harpist and composer, was a son of Jean-Henri Naderman who was a publisher and instrument maker, was an important single-action pedal harp makers in the 18th century (before Erard’s double-action pedal harp). Joseph studied harp with Krumpholtz. After Krumpholtz committed suicide in 1790, Naderman’s father became his teacher. Naderman began touring in 1810s and became harpist to the royal chapel and harp soloist to the Emperor. In 1825, he was appointed to the Paris Conservatoire as the first harp professor and developed many talented harpists for generations. His solo and chamber works included: two harp concertos, seven sonatas, and duos and trios harp. His etudes and methods include: *Ecole ou Méthode Raisonnée pour la harpe* (1832), and *Dictionnaire des transcriptions pour s'exercer dans l’art de préluder et d’improviser tant sur la harpe que sur le piano*.\(^{108}\)

**The Paris Conservatory Harp Department**

The most famous center of harp instruction in the nineteenth century was the Paris Conservatory. François (Jean) Joseph Naderman was the first professor in 1825. One of the Naderman’s puipils, Felix Godefroid gave concerts throughout Europe and became a great virtuoso. He was called the “Paganini of the harp.” Antoine Prumier


(1794-1868) was the harp professor from 1835 to 1867 at the Paris Conservatory after
Naderman died. In that same year, the double-action pedal harp replaced the
single-action instrument in the school. In 1868, Theodore Labarre followed Antonie
Prumier as harp professor at Paris Conservatory. He studied with Naderman and was a
pupil of Cousineau and Bochsa. In 1870, after Labarre’s death, Ange-Conrad-Antoine
Prumier followed in his father’s footsteps to teach at the Conservatory.

Alphonse Jean Hasselmans (1845-1912) succeeded Prumier. He was born in
Belgium and received his education at the Strasbourg Conservatory which his father
directed, and studied with Gottlieb Kruger (who had studied with Parish-Alvars) and
Ange-Conrad-Antoine Prumier. During his teaching years at the Conservatory, some
of his gifted teenage pupils became successful internationally, such as Henriette Renie
(1875-1956), Marcel Tournier (1879-1951), Marcel Grandjany (1891-1975), Pierre
Jamet (1893-1987), Ada Sassoli (1881-1946), Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961) and Lily
Laskine (1893-1988), and Susann McDonald (1935). Hasselmans held three harp
classes a week. Two etudes and a piece, or several pages of one piece were required to
be prepared to performance level each week. The etudes and methods all the pupils
worked on included methods by Martenot (Enoch et Cie) and Labarre (Leduc), many
etudes by Bochsa (editions of Lemoine and Costallat), Naderman’s etudes from his
Ecole de la harpe (Costallat), the aforementioned Labarre Caprices (Joubert), and
Dizi, Forty-eight Etudes (Noel), and other advanced etudes by Zabel, Berens
(transcribed by Vizthum), Schuecker, Posse.

Although Hasselmans did not publish any ensemble music, sonatas, or suites for
harp, he revised and edited fingerings in some important earlier music, such as Dizi’s
Forty-eight Etudes and Labarre’s *Grand etudes pour la harpe composee de huit caprices, Op. 30*. He also transcribed some piano music for harp. He composed many short harp solo pieces in the French Impressionistic style; small forms in the medium difficulty level, such as *Prayer, Ballade, Aeolian harpe, La Source* (The Wellspring), *La fileuse* (The Maid at Her Spinning), and *Lolita la danseuse* (Lolita the Dancer). These charming works are often played on recitals and recordings. Marcel Tournier followed his teacher, Hasselmans, and became the harp professor from 1948 to 1963.  

Marcel Lucien Tournier (1879-1951), was a French composer, harpist, and an educator. His father was a string instrument maker whose shop was located near the Paris Conservatory. Studying the harp at nearby conservatory became one of Marcel Tournier’s earliest desires. At the age sixteen, he began his studies with Hasselmans in the Paris Conservatory. His dream came true. When he won the *Premier Prix* in 1899. He also studied harmony with C.Lenepvu, counterpoint with G. Caussade, and composition with C-M. Widor. In 1909, he was awarded his second Prix de Rome with his composition cantata *La Roussalka* and won the Rossini Prize with his stage work *Laura et Petrarch*. At the same time, he was an active solo harpist touring Europe. He was appointed professor of the harp department after death of his teacher Hasselmans. He married the most important chromatic harpist of his time, Renée Lénars, in 1922; she was a professor of chromatic harp in Paris conservatory from 1912-1933. His works included *The Harp: A History of the Harp throughout the World*, some advanced harp solo, chamber music, also for an opera and music for harp and other instruments.  

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Henriette Renie (1875-1956), was one of the first women harpists who became professor of harp in the Paris Conservatory and was also considered one of the most influential and respected figures in harp world. She was one of the most influential and respected figures in the harp history. She was a gifted pupil Alphonse Hasselmans. In 1897, Renie was at the center of the development of the double-action pedal harp.\(^\text{111}\) She composed numerous solo works for all levels of proficiency, and transcribed many pieces for the harp. Renie’s distinguished Complete Method Harp is the most important foundation for harp technique, especially for modern French Grandjany School.

Marcel (Georges Lucien) Grandjany (1891-1975) was an important virtuoso, composer, harp teacher, accomplished pianist and organist. His pupils said of him: “A true teacher like Mr. Grandjany is a master not only of the music but for life,” and “to the one person who has influenced my life more than anyone else;” also “his dedication to music and the harp, not to mention his personal warmth are rare indeed.”\(^\text{112}\) He was born in Paris on September 3, 1891. Later, Grandjany was the head of the harp department at the Julliard School of Music from 1938 until his death. He was a pupil of Hasselmans and Renie at the Paris Conservatory where he gained a Premier Prix in harp in 1905 along with the first prize in solfege and harmony. When he was seventeen, he made his solo début with the Concerts Lamoureux Orchestra and gave his first recital at the Salle Erard. Also an organist, he played at the Sacré-Coeur


Basilica for several years during World War I. In 1922, he made his debut in London, and his first performance in New York in 1924 becoming an internationally known musician. After the First World War, he established the harp department at the American School of Music, Fountainbleau in 1927. He organized the first harp department at the Conservatory in Montreal, and was the head of the harp department at the Manhattan School of Music. He was a prolific composer, writing specific works for all levels of proficiency. He transcribed the music of Bach, Rameau, Couperin, and many others. He composed several of the most important orchestral and concerto cadenzas for works, such as Handel’s *Harp Concerto in Bb*, and Mozart’s *Flute and Harp Concerto in C*. He wrote for harp ensembles and music for harp in combination with other instruments. He was the founder of the American Harp Society and American Harp Journal. When asked why he did not write a method book, he replied: “I have lots of material, but my ideas keep changing. You never stop learning in music” and “The harp is a very personal instrument – you touch the strings and you feel the music. So there can be no universal method, although there are certain principles that must be observed.”

