

teacher's notes: This piece is intended as an exercise in beginning note reading for harp students. Students will learn to find all the black and red strings which are notated on the bass and treble clef staves. From there, they should be able to locate any other note they find in music. Students are not asked to name any of the notes herein, but to be able to quickly locate the proper string on a harp by learning to compare the location of a note on the printed page with the location of the corresponding harp string. Beginning note reading for harpists is easier for some students when they realise that each written note represents only one string. Any note written on third space treble clef, for example, always means the same string on a harp, whether the note itself is flat, natural or sharp. Unlike other instruments, key signature does not change the visual location of a note on harp. This collection of pieces uses the colored strings as marker points. Once the red and black strings are located, movement to all other notes can be made by comparing intervals and relationship to colored strings. Add to the map of the harp by using tiny Post-it flags to mark, on the sound board, the location of 1) middle c, 2) the F at the top of the treble clef and 3) the F at the bottom space of the bass clef. It's helpful to use a different color for each string, marking that place on the staff for reference in the same color.

- 1) Explain to the student that the only strings that will be played in *Rot und Schwarz* will be the red and black strings. No white strings will be used.
- 2) Show the student where middle C is notated and compare the middle of the harp with the middle of the bass clef staff and treble clef staff. Explain that this note "floats" between the two clefs. It can be part of either clef and still be the same note and the same string. Remind him that the note that floats between bass clef and treble clef is *always* red.
- 3) Show the student that the top line of the treble staff and the space at the bottom of the bass staff are *always* black strings. Some students like to have middle C, and the top and bottom of the clefs marked on the harp itself. You may use anything that removes easily and won't hurt the finish of the harp, like a small post-it-note or little dab of white-out.
- 4) Locate the other red and black strings, always pointing out the relationship to the easy to find strings. Ask if the note is printed close to or far away from the middle of the staff. Remind the student that no white strings will be used for this piece of music.
- 5) Students should be encouraged to read the music, and not to memorize this music. Since the point of this exercise is to find the correlation between printed location and string location, it won't matter which hand is used initially.
- 6) The entire piece can be played with second finger only. More advanced students can use thumb and 2nd finger and switch between right and left hand. Your choice for fingerings will depend on each student's ability. Students who have learned to play by ear very well will use more advanced fingering patterns.
- 7) Switching between left and right hand is difficult for some beginners. If that is the case, try allowing them to play the piece through two times, once with each hand.
- 8) Eventually using left hand for bass clef and right hand for treble clef can be introduced, but not before students can quickly find each new note. On occasion, students will view bass clef and left hand notes and treble as right hand notes. They need to understand that clef signs indicate specific pitches, not which hand to use.
- 9) For the purpose of this exercise, naming of notes is not necessary. Attention to rhythm is important because it is an aspect of note reading.
- 10) From time to time, instead of playing the music, ask your student to show you all the places where the music asks for a red string to be played. Repeat this with all the black strings. Ask them to begin playing in the middle instead of at the beginning so you know they are still reading the notes and can find the proper strings.