

Harpenz 2017

As usual Harpenz has lit a fire under our little harpist. Practising had become a chore but she's carrying it lightly again after the dedicated play time with so many different harpists. It's reminded her where she's come from and where she's heading. Our house is full of happy, confident, music once again. Lovely!



Evie (Mum of Sabina aged 10)

Front row – Deborah Edwards, Florence Carlyle, Sabina Jackson

It was my first time at Harpenz, and I was really nervous about Harpenz but once we started playing I really enjoyed it. The best thing to do is learn your pieces before so you can focus on playing them as a group. I learnt heaps and I can't wait for the next one!"

Florence (aged 13)

This year I attended my second Harpenz

I was struck afterwards by how much less stressful I found it than the first Harpenz I went to. I can only assume this was because the "fear of the unknown" factor was removed... I knew what to expect, so I understood what would be required of me.

So to people who have never been before, may I offer this advice - firstly DO GO! Register early and practice as much as possible beforehand - but don't worry if it's not quite perfect by the time you get there, as we have four whole days of hardcore practice together. There will be a wide range of skill levels among your fellow harpists and you never know where you will fall in the range... and in

many ways it doesn't matter... it's never about who is "the weakest link" because we're all there to help each other and create beautiful music together. And although you will have more fun if you are well prepared, the kinks in your timing etc can be ironed out once the whole group is together. That feeling in your gut of "OMG I'm so out of my league and I don't know what I'm doing"....? We have all had it at various stages and it's lying to you... you ARE good enough and you CAN do it!

Wendy Piddington



I'm a beginner harpist and I was really pleased to make a new friend, Saffron, at Harpenz. We had both only had ten harp lessons so by the end of Harpenz I had red fingers and a blister! I liked playing with lots of people of different ages. I really liked playing all together.... I really liked the music. I knew my music really well before I went to Harpenz. In fact I spent more time playing my harp than doing school homework!

Mandipa (aged 7)

(Pictured here with Saffron)

This was a first for me and just being new to playing the harp I wondered how out-of-my-depth I would be. I found there were others in the same situation and some ice-breakers were fun and let us get to know the group a little, while putting as at ease.

A few things I noted: lots and lots of concentration,
sore fingers from practising getting those harmonics to sound properly
lots of laughing over mistakes and then being most pleased when it came together
new friends
feeling proud to be part of the Concert Finale
surprised at all the different sounds the different harps made at the 'Sampling'
hearing fascinating stories of how people came to take up the harp
lovely arrangements of such a diverse collection of music
how hard everyone worked the whole time

In my playing I am now putting much more effort into getting all my fingers on the strings because being prepared makes for better sound.

Glenys George, Paeroa

It was fun to be an audience member this time round for HARPENZ 2017. I so enjoyed hearing the polished performance - it showed such dedicated work by

everyone. The sound was great and the overall effect was impressive. As a fellow beginning harpist, I learned a great deal by being able to relax and just listen, watch, and enjoy the show. When we are playing in the orchestra it is hard to hear how we sound as a group. What I learned most, was how important it is to play confidently, and with more volume. The Harp Ones were so strong this year and I noticed that what made the difference was that they played loud and confidently even over mistakes. And, what blew me away was, that as an audience member, you don't really notice the mistake. But in groups where harpists played more hesitantly and quietly it created a tension to the listener's ear. Almost like forcing us to expect to hear a mistake happen, even when the piece was played without any noticeable mistake. Anna has been saying that for years to me in my lessons – and finally I have understood it! So, my take home lesson from this year's HARPENZ is to play as strongly as I can, mistakes and all – because it helps the listener enjoy the music and the performance so much more. This is, after all, what playing music for others is all about.

Trisha Nazzari



Harpists: Front Row: Nadia Benton, Liz Brodie, Wendy Piddington, Raewynn Robertson, Denise Kelsall, Anna Dunwoodie, Shirley De Beer, Therese Elder, Bernadette Waller, Sarah Miller, Myron Bend, Pip Ferguson, Glenys George
Back: Saffron Braden, Deborah Edwards, Mandipa Mhuka, Emilia Finer, Joshua Edwards, Florence Carlyle, Odyssee Meurillon, Sabina Jackson, Lucy Makinson, Oyla Ostasheva, Jennie Cummins, Hannah Dawson, Laura Robertson, Sannah Rose Kingi, Mia Jackson, Lilly Brekwold