When speaking of Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961), Edgard Varese (1883-1965) said: “the musician that Carlos was, he could have been a great conductor…” And “he felt whole and complete and satisfied and in union when he was playing,” was said by Martha Graham. Carlos Salzedo was born in Arcachon in the Gironde region of France on August 6, 1885. He was recognized as a child prodigy, and he started

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playing the piano at the age of three. He received his music education at the Bordeaux Conservatory and later at the Paris Conservatory where he studied with Hasselmas when he was eleven. At the age of sixteen, he won the Grand Prix at the Paris Conservatory for both piano and harp. In 1909, after many European concert tours, he came to United States as a principal harpist for the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra in New York, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Four years later, he resigned the opera position to devote his time composing for harp, teaching and recording. After World War I, he was elected president of the National Association of Harpists, Inc. and organized several harp festivals in the country. In 1924, he became the first professor of the harp department at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.\(^{116}\) He wrote several harp method books. *Modern Study of the Harp* was written in 1918 and contains more than a dozen special harp effects. His *Method* was written with the distinguished American harpist Lucile Lawrence in New York in 1929 and is his most famous work. Salzedo was a member of the International Composer’s Guild, the United States section of the International Society for Contemporary Music, and the Pan American Association of Composers. He founded the first magazine, *Eolus* for both harp and contemporary music in 1921. His compositions included original solos and ensemble pieces with other instruments. He also arranged traditional arias, folk songs, carols for harp solo, and transcribed Bach’s *Sixth French Suite*, and more.

Lily Laskine (1893-1988), a French harpist, entered the Paris Conservatory and studied with Alphonse Hasselmans. In 1906, she won a *Premier Prix* and made her debut in London in 1907. She was a principal harpist in the Paris Opera Orchestra from 1909 to 1926. During that time, she played regularly with remarkable orchestras

in programs, such as the Koussevitzky concert series (from 1921), the Lamoureux Association (1921–40 and 1943–5). She made the first recording of Ravel's *Introduction et Allegro* in 1938 and became professor of the harp department in the Paris Conservatory from 1948 to 1958. In her later years, she recorded a number of works by Bochsa, Jadin, Krumpholtz, Gossec, Roussel, and Jolivet.  

Pierre Jamet (1893-1991), a French harpist, studied the new cross-strung chromatic harp with Gustave Lyon in 1905. In the following years, Alphonse Hasselmans heard him play and influenced him to take up the pedal harp instead. When he was sixteen years old, he entered and studied at the Paris Conservatory and won a *premier prix* in 1912. In March 1917, he performed in the first concert of Debussy’s *Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp* on the chromatic harp. He premiered Debussy’s *Danse sacrée et danse profane* on the pedal harp. From 1948 to 1963, he was professor of the harp at the Paris Conservatory. In 1962, he founded of the Association Internationale des Harpistes et Amis de la Harpe. His works include: *Memories of Debussy and the Origins of the Harp Quintet*, Magazine of the United Kingdom Harpists Association, no.7 (1967).  

A Basque harpist, Nicanor Zabaleta (1907-1993) was one of the most important solo harpists in the twentieth century. He studied with Marcel Tournier and had his debut in Europe in 1926, after which he started his sixty-six years career as an internationally known performer. He played over three thousand concerts, and played with some three hundred different orchestras. He performed the premiere of the

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concertos by Ginastera and Montsalvatge, and a concerto for harp and electronics by Josef Tal. It was at his request that Joaquín Rodrigo arranged the *Concierto de Aranjuez* for the harp. Some of his recordings won the major prizes in France, Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands. In 1982, he was awarded Spain National Music Prize. At the age of 84, he was still performing and giving masterclasses internationally. At the age of 85, he gave his final recital in Madrid on June 16, 1992.119

Susann McDonald (1935) currently teaches at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana as Distinguished Professor of harp department. She studied with Herritette Renie and Lily Laskine in Paris Conservatory in 1950. When she was twenty years old, she gained a *Premier Prix* and four years later, won second prize at the first Israel International Harp Competition. She was a professor of the harp at The Juilliard School from 1975 to 1981. In 1975, she was an artistic director of the World Harp Congress and the founder and musical director of the triennial USA International Harp Competition. She is known as a gifted teacher and solo artist. Her books include: *The Private Lesson: Thoughts for the Student*, and *The Private Lesson: Thoughts for the Teacher*, method, numbers of harp solo, such as *Haiku for the Harp* which uses special techniques, chamber music, and transcriptions of holiday and religious music, well-known composers, and Spanish music. She has recorded numerous albums, including *A Tribute to Henriette Renie, Caprice, In Recital, The World of the Harp, Virtuoso Harp*.120

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Catherine (Marie Céleste Elvire) Michel (1948) a French harpist, entered the Paris Conservatory at age thirteen. She studied with Perre Jamet and gained a *premier prix* in 1964. In 1970, she won second prize of Israel International Competition and also won a gold medal at the Marcel Tournier Competition in following year. She joined the Paris Opera Orchestra in 1978, and was a professor in academic institutions in Hamburg (1977–80), Detmold (1996–2000) and Zürich (from 1999), and the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris (from 1981). Her *Répertoire de la musique pour harpe publiée du XVIIe au début du XIXe siècle with F. Lesure* was published in Paris in 1990. Her significant and prize winning (1995) recording *Musique et Cinéma* with Michel Legrand was a great commercial success. Her recordings include: *In Recital, Pieces Faciles pour Harpe, Vol. 1; Pieces Faciles pour Harpe, Vol. 2; and Pieces Faciles pour Harpe, Vol. 3.*

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Chapter 6

A COMPARISON OF PERFORMANCE AND COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES FOR THE PEDAL AND CHROMATIC HARPS

Methods Use of the Performance Techniques

Chromatic Harp

Gustave Lyon’s chromatic harp received positive criticism from major institutions, harpists, and composers in the early twentieth century. Information concerning the performance technique of this instrument, is based on Mrs. Odile Tackoen’s method, *Approche de la harpe chromatique, son histoire, sa technique, son repertoire. Exercices et morceaux divers pour debutants* (1985). This method is the only surviving source. Portions of the method were translated by Hannelore Devaere and Philippe SRL Clement in their modern book, *X-Harps-History, Playing, Music and Construction of the Cross Strung Chromatic Harp*.

Pedal Harp

The current performance technique for the pedal harp was developed at the Paris Conservatory in the twentieth century. The method was developed by Henriette Renie, in her *Complete Method for the Harp*, a book that influenced harpists of her generation and those following: Nicolas Charles Bochsa, Alphonse Jean Hasslemans (1845-1912), Marcel Grandjany and Carlos Salzedo. Carlos
Salzedo wrote his own method standardizing the notation for the instrument’s many special effects.

Comparisons

Pedal Harp

Renie-Grandjany School (French) of Harp Technique

The Grandjany School of harp technique is an outgrowth of Henriette Renie’s style of playing and uses her method book, *The Complete Method for the Harp*. It was published in two parts, the first dealing with technique. The second contains musical examples.

In the foreword of Renie’s method, she states:

The entire basis of my method lies in one fundamental: principle suppleness. If one treats nature as an enemy it rebels, and this is reflected in an invincible stiffness which interferes with everything. Pupils are not manufactured creatures ‘in series’, nor are they of identical abilities, far from it. Therefore they cannot all be taught the harp in the same way. The basis of the instruction is the same, but the form differs for each.

It is not so much the pupil who must adapt himself to the Instruction rather it is the instruction which must be adapted to the pupil: all hands are not alike; nor the deviations between the fingers, nor the articulations, the arms, nor the rest of the body. Therefore, a very broad and cautious spirit is necessary in order to apply even the fundamental principles wisely.

