

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE

**MUSIC AND DANCE FACULTY**

Art of Music

HARP

MASTER'S THESIS

**PIANO PRELUDES Op. 28 BY CHOPIN PLAYED ON HARP  
–A COMPARISON–**

**Katarina Stanković**

Thesis Supervisor: doc. Mgr. Jana Boušková

Thesis Opponent: Mg.A. Ana Brateljević

Date of thesis defence: 6th June 2018

Academic title granted: MgA.

Prague, 2018

AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE

**HUDEBNÍ A TANEČNÍ FAKULTA**

HUDEBNÍ UMĚNÍ

HARFA

**DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE**

**CHOPINOVA KLAVÍRNÍ PRELUDIA Op. 28 HRANÁ NA  
HARFU–SROVNÁNÍ**

**Katarina Stanković**

Vedoucí práce: doc. Mgr. Jana Boušková

Oponent práce: Mg.A. Ana Brateljević

Datum obhajoby: 6. červen 2018

Přidělovaný akademický titul: MgA

Praha, 2018

## **D e c l a r a t i o n**

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis, independently on the following topic:

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date: .....

.....  
Signature of the candidate

## **Warning**

The use and public application of the findings of this thesis or any other treatment thereof are permissible only on the basis of a licensing contract, i.e. the consent of the author and of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.



**Abstract:**

Solo harp performance has gained a tendency towards playing solo piano works on harp. Because of the different technical properties of the two instruments, hence the different way of playing, each individual piano piece requires new solution and cannot solely rely on some previously established universal instruction regarding this matter.

My master thesis consists analysis of Chopin Preludes Op. 28, the analysis that focuses on examining the methods of adjusting elements of musical text for the harp, which can range from the possibility of literal transcribing, to unavoidable deviations from the original due to the technical impossibility of playing the exact musical text.

**Key words:**

Chopin, Preludes, Harp, Piano

## **Contents:**

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Development of the Harp Repertoire</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Instruments</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.1. Chordophone Instruments</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.2. Harp and Piano</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.2.1. Pitch Range</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.2.2. Strings</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.2.3. Pedals</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3.2.4. Harp Mechanism</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3.2.5. Use of Piano Pedal</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4. Frédéric François Chopin and His Music</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4.1. Preludes Op. 28 (1836–1839)</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4.2. List of Preludes with keys</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5. Preludes and possibilities of playing them</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6. Conclusion</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>7. Literature and Sources</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>8. List of Pictures</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>9. Musical Demonstrations</b>	<b>47</b>

## **1. Introduction**

For choosing the content of my master's thesis I wanted to work on a research that I would use in practical means. In past years, I was attending concerts on which harpists were playing music that was not originally composed for our instrument. It became usual to have at least one piece in repertoire that is not written by harp composer.

It is always challenging to adapt piece not written for harp, as well as playing it.

Therefore, searching for the best solutions from the different fingering patterns, pedal changes, pedal diagrams and enharmonic changes would be first things to do. Also, taking care of harmonies and muffling additional noises and buzzing has to be done.

These activities requires care and musical knowledge, as well as experience, so it is very useful for young harpist, although requiring lot of effort. However, it is invaluable in achieving self-confidence and better understanding of the instrument.

The goal of the research is to find ways to work around obstacles that are naturally encountered when adapting compositions intended for the piano to a harp.

## 2. Development of the Harp Repertoire

Before eighteenth century harp was an instrument with range and pitch limitations.<sup>1</sup> The famous Sébastien Érard in year 1811 made a revolutionary improvement to the harp. This invention has changed the course of further progress of the harp.

“Let us recall that at the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the harp could be played only in a few keys: nothing beyond four sharps and three flats! It was in 1811 that the famous French piano maker Sebastién Érard remedied this deficiency with a new mechanical device of his invention known as the “double pedal action”, thanks to which it became possible to play the harp in every key.”<sup>2</sup>

However, the harp was still a frail instrument that had not enough sound power and unable to attract composers, because the improvement of the mechanism did not augment the sound volume of the instrument. But then Lyon & Healy in Chicago manufactured contemporary concert grand harps which had immense sound potential. The tone difference between these harps and various harps from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Salzedo compares with the tone difference between the harpsichord of the past to our modern concert grand piano.<sup>3</sup>

As far as composers practice, it was not common for famous composers to compose for harp. One of the reasons was certainly rare presence of the instrument during the initial phase of musical education, where piano was much more present.<sup>4</sup> The other was, already mentioned, technical incapability.

But with mechanical improvement, nineteenth century composers were more and more fascinated with harp’s new chromatic capability. They started writing for harp in orchestral compositions as a part of an orchestra. Hector

---

<sup>1</sup>Yolanda kondonassis. *On Playing the Harp*. Carl Fischer, L.L.C., 2006. ISBN 0825849659, 9780825849657. p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Musical America, *The Harp Medium of our Age*. Carlos Salzedo. January 10, 1944. p. 1

<sup>3</sup> *The Harp Medium of our Age, op. cit.*, p. 1

<sup>4</sup> *The Harp Medium of our Age, op. cit.*, p. 1



Berlioz was the first who included harp into his large orchestra works. Afterwards, other composers, Liszt, Wagner, Verdi, Strauss, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel, Debussy and Stravinsky also incorporated harp in to the orchestral compositions.<sup>5</sup>

The harp has equaled and even in some cases replaced the piano as a basic instrument for chamber music. Composers such as, Saint-Saens, Debussy, Ravel, Pierne, D'Indy, Florent Schmitt, Caplet, Jongen, Arnold Bax, Wallingford Riegger and Boris Koutzen have increased the chamber music literature with works for harp and strings, harp and woodwind instruments or both.<sup>6</sup>

As far as solo repertoire, most of the composers that were composing for harp were also harpists. For example Robert Nicholas Charles Bochsa, Elias Parish Alvars, Marcel Grandjany, Henriette Renié, Alphonse Hasselmans,... Pieces written by some harp-composers were not considered to be of the same artistic level as the pieces written by other famous composers. In an account by Salzedo, he said:

"It would be inconceivable to love Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner and Debussy with sincerity, and at the same time bear the distasteful harp music written in the last century by such harpists as Boscha, Oberthur, Godefroy, Parish-Alvars, Aptomas and Hasselmans. This was explainable and even excusable at the beginning of this century when the harp had practically no literature of musical worth."<sup>7</sup>

Salzedo expressed his belief towards artistic value of the harp works that were written by the harp virtuosi that were also composing for harp. He put an emphasis on the importance on both high artistic composing and having the knowledge of the technical possibilities of the harp.

