

## *Roosebeck* Gothic Harp Instrument Care

As with any fine wood furniture, humidity is your biggest concern. Fluctuations in temperature and humidity will cause the natural wood to swell and contract, altering the amount of tension the strings place on the instrument.

Here are some simple tips to care for your Gothic Harp

- Use a dry soft cloth for dusting
- Use a damp soft cloth for cleaning
- Avoid extreme temperatures
- Avoid extremely dry conditions
- Avoid direct sunlight
- Avoid using abrasives

### Accessories

String Sets, Cases and other accessories are available at [www.mid-east.com](http://www.mid-east.com)



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Gothic Harp

*Roosebeck*<sup>TM</sup>  
FINE INSTRUMENTS

GOthic  
HARP



– OWNER'S GUIDE –

## Roosebeck Gothic Harp History

**G**othic harps appeared during the middle of the 14th century, remaining popular throughout Europe into the early 17th century. Compared to earlier harps, the Gothic Harp was tall, while still small and light by modern standards.

They were strung with gut strings at a much lower tension than we are accustomed to today. The bray pegs, along the center of the soundboard, lightly touch the strings at their base. The plucked strings buzzed against the pegs. This contact was essential in exciting the upper harmonics of the notes; an admired sound during the instrument's heyday.

Originally, the soundbox was hollowed from a single plank of hardwood, giving the harp a distinctive plucked sound that complimented the lute. The gothic harp was played solo, to accompany vocals, or in consort with vocals and the Lute. Earlier models had 19 to 22 strings, later harps known as early Renaissance harps were larger and had 26 to 30 strings.



## Roosebeck Gothic Harp Description

This Early Music Shop (EMS) design is an historic reproduction. The Gothic harps have a very graceful line, with a seemingly too thin arm. They are not free standing. Each string runs from the tuning peg in the arm, past a bray peg, to a hole in the center of the soundboard. The string is held in place by the bray peg.

Since the strings are changed from the front, there are no holes in the back of the harp. The number of strings and the length of the harp can vary.

## Roosebeck Gothic Harp Tuning

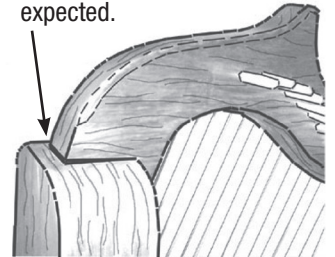
The tuning varies according to the length of the instrument. In general the Gothic harp is tuned lower than a similarly sized modern harp. The EMS designed 19 string Gothic harp is tuned F3-C6. The EMS designed 29 string Gothic harp is tuned F2-F6. The strings are color coded, all F's are Blue and all C's are Red.

### **Important note regarding construction.**

Under the tension of tuning, the shoulder of the arm will lean forward. This will cause a slight gap between the base of the shoulder and the soundbox. This gap is natural and should be expected. In anticipation of this gap a solid brass stability rod is installed in the shoulder during manufacture. The stability rod passes from the shoulder into the upper block of the soundbox.

This stability rod transfers the tension of the strings to the body of the harp. Therefore, the slight gap that develops is not a structural concern. It is best to leave this gap open, do not use filler. If the harp is de-tuned, such as during shipping, the gap will close.

A gap between shoulder and the soundbox should be expected.



## Roosebeck Gothic Harp Replacing Strings

When a string breaks, the strings to either side are under greater tension and more likely to fail. Therefore, always replace a broken string as soon as possible. To replace the string, first remove the old string. Pull out the bray peg and remove the broken string from the soundboard. Note the knot in the end of the string. Make sure your replacement string, is the same gauge and color as the broken string. Tie a knot in one end; do not leave too much string hanging past the knot. Slip the knotted end into the hole in the soundboard. Replace the bray peg. Look at the bray peg, there is one flat side on the post. The flat side should face up. Then take the free end of the string and slip it through the hole in the tuning pin. Pull it through all the way but do not pull it tight. Then start to turn the tuning pin. You can cut the string so there is just a half inch of free string, tuck that end under as you tune. Remember this is a new string and will need slow tuning to stretch in.