Concerning legato playing, M. Grandjany said: “to press each string in such a way as to create a legato from note to note within every phrase—as a singer can do. It is
difficult to do on a harp. But the instrument must sing!”

**Concerning the Sitting Position**

The techniques for both instruments contain detailed directions about sitting, holding the harp and most important, the hand position. Following is a comparison of the major playing techniques of both instruments.

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<th><strong>Chromatic Harp</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pedal Harp</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Seated behind the harp, the player’s legs must be at right angle from the floor and the player’s body slightly toward left side of the instrument. Lean the instrument backward until it reaches its balance point. The instrument <strong>must not</strong> rest on the right shoulder of the player, but rather the player’s knees against (slightly splayed). Sit on the forward half of the chair. Young children should sit on a rather high chair and not lean at all. It is important to choose a position which will allow the hands to be at the right height and the player’s body to remain vertical.</td>
<td>Place the instrument very straight in front of the right shoulder. The instrument <strong>must be</strong> balanced on the right shoulder, with the support of the right knee. When the instrument is so balanced, the player is able to reach the higher octaves of the instrument. When properly seated, the second octave C would be at the player’s eye level. The height of the bench should be adjusted to suit each individual.</td>
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Concerning Hand Positions

Both instruments use only four fingers on each hand. When the hand is in the proper position, the fifth finger cannot reach the strings. Both instruments number the fingers in the same manner: the thumb (1); the index (2); the middle finger (3); and the ring finger (4). The nails have to be short so that they will not touch the strings.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chromatic Harp</th>
<th>Pedal Harp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The player’s hand position should be in a natural, comfortable position. As you play in the upper octaves, the elbows come down but the shoulders should not move up. The right arm can rest against the body of the instrument. But, the left arm must stay away from it. The palm of the hands must face the strings. Hands should be near the crossing point of the strings. Left hand plays underneath the cross, the right hand above. There are two reasons for this: 1. the best sound is produced near the middle of the strings; 2. jumping from white strings (diatonic strings) to black (sharps) is easier in this position. The hand must remain in a stable position. The fingers pluck the strings in a bending motion (Figure 6.1).</td>
<td>The wrist of right hand places toward and touches the sounding board. The wrist can rest on the sounding board. The thumb is always high in ‘hand shaking position’. The space between and second finger creates an ‘L’ shape. The cup of the hand is hollow on the inside. In general, the left hand has the same principles as right hand, but a few differences. The fingers are parallel to the strings. The wrist of the left hand must not be on the sounding board. The arms are never ‘glued’ to the harp, and they are always raised. The right elbow needs to be flexible, not stiff. When playing in the high register, the elbow is raised away from the harp (Figure 6.2 and 6.3).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.1 Hand positions for the chromatic harp

Figure 6.2 Right hand position for the pedal harp
Generally, the thumb is kept higher than the other fingers, but there are notable exceptions. On the chromatic harp, when the left thumb is reaching for a black string and other fingers are reaching the black strings at the same time, the thumb must be held at the level of the second finger to make the reach easier. The left thumb will not be held as high as right thumb for pedal harp. Ideally, the objective is to give the student a comfortable and natural position.

Playing Scales

One of the most important techniques is learning to play scales. Scale passages are found in the majority of difficult harp passages. Learning to play rapid scales is difficult for both harps. Both harps require placing thumbs as high as possible, to allow other fingers pass under. On both harps, it is necessary to replace all the fingers as soon as possible after the fourth finger has passed under the thumb.
**Chromatic Harp:**

Fingering requirements: 1. place the fingers as high as possible before playing the first string; 2. before playing the thumb, place the next finger; 3. place all possible fingers; 4. before playing the fourth finger, place all possible fingers. Scales are practiced with each hand separately using two octaves at first. Length is then increased to three and four octaves (Figure 6.4).

![Figure 6.4 Hand positions for playing scales on the chromatic harp](image)

**Pedal Harp:**

To begin, students practice scales with each hand separately, then, with hands together, using the same fingering in both hands. Place four fingers on the strings, keeping the thumb high, then pass the fourth finger under the thumb and extend the other three fingers. Each finger makes contact with the palm after playing. For ascending scales, the thumb needs to high enough for the fourth finger passes under.
Before the fourth finger plays, replace all the fingers as soon as possible. Fingerings are the same in all keys, only pedal changes are required. For the descending scale, the thumb passes over the fourth, an easier movement than the ascending scale. To keep the second finger from ‘raising up’, the second, third, and fourth fingers need to be placed together as a unit on the strings. When the thumb passes over, the fourth finger reaches out, guiding fingers two and three toward the correct string (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5 Right hand position for playing scales on the pedal harp

Figure 6.6 Left hand position for playing scales on the pedal harp
Example 3 shows the fingerings of pedal harp Eb major scale from H. Renie’s Complete Method. For the pedal harp scales, the same fingerings reply to all the major and minor, but the only difference is the pedal changes. As the result, only the exact same fingerings are used by both harps (chromatic and pedal harps) in the key of C. The fingerings for chromatic harp are different in each hand, like keyboard scales.

Examples 4 and 5 are all fingerings for the major and minor keys of the chromatic harp.

Example 3. The fingerings of Eb major scale for the pedal harp from H. Renie’s

*Complete Method*
Example 4. The fingerings of chromatic harp major scales
Example 5. Fingerings of minor scales for the chromatic harp
Example 6. Fingerings of chromatic scales for the chromatic harp

Minor scales are played with the same fingerings as major scales on the pedal harp. Playing a chromatic scale on the pedal harp is possible, but very difficult even in slow tempo because of the pedal changes.

**Playing Chords**

Playing chords is one of the most common techniques on the harp. Students of both harps practice to find the correct ‘middle notes’ of the chords and inversions. Pedal harp students memorize the proper pedals for each chord. Chromatic harp students work to play each member of other chord with the correct strength to avoid buzzing. Since the spacing between strings is half of the spacing on the pedal harp, the closeness of the strings does not allow for fortissimo chords. The strings would buzz into each other. The following is an example of the same chords, played on both harps. The differences are the fingerings and pedal changes (Examples 7).
Example 7 shows the differences between performing chords on the chromatic and pedal harp. The color of pink is again used to show the fingerings (1,2,3 for both hands) and pedal changes for pedal harp for all the chord progressions. The fingerings for both hands of the pedal harp remain the same; only pedals change. Black ink is for chromatic harp fingerings; fingers 1,2,3 or 2,3,4 can be used.

Example 8. Comparisons of fingerings differences of playing chords
Example 8 shows the chord progressions in different keys; fingerings remain the same. Example 8(b) has two pedal changing options. In first option, the passage is seen in the key C#, the second option uses the enharmonic equivalents, playing in the key Db. So the first chord spells F natural, Db, Ab, F-natural, Db, Ab, F-natural and Db. For the best sound quality, harpists will most likely choose to play in the key of Db because no discs are pressing against the strings, allowing the harp to resonate, using the full string length.

**Composition Techniques**

*Chromatic Harp*

The chromatic harp is tuned in C like the piano. The writing is similar to writing for the pedal harp, but more closely resembles piano music. The chromatic harp gave the composers the freedom to write chromatically, unbothered by the use of pedals.