"The destiny of the harp repertoire in solo or with accompaniment of orchestra belongs to musicians who will be equally gifted as progressive harp

---

<sup>5</sup> *On Playing the Harp*, op. cit., p. 3

<sup>6</sup> *The Harp Medium of our Age*, op. cit., p. 1-2

<sup>7</sup> *The Harp Medium of our Age*, op. cit., p. 1

virtuosi and as progressive composers. For example, an excellent harp virtuoso mildly or conservatively gifted as a composer, will only duplicate in a contemporary way the regrettable harp output of the past century. And, of course, no composer, great or small, can genuinely write for harp solo; he will always need the close cooperation of a good harp technician.”<sup>8</sup>

Harpists were sometimes forced to play works that are originally written for harp because, playing transcriptions was not always accepted during the history. However, the number of transcriptions was continuously growing, offering a new variety in the harp repertoire.<sup>9</sup>

There are evidences of famous harpists playing music that was not written for harp. Henriette Renié (1875–1956) transcribed a lot of piano and harpsichord pieces:

*En Bateau, Deux arabesques, Clair de Lune* by Claude Debussy, *Musette, Menuet* and *Menuets* by Jean-Philippe Rameau, *La melodieuse* by Louis-Claude Daquin, *Un sospiro* by Franz Liszt, *Piece en sol* by J. S. Bach and *L’automne et Le printemps* by Isaac Albeniz, *Habanera* by Emmanuel Chabrier and other.<sup>10</sup>

Marcel Grandjany (1891–1975) transcribed many pieces for harp. Pieces by Bach, Couperin and edited Handel Concerto in B flat major that is one of his most famous works.<sup>11</sup>

Carlos Salzedo (1885–1961) arranged traditional airs, spirituals and carols for harp solo and transcribed a lot of pieces such as *Six French Suites* by Bach, *Wedding March* by Mendelssohn.<sup>12</sup>

There is another possibility of playing compositions that are not originally composed for harp. It is a direct playing of works. That is the fastest way of

---

<sup>8</sup> *The Harp Medium of our Age*, op. cit., p. 1

<sup>9</sup> Odette de Montesquiou. *The Legend of Henriette Renie*. Author House, 2008. ISBN 9781425954697 p. 20–21

<sup>10</sup> *The Legend of Henriette Renie*, op. cit., p. 20

<sup>11</sup> Roslyn Rensch. *Harps and Harpists*. Indiana University Press, 1989. ISBN 978-0-253-34893-7 p. 203

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202

repertoire expansion, because it does not request a lot of time as transcriptions. Although, it requires research of technical possibilities, fingering, pedal changes, muffling, enharmonic changes and sound clarity. In order to do this, we must get acquainted with the differences between two instruments, in this case–piano and harp.

### **3. Instruments**

System of instruments is classified in five groups:

1. Idiophones (e.g. xylophone, gong, triangle, maracas, jingles, glass harmonica)
2. Membranophones (e.g. timpani, bass drum, kazoo, table, rommelpot)
3. Chordophones (e.g. dulcimer, clavichord, piano, harp, guitar, harpischord, violin)
4. Aerophones (e.g. flute, clarinet, trumpet, accordion, cornetto)
5. Electrophones (e.g. synthesizer, electric guitar, Hammond organ)<sup>13</sup>

This system classifies instruments by the way of how the sound is created. The scheme of systematic classification is developed by Curt Sachs and Enrich von Hornbostel and extended by Francis Galpin later. These instruments within the group are divided by having similar methods of construction, similar playing techniques, or other common characteristics.<sup>14</sup>

#### **3.1. Chordophone Instruments**

Main sound generator of chordophone instruments is a stretched string. The sound is produced by plucking, hammering and bowing.

#### **3.2. Harp and Piano**

Harp and piano belong to the chordophone family of instruments.

Harp is a plucking instrument. String motion in this group of instruments is produced by plucking. The string should be pulled by the finger and released.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Murray Campbell/Clive Greated/Arnolds Myers. *History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*. Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-19-921185-2 p. 40

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 40

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 59

Motion sets the body vibrating and body becomes an effective radiator of sound waves.<sup>16</sup>

Piano is a hammering instrument. The hammering action at piano excites the string and compels it to a certain shape. String is then released and begins vibration without interference of the mechanism. String hammering motion makes set of the natural modes of string vibrate at the same time. That is why the main difference between plucking and hammering is the number of modes that are put in the motion.<sup>17</sup>

Common principle of both is sudden impulse that produces string vibrations, but in case of piano the impulse is not given directly by player's finger though indirectly by the mechanical system of keyboard and hammers.<sup>18</sup>

### **3.2.1. Pitch Range**

Usually pitch range of the grand piano is seven and one quarter octaves ( $A_0$  to  $C_8$ ), eighty eight notes in total. Some pianos even have an extended range in bass, having the pitch until  $C_0$  (Bösendorfer<sup>19</sup>).<sup>20</sup>

Harp has range that is the largest of all orchestral instruments.<sup>21</sup> Its pitch range is from flat  $C_1$  until sharp  $G_7$ . It has six and a half octaves.

### **3.2.2. Strings**

Full-sized concert harp has forty seven strings which are color-coded with red and black strings that are helping us to recognize and orientate. Black strings represent "F" pitches and red strings represent "C" pitches. Materials used for strings are nylon, natural gut and wire. Wire strings are used for lower strings

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 61

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 61

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 278

<sup>19</sup> "Bösendorfer produce grands with ranges of  $7\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $7\frac{3}{4}$  and 8 octaves." – Ibid, p. 363

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 363

<sup>21</sup> Diagram Group. *Musical instruments of the world: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Sterling Publishing Company, 1997. ISBN 0806998474, 9780806998473. p. 177

(usually G5-C7) therefore natural gut and nylon are used for upper strings (G0-A5). Material used for strings in some octave depends not only on register but it is also a question of personal preference.<sup>22</sup>

As it is said earlier, piano is a hammered instrument. Pianist is pressing the keys that are connected to hammers. Usually, grand piano has eighty eight keys that are colored in black and white that are helping player to orientate. For middle and upper ranges of piano (usually from B<sub>2</sub> upwards), there are three plain steel strings for each key. From B<sub>1</sub> until B<sub>2</sub> there are two overwound strings and the lowest octave has one overspun string.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2.3. Pedals

*"Pedal is part of the mechanism of an instrument, controlled by the feet."*<sup>24</sup>

Piano has two or three pedals. The left-hand one is called *una corda* pedal and the left-hand one is *sustain* pedal. In the middle, if it is three piano pedal, there is a *sostenuto* pedal. *Una corda*, when depressed, moves the whole keyboard to the right. Then the hammer hits only two of three strings in the upper register and one of two in double-strung part. In the lowest register with one string notes, hammers become closer to the strings. The sound becomes quieter and reduced.

