

The highest priority for your enjoyment in learning repertoire is to be able to execute the technical demands of playing the harp with musical panache. When you can have the pleasure of shaping a scale musically, making a series of chords sound melodic, rippling through arpeggios with agility, and using muffling techniques to highlight harmonies and phrasing, your technical mastery will manifest itself through your musical fluency.

The arpeggiated chord is a fundamental component of most of traditional harp music, for a few reasons. First, what the harp likes to do is ring, and one of the most effective tools for communicating a sustaining, ringing, sound on the harp is to activate the maximum resonant surfaces of the instrument. This resonance helps to mask the inherent percussive nature of the harp (plucked sounds); gives the illusion of a sustained sound, much like holding down the sustain pedal on the piano, and contributes to making the harp sound melodic, horizontal, and vocal. Every musician aspires to sing through their instrument and harpists are no exception. Getting there though, well– that’s a task, isn’t it?

Try it out for yourself: play a single chord and listen. Play the same chord as an arpeggio and listen.... There are inherent differences in what we/our listeners hear when we play a chord and when we arpeggiate the same chord tones.

The musical score is for a harp piece titled "Majestic" with a tempo of 100. It is written in 3/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system shows a block chord in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. The second system features a melodic line in the right hand with triplets and a "simile" instruction, and a bass line with triplets. The third system continues the melodic line in the right hand with fingerings and a bass line with fingerings.

The arpeggio is one step on the continuum of mastering the sounds of the harp, from single note/block chord to rhythmic (written out note values) arpeggios, to rolled chords, to fast scales and to the glissando. The fundamental principles of equality apply to a genuinely

beautiful arpeggio: equal amount of pad (fingertip) on each string, equal preparation of the strings, equal release, and equal follow through. Conversely when we change any one of those components, we can create an arpeggio with notes that stand out from the others. Also a skill, and a fun one, to master for certain.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Calme" (Op. 9, No. 17 by Chopin). The score is written for piano and bass clef. It consists of four systems of music. The first system is marked "Calmé" and "mp", with a tempo of quarter note = 63. The second system is marked "mp" and "mf". The third system is marked "dolce" and "delicato". The fourth system is marked "dolce", "simile", and "pp". The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, fingering numbers, and dynamic markings.

Mastering beautiful arpeggios

As in everything musical, learn this technique without using music, so you can listen, watch, and feel what's going on. You can make up your own little drills, or ask your teacher for options, but whatever you do, do it without looking at notes on a page.

Get your ground game going: know your home hand position

Feel the equality of pressure on the strings from each finger and give every finger equal attention physically and aurally.

Listen horizontally, rather than listening vertically

Every great arpeggio starts with great placing preparation. The correlation between being prepared to play and playing fluently is what we all strive for in our practicing.

Practice making the shape you see, or want, in your hand, down at your side before you come to the harp. Walk across the room if you have to. Close your eyes. This is the start to all good playing- when we feel in our body what we intend to do at the instrument we're connected to the process.

There is no "flying" in secure and musical 2-hand arpeggios: one hand is always preparing while the other hand is playing

Two hands @ the same time just doubles the fun of our equal action/equal sound equation!

Arpeggiations

Match the shapes in each hand as much as possible

Consider your fundamental interval fingerings

In a 3-hand cross-over pattern try to make the middle group four fingers in one hand: always gives you that split second of more time to jump the other hand

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a single melodic line with a treble clef, featuring a series of arpeggiated chords. A *cresc.* marking is present. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) showing a two-hand arpeggiated pattern. The right hand plays a sequence of chords, while the left hand plays a corresponding sequence. The notation includes fingerings and a *tr* (trill) marking at the end.