Examples 9-16 represent solo and chamber music for chromatic harp, and Examples 17-19 represent orchestral music for chromatic harp. Simple chromatic passages, such as in thirds, sixths, octaves, tenths, are easy to manage. The following examples are from *L'Etude des qualites artistiques et pratiques de la harpe pleyel Chromatique sans pedales-Systeme G Lyon* (1908, Alphonse Leduc, Paris) by Jean Risler, professor at the Conservatory of Bruxelles from 1900-1920. The book contains the capabilities of the instrument.
Solo and Chamber Music for Chromatic Harp

Examples 9 and 10 show the easy of performing chromatic scales, single or in octaves.


Examples 11, 12 and 13 show the ease of performing chromatic passages of three-to-four-note chords, provided the intervals are not too far apart.
Example 11. Mario van Overeem, *Barcarolle pour Harpe Chromatique*.

![Example 11](image)


![Example 12](image)


![Example 13](image)
Examples 14 and 15 show that broken chromatic chords are also easily to
accomplished.

Example 14. Reynaldo Hahn, *Prelud Valse et Rigaudon pour Harpe
Chromatique* and *String Quartet*.


Example 16 shows the instrument is also capable of changing keys in the
middle of the instrument.

Orchestral Music for Chromatic Harp

Example 17. R. Wagner, *Ouverture des Maitres-Chanteurs*. 

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**Example 16:**

```
Moderato poco marcato
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**Example 17:**

```
Moderato
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Example 18. R. Wagner, *La Walkure*.

The original works written for the chromatic harp were very playable and well-written. The list of pieces which may serve as a model for composers writing for the chromatic harp includes:

*Fantaisie Chromatique*………………………………………… J. S. Bach

*Concerto en re mineur (part 1)*………………………………... J. S. Bach
Chaconne en sol ................................................................. Handel
Fantaisie ................................................................. Th. Dubois
Choral et Variations .................................................... Widor
Andante et Scherzo ....................................................... Florent Schmitt
Sonate ................................................................. Emanuel Moor
Danse Sacree et danse profane ........................................ Debussy
Prelude, valse et rigaudon ................................................ R. Hahn
Impromptu Caprice ........................................................ Pierne
Impromptu ............................................................... Clarlone
Fantaisie-ballade ........................................................ Pfeiffer
Scherzo ................................................................. Perilhou
Les trois Valses ........................................................ Nerini
Concerto .............................................................. Mario von Obereem
Parties d’orchestre ....................................................... Wagner
Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

The construction of the harp has undergone numerous changes throughout its long history, changing both in size and shape. It has grown from a lap-held one octave instrument to the modern seven octaves concert grand harp standing tall in the orchestras.

In the early twentieth century, Pleyel’s chromatic harp and Erard’s double-action harp had equal opportunity to become today’s standard harp. Each instrument had its own musical advantages and disadvantages. Pleyel’s chromatic harp was able to play the chromatic music of the key, broke fewer strings, had stable tuning and required less maintenance. But several major disadvantages caused the instrument’s demise. The heaviness of the instrument, which was played mostly by women, made it cumbersome to move. Due to the narrow spaces between strings, it was not possible to play loudly without the strings buzzing into one another. In orchestral pieces, several chromatic harps had to play in unison to bolster the sound. The cross stringing caused eyestrain for the players. The instrument was unable to produce enharmonic equivalents used in the colorful glissando of the double-action pedal harp. Despite its strengths, and the endorsement of famous composers and conductors, Pleyel’s chromatic harp survived less than three decades.

The double-action pedal harp had problems, such as unstable tuning, and the limitations of playing chromatic passages caused by the pedal system. These
problems continue to this day. But the instrument prevailed due to the instrument’s ability to project well in an orchestra, produce a pleasing tone quality, and play colorful glissando that caught the imaginations of composers, harpists and audiences.

The Pleyel chromatic harp is now a museum piece. A rare concert is always newsworthy in the harp world. In Harpseasons newsletter of Winter 2006, was published by French harp marker Camac, and a chromatic harp recital was performed by Francette Bartholomée on October 16th, 2005 at the Harp Conference in Arles, France (Figure 7.1 and 7.2).

Figure 7.1 Francette Bartholomée gave a chromatic harp concert in Arles, France on October 16th, 2005

Francette Bartholomée said about her harp: “The harp that you have heard is probably a hundred years old, it has traveled far, and it is worn and fragile. It has its moods and its unwanted noises. I hardly dare play it…”
Figure 7.2 Francette Bartholomée’s Pleyel no. 420 chromatic harp

Figure 7.3 Close look of Francette Bartholomée’s Pleyel no. 420 chromatic harp
After Gustave Lyon, some chromatic harp makers continued producing instruments for a short time. Only John Thomas’s Wales Company continued into the 1950’s when the last instruments were purchased by a Belgian music school where Odile Tackoen was teaching.
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Pullen, Don 'K.S.' Marcel Lucien Tournier; 


APPENDIX

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Uncertain Titles in Brackets

Music for solo harp:

Bailly, Jean: *Preludio, Andante, Romance per Arpa Diatonica e Cromatica*, 1978
CeBeDem, a.s.l.b., Rue d’Arlon 75-77, 1040 Bruxelles

Baldouï: *Melodie, Rouet Methode Gustave Lyon*, 1898

Bartholomee, Pierre: *Pastorale Pour Harpe Chromatique ou Diatonique*, 1981
Dedie a Valerie Bartholomee
Andel, Madeliefjeslaan 26, 8400 Oostende

*Trios Nocturnes*, 1961
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Briee, Ernst: *Ballade, Op. 1*
Methode Gustave Lyon, 1898

Dedie a Mlle. Renee Lenars
Evette & Schaeffer, Passage du Grand Cerf, 18-20, Paris

Cantelon, Auguste: *Nocturne*
Dedie a Jean Risler
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Casella, Alfredo: *Berceuse Triste*, 1911
Dedie a Mlle. Adele Fanta
Salabert, Rue Chauchat, Paris
Serenade en Quatre Parties
A. Durand et Fils, Place de la Madeleine 4, Paris

Clarlone, Virginie: Asie (Reverie)
Dedie a Mme, Gustave Lyon
Emile Leduc, Paris

Elegie
Dedie a Mlle. Lucile Delcourt
Emile Leduc, P. Bertrand et Cie, Paris

Impromptu
Dedie a Mme. Gustave Lyon
Emile Leduc, Paris

Osanna a Hymne Religieux
Emile Leduc, Paris

Serenade
Ancien air Irlandais
Fantaisie
Dedie a Mlle. Emilie Ponteneau
Emile Leduc, Paris

D’Agreve, Ernest: Deux Pieces Pour Harpe Chromatique, 1923
Sylphides
Fantaisie
Dedie a Mlle. Germaine Cornelis
A. Zurfluh, Rue des Sts. Peres 14, Paris

Deboeck, Auguste: Fantaisie, 1916
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen
Improvisation, 1927
A. Zurfluh, Paris
De Bourguignon, Francis: *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*