The *sustaining pedal* is the most used pedal. It is lifting all the dampers from strings and sustains notes. The sound remains after the player has released the keys.<sup>25</sup>

The *sostenuto* pedal raises the already raised dampers when it is depressed. It also sustains the notes after releasing the keys. This is the only pedal that can be kept in the second position without pressing it.

---

<sup>22</sup> *On Playing the Harp*, op. cit., p. 1

<sup>23</sup> *History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*, op. cit., p.364

<sup>24</sup> Westrup, Jack Allan: Collins encyclopedia of music. Chacellor Press, 1991. ISBN 0907486495 p. 411

<sup>25</sup> *History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*, op. cit., p. 365–366

On contrary, harp pedals have different purpose than piano pedals. Mechanical dumping does not exist on the harp. It is necessary to do it manually to avoid clashes of harmony.<sup>26</sup>

Harp has seven pedals. Each pedal is for one note of musical scale and has three positions. Upper position makes string free from pressure of the mechanism and string is open. The string is then flat. Middle position sharpens the string for half tone and down position makes string sharper for whole tone. Because of these three positions, modern concert harp is also named double-action harp.<sup>27</sup> Moving the pedals during the performance allows changing keys while playing some musical work. On the left side there are three pedals (H,C,D) pressed with left foot and on the right four (E,F,G,A) pressed with right foot. "Without pedals, the capability of the harp would equal that of a piano without any black keys."<sup>28</sup>

### **3.2.4. Harp Mechanism**

Development of the harp in nineteenth century by Sebastien Erard was made by introducing two-discs system.<sup>29</sup>

Pedals are connected to rotating discs with bar in the base of the harp, metal rods that go through column and linkage that is in the neck of the harp. Every string has two discs. Upper disc pressures the string from flat to natural and second from natural to sharp.

Over 10 000 mechanical parts can be found in concert pedal harp.<sup>30</sup>

---

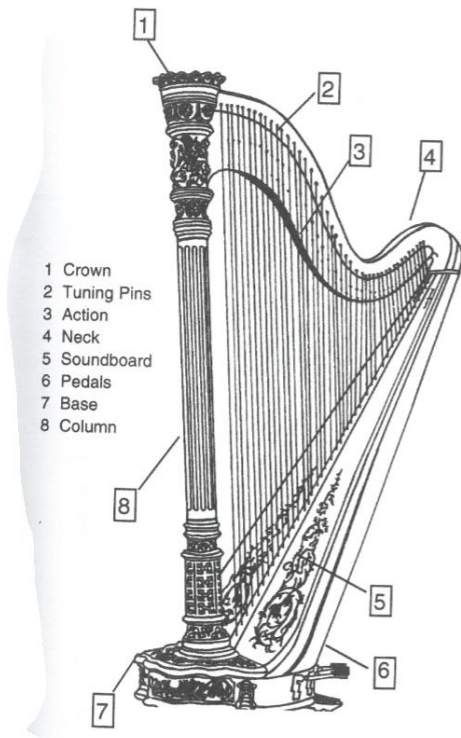
<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 302

<sup>27</sup> *On Playing the Harp*, op. cit., p. 2

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 2

<sup>29</sup> *History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*, op. cit., p. 389

<sup>30</sup> Susan Mc Donald/Linda Wood Rollo. *Harp for Today: A Universal Method for the Harp*, Music Works, 2008. p.3



Picture 1

*Full-sized concert harp with names of parts*

### 3.2.5. Use of piano pedal

In classicism pedal was used for special effects.

The importance of the pedal was increased in Romantic era. In Chopin compositions, he gave precise instructions on how player should be using it.<sup>31</sup>

Exist two main ways of usage. In case of "Rhythmic pedalling" dampers are raised in the same moment of pressing the keys. The strings are freely resonating when the pedal is pressed. As far as "legato pedalling", it is used to create legato between notes. Pedal is pressed on every change of harmony. It

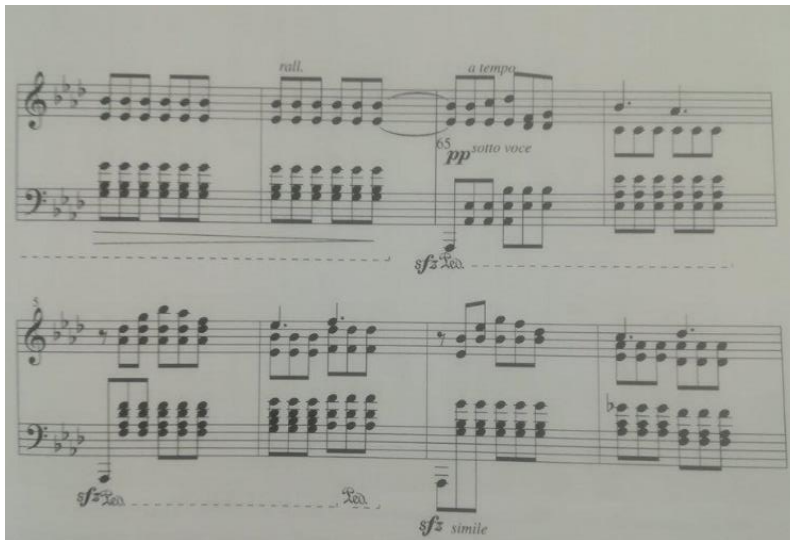
---

<sup>31</sup> *History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*, op. cit., p. p. 382



is damping the previous notes. Pedal is used in purpose of sound coloring where it is applied before series of chords. It was invented by Claude Debussy.<sup>32</sup>

The “half-pedalling” technique is widely used in piano performance. It is used to maintain the bass line during the melody in treble. In Chopin Prelude Op. 28 No. 17 the bass accompaniment can be maintained with “half-pedalling” technique.



