



Harps North West

Charity number 1093441

## Bite size Composition

### Theme - Summary & Blank Page to Piece

The following is in no particular order, you could start your composition from **any where** on the list.

Also remember that nothing is set in stone, you can edit and change things to your hearts content at any point in the process of creating, you're ideas will change and develop as you go, try things out at your harp and ultimately follow your ears.

**Title** - having a rough brief helps musical decisions e.g a sad waltz = minor key/ 3 beats in a bar.

**Key** - Choose a set of notes to work with. Set levers & think in Major, minor, other modes, or no key, or your own pattern of levers.

Pick a **time/feel** - free or beats, time is the framework of any music, decide how you are dividing it. Freely or with a pulse. If a pulse what kind. 2, 3, 4, etc. Think of common uses, e.g 3 = waltz, 2 = a March, 6/8 = jig

**Chords** - Use existing standard chord progression (Chords as numbers of your key)  
- or make a chord chart from the scale of the notes you have chosen and choose a couple  
- or choose chords to fit with notes from your melody.  
- Root triads, 7ths, sus2 sus4 etc. - think shapes.  
- turning chords into patterns, block chord/arpeggio etc. think texture dense or sparse.

**Melody** - find a pattern - anything, 5 notes in a row, a scale, arpeggio. A snippet of something else  
- phrases - Turning patterns into musical sentences. Balanced/unbalanced = Same number of bars in each or not. Resolved back to 1 or unresolved?  
- Inspiration from words - poetry & prose - rhythms, structure, meaning of text.  
- inspiration from sounds around us - bird song, microwave ping.  
- Random note generator - restrict your choices to a set of randomly generated notes, play around with order to make melody, bunch together to make chords.

**Form/structure** - sections or no sections? Map out a rough number of bars to work with, you can always expand or reduce in edit. Start small, fill 4 bars. Repeat to make 8 etc. Creating your own or using existing formats.

**Ending your piece** - sudden/gradual, resolved/unresolved.

**Dynamics** - Louds & quiet, contrasting/sudden/gradual, character.

**Effects** - glissandos, dampening, grace notes

## Quick Example of one approach... a way of just getting pencil to paper

**Character:** happy & lively

**Key:** G Major - G is the key note/ tonic/ home/ resolution.

**Chords** - make a chord chart from that scale. (Root triads to start but can expand 7ths etc)

Create a **melody**. If unsure wiggle your way up and down the scale.

**Phrase** - can we make one part of the phrase balance the other. Question and answer. Or have one continuous phrase.

Find **chords** to fit with certain melody notes.

Draft them in as **root shape chords**, then you can spread them out or turn into patterns

Would the melody suit some **embellishment**? (Grace notes etc)

1, Set out 4 bars



2. Wiggly scale. Try out different shapes.



3. changed last note in bar 2 to make it sound less resolved in the middle.



4. Choose chords from the chord chart to fit with melody notes. try them out at your harp, see what you like the sound of.



5. Use the notes from the chords to make accompaniment patterns.



6. Repeat the first phrase to turn it into 8 bars, changing the melody slightly.



7. Add in chords for the next phrase. Repeat or contrast, here I have repeated.



8. Change last chord of bar 4 so the first phrase doesn't resolve onto the tonic (G) but the second one does, to make it balance. Add more patterns for LH accomp, and details - dynamics, rolled chords

*Lively, quick*