*Pour Harpe Chromatique, Op. 50, 1936*

CeBeDem, Bruxelles

Faye-Josin, Frederique DB: *Barcarolle, Feuillet d’album*. 1905

Dedie a Mme. Wurmser-Delcourt

Emile Leduc, Paris

Delaborde, Miriam Eraim: *Trois Pieces: Prelude*

*Scherzetto*

*Valse de Concert*

Dedie a Mlle. Helene Zielinska

Enoch et Cie, 27 Boulevard des Italiens, Paris

Delaunay, R.: *Caprice*

Dedie a Gabrielle Humphrey

Emile Leduc, Paris

*Chanson Badine*

Emile Leduc, Paris

*Impromptu*

Dedie a Gustave Lyon

Emile Leduc, Paris

Delmas, Marc: *Theme et Variations, Op. 198, 1925*

Dedie a Auguste et Lina Cantelon

Evette & Schaeffer, Paris

Delune, Louis: *Ecossaise, 1913*

Emile Leduc, Paris

De Maleingreau, Pual: *Nocturne a Casteau (Mons), Op. 77 no. 3, 1937*

Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

*Prelude, Interlude, Final, Op. 77, no. 1, 1937*

Dedie a Maria Moens

Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen
Prelude et Danse, Op. 77. no. 2, 1937
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

De Seck, B. : *Un Souffle de Passait…*, 1922
Dedie a Jean Risler
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Dsire-Paque, M. J. L. : *Theme Carie Pour la Harpe Chromatique, Op. 82*, 1914
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Deslandres, Adolphe: *Canto d’Ucello*
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Emile Leduc, Paris

Desportes, Emile: *Impressions et Soucenirs*, 1908
Dedie a Helene Zielinska
Maurice Senart, 20 Rue du Dragon, Paris

Enesco, Georges: *Allegro de Concert*
Dedie a Gustave Lyon
Enoch et Cie, Paris

(Concert dans la Methode de Gustave Lyon, 1898)

Eymieu, Henry: *En Filant, Op. 120*
Emile Leduc, Paris

*Romance Sans Paroles*
Emile Leduc, Paris

Fevrier, Henry: *Intermezzo*
Dedie a Mlle. Lenars
Emile Leduc, Paris

Gallon, Noel: *Improvisation et Allegro*
De l’article de R. Lenars
Ganeval, E.: *Caprice*
   Emile Leduc, Paris

Benjamin: *Fantaisie* (etudes artistiques)
   Heugel et Cie, 2 bis Rue Vivlenne, Paris

Goeyens, Fernand: *Paysage*, 1932
   Dedie A Mlle. Maria Moens
   Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

   *Improvisation*, 1935
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   *Aspiration*, 1940
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Grovlez, Gabriel Marie: *Impromptu*, 1909
   Dedie a Gustave Lyon
   Bauwens Van Der Boljeen, Square de l’Oper 6, Paris

Billemacher, P.: *Petite Piece en Frome d’etude*
   Dedie a Gustave Lyon
   Emile Leduc, Paris

   *Piece de Concert*
   Joanin et Cie, Rue des Saints-Peres 22, Paris

Jongen, Joseph: *Ballade Sur un Vieux Noel Wallon Oublie*
   Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Junker, W.: *Reverie*
   Emile Leduc, Paris

Knosp, Gaston: *Rinnegate... e Felice*, 1938
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Laparra, Raoul: *Rythmes Espagnols*

* I. Tientos
* II. Petenera
* III. Solea
* IV. A. Sevillanas
  B. Trianeras
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Lefebvre, Charles Edouard: *Romance sans Paroles*

Dedie a Madeleine Lefebure

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(Introduction et Allegro)

Flem, Paul Le: *Clair de Lune Sous Bois*, 1910

Dedie a Gustave Lyon

Mutuelle, Paris

*Danse Desuete*, 1911

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Leleux, Nine: *Idylle*, 1941

Dedie a Mlle. M. Moens et ses Eleves

Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

*Romance*, 1941

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Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen
Martin, Jeanne: *Feerie*, 1959
- *Impromptu, Op. 17*
- *Caprice, Op. 20*
  
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Mesquita, C. de: *Deux Pieces de Concert*
  
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Migman, Edouard: *Trois Pieces pour Harpe Chromatique*, 1908
- *Etude an re bemol*
- *Romance sans Paroles*
- *Caprice en si mineur*
  
Dedie a Renee Lenars
  
Emile Leduc, Paris
  
Rapsodie sur un Theme de M. Ravel, 1923
  
Buffet-Crampon

Moor, Emanuel: *Op. 68, no. 1 Sonate*
- *no. 2 Prelude*

*Op. 71, no. 3 Prelude*

Dedie a Helene Zielinska

Max Eschig, Paris

*Deux Esquisses no. 1 Prelude*
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Nerini, Emile: *Fantaisie Italienne, Op. 22*

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Ulysse T. du Wast, Paris

*Trois Valses, Op. 28 : Valse Celeste*
- *Valse Tendre*
- *Valse Folle*

Dedie a Mme. Renee Lenars
Ulysse T. du Wast, Paris

_ Jonglerie, Op. 36 _
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Ratez, Emile: _Ballade, Op. 39_
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Risler, Jean: _Au Soir_ (Etude VIII)
Emile Leduc, Paris

(Ballade sour des airs Irlandais)

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_Choral et Variations_, 1905
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_Danse Lente_
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Op. 2
Op. 3
Op. 4

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Dedie a Mlle. Lina Renson
Emile Leduc, Paris

Petite Fantaisie
Dedie a Mlle. Marguerite Levy
Emile Leduc, Paris

Romance
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Etude Chromatique, 1925
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A. Zurfluh, Paris

Roger-Ducasse, Jean Jules: Basso Ostinato
Durand, Paris

Sachs, Leo: Impromptu, 1913
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*Exercices sur l’air Savez-Vous Planter des Choux*
Deide a Claire Tackoen
Collection Privee Mme. O. Tackoen

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Collection Privee Mme. O. Tackoen

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Dedie a Susann MacDonald
Collection Privee Mme. O. Tackoen

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Emile Leduc, Paris

Uyttenhove, Yolande: *Au Loin la Foret*, 1975
Collection Privee Mme. O. Tackoen
La Maison aux Vitres Colorees, 1975
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Piece Breve
Dedie a Mme. Carlson-Gallemaerts
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Prelude a Caserte, 1975
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Sur le Pont d’Avignon (variations)
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Van Dooren, Arthur: Fantaisie-Impromptu
Dedie a Gustave Lyon
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Van Overeem, Mario: Deuxieme Fantaisie
Deide a Mme. Mary Kuhner
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Prelude et fugue
Emile Leduc, Paris

(Sept Impromptu, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1918)

Six Morceaux: Pour les eleves de la classe de Jean Risler
Petite Fantaisie (Annie van Overeem)
Romance (Lina Renson)
Berceuse (Lina Renson)
Lentezang (Helene Ottmann)
Barcarolle (Lina Renson)
Pensee Fugitive (Germaine Cornelis)
Emile Leduc, Paris
Verbruggen, Rene: *Fumees, Op. 16*

Collection Preivee Mme. Rene Verbrugghem

*Romance en re, 1941*
Dedie a Maria Moens
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Wallner, Leopold: *Elegie*

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*Mazurka de Concert, 1905*
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Wursmer, Lucien: *Guirlandes, 1927*

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*Invocation*
De l’Etude… de J. Risler, 1908

*La Chanson du Rouet*
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*Marche Andalouse*
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*Reveuse, Op. 102*
J. Pisa

*Tourbillon*
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Amman, Benno: *Synchronies Pour Quatre Harpes*
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