### *Musical demonstration 1*

*"Part of the Prelude Op. 28 No. 17 by Chopin, that shows a typical use of half-pedalling which allows the low A flat in bar 65 to be prolonged into bar 66."<sup>33</sup>*

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 382

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 383

#### 4. Frédéric François Chopin and His Music

Frédéric Chopin was born in Zelazowa Wola, near Warsaw. At the age of six, he had his first piano lessons with Adalbert Zywny. His father insisted for Chopin to have general and musical education. When he was sixteen, he started studying composition at the Warsaw Conservatory. In 1829, he had two concerts in Vienna. He left Poland at that time occupied by Russia, after having concerts in Warsaw. Polish born composer moved to Paris at 1831 where he started giving lessons.<sup>34</sup>

In the winter of 1838-1839, he lived in Majorca with George Sand.<sup>35</sup> Due to the cold and wet weather, Chopin became sick.<sup>36</sup> Later he continued to live with George Sand in Paris and in her house at Nohant (1840-1847). In period of their liaison, he wrote a lot of his finest works. At that time he was also writing *Preludes Op. 28*. In the year 1848, he had a tour around England and Scotland. He died in year 1849.<sup>37</sup>

Frédéric Chopin is one of the greatest composers of the world who contributed to the development of the piano.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, it should be said that besides his composing, Chopin was a great pianist.<sup>39</sup> His numerous works that contributed to piano literature, influenced piano technique. Revolutionary style of his and sound are full of color effects, sonorities and dynamics that were unknown before him. Chopin created his own world without having guidance of earlier composers. He was an innovator with a lavish imagination.<sup>40</sup> This exquisite

---

<sup>34</sup> *Collins encyclopedia of music, op. cit., p. 116*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid., p. 116*

<sup>36</sup> Milton Cross/ David Ewen. *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music*. Doubleday, 1969. p. 229

<sup>37</sup> *Collins encyclopedia of music, op. cit., p. 116*

<sup>38</sup> *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit., p. 231*

<sup>39</sup> *Collins encyclopedia of music, op. cit., p. 117*

<sup>40</sup> *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit., p. 231–232*

miniaturist was influenced by the Polish folk music and he was the first composer to add Slavic expression in to the Western music.<sup>41</sup>

“He recognized that his genius lay mainly in the world of short, perfectly proportioned piano pieces, to which he brought a wealth of poetic intensity.<sup>42</sup>

He is specialist when it comes to smaller forms. His opus is rich with small form pieces such as mazurkas, waltzes, nocturnes, etudes, impromptus, scherzos and preludes.<sup>43</sup> These pieces have a whole variety of moods. Dramatic, sensitive, full of elegance and sophistication.<sup>44</sup>

#### **4.1. Preludes Op. 28 (1836-1839)**

Term *Prelude* comes from Latin word *praeludium* and it signifies an introductory movement of a suite, a fugue, or an opera or drama.<sup>45</sup> Later with Chopin and after it starts representing a short self-contained piano piece in one movement.<sup>46</sup> Preludes Op. 28 were published in year 1839.<sup>47</sup> He wrote a prelude in every major and minor. Preludes that he wrote for each key were his tribute to Bach.<sup>48</sup>

There are 24 preludes. But also two more that are not well known. Prelude Op. 45 (1841) in C-sharp major and A flat major discovered and published at

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 224

<sup>42</sup> *Collins encyclopedia of music, op. cit.*, p. 117

<sup>43</sup> *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit.*, p. 232

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 232–236

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 239

<sup>46</sup> Westrup, Jack Allan: *Collins encyclopedia of music*, Chacellor Press, 1991. ISBN 0907486495 p. 430.

<sup>47</sup> Maurice J. E. Brown. *The Chronology of Chopin's Preludes*. *The musical times*, Vol. 98, No. 1374. Musical Times publications Ltd, Aug., 1957. p. 423

<sup>48</sup> Westrup, Jack Allan: *Collins encyclopedia of music*, Chacellor Press, 1991. ISBN 0907486495 p. 117.

the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. "Each of his preludes is a little poem, but each quite different from the others in mood and feeling."<sup>49</sup>

#### **4.2.List of Preludes with keys**

1. Agitato	C major
2. Lento	A minor
3. Vivace	G major
4. Largo	E minor
5. Molto allegro	D major
6. Assai Lento	B minor
7. Andantino dolce	A major
8. Molto agitato	F sharp minor
9. Largo	E major
10. Molto allegro leggiero	C sharp minor
11. Vivace	B major
12. Presto	G sharp minor
13. Lento	F sharp major
14. Allegro pesant	E flat minor
15. Sostenuto	D flat major
16. Presto con fuoco	B flat minor
17. Allegretto	A flat major
18. Molto Allegro	F minor
19. Vivace	E flat major
20. Largo	C minor
21. Cantabile	B flat major
22. Molto agitato	G minor
23. Moderato	F major

---

<sup>49</sup> *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit.,*  
p. 240

24. Allegro appassionato D minor

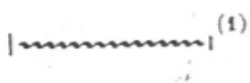
## 5. Preludes and possibilities of playing them

### I Prelude

Tempo of the first prelude is *agitato*. That means that the tempo should not be slow.

Every bar has a different harmony. Before every next harmony, you should muffle the previous one. Muffling takes time and in this case it should be done with left hand before catching the next chord.

The harp in the lower registers does not have a clear sound as piano. To produce a little bit clearer sound player should try to play left hand near to the sound board. It is common that in some harp compositions composer indicates that harpist should play near to the sound board to produce a sound that is similar to the sound of the guitar. It is written in music P.D.L.T., "Prés de la table" in French-near to the board. This way of playing has different ways of notation. For example famous French harpist and composer, Marcel Grandjany<sup>50</sup>(1891–1975), has written a lot of symbols and ways how to play some parts of a certain composition. Although, he did not publish a harp method<sup>51</sup>, we can find a signs of abbreviations ("signes d'abréviations employés") in the beginning of of G. F. Handel Concerto in B flat that he transcribed for harp. We can see that he had two ways of markings for playing near to the sound board (picture 2 and 3). Other markings (pictures 4, 5 and 6).



To play lower on the string

*Picture 2 Grandjany's marking*

---

<sup>51</sup> *Harp and Harpists*, op, cit., p. 203.



To play very close to the sounding board.

