



## **Harps North West Composer in Residence Application Pack**

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### **Harps North West**

Harps North West is a charity, based predominantly in Cumbria and North Lancashire. We have a strong annual membership of around 75 members, across a wide age-range and consisting of a range of comfort levels with harp playing. Our aim is to maintain, improve and advance public education and appreciation of the lever harp and its associated music and history. Our charity has the educational purpose of promoting the playing and teaching of the harp. We aim to enable more people to enjoy the harp in its various forms, but especially the lever harp, which is also known as the folk harp or clarsach.

Learn more about HNW and what we do by visiting the website:  
[www.harpsnorthwest.org.uk](http://www.harpsnorthwest.org.uk)

## **Commission Brief**

Our membership consists of players of all abilities, from new beginners to confident players with over 10 years experience, and every level in between. Whilst the bulk of our members are mature adults, we do have a good number of youth members.

A sizable amount of the music we currently play has its origins in the folk genre, with Scottish and Manx music particularly common. This is in no small part due to the nature of lever harps requiring the player to stay mainly in one key for the duration of a piece. Accidentals aren't out of the question, but have their associated difficulties as they require a manual change of levers, which can only be realistically done one note at a time.

HNW members are used to playing in parts, typically up to three, though more have been tackled on occasion. This is a superb way of differentiating playing levels, allowing all to play together on the same piece.

Our ideal final composition might last a total of c.15 minutes, and consist of a suite of three or four short pieces rather than one long one, perhaps with one being specifically aimed predominantly at the youth members. Whilst we appreciate the excitement for a composer to make great exploration of tonality, we are very much looking for music that is both enjoyable to play and to listen to, that members would want to return to again and again. That isn't to say it needn't do some clever things, and hold some new challenges for players!

We hope that one piece from the suite in particular might form a signature tune for HNW – a piece that all members will find accessible and that we might play at each gathering we have. It is likely that we would have a recording of this on our website too, and use it when promoting our organisation.

We are looking to work with the composer in residence, so that they are confident of what our lever harps and players are able to do. This would take place over a course of half-day workshops, where the composer can gain valuable insight in an open dialogue with members. We see this part as very much two-way.

## **Remuneration Package**

Commission Fee – £750-£900, based on experience.

Morning workshops with members - £87.50 per half-day session.  
(Expecting 3 half-day sessions total, over the course of a year.)

Payment for first meeting and attendance at premiere performance: £100 each – half day activity, plus hour-long afternoon performances. Lunch provided at both of these.

Travel expenses – fixed upper limit, up to £50 per visit, as needed.

## **Guidelines for Application**

Please apply in writing.

Outline your musical education, detailing your arrangements and compositions to date and your aspirations for the future.

Include your experience of working with other musicians, either as individuals or ensembles.

Give details on your familiarity with the lever harp. No prior experience is necessary as we intend to work with the composer in residence to help them understand its capabilities. However, if you have no prior experience with the lever harp, indicate how else you would approach acquainting yourself with its range, its techniques and the demands it makes on players.

Provide a proposal for how you will make the piece accessible to the full range of members of HNW, from absolute beginners, enthusiastic amateurs through to its professional harpist tutors.

## **Timetable**

Deadline for applications: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015

Interview period: September 2015

First meeting with HNW members: Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015,  
Greenodd Village Hall

1<sup>st</sup> workshop: ½ day session, Feb/March 2016, likely North Cumbria (Shap) tbc

2<sup>nd</sup> workshop: ½ day session, 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in June 2016, North/South Cumbria tbc

3<sup>rd</sup> workshop (completed piece): 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in September 2016, South Cumbria  
(This is also our AGM in the afternoon, lunch provided, no need to stay for AGM.)

Premiere performance: 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in December 2016, South Cumbria

## **Contact Details for Applications**

Composer in Residence Application  
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