

# PRACTICAL GIGGING HANDOUT

July 25th, 2014 WHC Sydney - Kaoru Arai

**1. The question every harpist should ask themselves is not what they can do, but rather who they can you work for.**

**2. What is the biggest secret to playing the harp in any style, in any situation, and under any circumstances that could make or break your career?**

## **a. How to start getting used to pop/lounge music and building repertoire**

Below are some useful harp arrangements for lounge music-playing beginners.

♪ Sylvia Woods arrangements:

<http://www.harpcenter.com/category/harp-books-sylvia-woods-2>

- 76 Disney Songs For The Harp
- Andrew Lloyd Webber arranged for the harp
- Lennon and McCartney For The Harp
- 22 Romantic Songs arranged for harp

♪ Ray Pool arrangements (no chord symbols but wonderful arrangements):

<http://raypool.com/sheet.html>

- Winter Wonderland
- American Classic Pop series

♪ Jan Jennings arrangements:

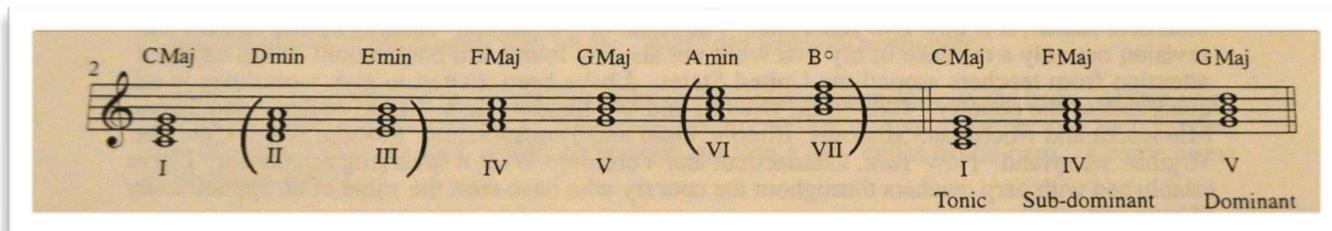
<http://www.seasidemusic.com/standards.html>

- Pop Standards for Lever Harp (no chord symbols but easy to sightread)



Memorize where the pedals are for the chords built on a scale of the above keys. In all major scales, triads that are formed on degrees I, IV, and V are major. Those formed on degrees II, III, and VI are minor; the triad formed on degree VII is diminished. (from "Blazing Pedals" by Ray Pool)

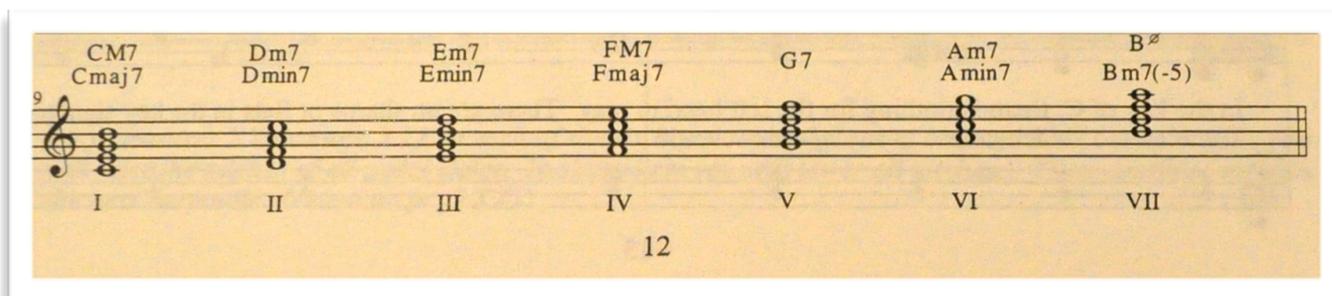
Once you memorize these triad chords, try adding 7th notes to the triads. In all major scales, 7th chords