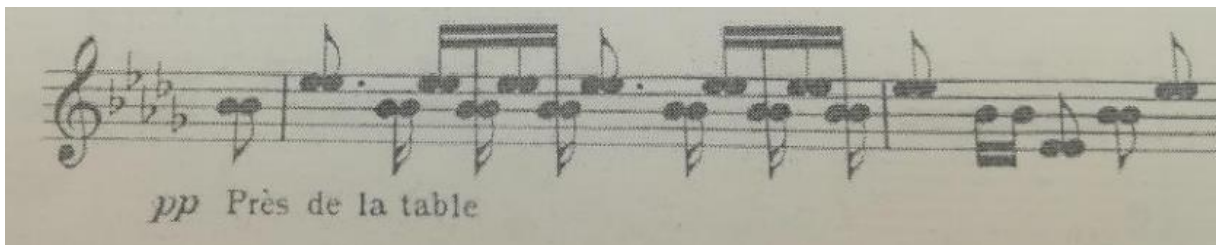
Picture 3 Grandjany's marking



Picture 4



Picture 5 The „Guitar" Effect (also referred to as "pres de la table"): Play very close to the soundboard to produce a muted guitar-like effect.<sup>52</sup>



Picture 6 Pres de la table sign

It is possible to play all the notes in this prelude. For instance on red string that is marking A natural, A sharp and A flat it is not possible to play A natural and A sharp at the same time. However there is a solution. Harp is an instrument

<sup>52</sup> On Playing the Harp, op, cit., p. 45

on which you can make enharmonic changes. That means that B flat can be played instead of A sharp and not use the same string.

In the bar number thirteen, it is necessary to use enharmonic changes. In bar thirteen it is written C sharp in the right hand and C natural in the left hand in the same moment. It is needed to release the pedal D in flat position and to play C sharp as D flat (m. d. 3). Exact circumstance can be found in bar nineteen, where G sharp should be played as A flat (m. d. 5).

At the end of the second beat of bar thirteen we have D natural. Before pressing the pedal, finger should be placed on the D string to muffle the previous D flat on account of avoiding buzzing from the pedal change. The feet must be precise with moving the pedals. According to this it must be known at what exact time should pedal be moved. Same situation can be found at the end of the second beat of the nineteenth bar.

In book "Modern Study of the Harp", Carlos Salzedo<sup>53</sup> wrote explanations and notation of harp effects, most of them invented by himself, as well as explanations of signs that were in usage at that time. Notation of note that should be played enharmonically he marked above the note and indicated the note that should be played (m. d. 2). Another way to mark the note that is changed is to circle it.



*Musical demonstration 2*

"Fingering on harp is the plan that provides for the most logical and musical execution of the passage by indicating which fingers will be used to play which notes."<sup>54</sup>In this prelude the most logical fingering for right hand would be to place as much fingers as you can in favor of secureness and speed. Place

---

<sup>53</sup> Carlos Salzedo (1885–1961), born in France. He was a professional harpist, composer, author and teacher. "Introduced special effects for the harp."- Harnsberger, C. Lindsey. *Essential Dictionary of Music*. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. Los Angeles. 1969. ISBN 0882847287, 9780882847283

<sup>54</sup> *On Playing the Harp*, op. cit., p. 15.



the whole chord, before playing interval (either second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth) on the second beat return the third finger on the same string. Following the playing of the interval, place the octave (m. d. 4).



*Musical demonstration 3*



*Musical demonstration 4*



*Musical demonstration 5*

## **II Prelude**

Biggest issue in this prelude is the register in which it is written (m. d. 6). As earlier mentioned, clear sound in this part of the strings is not clear as in the upper strings.

The main melody is in the right hand and the left hand has intervals alternately.

Plucking the string on harp is complex movement. First of all, finger needs to be placed on string, then the string needs to be pressed and released. Issue of the bass strings is that they oscillate more than upper strings. Putting the finger on to the string that is next to a string in motion needs to be precise due to preventing the additional noises and buzzing. Alternative way of playing the left hand part is to use right hand whenever it is possible (when there is nothing in the right hand part) and help the left hand with creating the nice sound without any additional noises.

In bar number five, there is a G sharp and G natural in left hand part that is written at the same time. G sharp should be played as A flat. But there is another difficulty, G sharp is between A natural. It means that we need to move the pedals more times (m. d. 7). Same situation can be found in bar ten (m. d. 8). All pedal changes should be carefully performed, also every string needs to be caught before moving them.

Bar six has changes of E natural and E flat. In this bar it is not possible to use enharmonic changes of E flat because of D natural. According to that, for each change the pedal must be moved (m. d. 9).

In bar eleven it is not necessary to move the pedal for D sharp and C double sharp (sounds D natural). D sharp is possible to play as E flat and C double sharp as D natural.

Musical demonstration 6



Musical demonstration 7



Musical demonstration 8



Musical demonstration 9

### III Prelude

Third prelude is *Vivace*. *Vivace* means that it should be performed lively and spirited.<sup>55</sup> It is not certain how lively it can be performed on harp. Additionally, sign *leggiermente* indicates delicate and light sound.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Essential Dictionary of Music*, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75.

When available, right hand should help left hand in purpose of speed. This will provide more time for placing that contributes to hands security and makes it easier to play faster. There are two possibilities. One is that right hand should always replace left hand at the same place in the bar with the same movement so that it would be easier for hand to remember the position. Other possibility is to remember different position, that would take more time in the beginning but the final result would probably be preferred. "One should always try to use a fingering that is not only the easiest but also sounds best."<sup>57</sup>

Choosing one of these two ways depends on harpist level of playing, as well as player's configurations of hand and fingers.

#### **IV Prelude**

This prelude has long slurs. Every slur represents a phrase. But does phrases can not be honored equally on the piano and on the harp.

Placing the fingers on harp makes the sound stop. Fingers muffle the strings when placing. Huge difference in regards to producing sound on piano is that you do not have to stop the sound when you are repeating exact same notes. On contrary, harpist needs to place the fingers at the "last minute" so that listener does not realize that sound is not connected. There is a short amount of time for this action that needs to be precise to not create the additional buzzing (m. d. 10).

In bar sixteen some notes must be played enharmonically. One possibility is to play C sharp as a D flat, A sharp as B flat in left hand and A sharp as B flat in right hand. The ornament in right hand has this notes following: A sharp, B natural, A sharp, G double sharp, A sharp. All of these notes are distant for only

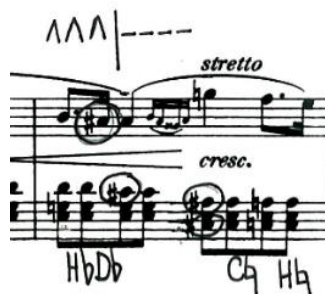
---

<sup>57</sup> *On playing the Harp*, op. cit., p. 15.

half tone from each other. For that reason, notes need to be enharmonically changed (m.d. 11 and 12).



Musical demonstration 10



Musical demonstration 11



Musical demonstration 12. Original notation, followed by enharmonic substitute.

