



Harps North West
Charity number 1093441

Bite size Composition

THEME - THE ART OF NOODLING

A fun way into composing is through improvising, after all improvising is composing on the spot. I like to think of it as **noodling** at your harp as this feels more relaxing and much more fun to say.

When you are trying out ideas, play around and let your hands do what's comfortable. It's a way of finding out your musical language. Start with shapes and patterns that you are familiar with keep it simple and build from there.

Key = (e.g C Major) a group of notes which give the all the individual notes a context.

Tonic/key note = first note of a scale/key. This is the strongest most stable note of the key. Music often comes back to the tonic as it feels fully resolved and complete.

Exercise - (demonstration video link in the email)

In any key, repeatedly play the **tonic/key note** in the Left hand, set a nice steady pulse. Choose a feel by counting beats, (2, 3, 4, 6) at any speed but nice and steady.

E.g. In C Major - LH plays - C C C
Count - 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

(Don't worry if the counting out loud goes by the wayside when the RH comes in. It's just to give you a feel and pulse to go with)

Then with the right hand play around with patterns over the top of this repeating bass note. If unsure, start with the tonic and keep it simple. Any speed, any rhythm. Notice that when your pattern comes back to the **tonic** it will sound and feel complete. Remember there is no right or wrong, just things you like the sound of and things you don't, have fun and experiment.

Here are some ideas to try out to get your RH started:

- Starting from the **tonic** walk up and down a few notes e.g in c Major C D E D C
- Walk up and down the major scale.
- Walk up and down missing out a couple of notes, or play the arpeggio 1,3,5 8 of the scale)
- Change direction back and forth..
- Move a pattern up and down the harp.
- Try playing in 3rds.
- Try playing in 6ths.
- Expand this as far as your musical vocabulary takes you.

This is a fun way of getting familiar with your harp, the pitches within a key, co-ordinating LH and RH, working out your existing musical vocabulary, getting used to a feel/groove and your ear used to the tonal centre set by the repeating note of the left hand...many birds with one stone! And there's no pressure to come up with anything specific or to "write something" just see what patterns emerge and what you like the sound of.

If you have any questions or want more info on anything feel free to get in touch with me at online@harpsnorthwest.org.uk

Happy noodling!
Susan @ HNW