

MUFFLING

The resonance is different in every register. The longer the strings, the greater the resonance.

Also, the effect regarding dynamics varies in every register.

Harp strings resonate and fade naturally unless they are muffled. Muffling is a deliberate action and takes time!

There is a lot of discussion and confusion about muffling. Without specific directions from the composer, harpists will muffle or let the strings vibrate, depending on their own taste and opinion.

A muffling sign between the two staves indicates that all sound should be damped.

This chord will be muffled or not, depending the taste of the harpist, and the style of the music

To avoid misunderstandings, use the muffling sign

Harpists will muffle staccato notes automatically, without extra instructions

Let ring = laissez vibrer = L.V.

Muffling of specific area

Muffling of specific notes

Staccato

Harpists can muffle a string or chord immediately after it has been played, by putting their finger(s) back on the strings. The muffled string(s) stops sounding. Be aware that their resonance can live on elsewhere on the harp! Muffling single strings takes time and requires precision, so it slows down the possible tempi.

Étouffé

Étouffé is a technique for the left hand. It muffles single notes, and sounds like a 'walking bass'. Since this is a specific harp technique, composers don't have write the étouffé sign. It is better to use the usual portato sign. Like all muffling, étouffé takes time.