

Notes from Panels at 2018 Harp Day

GIGGING PANEL 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Panellists: Alison Hunter, Rosanna Chiu, Miya Otake, Mehinda Heartt
also present and contributing: Elizabeth Volpé Bligh, Rebecca Blair, Michelle Klimchuk, and many more

Professionalism:

- Always be civil
- Know what you're doing - plan ahead
- Always have a contract! No surprises! Be clear if you expect to be fed, when and how you expect to be paid, when you must leave, non-refundable deposit (if applicable), overtime costs, breaks, providing a substitute if you become ill, rules such as no direct sunshine, must be indoors in case of rain or extreme temperatures, etc. Have a 2-hour minimum call, to account for all the driving, tuning time, loading and unloading time. But don't overwhelm the contract with so much detail that they don't read it.
- Consider getting them to pay you the day before or the day of the wedding. Honeymoons can last a long time, while you wait for your money.
- Consider having an American bank account if it makes it easier for American couples to pay you quickly online.
- Ask if it's okay for you to bring business cards, merchandise, promotional materials, or not. At a wedding, it's not usually appropriate.
- Act as an ambassador for the harp - one bad impression can mean that they will never hire a harpist again
- Remember social media - people will record you, especially if you're acting badly
- First contact very important
- Reply to emails in a timely way, but not so fast that you cannot give a concise, clear and informative reply - try not to send multiple emails, unless absolutely necessary
- On the phone: know what to ask
 1. time and date (ask this FIRST- otherwise, you may be wasting your time)
 2. location (inside or outside)
 3. length of gig
 4. what kind of harp they want (from the choices you have)
 5. how many people in the audience (will you need an amp?)
 6. if it's a wedding, when does ceremony begin
 7. loading and setting up - will there be stairs? Nearby parking space reserved for you?
- Leave plenty of time to get lost on your way to the gig, park, unload your stuff, re-park if necessary, tune up, warm up. Take note of traffic situations. Is it rush hour? Add extra time.
- Listen to your client, and to your accompanying musicians - their needs must be taken into account - it's not about you - be nice even if they are rude
- Be appropriate - good grooming - dress for the occasion (ask about colours for weddings), formal shoes (no bare feet - health hazard) - no thigh-high slits, deep

necklines, mini-skirts, no all-white attire at a wedding - no swear words or off-colour expressions, no gossiping

- Wear comfortable flats to move your harp, and switch to your harp-playing shoes discreetly.

-Carry a gig bag with all your supplies: extra strings, tuning key, batteries, tuner, pickup, doorstop, etc.)

-Keep your web site up to date, with everything the client needs easily located, and good photos, possibly videos

-Always thank the clients and other musicians afterwards.

-To get a gig at a restaurant or venue that you really want, sometimes it works to frequent the place, get to know them, and mention how wonderful it would be to hire you.

-Keep your set lists up to date, in case you get requests. Your repertoire should reflect your versatility. You need at least 2 - 3 hours of different music, so that you don't repeat anything until the fourth set, if there is one. The more you have memorized, the better. Get a list of the most-requested pieces and learn them.

-Consider charging extra for learning or arranging a piece for the first time. Take requests from wedding couple for their ceremony, but not for the music when guests are coming in beforehand. If the couple aren't going to be there to hear it, what's the point?

-If a wedding couple wants you at the rehearsal, don't bring your harp. Just go in order to get a sense of the location and loading. I would charge extra for my time.

-Consider charging a consultation fee if they want to check you out first before they decide to hire you. Then, if they DO hire you, that can be put towards the payment. If they DON'T, at least you didn't give away your time for nothing. Safety tip: don't have strangers come to your home if you're alone. Have them check you out on your web site or by Skype, or meet them at a coffee shop. Let them know where you are performing, and where they can find you on YouTube or online.

-For outside gigs, consider getting attractive clips for your music, or use an iPad Pro with a foot pedal page-turning device.

-Amplifiers are necessary for outdoor gigs. The harp's sound does not carry far in the wind. It's best if you have your own and do not rely on the venue's equipment. Be self-sufficient as much as possible. If you must have help with your harp, ask in advance.

-Carry a piece of cardboard or rubber-backed mat or rug to put your harp on when unloading it or if you have to play on grass.

Insurance:

-liability insurance - must have if you're teaching at home. It's often included in your instrument insurance.

-must insure travelling harps and equipment - harps that stay in the house can be part of your house insurance package. - Take photos of your harps for insurance purposes. Photograph and date any damage.

Teaching:

Have a short resumé on your web site.

-Who do you take? Beginners? Every level? Ages? Do you require piano background or at least ability to read music?

-Be clear about expectations. Have recitals or provide opportunities for them to perform.

-Lesson notes - they might learn better if they write them out themselves. In any case, make sure they read them and understand them.

- teach how to practise. (More on this in panel for parents of students)

-respect copyright law

Resources:

Lisa Lynne's How to Succeed with Self-Produced Concerts

<https://lisalynne.com/books-and-dvds/how-to-succeed-with-self-produced-concerts/>

Mika Brzezinski - EARN IT - Know Your Value and Grow Your Career

PDF of local harpists who play gigs - make one for web site? We do have a listing for teachers and performers on our web site, so everyone should sign themselves up.