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Snoer: *Capriccio Marcial Pour Huit Harpes*
Emile Leduc

Uyttenhove, Yolande: *Suite Pour deux Harpes Chromatiques*
  *Prelude*
  *Sarabande*
  *Gigue*
  *Gavotte*
  *Rigaudon*
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

van Overeem, Mario: *Allegro pour Quatre Harpe Chromatiques*
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen
**Chamber Music**

Britt, Ernst: *Chant du Barde pour violoncello et harpe chromatique*
   Emile Leduc, Paris

*Trilby, idylle pour violoncello et harpe chromatique*
   Emile Leduc, Paris

Debussy, Claude: *Danses avec double quatuor a cordes, 1904*
   Danse Sacree
   Danse Profane
   A. Durand, Paris

Dewilde, Georges: *Moineaux de Paris pour Chant et harpe, op. 11*
   Dedie a Janine Maca et Odile Tackoen
   Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

D’Ollone, Max: *Fantaisie pour harpe chromatique et quatuor simple, 1908*
   Deide a Gustave Lyon
   Emile Leduc, Paris

Hahn, Reynaldo: *Prelude, Valse et Rigaudon pour harpe chromatique et piano ou double quatuor a cordes, 1903*
   Heugel, et Cie, Paris

Jongen, Joseph: *Concerte a cinq pour harpe chromatique ou diatonique flute, violon, alto et violoncello Deide au quintette instrumental de Paris Vriamont, Bruxelles*

Huhner, Jacques: *La Petite Berceus pour guy-Jacques pour harpe et violoncello, 1938*
   Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

*Nostalgie, Piece pour quatuor et harpe chromatique, 1938*
   Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen
La Gye, Paul: *Scene d’amour, extralte de l’opera “Franchimont”, op. 10 pour violon, Violoncello et harp chromatique*
  Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

Lefebvre, Charles: *Andante et Chroal pour harpe chromatique et orchestre*
  *De l’Etude… de Jean Risler, 1908*
  
  *Une Serenade pour harpe chromatique, piano, flute et quatuor a cordes*
  Emile Leduc, Paris

(Marechauz, E.: *Chant d’amour pour harpe chromatique, violon ou cioloncelle*)

(Mignan, Edouard: *Suite pour harpe chromatique, violon ou violoncello*)

(Peron, Paul: *Trois Esquisses Musicales pour harpe chromatique et alto ou violon, 1908.*
  
  *La Charmause*
  *Le Songe*
  *La Delire*
  
  Dedie a Mons. Et Mme. Pierre Brun-Fontaneau)

Risler, Jean: *Allegro-Fantaisie avec Double quatuor*
  Emile Leduc, Paris

(Concertstuck avec double quatuor)

Rousseau, Samuel: *Fantaisie pour harpe chromatique et double quatuor*
  Emile Leduc, Paris

Schmitt, Florent: *Andante et Scherzo pour harpe chromatique avec Accompagnment de piano* (reduction d’orchestre) 1903
  
  Dedie a Mlle . Claire Blot
  Max Eschig, Paris

Sourilas, Theodore: *Suite pour hautbois, cor, violon celle et harpe chromatique,*
  1899
Deide a Mons. Et Mme. Charles Duval
Lemoine, Paris-Bruxelles

van Overeem, Mario: *Concerto en la Mineur pour harpe chromatique et orchestre*,
1905
Emile Leduc, Paris

*Musique Religieuse pour violons, harpe solo, orgue et choeurs*
  
  *Kyrie*
  *Prelude*
  *O Salutaris*
  *Ave Maria*

(Petite danse pour flute, harpe et orchestre a cordes
Dedie a Leon Polliet)

*Prelude en mib majeur pour harpe Chromatique, orgue et violon*
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

*Prelude en la Makeur pour harpe chromatique, orgue et violon*
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

*Prelude mystique en sib majeur pour flute solo, harpe chromatique et orchestre a cordes*
Deide a Leon Plliet
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

*Prelude pour violon, harpe chromatique et harmonium, 1904*
Collection Preivee Mme. O. Tackoen

(Flaurent, Ed.: *Variations sur un air Populaire douaisien pour harpe chromatique, orgue, celesta et piano*)

Zurfluh, Auguste: *Chansons d’absence pour chant et harpe chromatique sur des Poemes de G. Lantelme*
Si Vous Vouliez que je l’oublie, Op. 95
Les Fleurs avaient pour moi des charmes, Op. 96
Voici la risante journée, Op. 97
Puisque pour toujours m’est ravie, op. 100
Madrilena (Poesie de Nielmay), Op. 100 (?)
de l’Etude... de Jean Risler, 1908

Above information is from Devaere, Hannelore and Philippe, S.R.L. Clements,
*X-Harps: History, Playing Technique, Music and Construction of the Cross Strung
Chromatic Harp.*

**Music of Piano Transcribed for the Chromatic Harp**

1. *Transcribed Writings by Virginie Clarlone:*

Beethoven: *Sonate, Op. 49, no.2*

Chopin: *Valse, Op. 34, no.2*

Glinka: *Barcarolle*

Mendelssohn: *Chanson Populaire*

2. *Transcribed Writings by Lucile Delcourt:*

Bubois: *Chanson d’Orient*
    *Histoire Triste*
    *Ronde des Archers*
    *Sorrente*
    *Stella Matutina*

Haydn: *Adagio*
    *Arietta con Variazioni*

Pessard: *Premier Nocturne, Op. 5*

Pierne: *Serenade*
3. Transcribed Writings by M. Tassu-Spencer, professor in the Conservatoire National of Paris:

Beethoven: *Andante de la 10th Sonate*
Mendelssohn: *Barcarolle Venitienne*

Schubert: *Moment Musical*

Pfeiffer: *Romance sans Paroles*

### Other Writings of Piano

Beethoven: *Adagio de la Sonate “Clair de Lune”*
- *Andante con Variazioni de la Sonate Op. 26*
- *Largo de la Sonate, Op. 7*
- *Deux Rondos*

Boelly: *Prelude, Andante et Romance*

Chabrier: *Feuillet d’Album*
- *Scherzo-Valse*

Chopin: *Preludes 1, 3, 15, 17, 19, 25*
- *Nocturnes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15*
- *Valses 3, 6, 8, 9, 13*
- *Mazurkas Diverses*
- *Etudes*

Chaminade: *Courante*

Cui: *Valse en mi mineur*

Dubois: *Scherzetto, des Douze Petites Pieces.*
- *Prelude*
- *Reverie*
Durand: *Chacone*

Debussy: *Arabesques*

Delaborde, E.M.: *Prelude*
   *Petite Marche Villageoise*
   *Capriccio alla Chopin*

Faure, G: *Romance sans Paroles, no. 3*
   *Chant d’Automne*

Grieg: *Papillon*
   *Prelude, dans le Style Ancien*
   *Air*
   *Gavotte*
   *Poeme Erotique*
   *Valse*
   *Aria*

Godard, Benjamin: *Les Hirondelles*
   *Valse Villageoise*
   *Improvisation*
   *Romance*
   *Fileuse*
   *Barcarolle Napolitaine*
   *Deuxieme Mazurka, en si Bemol Majeur*
   *Valse Chromatique*
   *Etude Fantaisie*