## V Prelude

This movement is *Molto Allegro*—very fast.<sup>58</sup> Besides *Molto Allegro*, the chords with big intervals are not making this prelude easier to play on the harp. Right hand has chords with big total intervals of tenth in bars thirteen until seventeen and twenty nine until thirty two (m. d. 14 is bar 13 and m. d. 15 is bar 29). Left hand has chords with total interval of twelfth in bars one until four, from seventeen until twenty and thirty tree until thirty six, jumps of twelfth in

<sup>58</sup> *Essential Dictionary of Music*, op, cit., p. 307.

bars fourteen until sixteen and thirty until thirty one (m. d. 17, m. d. 16, m. d. 13).

Big intervals are making our hands not relaxed. Some of them are possible to place but some no. It depends on the size of player's hand, as well as largeness of the total interval. There is a point where hands do not feel comfortable and relaxed, but the rule for universal size of interval that is possible to catch with right and left hand does not exist because every hand's physiognomy is unlike.

Chromatics in bar five, twenty one in right hand and bar eight and twenty four in left hand. Pedal needs to be pressed at the exact time after catching the string. Enharmonic changes due to avoiding precise pedal pressing is not possible. For instance in bar number five, A natural goes to A sharp but B flat follows after. Replacing A sharp by B flat is not possible (m. d. 18).



Musical demonstration 13



Musical demonstration 14



Musical demonstration 15



Musical demonstration 16



*Musical demonstration 17*



*Musical demonstration 18*

## **VI Prelude**

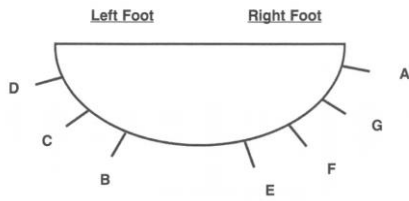
Prelude in B minor does not have some significant problem for performing it on harp. The performer should try to make quality sound in right hand that has a lot of repeating notes. When it is spoken about sound all musicians are trying to create a balance of tone quality, volume, and musical color. Creating a nice, quality, rich but sensitive tone on harp is not simple. "What you pluck is what you hear", there is a direct contact with the string.<sup>59</sup>

In bar number six, left leg needs to press the pedal on the other side, right side (picture 7). Left leg is going to move E sharp to E natural and right is going to press G sharp to G natural in the same time. Carlos Salzedo explains how it should be noted in his study of harp.<sup>60</sup> He indicates the pedal that is pressed with left foot on the right side of pedals, framing it with square (picture 8).

---

<sup>59</sup> *On playing the Harp*, op. cit., p. 25

<sup>60</sup> "Modern Study of Harp was written in 1921. The study consists explanations and notations of effects, as well as five poetical studies for harp solo.



Picture number 7



Picture number 8

## VII Prelude

This second shortest prelude is possible to play on harp. It does not have any particular problem. It should be mentioned that harp is played with four fingers on each hand. Fifth finger, little finger, is not in use because of lack of strength and length. Therefore, it is not possible to play five note chords with one hand. According to that, in bar twelve (m. d. 19), one note should not be played or chord should be played arpeggio<sup>61</sup> with left hand playing the highest note.



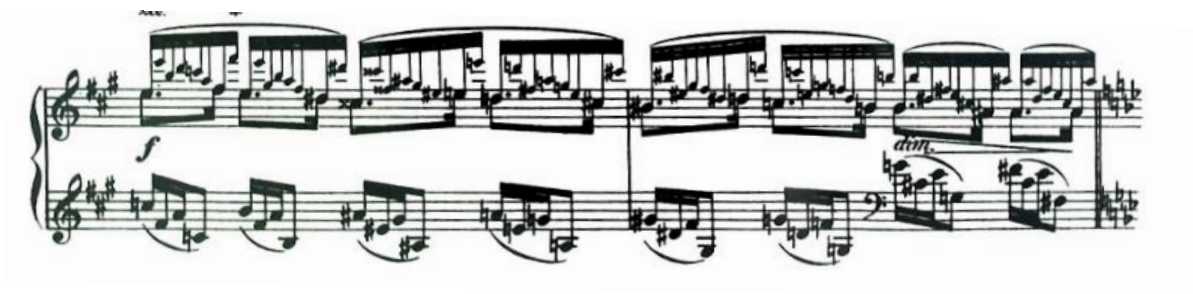
Musical demonstration 19

## VIII Prelude

This prelude is not possible to play on harp. It requires a lot of pedal changes and has a lot of chromatic changes in short period of time (m. d. 20).

<sup>61</sup> Arpeggio—"The notes of the chord played one after another."- *Essential Dictionary of Music*, op, cit., p. 13.





*Musical demonstration 20*

## **IX Prelude**

In E major prelude both left hand part and right hand part are written in bass clef. It is written in a lower register as well as the second prelude.

Reverberation of the strings on the harp is important, but equal important as having control over the dampening them when it is needed.<sup>62</sup>When playing the harp, harmonic clarity can be sustained with muffling. In this prelude every change that happens in left hand should be muffled just before plucking the next string or group of strings .

In bar number three and four there is a trill on B6 string and D6 string. Both of them are wired strings. When playing trills on wired strings, buzzing is heard more than the actual notes. The sound that is reproduced on piano is far away from the harp (m. d. 21 and 22).

Most of the harps today have rotational actions on the neck from E7 until F0, Lyon and Healy harps have even for G00. Wired strings, D7 and C7 have to be tuned in the key of the composition. In this case C7 needs to be tuned as C natural (second beat of bar ten) and D as D natural (second beat of eleventh bar).

---

<sup>62</sup> *On Playing the Harp*, op, cit., p. 19



*Musical demonstration 21*



*Musical demonstration 22*

## **XX Prelude**

Main movement in the right hand has four single notes and an interval (m.d. 23). This movement is only possible to play by crossing over third finger with the thumb. The whole movement is time consuming and the speed. It would be easier if the theme was starting with less distance between first and second note in triola. Then it would be possible to slide with the thumb.



*Musical demonstration 23*

## XI Prelude

Prelude in B major is possible to play on harp. It has few places that we should pay attention. Second bar and this change of E sharp to E natural. It should be paid attention no to make noise with the pedal. That is why the E string must by touched before moving the pedal (m. d. 24) Using enharmonic substitutes in bar ten and also twenty three.



*Musical demonstration 24*

## XII Prelude

This prelude is not possible to play due to numerous pedal changes and fast tempo (m. d. 25).



*Musical demonstration 25*

### **XIII Prelude**

This prelude has a romantic and sensitive tone-picture.<sup>63</sup>

For producing better legato, the best fingering solution would be to put as much fingers as you can and not jump to much (see p.). There are three possibilities for playing and muffling some bars. For instance, in bar number fourteen there are E natural and E flat just next to each other but played with different hands. First solution is to muffle the the E natural from right hand and to press the pedal. Other one is to skip and not play the E sharp after the E natural so that E natural can resonate more. The third possibility is about using enharmonic substitution of E sharp for F natural but muffling the previous F sharp before releasing the pedal.

