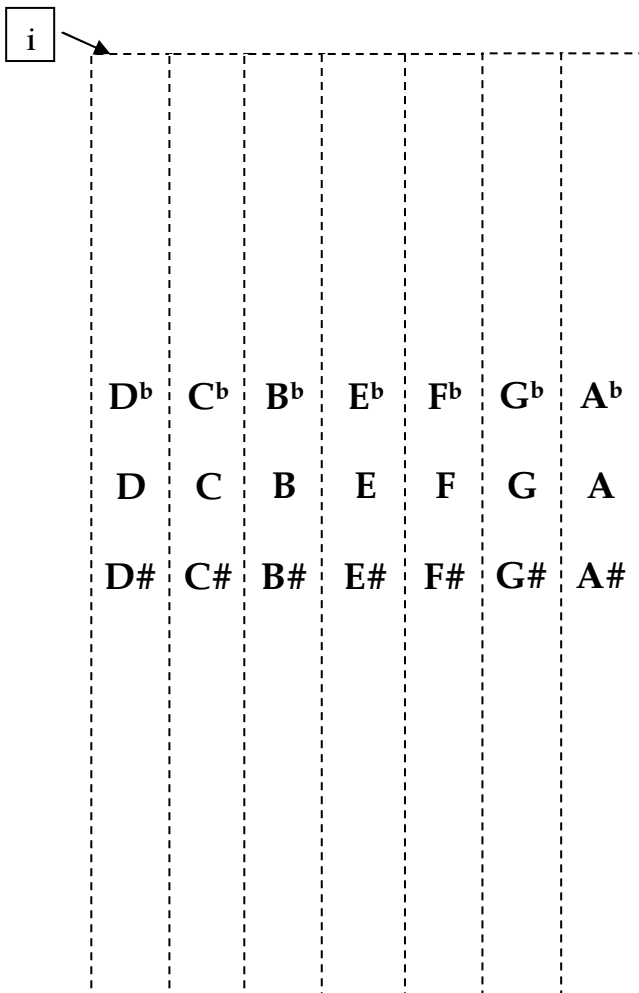
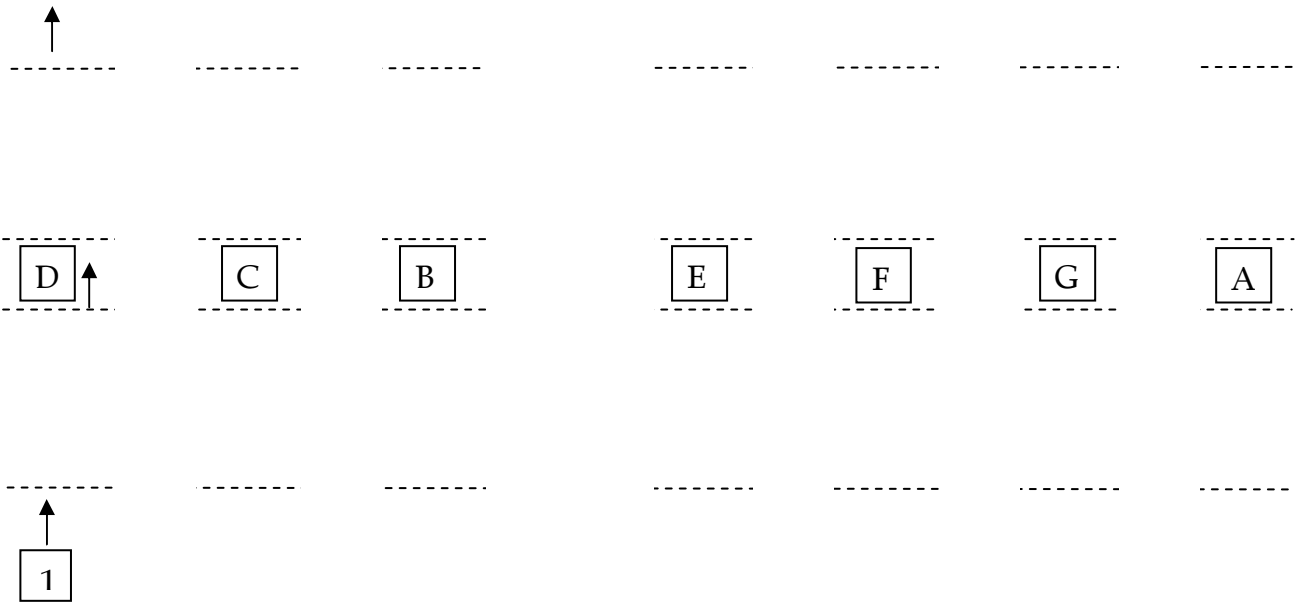


The Virtual Harp

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for A4 paper

Each pedal controls a set of strings (eg the C pedal changes ALL the C strings) so some note combinations won't work. When writing harp music it's hard to keep track of what notes are available. You need a reminder so you always know which pedal is where. A kind of virtual harp...



Instructions

1. Print this onto 160gsm card with p2 on the back
2. With a sharp knife, cut along all the dotted lines
You should now have a half page with seven sets of slots and seven strips marked with note names
3. Take the strip marked **D^b D D[#]** and slide the top edge (i) into the lowest left hand slot (marked 1)
4. Turn the paper over and slide the top edge of strip D through the next slot up
5. Turn back to the front of the sheet, and slide the top edge of strip D through the next slot up (3)
6. Turn the paper over and slide the top edge of strip D through the next slot up
You should now have a kind of woven effect, with the strip showing at the top and bottom, viz:



The strips should slide up and down and show the letter name in the window.

7. Repeat the process for the remaining strips
Now work through your music, moving the strips as you go along. Now you always know what pedal settings are current, and what notes you can use.

Writing for the Harp

The concert harp has seven pedals, three on the left and four on the right. Each pedal controls a set of strings - ie the C pedal controls ALL the C strings on the instrument. Each pedal has three positions: middle (giving the note itself), up (giving the note flattened) and down (giving the note sharpened). So if all the pedals were up the available notes would be $D^b C^b B^b E^b F^b G^b A^b$.

There are therefore some note combinations that cannot be used and some chromatic scales that won't work. It takes time to change a pedal; there can be a clunk if the string changed is still vibrating; and replaying the same string quickly can cause an unattractive buzz. On the other hand, you can get a good tremolo by alternating two neighbouring strings tuned to the same note (eg **B** and **Cb**).

Write on a double staff; notes in the bottom staff will be played by the left hand and the top by the right. Chords with a gap between the highest note and the others are idiomatic, as the thumb plays the higher note (like piano left hand - NOT right hand). Harpists will normally arpeggiate chords unless told not to - they sound better that way. Only use four notes per chord/arpeggio: harpists don't use their little fingers.

In the first bar, write out the initial settings for the pedals from left to right - eg **DCB^b EFGA**. Thereafter, just write each new pedal setting as it comes along. There's no need to write an arrow from the old setting (**B > B[#]**) - just put **B[#]**. (Use The Virtual Harp to keep track of which pedal is where.) Write them in the middle of the staff. If possible, do pedal changes in order, and one foot at a time: DCB or BCD - not DBC; DBFG - not DGBF. Always get a harpist to check your work.

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