Haydn: *Les Sonates*
   *Oeuvres Diverses*

Heller, Stephen: *Les Etudes*

Henselt: *Etudes*

Kulhau: *Les Sonatines*
Liszt: Nocturnes
    Consolations

Liadoff: Prelude, Op. 3, no. 1

Lack: Valse Arabseque
    Au gre des Flots
    Etudes Elegantes

Mozart: Les Sonates

Massemet: Marche Celeste du Roi de Lahore
    Elegie (Les Erynnies)
    Clair de Lune (Werther)
    Prelude d’Herodiade

Mendelssohn: Les Romances sans Paroles et Oeuvres Diverses

Mailly, Alphonse: Causerie
    Impressions d’Avril

Pugno, Raoul: Soir d’Automne
    Causerie sous bois

Pfeiffer, G.: Bruit d’Ailes

Pessard: Vingt-cinq pieces, Op. 20
    Nocturnes no. 1 and 2

Rousseau, S.: Harmonies du soir

Rachmaninoff: Prelude, Op. 3, no. 2

Radoux: Matinee a la Huda

Raff: Les Harmonieuses (Etudes)
    La Fileuse, Op. 157, no. 2
Etude Melodique, Op. 130, no. 1
Sinding: Gazouillement de Printemps
Caprice

Schumann: Oeuvres Diverses

Schutt: Etude Mignonne

Schytt, L.: Serenade et Barcarolle

Seitz: Fileuse

Sandre, G.: Ballade

Thome: Oeuvres Diverses

Tschaikowski: Chanson Triste
Chant d’Automne, Op. 37
Barcarolle
Souvenirs de Haspal
Oeuvres Diverses, Op. 40

Widor: Oeuvres Diverses

Wurmser, Lucien: Nocturne
Feuillet d’Album

Haessler, J. W.: Gigue en re Mineur, Op. 31

Transcriptions for 2, 3, and 4 Harps and 2 Pianos

Bizet: Menuet de l’Arlesienne

Chabrier: Idylle

Chaminade: Andante et Scherzettino
Grieg: Peer Gynt
   Marche Triomphale

Haendel: Largo Celebre

Massenet: La Terre Promise
   Clair de Lune (Werther)

Mendelssohn: Etude

Mozart: Menuet
   Sonate a 2 Pianos

Pierne: Prelude de la Samaritaine

Rousseau, Samuel: Harmonies du Soir

Saint-Saens: Menuet et Gavotte du Septuor
   Pavane d’Etienne Marcel
   Tournoiement
   Danse Macabre
   Reverie du Soir de la Suite Algerienne

Schumann: Andante et Variations

Thome, F.: Menuet Lavalliere
   Gavotte et Musette
   Clair de Lune

Wagner: Choeur des Pelerins

**Music of Harpsichord on the Chromatic Harp and on the Harp-Lute Pleyel**

Bach, J.S.: Gigue
   Concerto en re Mineur
   Fantaisie Chromatique
Fugues d’orgue transcribed by Liszt
Petits Preludes
Inventions
Preludes et Fugues (les deux cahiers)
Suites Francaises
Suites Anglaises
Pieces Diverses
Transcriptions de Sonates for Violin by C. Saint-Saens

Bach, P. E. : Solfeggio
   Fantaisie
   Sonates
   Pieces Diverses
   Rondeau

Besarde, Giov-Battista: Airs de Danse

Couperin: Les Moulins a Vent
   Papillons
   Les Tricoteuses
   Pieces Diverses

Dandrieu: La Gemissante

Daquin: Le Coucou
   Pieces Diverses

Haendel: Concerto de Harpe ou Orgue
   Chaconne
   Passacaille
   Gavotte
   Largo celebre
   Pieces Diverses

Loeilly, Jean-Baptiste: Gigue

Lully: Gavotte
   Pieces Diverses
Rameau: *Le Rappel des Oiseaux*
- *La Sensible*
- *La Dauphine*
- *L’Enharmonique*
- *Le Tambourin*
- *Menuet*
- *La Joyeuse*
- *L’Harmonieux Forgeron*
- *Sarabande*
- *Les Trois Mains*
- *Menuet de Platee*
- *Rigaudon*
- *Pieces Diverses*

Scarlatti: *Prelude*
- *Sonate*
- *Pastorale*
- *Pieces Diverses*

**Pedal Harp Repertoires Play on Chromatic Harp**

1. *Transcriptions for the Chromatic Harp*

Hasselmans: *Reverie* (Transcribed by L. Delcourt)
- *Ballade*

Oberthur: *Serenade Mauresque*
- *Danse des Lutins*

2. *Other Music for Pedal Harp only*

Faure: *Impromptu*

Godefroid: *Marche Triomphale du Roi David*
- *Carnaval de Venise*
- *Etude de Concert*
Le Reve
La Jenue et la Vieille
Morceaux Divers

Hasselmans: Aubade
  Berceuse
  Cantilene
  Chasse
  Lamento
  Menuet
  Petite Valse
  Follets
  La Source
  Priere
  Grande Reverie
  Ballade
  Conte de Noel
  Patrouille
  Nocturne
  Pieces Diverses

Holy: Idylle
  Am Spinrath
  Barcarolle
  Ronde des Sylphes
  Chanson d’Automne

Lefebvre: Romance sans Paroles

Oberthur: Conte de Fees
  Melodie
  Virgo Maria
  Danse des Lutins
  Reve de Tristan (d’apres Wagner)

Pierne: Impromptu-Caprice

Posse, W.: Les Vagues
Poenitz, F.: *Ballade*

Alvars, Parish: *Reverie*
   *Marche*
   *Nocturne*

Saint-Saens: *Fantaisie*

Schuecker: *Ballade*

Snoer: *Valse de Concert*
   *Nocturne*
   *Feuilles d’Album*
   *Reverie*

Thomas, John: *Air Gallois*
   *Automne*
   *Etudes Melodiques*

Tedeschi: *Romance sans Paroles*
   *Ritournelle Triste*

Verdalle: *Berceuse*
   *Air de Ballet*

Zabel: *La Source*
   *Un Moment Heureux*
   *Warum*
   *Reve d’Amour*
   *Ballade en Trois Parties*
   *Marguerite au Rouet*
   *Elegie Fantastique*

3. *Repertoires for Harp Ensemble*

Oberthur: *Amadis*
   *Esmaralda*
4. Concertos and Fantaisie with Accompaniment of Orchestra

Brahms: *Chants for Voix de Femmes, Op. 17* (with accompaniment of two horns and harp)

Dubois: *Fantaisie*

Haendel: *Concerto for Harpe and Orgue*

Mozart: *Concerto for Harp and Flute*

Renie: *Concerto*

Thome: *Legende*

Widor: *Choral et Variations*

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**Music of Orchestra and Chromatic Harp without Public Performances**

1. Symphoniques:

Beethoven: *Promethee*

Berlioz: *La Fete chez les Capulets*

- Damnation de Faust
- Enfance du Christ

Bizet: *Ouverture de Patria*

- Fantaisie sur les Pecheurs de Perles

Blockx, J.: *Kermesse Flamande*

- Triptyque Symphonique

Boelmann: *Variations Symphoniques, pour Violoncelle et orchestre*

Bruck, Max: *Prelude de Lorely*
Kol Nidrei
Fantaisie Ecossaise, pour violin et orchestre

