

WITH HARP AND VOICE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF HARP/CHORAL WORKS

By James and Emily John

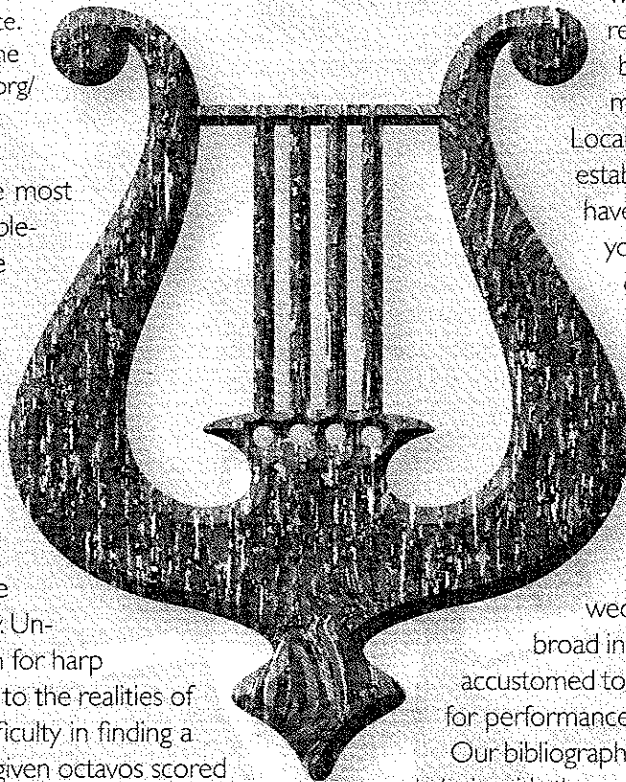
Editor's note: This article contains an index of suggested repertoire organized by voicing which can be found on the ACDA Web site. Click on the interactive link on the *Choral Journal* page <www.acda.org/publications/choral_journal>.

Although harp is one of the most ancient instruments, the double-action pedal harp (what we could call the modern harp), was invented in 1810 and has only been in wide use since the 1850s. Since then, countless composers have been inspired to write for this "venerable combination," but only a handful of pieces such as *A Ceremony of Carols* have entered the standard repertory. Unfortunately, many works written for harp are performed with piano (due to the realities of budgets, rehearsal time, and difficulty in finding a harpist), and harpists are often given octavos scored for piano that are playable, but not idiomatic or appropriate for the harp. It is our hope that this bibliography will make the extraordinary wealth of literature composed or arranged specifically for harp and choir more accessible to choirs at all levels. While by no means complete, the nearly two hundred pieces listed offer ample ideas for successful performance.

Part of the challenge in programming harp/choral works is finding a harpist. Contacting your local chapter

of the American Harp Society (AHS) is a great start. <www.harpsociety.org>. Regional representatives of the AHS may be able to provide contact information for harpists in your area. Local colleges or universities with established music programs may also have a faculty harpist who can put you in touch with recent graduates or current harp majors. University or community orchestras sometimes have a list of professional harpists in the area that they use. In addition, you can check the wedding section of your paper or call local party houses for listings of harpists who perform at weddings and other functions. Be broad in your search—many harpists are accustomed to traveling a considerable distance for performances.

Our bibliography focuses on works for solo harp and choir with the occasional addition of one or two instruments. Chamber works or compositions for small orchestra and chorus (which are numerous enough to warrant a bibliography of their own) have been excluded, along with works that are out of print or rental only. Most of the pieces found here are scored for pedal harp, though a select few can be performed on lever harp. We have made special note of this, and have indicated those works that are particularly suitable for a student in the event that there is a young harpist in your community that would like to gain experience. The concluding index is arranged according to voicing (SA, SSA, TTB, SATB, etc.), and categorizes works as sacred, secular, or suitable for Christmas. A companion article, "Beyond the Britten: an Annotated Bibliography of Harp/Choral Works" was published in the *American Harp Journal* (volume 20, no. 1, summer 2005) to introduce harpists to lesser known harp/choral works and encourage them to seek out choirs to collaborate and perform with.



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SEIDIO, MARK

LET OUR GLADNESS HAVE NO END

SATB (DIVISI), HARP, VIOLIN

An uplifting Christmas anthem based on a fifteenth-century melody and text. Separate harp and violin parts are included in the choral octavo. MorningStar Music Publishers

SHELTON, TOM

GOLDEN SLUMBERS KISS YOUR EYES

SSA, SOPRANO SOLO, HARP

This simple and beautiful setting of *Golden Slumbers* portrays a mother singing a lullaby to her children, and is intended (ideally) for children's choir and adult soprano soloist.

