

Accompaniments

An accompaniment is a chordal support for a melody. A melody is the tune of a song, what you hum. The harmony of a song is the chords. The rhythm is the speed at which those other two elements happen. Melody, harmony any rhythm are the fundamental elements of music. There are others but these are the main ones. Not all music has all three elements but all music has at least one.

Below are a couple of basic ways to play the accompaniment for a song with three beats per measure.

- The first line shows the chords being strummed on the first beat of each measure and held for beats two and three.
- The second line shows the bass note of each chord played on beat one and the rest of the chord strummed in beats 2 and three.

The image shows two musical staves in 3/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It shows two measures. The first measure has a chord symbol 'A' above a diamond-shaped strumming symbol on the first beat. The second measure has a chord symbol 'D' above a diamond-shaped strumming symbol on the first beat. The second staff also has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It shows two measures. The first measure has a '3' above the first beat, a chord symbol 'A' above the first beat, and the word 'Bass' below the first beat. The second measure has a chord symbol 'D' above the first beat, and the word 'Bass' below the first beat. In both measures of the second staff, there are three upward-pointing slashes on the first, second, and third beats, with the word 'Chord' written above each slash.

Alternatively you could just strum the chords on every beat. There are many ways you could accompany this song. You could pick the notes of the chords individually. You could vary the strumming from measure to measure. Endless possibilities.

You could listen to a couple different versions of the song and listen for how the chords are played. Do the accompaniments change or not? Are the chords strummed or picked?