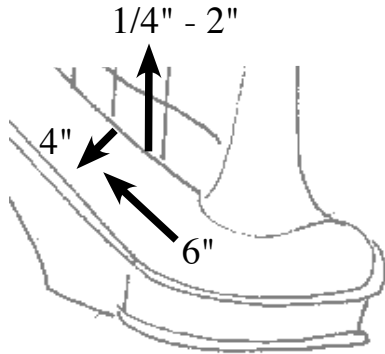


## Recording an Acoustic Harp

**REMEMBER:** Recording isn't really amplifying -- it's a different process, a different artform. I don't use mics on a harp in performance, but I do in recordings. Generally, if you're the soloist, the first hours of a recording session are dedicated to getting your sound. If you're just part of the mix, there's less chance you'll have as much time to "get your sound."



### Basic Guidelines for Mic Placement:

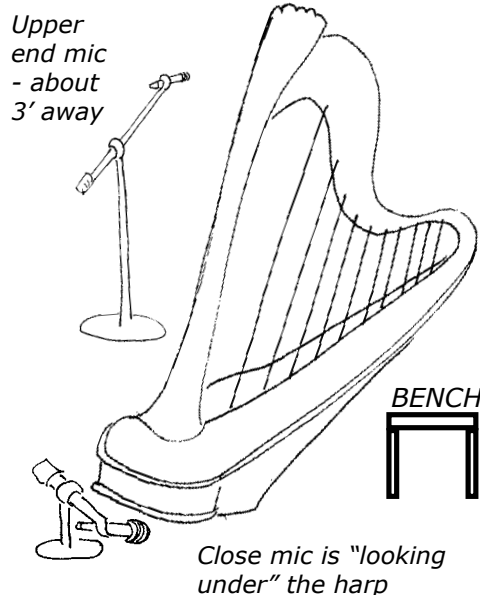
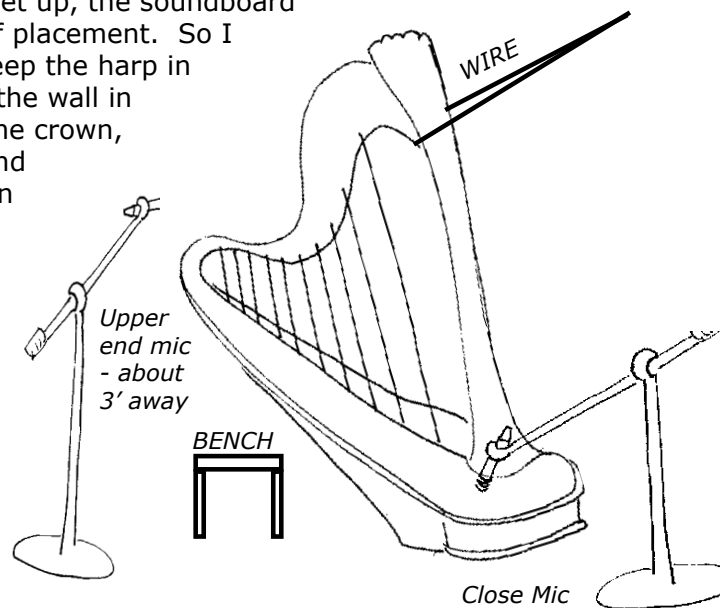
Every room, every harp, every player, every engineer, every session is different! So be open to all possibilities for mic placement, and listen, listen, listen. There are no rules, but here are some guidelines:

- One mic close to the soundboard (from 1/4" to 2" above the board), about 6" up from the base of the soundboard and about 4" away from the strings.
- The second mic about 3-4 feet away (sometimes more) aimed towards the upper 2 octaves of the harp.

### How to get the mic close enough

I love the sound of the harp when the mic is a half inch from the lower end of the soundboard . . . but everytime I have to get up, the soundboard bangs against the mic and throws it out of placement. So I came up with this trick (*see at right*) to keep the harp in playing position: We screwed a wire into the wall in front of the harp, then looped it around the crown, tipped the harp back to playing position and tightened the wire. Voila! The harp stays in position even when I get up!

Another version of that is to lean the knee-block of the harp against the wall behind you (the wall I tried this with was padded). It's not as comfortable as the wire trick, but they both allow the mics and the soundboard to maintain a constant distance.



I like to have the "upper -end" mic at least three feet away from the harp, to get a brilliant sound without the harshness of my finger plucking the strings.

Depending on the room, I've also used the mic set-up at left: once again, the "upper-end" mic is distant from the harp, but the "lower end" mic (which also picks up the treble of the harp!) is sort of "looking under" the front of the harp. Sometimes this method has surprisingly beautiful results -- other times, it doesn't.