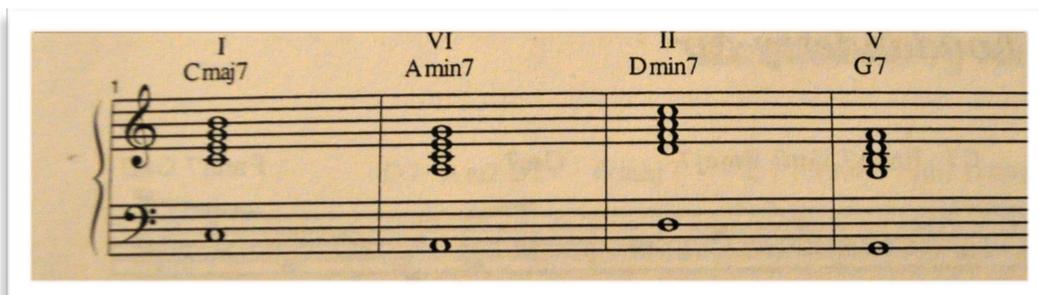
that are formed on I and IV are called "Major 7 chords". Those formed on II, III, and VI are "minor 7 chords". V is a special chord called "Dominant 7", and VII is called "minor 7 flat 5".

(from "Blazing Pedals" by Ray Pool)

Memorize (and write down on the side of each song) I - VI - II or IV - V, which are vamping chords, in the above keys (from "Blazing Pedals" by Ray Pool)



Memorize glissando pedals for I, IV, V in the above keys



Attached is a chart for all the chord glissandos: free to download from Takada Harp Salon website. <http://www.takada-harp.com/seminar/glissando/glis.pdf>

#### d. How to play the accompaniment

- Start by playing chords on the left hand, simple melody on the right hand.
- Arpeggiate the chords on the left hand.
- Learn a few different rhythm styles such as swing and bossa.
- Mute the left hand on the lower strings as much as possible when playing rhythmically.

### e. Arranging on the spot

- Play melody + accompaniment once, then go back to the beginning to improvise on the chords for the whole song. Go back to the top for the third time and play melody again, maybe with the melody an octave higher.
- If you are playing at a wedding or a party where you are expected to “match” the movements of the clients (groom lifting the bride’s veil, or the key person makes an appearance in a party, etc), you may have to learn how to elongate a piece (by repeating a chorus or adding a vamp) or to finish up a piece (easiest way is to play V7 and then I)

### f. Improvising (on the melody)

- Start by adding trills and pick-up notes on the melody
- Play any note on the chord of that bar
- Experiment with different rhythms

## 3. Technology – store your music on your ipad/tablet.

This is something I have started experimenting on recently. There are a few iPad applications for music score reading and chord-playing.

**piaScore** – this application lets you turn your PDF musical scores sideways as if you are playing with regular sheet music, and lets you make notes. You can also make groups, which is helpful if you want to make a set list.

**bReal** – this application lets you download (from a forum) and create a chord-only score. There are forums where users upload chord progressions for many songs, and for standard jazz pieces or holiday pieces, you can download a great number of tunes that may be useful if you know the melody. It also plays back the chords with a set drumset-rhythm on your device, so you can play along with it and practice playing the melody or solo-ing (improvising) as if you were playing with a band.

Your Device's "**Photos**" feature – This is what I use the most for my restaurant work. You can take photos of your sheet music and categorize them into albums. As long as your photos are clear and easy to read, you can flip through your photos sideways when you are trying to turn the page.

**Handy-harp** – a little expensive but an amazing app that help you figure out pedals and glissandos!

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!

Kaoru Arai

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**YouTube link:** <http://youtube.com/user/harperkaoru>

**Biography:**

Kaoru Arai started studying the harp under Kumiko Inoue at the age of 13.

She is actively giving performances in a wide variety of music, often playing with jazz and pop musicians. In 2011 she recorded the soundtrack to the film "Then and Now", a documentary by videographer Paul Johannessen about the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which received Grand Prix and Best Documentary awards at the 2012 Super Shorts Film Festival. In 2012 she started a 4-women band, Harp & Soul, with 2 singers and a percussionist, and released their first album "Lemongrass" in July 2013. As a soloist, she not only performs on the grand concert harp, but experiments with jazz, improvisation, pop, and world music using her Camac electric folk harp, with which she travels the world.

Based in Tokyo, and having spent her formative years in the US, she is fluent in both Japanese and English.