

Visit <http://hornandharp.com> to obtain a version of this tutorial for harps tuned in E flat.

Aura Lee

1861 (also known as Love Me Tender)
lever harp: C tuning

Shifting levers while playing can be a challenge until you know some tricks to help you keep your place. Use this piece as an exercise in letting your RH help your LH find the proper lever at the right time.

George R. Poulton (music)
W.W. Fosdick (words)
arranged by Barbara Ann Fackler

The first system of musical notation for 'Aura Lee' is in 4/4 time. It consists of four measures. The first measure has a C chord. The second measure has a Dm7/F chord. The third measure has a G7sus4 chord. The fourth measure has a G7/D chord. The notation shows the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a melody line.

Keep your focus in m. 8, the RH moves up an octave while the LH grabs the lever. Practice this lever shift while omitting the RH chord on beat three, then add that RH chord back in when the lever shifting is comfortable.

The second system of musical notation for 'Aura Lee' is in 4/4 time. It consists of four measures. The first measure has a C chord. The second measure has a Dm7/F chord. The third measure has a G7sus4 chord. The fourth measure has a G7/D chord. The notation shows the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a melody line. An arrow points to the G7/D chord in the fourth measure.

There's plenty of time in m. 8 to shift the G lever to sharp. Use the F string below it to guide your eyes to the right spot and know that it's in between the two notes your RH has just touched. It's even easier when you shift the lever in rhythm, so try to move it on beat three.

The third system of musical notation for 'Aura Lee' is in 4/4 time. It consists of four measures. The first measure has a C chord. The second measure has an E7 chord. The third measure has an Am chord. The fourth measure has an Fmaj7 chord. The notation shows the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a melody line.

In m. 12 both hands are heading toward the same string, LH to the lever, RH to place on the G. You can shift a lever while your RH is placed on the string as long as you wait to play the note until the lever is completely in its new position. Try to shift the lever in m. 12 on beat two. As soon as your LH finds the lever and your RH is placed and ready to play, focus on the next measure's notes.

The fourth system of musical notation for 'Aura Lee' is in 4/4 time. It consists of four measures. The first measure has a C chord. The second measure has an F/C chord. The third measure has a Dm7 chord. The fourth measure has a G7sus4 chord. The notation shows the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a melody line.

This version is intended only for harpists tuning in the key of C. If you tune your harp in Eb and read the changes as you play, try the version for Eb tuning, even though it's more levers to move, the thought process will help you be ready to learn to read changes and grab lever changes without marking them. As soon as your hand touches the lever, move your eyes from looking at the lever to finding the next note you need to play with your left hand. Don't linger, watching something you don't need to watch. Once your hand is placed, either on a note or a lever, your eyes are no longer needed there, move on to the next thing you need to do. In most cases, a lever shift is easier to execute and less noticeable to an audience if you make the shift in rhythm.

© This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.