### **XIV Prelude**

Second prelude that is written in bass clef. The sound of this register is not the clearest on the harp. That is why it creates a sound that does not sound articulated.

Time for muffling does not exist because both hands are playing without a break.

There are a lot of double flats and double sharps. "The mechanism of the harp-pedals does not reach beyond the one flat and one sharp; consequently, the double flat and double sharp are played by employing enharmonic tones."<sup>64</sup> In this prelude it can be found in bar three, six, nine and fourteen.

---

<sup>63</sup> *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit., p. 240*

<sup>64</sup> Salzedo, Carlos. *Modern Study of The Harp*. G. Schirmer, 1921. Page 10

## XV Prelude

Prelude number fifteen is also called "Raindrop" Prelude. The persistent rhythm in the left hand is suggesting the tapping of raindrops on the roof or window.<sup>65</sup>

Ongoing tone in left hand in the first part has to be continuing sound without additional noise. This can be done with placing thumb on the upper string without moving it and playing second finger that now has more stability.

At the beginning of second part first seven bars in right hand can be played with enharmonic change so that hand is playing G sharp and A flat. That helps and takes away the additional sound when playing the same string (m. d. 26).

In bar seventy five, it is necessary to use enharmonic changes to transition from sharps to flats. In bar seventy nine D flat in left hand must be muffled because of the pedal that needs to be pushed for the D natural in right hand.



Musical demonstration 26

<sup>65</sup> The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit., p. 240

## XVI Prelude

Presto, chromatics and harp are not the right combination. That is why this prelude is impossible to play. For almost each note in bars thirty two and thirty three, pedal needs to be moved (m. d. 27).



*Musical demonstration 27*

## XVII Prelude

Melody in this prelude is in thumb of the right hand. It is essential to press the strings harder than usual to make our phrases singing and with legato.<sup>66</sup>Placing the strings should tend to be as shortest as it is possible to help producing legato.

Enharmonic changes need to be made in bar twenty, twenty two, twenty four as well as fifty two, fifty four and fifty five.

---

<sup>66</sup> *Harp for Today, op. cit., p. 170*

## XVIII Prelude

This prelude is not possible to play. In third, fourth and fifth bar there are thirteen changes of pedal and some of which change from flat to sharp and from sharp to flat (double pedal movement).

## XIX Prelude

*Sempre Legato* in this prelude is not easy task to achieve (m. d. 28). It is hard to have a legato on a harp because it is a plucked instrument. "Necessary is to achieve a warm singing line and project it by the practice of singing the melody inwardly and pressing the strings with warmth and sensitivity."<sup>67</sup>

Placing strings in left hand is possible but not so often because of big intervals, meanwhile in right hand, secureness from placing is going to contribute to better catching the strings in left hand.



Musical demonstration 28

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 170

## XX Prelude

When performing this prelude, it is important to know that before every next chord, muffling must exist. In their book, Susan McDonald and Linda Wood Loro are explaining different ways of muffling vibrating strings. They are talking about four ways of doing it. First, to place a knuckles closer to strings and muffle the string with second and third finger. To muffle everything while other hand is playing or to camouflaging a finger buzz by replacing the fingers. And most important, when it comes to this prelude, is the "brush-by consecutive adjoining wire strings and lower notes."<sup>68</sup>

Last to strings should be tuned as C natural (C7) and D flat (D7), as they need to be prepared before the performance because they do not have the rotating actions.

In bar number one and two, we can find chords with five notes in right hand section. One of them can not be played, because of four finger use (m. d. 29).



The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Largo." The score is written for piano, with a treble clef on the right and a bass clef on the left. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is marked "Largo." and "ff" (fortissimo). The right hand part features complex chords with five notes, and the left hand part features a steady bass line. The score is numbered "20." at the beginning. Above the first measure of the right hand, there are fingerings: "5 5 5" above the first three notes and "4 3 4" below the last three notes. The notes are beamed together in groups of three.

*Musical demonstration 29*

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 169



## XXI Prelude

Prelude in B major is a calm prelude in three quarters measure. From the beginning of the prelude, already in first bar there is a pedal change. It indicates the challenges of its pedal difficulties at the start. This prelude is requiring precise rhythmic moving of feet. In bar thirteen and fourteen, and forty one until forty five (m. d. 30 and 31).



Musical notation for Musical demonstration 30, showing a piano prelude in B major. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 3/4 time signature. The music consists of two staves. Handwritten chord symbols are written below the bass staff: Eb, Eb, Hb, Db, Ab, Gb, Ab, Ab, Gb, Gb, Db.

*Musical demonstration 30*



Musical notation for Musical demonstration 31, showing a piano prelude in B major. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 3/4 time signature. The music consists of two staves. Handwritten chord symbols are written below the bass staff: Gb, Eb, [Eb], Db, Ab, Gb, Ab, Ab, Gb, Gb, Eb, Gb, Ab, Gb, Gb, Ab, Db, Eb, Db, Db, Db. A 'dim.' marking is present above the second staff.

*Musical demonstration 31*

## XXII Prelude

This "febrile and stormy"<sup>69</sup> Prelude it is not possible to play prelude number twelve on harp. Fast tempo and numerous pedal changes happen within

<sup>69</sup> *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music, op. cit., p. 240*

one bar. The bar that indicates impossibility the most is number sixteen. In left hand section is the chromatic descending movement from G natural until D natural.

### **XXIII Prelude**

Basic problem of this prelude is fingering. Left hand should play some notes from right hand section. Left hand helping can be of use. Alternately playing left and right hand could cause uneven sound. Since the left hand is playing only few notes from right hand section, the notes of left hand should blend in to the sound of notes played by right hand. It should be heard like one hand is playing.

The same pattern of placing left hand can be used in four similar places: bar one until three, five until seven, nine until eleven also seventeen until nineteen (see p.).

To avoid buzzing in bar number three, pedal must be moved after catching the string.

### **XXIV Prelude**

This prelude has huge interval movement and jumping in left hand that is fast tempo. There is a twelfth interval jump, it is not possible to play in that tempo on harp. It is written in lower register which belongs to wired strings on harp. Wired strings are demanding more strength, especially in forte dynamic. However, solution exists. Fourth note on every beat could be played octave higher (m. d. 32 and 33 suggestion).