Hinshaw Music

SULZER, SALOMON

HALELUYAW

SATB (DIVISI), TENOR OR BARITONE SOLO, HARP, ORGAN

Salomon Sulzer (1804–90) served as the chief cantor of Vienna for most of the nineteenth-century. *Haleluyaw* was composed for a festive occasion honoring the wealthy landowners of his temple. A clear pronunciation guide is provided for the Hebrew text, along with a singable English translation. A separate harp part is available and necessary.

HaZamir Music

(distributed by Transcontinental Music)

SUSA, CONRAD

CAROLS AND LULLABIES, CHRISTMAS IN THE SOUTHWEST

SATB, SSAA OR TTBB, HARP, MARIMBA, GUITAR

Suite of ten Spanish carols arranged by Susa and put together to form a narrative. Lovely, varied and delightful works, they are intended as a set, but may be excerpted individually. A separate harp part is available.

E.C. Schirmer

SUTCLIFFE, JAMES HELME

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

TWO-PART TREBLE VOICES, HARP WITH OPTIONAL STRINGS

Sutcliffe's setting of this traditional carol works beautifully for young voices. The harp accompaniment is very effective, but the modal melody requires fast pedal work, which at times can cause extraneous noise.

Boosey & Hawkes

ŚWIDER, JÓZEF

CZEGO CHCESZ OD NAS PANIE

[WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US, LORD]

SATB, HARP

This relatively easy work, composed in 1977, is a setting of a well-known Polish hymn text. Language is the main challenge, since no English translation or pronunciation guide is provided. An alternate edition is available from United Music Publishers with German or Czech translations.

Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne

<www.pwm.com.pl>

TERRI, SALLI, ARR.

AWAY IN A MANGER

SSA, HARP

Beautiful arrangement of this traditional Christmas carol. May be sung *a cappella* or with harp accompaniment.

Lawson-Gould

THOMPSON, RANDALL

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

SATB OR SSAA, HARP

Lovely setting of Psalm 23, equally effective for SATB or SSAA. Extremely demanding harp part. Approximately 9' duration.

E. C. Schirmer

TRAVERS, AARON

GLORIA

SATB (DIVISI), HARP, ORGAN

Winner of the 1998 AGO/ECS Publishing Composition Award, this engaging work—full of vibrant rhythms and appealing harmonies—is a rewarding challenge for a very good choir.

E.C. Schirmer (lone Press)

VAN BRINK, MATTHEW

A THOUSAND TENDER PASSAGES: A LETTER FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON TO SALLY FAIRFAX

SATB, HARP, CELLO

A poignant setting of excerpts from two letters by George Washington, tacitly expressing his love for Sally Fairfax. Premiered in May 2008 by Vocal Essence, Phillip Brunelle, conductor. Approximately 7' duration.

Self-published, mattvanbrink.com

WARLAND, DALE

SIMPLE GIFTS

SATB, FLUTE, HARP OR GUITAR

Warland's thoughtful setting of this Shaker song is straightforward and very singable. A lever harp can be used, and could be played by a student harpist. Flute, harp and guitar parts are included in the choral octavo.

G. Schirmer

THERE WILL BE REST

SATB (DIVISI), HARP, FLUTE

Serene and reflective, this setting of a poem by Sarah Teasdale employs flute and harp coloristically to bring out textual elements. Separate harp and flute parts are included in the choral octavo.

G. Schirmer

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

SATB, HARP, FLUTE

Warland's sensitive use of flute and harp adds a beautiful touch to this lovely, accessible arrangement.

Hal Leonard

WEIR, JUDITH

ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

SATB DIVISI, HARP, PERCUSSION (THREE PLAYERS)

This work is based on Perotin's organum *Viderunt Omnes*—the cantus firmus and its text have been retained exactly in the men's voices, with freely composed soprano and alto parts. Written for the BBC Singers, for a Europe-wide radio broadcast on Millennium Day, January 1, 2000. Approximately 10' duration.

Chester Music

WHITEMORE, JOAN

SCARECROW SONGS

(PUBLISHED SEPARATELY)

1. IN THE FARTHER FIELD
2. SILLY SCARECROW (DOES NOT CONTAIN HARP)
3. YELLOW EVENING SUN
4. AUTUMN WIND

TWO OR FOUR-PART TREBLE VOICES, HARP, OPTIONAL WOODWIND OR ORFF INSTRUMENTS, MARIMBA, AND TWO FLUTES.

These enjoyable Haiku settings feature singable, pentatonic melodies and employ a delightful economy of means appropriate to the poetry.

Boosey & Hawkes

WIENHORST, RICHARD

THE LAMB

UNISON TREBLE CHORUS, HARP

Sensitive setting of this well-known poem by William Blake, appropriate for Christmas but broad enough for general use. Can be performed with "Soft Snow" as the second of Wienhorst's *Two Blake Settings*.

E. C. Schirmer