

## Holly's Harps

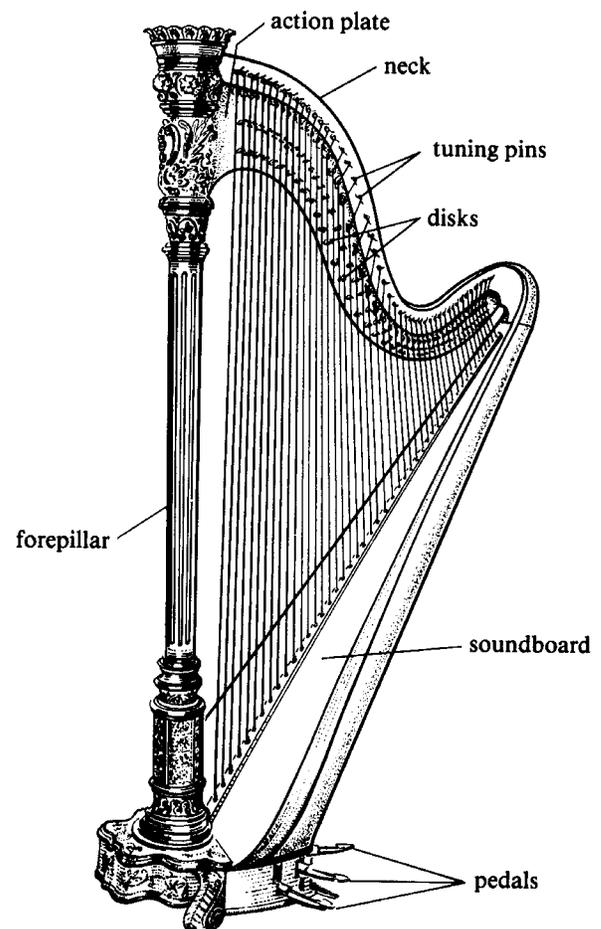
### *Holly and the Harp*

#### TYPES OF HARPS

**ARCHED HARPS** – the neck and body form a bowl-like curve. The most ancient of harps, known in Sumer and Egypt between 3000 and 2000 BCE. Still found in Myanmar and parts of Africa and Siberia.

**ANGULAR HARPS** – neck and body form at least a right angle. Prominent in medieval Arabic and Persian music, though played as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Persia.

**FRAME HARPS** – a third piece, the forepillar, is placed opposite the angle between the neck and body, forming a triangle, to brace them against the tension of the strings. Example: the modern orchestral harp. Exclusively European, developed two versions one in Ireland and Scotland and one on the continent. Originally had seven notes, but during the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century music gradually demanded more notes. In 1720 the first single-action pedal harp was developed. It could play in many but not all keys. In 1810 Sébastien Érard in Paris developed the double-action harp that could play in all keys.



# HARP HISTORY

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The first harps were probably fashioned after hunting bows. Harpstrings make sound the same way a bowstring does when an arrow is released. Long ago, musicians were employed by powerful or rich people. Long before radios, televisions, or stereos, “live” musicians played instruments so people could enjoy music. People who could afford to show off how important they were might employ many musicians so there would always be music in their household. Sometimes people wanted to dance, and musicians provided the tunes. Musicians also had a special job of telling stories with their songs. Before there were any newspapers or computers or other modern means of communication, people learned the “news” by hearing it from other people. Musicians could make up songs about events in other places, and sing the songs wherever they went. People who could not read also learned about their religion from songs, and they even learned about important events in history from songs. Some musicians traveled from town to town, and they carried small harps. In some places, these musicians were called troubadours. They played the harp to accompany themselves when they sang.

## HOLLY PRATT

Holly Pratt has a Master of Music degree from the College-Conservatory of Music and has played solo concerts as well as with orchestras throughout the United States and the world — United Kingdom, Japan and Spain. She currently is a member of the chamber music group Lyrica. Ms Pratt is also the director and teacher for the Holly’s Harps programs, where she educates students (and adults) about music and the mechanics of the harp.

