

# The Good Harpist's Checklist by Nikki Lemire

## Preparation

- Consult the **entire season** to determine pieces scored for harp
- Get parts not in your own collection from orchestra library as early as possible, mark dates when rental parts should arrive and try to obtain a practice copy, if possible
- Find recordings, preferably performed or recommended by conductor, from orchestra library or itunes
- Listen to preferred recording with harp score and full score; flag solo and exposed passages; mark cues
- Rate all pieces by knowledge, difficulty and your required learning time
- Attend live performances of the pieces scheduled for this season, if possible
- Finger passages, mark pedal and key changes, and experiment with enharmonics where desired
- Consult or schedule a coaching with other professional harpists, ask about any necessary editing
- Meet with conductor to discuss any drastic changes/edits to the score, even those considered conventional (especially if it is the first time performing with conductor); make copy of edits for his/her records

## Practice

- Practice piece following all metronome markings and dynamics where noted
- Track metronome marking of the recording and also rehearse at that tempo
- Rehearse the piece with recording, practice looking up for “imaginary” cues
- If there is a second harpist, schedule a sectional as needed
- If accompanying an instrument solo, arrange to hear their playing of the section for phrasing
- If a part of an exposed duo or trio, arrange a short rehearsal before the first full rehearsal
- Play your part for others; a harpist, if possible

## Pre-Rehearsal

- **Bring everything!** One complete set of strings, tuner, tuning key, bench, stand, stand light, score, picks
- If piece calls for a mediator or other special tool for effect, bring multiple options for conductor to choose
- Consult manager about placement of harp
- Compare tuners with that of the oboist for calibration, if harp doubles piano or celesta, tune to them
- Tune, tempering to keys of pieces whenever possible
- Have pencil, tuner and tuning key handy—turn off cellphone and other noise-makers

## Pre-Performance

- 2 weeks prior to performance survey all strings for possible breakage and replace any overly worn strings
- Make any minor regulation adjustments
- **Make an extra copy** of the part for your file, if needed; make a study copy if a rental part (it's legal!)
- GoogleMap directions to performance site; get parking passes, if necessary, from orchestra manager

## Performance

- **Arrive very early**, place harp on stage to acclimate to heat and humidity
- With stage manager's permission, turn on all lights and spots that will be used in performance to accurately acclimate
- If in a different space than rehearsal, check piano or celesta tuning with tuner
- After approximately 20 minutes in space, thoroughly tune—this is **NOT** the last time you will tune tonight!!
- Warm-up and make any adjustments to harp, wardrobe, and equipment
- 30 minutes prior to performance, tune again and check in all pedal settings
- 10 minutes prior to performance check tuning again; check tempered tuning and tune slightly sharp any new strings

## Post-Performance

- If storing harp at performance space, make arrangements with stage manager for harp and all necessary equipment to be locked in a secure place where access is limited to as few people as possible: i.e. an office
- Survey room, taking care to park harp away from windows and vents/radiators
- Completely **cover harp** and store harp cart in separate space; take smaller valuables and **score** with you.

