The popularity of the musical instrument the harp has grown over the last couple of years. More and more boys and girls show great interest in this instrument and want to learn how to play it. A clear demand for affordable entry level harps has been identified in the context of the Leerorkest’s ±100 schools in the Netherlands. However, current entry level harps are expensive, fragile, non-standardised, unwieldy, high-maintenance and generally unfit for purpose. Therefore, a new harp had to be developed that is both affordable and better fitting with the children of the Leerorkest.

New integral ways of making an affordable harp were explored. Numerous production methods were compared, concluding waterjet cutting as the most promising outcome. The pitch changing mechanism was examined and a new mechanism was developed inspired by the Finnish concert kantele. The whole harp was redesigned to meet all the requirements from the analysis phase.

HarpE, the durable and affordable entry-level harp for children, was evaluated by professional harpists, harp teachers and children. They rated the design to fit the users very well for the intended price, meeting the requirements initially set.