

Diatonic “Color Chords”

Cathy’s Color Chord Secrets are Secret No More!

Cathy Britell <http://www.larkpoint.com>

A number of people have asked how I play some of the tunes that I do on my diatonic autoharps. So, here’s a little discussion of some of the chords you can make on a diatonic ‘harp, and which ones I choose at the present time.

If you have a G diatonic scale you have the following notes:

G A B C D E F#

You can make a large number of chords out of these notes. Some of the common ones used in autoharp music.

Chord Name	Notes in the chord
G	G B D
D	D F# A
C	C E G
Em	E G B
Bm	B D F#
Am	A C E
G pentatonic	G A G D E
G sus4	G C D
D sus4	D G A
Em7	E G B D
Bm7	B D F# C
Am7	A C E G
CMAJ7	C E G B
GMAJ7	G D A F#
G+9	G B D A
D+9	D F# A E

Chord Name	Notes in the chord
C+9	C E G D
D pentatonic	D E F# G C
D7	D F# A C
others as you wish	

Cathy's G-D autoharp chordbar setup (this is centered around the Key of G):

Glock Am7 Em7 Bm7 D7 A7 E7-3
 Dlock Gpent C G D A Gsus4
 CMAJ7 GMAJ7 Am Em Bm F#m Dsus4

Here are some of my favorite tunes and songs that some of these color chords can enhance.

- *Wondrous Love*
- *Blind Mary*
- *Vincent*
- *I Will*
- *Try To Remember*
- *Star of the County Down*
- *Skye Boat Song*
- *Blind Mary*

How to get into this:

1. Get an extra autoharp
2. Cut some chords or have your friendly autoharp tech do it.
3. Sit in the corner and noodle and see what comes out.

Skye Boat Song (diatonic color chords)

trad. (arr. Cathy Britell)

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. Chords are indicated above the notes. The first staff (measures 1-6) has chords: G, Em7, Am7, D, Cmaj7, Am7. The second staff (measures 7-15) has chords: 1. G, D; 2. G, Em7, A, Em7. The third staff (measures 16-23) has chords: Am7, Em7, Em7, A, Em7. The fourth staff (measures 24-29) has chords: Am7, Em7, D, G, Em7, Am7. The fifth staff (measures 30-35) has chords: D, Cmaj7, G, D, G, Em7. The piece ends with a double bar line at the end of the fifth staff.

With "Wondrous Love" try playing the whole thing on minor sevenths. Or not. :-)

Wondrous Love

Traditional

For rhythm, try doing an A-E "drone" by holding down the Am and A or A7 chords at the same time and strumming.

Rhythm Chords

Melody Chords

Am / G / / Am / / Am / G

5

/ Am G D Am G Am G / Am

10

/ G Am G Am G Am G Am G Am G Am

14

/ G / / Am G / Am / G / Am

18

G D Am G Am G / Am

⊙ = can be played open

Blind Mary

Turlough O'Carolan

⊙ = can be played open

1. G 2. G

1. G 2. G

1. G 2. G

1. G 2. G

Chords: G, (Em7) ⊙, C, G, ⊙, G, ⊙, (Am7) D, ⊙, G, (Bm7) ⊙, C, G, ⊙, G, (Am7) ⊙, G, G, ⊙, G, G, ⊙, G, ⊙, C, ⊙, C, D, ⊙, D7, ⊙, (Em7) ⊙, ⊙, (Am7) D, ⊙, G, C, G, Em, Bm, D, G, C, G, D, G, ⊙, (Am7) ⊙, G, ⊙, G, ⊙, G, D, G

⊙ = can be played open

Blind Mary

Turlough O'Carolan

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature staff is labeled 'TAB' and '4/4'. The score includes the following elements:

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Treble staff has notes G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Chords: C, (Am7) ⊙, F, C, C, (Dm7) G, ⊙. Tablature shows fretting for A, B, and G.
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Treble staff has notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, G4. Chords: C, (Em7) ⊙, F, C, C, (Dm7) ⊙, ⊙. Tablature shows fretting for E, F, G, and A.
- System 3 (Measures 9-13):** Treble staff has notes G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Chords: C, ⊙, F, G, G7, (Am7) ⊙, (Dm7) G, ⊙. Tablature shows fretting for G, F, E, and D.
- System 4 (Measures 14-17):** Treble staff has notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, G4. Chords: C, (Em7) ⊙, F, C, (Dm7) ⊙, ⊙. Tablature shows fretting for E, F, G, and A.
- System 5 (Measures 18-21):** Treble staff has notes G4, A4, B4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Chords: C, ⊙, F, C, C, C, C, G. Tablature shows fretting for G, F, E, and D.

Chord symbols in red text: (Am7), (Em7), (Dm7). Symbols ⊙ indicate chords that can be played open. The score includes first and second endings for measures 13-14 and 17-18.