

Maurice Ravel

Tzigane

Cadenza

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), a French composer during the Impressionist period, entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1889 at a time when the harp was truly coming of age. He wrote some of our most important repertoire in concerto and orchestral genres. The cadenza from Tzigane is probably the most difficult of all harp cadenzas.

Ideally, this cadenza will not be conducted. However, since the other instruments are counting bars, the conductor may mark the time or actually conduct the harpist! The solo violin begins with a lengthy unaccompanied passage which ends with a trill that accompanies the harp cadenza.

What should be memorable about this cadenza is the brilliant, virtuosic sweep of the harp. Too often, the result is a rattling jumble of buzzing chaos. Notice how the first three beats of the first bar are divided into groups of 4, then 6, then 8. Begin with a strong confident four and do not rush! Build speed though the next two beats into the top "D." The following descending pattern must be played at lightning speed with a fast light touch. Be careful to pedal quietly and rhythmically to avoid buzzing. As you approach the bottom, slow down slightly and crescendo into the low octave "C." To make the following 2/4 bar less awkward, I have made some changes. Be sure to maintain the pulse in this bar. Allow the low octave "C" to ring with full voice. Then, at top speed, develop a nice sweeping arch which extends through the bar line into the low "E." Each musical pattern has its own signature, mood, and effect. Break the sections down, find the patterns, decide where each pattern is leading, and choose which approach is the most interesting and effective. Try to avoid sounding frantic and try to create as many different effects as possible, such as confidence, boldness, strength, speed, brilliance, and shimmers. All of these effects are possible within this fifteen-second whirlwind cadenza.

The Harp Part after the Tzigane cadenza is published in Sarah Bullen's "Principal Harp Book 2".

The musical score is written for harp and piano. The harp part is in 4/4 time, marked *Brillante* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 46$. The piano part is in 4/4 time, marked *f* (forte). The harp part begins with a series of chords and arpeggios, followed by a descending scale. The piano part begins with a series of chords and arpeggios, followed by a descending scale. The harp part includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The piano part includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The harp part includes a section marked *poco allargando* (slightly slowing down). The piano part includes a section marked *poco allargando* (slightly slowing down). The harp part includes a section marked *poco allargando* (slightly slowing down). The piano part includes a section marked *poco allargando* (slightly slowing down).