Bruneau, A.: Prelude de l’Ouragan

Chabrier, E.: Espana Phapsodie
   Bourree Fantasque (orchestree par Mottl)
   Joyeuse
   Les Violettes
   Grande Valse
   Ouverture de Mandoline
   Joyeuse Marche

Charpentier, G.: Impressions d’Italie
   Napoli

Clifford: Ballade, pour orchestre
   Suite de Concert

Cowen, F.: Concertstuck, pour piano et orchestre

Debefve, Jules: Rhapsodie Wallonne

Debussy, C.: La Mer

Delibes, Leo: Sylvia
   Coppelia

Dvorak, A.: Legende, pour orchestre
   Carnaval

Dupuis, Albert: Martille
   La Chanson d’Halyn

Elgar: Marche de Circonstance
   Marche Militaire

Faure, G.: Pelleas et Melisande
Flotow: *Ouverture d’Indra*

Franck, C.: *La Procession*
  - Symphonie en re mineur
  - Ghiselle, Drame Lyrique
  - Les Eolides (Poème Symphonique)

Gilson, P.: *Rhapsodie Canadienne*

Glinka: *La Jota Aragonaise*

Godard, B.: *Berceuse de Jocelyn*

Goldmarck: *Ouverture de Sakuntala*

Gounod: *Marche de la Reine de Sabat*
  - Hymne a Sainte-Cécile
  - Danse des Bacchantes de Philemon et Baucis
  - Redemption

Grieg, E.: *Sigurd Jorsolfar*
  - Peer Gynt

Haendel: *Celebre Largo*

Harechal, H.: *Le Sommeil de Jesus*

Huberti, G.: *Symphonie Funèbre*
  - Bloemardine (Reve et Chasse)
  - Brune du Midi

Hue, G.: *Prelude de Ruberzhal*

D’Indy, Vincent: *Symphonie no. 20 en si bemol*
  - Symphonie en re mineur
  - Istar, Variations Symphoniques
  - Symphonie sur un Chant Montagnard Français
Jehin, L.: *Amoroso Caprice-Valse*

Jongen, J.: *Cortege, Op.13*
- *Divertissement sur Macbeth, Lala Roukb*
- *Fantaisie sur deux Noels Wallons*
- *Scherzo et final de la Symphonie en la majeur, Op. 15*

Lalo, E.: *Namouna*
- *Symphonie Espagnole*
- *Phapsodie norvegienne*

Liszt: *Mazeppa*
- *Les Preludes*
- *Orphee*
- *Rhapsodie 1 and 2*
- *La Procession Nocturne*
- *Faust Symphonie*
- *Le Tasse*

Litoff, H.: *Ouverture des Girondins*

Luigini: *Ballet Egyptien*
- *La Voix des Cloches*
- *Carnaval Turc.*

Mackenzie, A. C.: *Britannia, Ouverture*

Massenet: *Les Erynnies*
- *Transcription sur Le Cid*
- *Ballet du Cid*

Mawet, E.: *Fantaisie Caprice*
- *Lieder, pour Chant et Orchestre*
- *Marche Solennelle*

Meyerbeer: *Marche Indienne*
- *Marche aux Flambeaux*
Schiller Marche
Moskowski: Serenade

Pierne, G. : Almee (Air de Ballet)
Collier de Saphir

Radoux: Marche Nationale Belge
Elegie
Cantate, pour soli, choeurs et orchestre
Ouverture et Fantaisie, sur (La Coupe Enchantee)
Fantaisie, pour violin and orchestre

Raway, E. : Ode Symphonie
Raymonda
Serenade 1865
La Foret, Op. 19

Ropartz, Guy: Danse des Pecheurs d’Islande

Saint-Saens, C. : Marche Heroique, Op. 34
Marche du Couronnement
La jota Aragonesa
Ballet et Suite d’Orchestre sous Henri VIII
Danse Macabre
Rouet d’Omphale
Ascanio (Suite d’Orchestre)
Phaeton
Symphonie no. 3 en ut mineur

Sibelius, J. : En, Saga

Smulders, C. : Ballade en cinq chants
Ymmis et Numaine
Marche Solennelle

Stojowski: Symphonie en re mineur, Op.21

Strauss, R. : En Italie
Mort et Transfiguration
Svendsen: Rhapsodie Norvégienne

Tinel: Ouverture de Polyeucte


Vreuls, Victor: Cortege Heroïque

Wagner: Ouverture, entr’acte du troisieme acte et Preislied des Maitres Chanteurs
      Siegfried Rheinfabrt
      Ouverture du Vaisseau Fantome
      Marche funebre et Scene Finale du Crepus-cule des Dieux
      Final du 1er acte de Parsifal

Weber, M.: Invitation a la Valse (arrangement Wein-gartner)
      Invitation a la Valse (arrangement Berlioz)

Widor, M.: La Korrigane
      Serenade, Op. 10, si bemol majeur

**Operas, Operas-Comic, Ballets Performed on the Chromatic Harp in the Public Theaters**

Adam: Sij’etais Roi

Bizet, G.: Carmen
      Les Pecheurs de Perles
      L’Arlesienne

Blokx, J.: La Fiancee de la Mer
      Princesse d’Auberge
      Milenka

Boieldieu: La Dame Blanche

Charpentier, G.: louise
Delibes, Leo: *Lakme*  
*Sylvia*  
*Coppelia*

Donizetti, G.: *La Favorite*  
*Lucie de Lamermoor*  
*Don Pasquale*

Dupuis, Albert: *Jean Michel*

Gounod, C.: *Faust*  
*Mireille*  
*Romeo et Juliette*  
*Philemon et Baucis*

Halevy: *La Juive*

Leoncavallo: *Paillasse*  
*La Boheme*

Leroux Xavier: *La Reine Fiamette*

Mascagni: *Cavalleria Rusticana*

Massenet, J.: *Herodiade*  
*Manon*  
*Werther*  
*Sapho*  
*Cendrillon*  
*La Jongleur de Notre-Dame*  
*Thais*  
*Herodiade*

Meyerbeer, G.: *L’Africaine*  
*Les Huguenots*  
*Le Prophete*
L'Etoile du Nord
Robert le Diable

Offenbach, J. : Les Contes d’Hoffmann

Puccini, G. : La Boheme
   La Tosca

Rossini: Guillaume Tell
   Le Barbier de Seville

Saint-Saens, C. : Samson et Dalila

Thomas, Ameroise: Mignon
   Hamlet

Verdi: Le Trouvere
   La Traviata
   Aida

Wagner, Richard: Tannhauser
   Le Crepuscule des Dieux
   Lohengrin
   Tristan et Yseuld
   La Walkure

Wolf, Hugo: Le Corrigidore

Above Information is from Etude des Qualites Artistiques et Pratiques de la Harpe Pleyel “Chromatique sans Pedales” System G. Lyon par Jean Risler Professor of Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles.
VITA

Lee-Fei Chen was born in Tainan, Taiwan. In 1997, she earned her Bachelor Degree at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she studied with Anne-Marguerite Michaud. She continued her graduate studies in Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana in 1999, where she studied with Susann McDonald. In 2001, she received full scholarship and assistantship, and completed her Master Degree at University of Miami in 2003 where she studied with Valerie Von Pechy Whitcup. Currently, she is a Doctoral Candidate for harp performance at Frost School of Music at University of Miami.