

james taylor have yourself a merry little christmas chords

Introduction to "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by James Taylor

James Taylor Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas chords are a beloved part of the holiday music repertoire. Originally written for the 1944 film "Meet Me in St. Louis," the song has since been covered by numerous artists, with James Taylor's version gaining particular acclaim for its warm, heartfelt interpretation. In this article, we will delve into the history of the song, explore its significance, and provide a detailed look at the chords and techniques used in Taylor's rendition, making it accessible for musicians of all levels.

The History of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"

The song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" was composed by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane. It was first introduced by Judy Garland in the aforementioned film, where it served as a poignant moment amidst the backdrop of family struggles during the holiday season. Over the years, the song has evolved, with various artists putting their unique spin on it.

James Taylor released his version on the album "James Taylor at Christmas" in 2006. His interpretation is characterized by a gentle, folk-inspired arrangement that resonates with listeners. Taylor's soothing vocals and intricate guitar work give the song a fresh yet nostalgic feel, making it a popular choice during the Christmas season.

Understanding the Chords

To play "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" like James Taylor, you need to understand the chords and how they fit into the structure of the song. Below are the basic chords used in Taylor's rendition:

Chords Overview

- Intro: Cmaj7 E7 A7 Dm Dm/C Bm7(b5) E7

- Verse: Am Cdim7 Bm E7 Am E7 Am Cdim7 Bm E7 A7 Dm D7
- Chorus: G G/F Em A7 Dm G C E7 Am Cdim7 Bm E7

This structure provides a solid foundation for playing the song. Below is a more detailed breakdown of how these chords can be played, along with tips for transitioning between them smoothly.

Chord Breakdown

1. Cmaj7:

- Fingering: Place your index finger on the first fret of the B string, your middle finger on the second fret of the D string, your ring finger on the third fret of the A string, and let the G string ring open.
- Sound: A warm and inviting chord that sets the mood for the song.

2. E7:

- Fingering: Place your index finger on the first fret of the G string, your middle finger on the second fret of the A string, and your ring finger on the second fret of the D string.
- Sound: Adds a bluesy feel that transitions well into the next chord.

3. A7:

- Fingering: Place your index finger on the second fret of the D string, your middle finger on the second fret of the B string, and leave the other strings open.
- Sound: A classic seventh chord that introduces a slight tension.

4. Dm:

- Fingering: Place your index finger barring the first fret from the high E string to the G string, your middle finger on the second fret of the G string, and your ring finger on the third fret of the B string.
- Sound: A minor chord that adds depth and emotion to the progression.

5. G:

- Fingering: Place your middle finger on the third fret of the low E string, your index finger on the second fret of the A string, your ring finger on the third fret of the B string, and your pinky on the third fret of the high E string.
- Sound: Bright and full, it lifts the mood at the end of the chorus.

6. Cdim7:

- Fingering: Place your index finger on the first fret of the B string, your middle finger on the second fret of the D string, your ring finger on the second fret of the G string, and your pinky on the third fret of the A string.
- Sound: A diminished chord that adds a unique flavor and sense of movement.

7. Bm7(b5):

- Fingering: Place your index finger on the first fret of the A string, your

middle finger on the second fret of the D string, your ring finger on the second fret of the G string, and your pinky on the second fret of the B string.

- Sound: A half-diminished chord that adds complexity to the harmony.

Playing Techniques for "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"

To capture the essence of James Taylor's performance, consider employing the following playing techniques:

Fingerstyle Technique

James Taylor is known for his fingerstyle guitar playing, which adds a gentle, intimate feel to his music. Here's how to adopt this technique:

- Use Your Fingers: Instead of a pick, use your thumb and fingers to pluck the strings. Your thumb can handle the bass notes, while your index, middle, and ring fingers can play the melody and harmony.
- Practice Alternating Bass: For each chord, try alternating the bass notes with your thumb. This creates a fuller sound and adds a rhythmic quality to the piece.

Dynamic Control

Pay attention to the dynamics of your playing. Taylor's version features soft, flowing passages that build to more pronounced sections. Here are some tips to achieve this:

- Start Softly: Begin the song at a lower volume, gradually increasing as you approach the chorus.
- Emphasize the Melody: Make sure to highlight the melody notes when they coincide with the lyrics, allowing them to stand out.

Conclusion

Playing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" using the **James Taylor Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas chords** can be a rewarding experience, especially during the holiday season. By understanding the history of the song, the chord structure, and incorporating specific playing techniques, musicians can create a heartfelt rendition that resonates with listeners. Whether you're performing for family, friends, or simply enjoying a quiet

moment of reflection, this classic tune is sure to bring warmth and joy to your holiday celebrations.

As you practice, remember to bring your own interpretation to the piece. Let the music flow and enjoy the process of making it your own. Happy playing!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the basic chords for 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' as performed by James Taylor?

The basic chords are C, E7, Am, Dm, G7, and F.

Is 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' in a major or minor key?

The song is primarily in a major key, but it has sections that incorporate minor chords for emotional depth.

What is the strumming pattern for 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas'?

A common strumming pattern is down, down-up, up, down-up, but you can adapt it to fit your style.

Are there any capo recommendations for playing 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas'?

Using a capo on the 3rd fret can make it easier to play in a higher key without changing the chord shapes.

What tempo is 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' typically played at?

The song is usually played at a slow tempo, around 70-80 beats per minute.

Can 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' be played on piano as well?

Yes, the chords can easily be adapted for piano, following the same chord progression.

What is the chord progression for the verses in James Taylor's version?

The typical chord progression for the verses is C - E7 - Am - E7 - F - Fm - C - G7.

Are there any online resources for learning 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' chords?

Yes, websites like Ultimate Guitar and YouTube have tutorials and chord sheets for the song.

What makes James Taylor's rendition of 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' unique?

James Taylor's version features his signature fingerstyle guitar playing and a warm, soothing vocal delivery.

Is 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' suitable for beginners on guitar?

Yes, the chords are relatively simple, making it a good choice for beginners to practice.

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