Bar fourteen has at the same time B flat and B natural (same situation in bar thirty two). It is not possible to play both of those notes. One should not be

played. In bar eighteen we do not have the same situation, it is possible to play D sharp and D natural. Still the problem exists with muffling. It is impossible to muffle the string before changing the pedal since both arms are playing without stopping. It would cause a lot of noise.

Because of the speed, exists a possibility that the scale can be played as an articulated glissando with crescendo until the end where is marked *forzando*<sup>70</sup>. Glissando would make a greater crescendo that is needed here.

In bar thirty five and thirty six we can find a chord that is written through 3 and 4 octaves. These kind of passages, at harp are called arpeggio cross-unders and cross-overs<sup>71</sup>. Cross-unders for upwards, the fourth finger goes under the thumb and cross-overs for down direction, the thumb goes over the fourth finger.

Chromatic thirds scale in bar fifty five and fifty six can not be played on harp, because harp is not an instrument on which chromatic scales can be played specially not in tempo of *Allegro* (m. d. 34).<sup>72</sup> Therefore this two bars determined the faith of this prelude played on harp. It would be only possible to play something alternative that would replace the only two bars that are not possible to play in whole prelude.



*Musical demonstration 32*



*Musical demonstration 33*

<sup>70</sup> *Forzando*: accented, abbreviated.- *Essential Dictionary of Music*, op. cit., p. 56–57.

<sup>71</sup> *Harp for Today*, op. cit., p. 123

<sup>72</sup> *Allegro*: Cheerful, quick and fast.- *Essential Dictionary of Music*, op. cit., p. 10



*Musical demonstration 34*

## 6. Conclusion

The analysis was conducted with tendency that every exact tone should be played from musical text. It is hard to say if the outcome of the research is positive or negative. Most of the preludes are possible to play on harp. There are only seven of those that can not be played (numbers: 8,10,12,16,18,22,24). Combination of fast tempo and chromatics that require fast changes of pedals are mostly impossible to achieve. Using four fingers instead of five as pianist does, demands more hand movement that is not manageable in fast tempo.

Other preludes can be played but with precise moving of pedals, muffling, avoiding noises and buzzing, enharmonic substitutions, using left leg for right-hand pedals, precise placings on strings, help of left hand with right hand section, mastering big chords and intervals, speed, left hand jumping, producing sound close to legato on piano.

The main question that remains after the research is if these miniatures, when played on harp, are going to have the same level of sound quality (clear sound without additional noises, differences in dynamics) as the one they have when they are played on piano.

The preludes when played on harp sound different than played on piano. The sound potential of the harp can not be shown in this pieces. Not only is the sound produced differently, but the whole hand technique differs one from another. Still these are the pieces that composer wrote for piano and playing them on the other instrument changes the meaning. However, making it possible to play on harp demands a lot of observation and gives interesting results.

## 7. Literature and Sources:

1. Musical America, *The Harp Medium of our Age*. Carlos Salzedo. January 10, 1944.
2. Yolanda Kondonassis. *On Playing the Harp*. Carl Fischer, L.L.C., 2006. ISBN 0825849659, 9780825849657
3. Odette de Montesquiou. *The Legend of Henriette Renie*. Author House, 2008. ISBN 9781425954697
4. Roslyn Rensch. *Harps and Harpists*. Indiana University Press, 1989. ISBN 978-0-253-34893-7
5. Murray Campbell/Clive Greated/Arnolds Myers. *History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*. Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-19-921185-2
6. Susan Mc Donald/Linda Wood Rollo. *Harp for Today: A Universal Method for the Harp*, Music Works, 2008.
7. Diagram Group. *Musical instruments of the world: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Sterling Publishing Company, 1997. ISBN 0806998474, 9780806998473.
8. Jack Allan Westrup. *Collins encyclopedia of music*. Chacellor Press, 1991. ISBN 0907486495
9. Milton Cross/ David Ewen. *The Milton Cross new encyclopedia of the great composers and their music*. Doubleday, 1969.
10. Maurice J. E. Brown. *The Chronology of Chopin's Preludes*. The musical times, Vol. 98, No. 1374. Musical Times publications Ltd, Aug., 1957. p. 423
11. Lindsey C. Harnsberger. *Essential Dictionary of Music*. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. Los Angeles. 1969. ISBN 0882847287, 9780882847283
12. Carlos Salzedo. *Modern Study of The Harp*. G. Schirmer, 1921.

## **8. List of Pictures:**

1. *Full-sized concert harp with names of parts*
2. *Picture 2 Grandjany's marking*
3. *Picture 2 Grandjany's marking*
4. *P.D.L.T. sign*
5. *The „Guitar“ Effect (also referred to as "pres de la table"): Play very close to the soundboard to produce a muted guitar-like effect.<sup>73</sup>*
6. *Pres de la table*
7. *Bottom of the harp with pedals*
8. *Sign for pressing two pedals on the right-hand side*

## **9. Musical Demonstrations:**

1. *“Part of the Prelude Op. 28 No. 17 by Chopin, that shows a typical use of half-pedalling which allows the low A flat in bar 65 to be prolonged into bar 66.”<sup>74</sup>*
2. *Notation of enharmonic change on one note*
3. *Prelude 1, bar 13*
4. *Prelude 1, bar 1*
5. *Prelude 1, bar 19–20*
6. *Prelude 2, bar 1–4*
7. *. Prelude 2, bar 5*
8. *. Prelude 2, bar 10*
9. *. Prelude 2, bar 6*

---

<sup>73</sup> *On Playing the Harp*, op, cit., p. 45

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p. 383

10. *Prelude 4, bar 1*
11. *Prelude 4, bar 16*
12. *Enharmonic substitutes for bar 16*
13. *Prelude 5, bar 14-16*
14. *Prelude 5, bar 13*
15. *Prelude 5, bar 29*
16. *Prelude 5, bar 33-36*
17. *Prelude 5, bar 17*
18. *Prelude 5, bar 5*
19. *Prelude 7, bar 12*
20. *Prelude 8, bar 7-8*
21. *Prelude 9, bar 3*
22. *Prelude 9, bar 4*
23. *Prelude 10, bar 1*
24. *Prelude 11, bar 1-2*
25. *Prelude 12, bar 1-4*
26. *Prelude 15, bar 28-30*
27. *Prelude 16, bar 32-33*
28. *Prelude 19, bar 1-3*
29. *Prelude 20, bar 1-3*
30. *Prelude 20, bar 13-14*
31. *Prelude 20, bar 41-45*



32. *Prelude 24, bar 1*

33. *Prelude 24, bar 1*

34. *Prelude 24, bar 55–54*