

The following diagrams show a family of chord positions for commonly occurring chord progressions. Chord progressions are listed for keys of A, D, G, C, and F. Fiddle and mandolin players often play tunes in the keys of A and D. Guitar players often play in the keys of G and C (using their capos to accompany the fiddle players. Brass music, and lots of “spiritual” music often occur in F major.

Fortunately, with your duet “Hayden” keyboard concertina, you can accompany any instrument or player regardless of preferred key, playing the “voice” with the right hand and accompanying chords with the left hand; although nothing stops you from playing melody on the left hand or chords on the right hand.

The following diagrams show diatonic scales for a given key as they occur on the left side of the Stagi Hayden-style duet concertina. The notes of the scale are highlighted with yellow or red circles. For example, the first row represents the key of A, with notes of A, B, C#, D, E, F#, and G# highlighted. Melodies written in that key will use those notes (unless a special accidental is indicated).

Many folk songs will employ a chord progression using notes from the given key. The progression would include the key chord, the second minor seventh, the fifth seventh, and the key major seventh. The diagrams show these progressions for each key. The progressions are listed as follows:

A (A major, B minor 7th, E Dominant 7th, and A major 7th)
D (D major, E minor 7th, A Dominant 7th, and D major 7th)
G (G major, A minor 7th, D Dominant 7th, and G major 7th)
C (C major, D minor 7th, G Dominant 7th, and C major 7th)
F (F major, G minor 7th, C Dominant 7th, and F major 7th)

The contributing notes are listed above the diagram. Red circles highlight the contributing notes to each chord. To play the chord, one would press some selection of the contributing notes of the chord. Ideally, one would depress all four notes of a 7th chord, or play some sequence of contributing notes of the chord in accompaniment. One may wish to play a “Power Chord” of just two contributing notes, the first and the fifth, or the first and the 7th. Notice the many possibilities for contributing chord arrangements, playing all or some of the notes in various combinations and inversions. Therein lies the problem, how does a beginner pick up a fake book and hack out a tune with the chord diagrams written above the melody?

An easy way is to pick a simple fingering selection applicable to any scale and simply memorize a set of patterns. Two sets of simple fingerings are suggested. The first diagram proposes the Major fingering for the I, IV, and V chords and the I7th cord. The I, IV, and IV finger patterns are the same, two buttons in a right diagonal and, if desirable, another button over one in the same row as the lower button. It’s easier to just recognize the pattern. The I7th chord shows the third button a column over to the right, but in the upper row.

The second diagram shows another simple pattern for three notes, but the upper note is slanted to the left. Some players, myself included, find this pattern easier to play.

Once you get the “basics” down, try some variations in fingering to get a better sound for your song.

One more problem-too much air. Punching all those buttons lets out a lot of air, sometimes drowning out the melody played on the right hand. Laugh if you wish, I just taped up the sound holes on my Stagi with masking tape. Plenty of air gets out the keyholes - and not too loud.

James B. Woodruff, June 2003



