

Lady Godiva Tuning to create Shakespearean sounds



This is a handout to go with Tutorials 149 and 150 on YouTube.

Single strung harpers can benefit as well.

Just move the LH down an octave.

The section on choosing chords may be a HUGE “Aha” for many harpers.

And you can apply it to any arranging.

1. Put harp in LADY GODIVA TUNING:

Tune harp in C. Sharp the G above middle C on the right.

Single strung players just sharp the G above middle C. I call this the “Lady Godiva G-string.”

2. Play all LH chords as 1-5-8’s.

3. Secret Sauce #1: E minor chord

When you play the Lady Godiva G#, ALWAYS play an Em chord in the LH. No other chords sound good.

4. Secret Sauce #2: “A” minor chord.

You will play a lot of this chord in Shakespearean sounding compositions or improv.

5. Secret Sauce #3: C and G major chords.

You will use these often in Shakespearean sounding improv and tunes, and other “Lady Godiva” tunes.



6. Secret Sauce #4: There are only two starting places.

Start on an A, or start on a C.

7. Ending place: End the tune by playing an E minor chord (with the G# in the RH) that “takes you home” to a final A minor chord.

8. Ending alternative: Or you can end the tune by playing a G chord that “takes you home” to a final C chord.

9. Sometimes you’ll also use F Major chord or D minor chord. At first just use C,G, and Am, Em to get the hang of it the Old English sound.

10. Go back and forth between major sounds and minor sounds. It’s like a stately dance.

11. Do some of your 1-5-8’s blocked, some arpeggiated, some rolled. Give the tune some variety. Also try some Delayed Thumb 1-5-8’s. If you don’t know how to do them, my Mastery With Ease book will get your REALLY good at them, and they are an amazing tool in playing double strung harp.

12. Get inspired, get ideas for rhythms and timing. Watch the 1968 movie Romeo and Juliet - the dance scenes have some inspiration for you. There are lots of movies with Shakespearean music. And Shakespeare plays. BUT...

13. Don’t feel you have to make authentic Shakespearean sounds. Some of the genuine music from that time period can be tedious to the modern ear. Just have fun using the principals in the tutorial and on this sheet, and you, and others, will love the modern interpretation of the Old English sound.

13. Generally stay away from lush chords in RH but thirds are great.

14. HOW TO CHOOSE LH CHORDS:

Think of the three notes in a chord by thinking of the triad. You won’t play all three notes in the LH because you are playing 1-5-8’s. But the triad reminds you of the three notes of the chord.

15. When you play a melody note, pick a chord for the LH that would have that note in it. If you play an A in the RH, that means you could play an Am chord in the LH, a Dm chord in the LH, or an F chord in the LH. This trick is good for all arranging, not just Lady Godiva.

16. All chords are played as 1-5-8's.

Not triads.

17. BUT – If you are not good at 1-5-8's yet, you can play 5th's in the LH.

Again, not triads.

18. “Pass-through Chords:” If you play a chord that is discordant and doesn't mesh with the RH note, don't wince. Just keep the rhythm and next play the chord below it or above it. That creates the illusion of the mistaken chord being a “Pass-Through Chord” and it resolves with the next chord. Then you have created it to be a “Happy Accident.”

19. If you make a chord mistake and resolve it that way, and it's pretty, consider repeating that sequence. That gives the listener reassurance that you were playing it the way you wanted to.

20. Your homework for this week:

Each day, take one chord and recite it's three notes over and over all day.

Knowing the notes in each chord will advance you immeasurably and allow you to improvise more easily and arrange more fluidly.

21. For another Lady Godiva experience, also sharp the F next to the Lady Godiva G string. When you play that F sharp, you can either leave the LH off the harp, or play a Dm chord. All other chords sound bad with that F#. Dm sounds beautiful.

Enjoy! Carolyn Deal

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“Lady Godiva Tune Book” and
“Mastery With Ease” Book
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