

Scintillating baroque..



.. Serious **fun**



Director from the Continuo
Andrew Lawrence-King
Early Harps & Research

www.TheHarpConsort.com

Early Opera &
Historical Productions



Action! Action! Action!

For more information, photos etc do visit my website www.TheHarpConsort.com

The **harp** is a very ancient instrument. Its form has changed over the centuries, and varies also between one country and another. Medieval harps are typically quite small, but we read about larger instruments from the mid-14th century onwards. At this date the poet and composer Guillaume de Machaut writes about a harp with 25 strings, which he compares to the 25 virtues of his Lady.

The harp has a wooden frame, strings made from natural gut (animal sinews), and tuning pegs of iron. Medieval Christians saw the harp as a holy instrument, with the strings symbolising Christ's body stretched on the wooden cross (the harp frame) with iron nails (tuning pegs).

Tuning the harp also symbolised God putting creation into good order, every star and planet sounding its correct note in the Heavenly Harmony.

Although today we often think of the harp as a gentle instrument, a woman's instrument, an angelic instrument, medieval manuscripts show harpists leading armies into battle. When William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, his harpist, Taillesfer, had the honour to strike the first blow, and he stuck his sword into the belly of an Englishman!

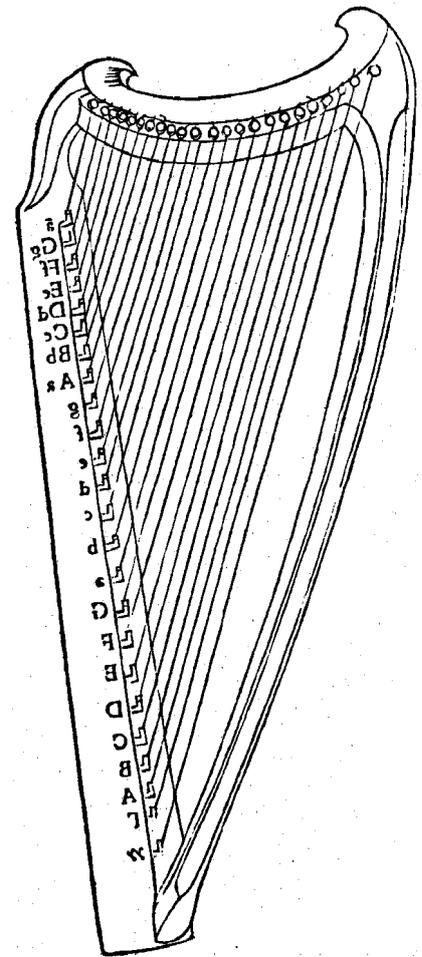
Late medieval harps have wooden pins on the sound-box that rattle against the strings to make a buzzing sound. This was described by German writers as *die angenehm schnarrende Harfe*.

[I don't yet know if Jordi Savall will ask me to bring this late medieval harp, or only the smaller one]

You can find a poster with the history of Early Harps, free to download from the website here: <http://www.theharpconsort.com/#!study-early-harps/cq26>



Early Medieval Harp



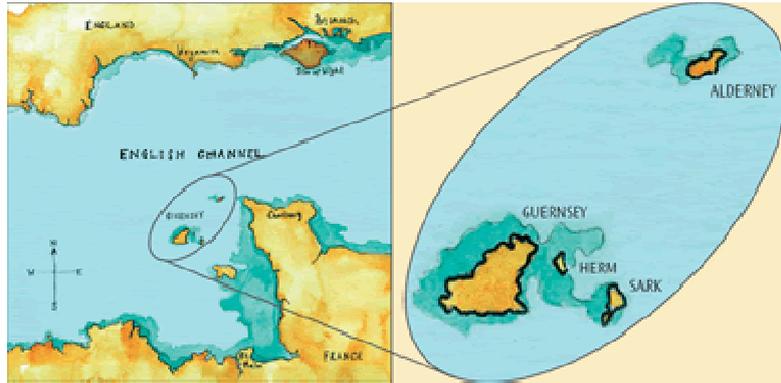
Late Medieval Harp

The **Psaltery** is similar to the harp, in that it has many strings, and can play both melody and harmony. But it has metal strings, which are stretched across the soundboard. Like the harp, its organised row of strings, one for each note, symbolises the perfect organisation of the cosmos, with (as they believed in this period) the moon, planets, sun and stars orbiting the earth, in each its own perfect sphere. This idea of perfect geometry in the heavens was matched with perfect tuning and well-organised rhythm in music.

Psaltery



Andrew Lawrence-King comes from the island of Guernsey, between England and France.



One of the island's most famous inhabitants in the 19th century was the French writer Victor Hugo. He wrote his novel "Les Miserables" in Hauteville House, just around the corner from where Andrew now lives.



More information and photos from www.VisitGuernsey.com

RECIPE

A Brief History of Guernsey Bean Jar, by Steven Torode.

"First of all, it must be remembered that Bean Jar was never a delicacy but a cheap wholesome winter meal, mostly made by people living close to the bakers' ovens.

"Traditionally, the dish would be started on the Friday night with the soaking of dried beans. Next day, Saturday cheap cuts of meat would be bought (normally pigs trotters). Beans and meat would briefly be boiled and transferred to a pottery jar, 'the Bean Jar' this would be covered with thick brown paper tied with string and marked with the family name.

"This would be taken to the nearest bakery and the jars put into the cooling oven as no bread was baked on the Sunday. In the morning the cooked Bean Jar was collected and the baker was paid per jar. The Bean Jar was then stored and eaten on Monday, washing day, as the women were too busy washing clothes to cook and normally reheated the jar on Tuesday because this was ironing day.

"Many people believe Bean Jar always tastes best once it has been reheated on the second day. Everybody's Granny has a recipe for Bean Jar, all slightly different due to the ingredients available but normally the simpler the better."

Bean Jar recipe

(Guernsey French: enne Jarraie d'Haricaots)

Ingredients

1 lb haricot beans
1 lb butter beans
1 lb belly pork
1 lb onions
Stock
Salt and pepper for seasoning

Method

- 1) Soak the beans overnight in cold water. Discard the water. Put beans in fresh water and boil for at least 30 minutes.
- 2) Add pork, chopped onions and stock cube and boil for a further 20 minutes.
- 3) Place in a low to medium oven for a minimum of three to four hours or a slow cooker.

4) Beans should be soft and the meat should fall off the bone. Enjoy with a thick slice of farmhouse bread and Guernsey butter.

With thanks to Rachel Torode for supplying this recipe.