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Wild Horses Susan Boyle Chords

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How to Play Wild Horses by Susan Boyle: Complete Chords and Performance Guide

When Susan Boyle stepped onto the world stage with her breathtaking rendition of “Wild Horses,” she transformed a classic Rolling Stones ballad into a deeply personal anthem of longing and resilience. Her version, featured on her debut album *I Dreamed a Dream*, captivated millions and sparked a surge of interest from musicians wanting to capture that same emotional magic. Whether you are strumming an acoustic guitar or sitting at a piano, learning the **Wild Horses Susan Boyle chords** is a rewarding journey into the heart of modern balladry. This comprehensive guide will walk you through the song’s structure, provide accurate chord progressions, and offer performance tips to help you play it with the sincerity it deserves.

The Story Behind Susan Boyle’s Cover

Originally written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in 1969, “Wild Horses” was released by The Rolling Stones in 1971. The song is famously about longing and the difficulty of letting go. Over the decades, it has been covered by countless artists, but Susan Boyle’s 2009 version stands out for its raw vulnerability and soaring vocal delivery. Recorded with a full orchestral arrangement, her cover turned the track into a tear-jerking highlight of her debut. For guitarists and pianists, the **Susan Boyle Wild Horses chords** retain the core harmonic structure of the original but are often performed in a slightly lower key to suit her vocal range, making them accessible to intermediate players.

Essential Wild Horses Susan Boyle Chords for Guitar

Susan Boyle’s version is typically played in the key of G major. This is a comfortable key for both guitar and piano, offering open chords that ring beautifully. Below is the basic chord set you will need. If you are a beginner, focus on mastering these shapes before moving on to the full progression.

Basic Chord Shapes (Guitar)

- G major – 320003
- C major – x32010
- D major – xx0232
- Em – 022000
- Am – x02210
- Bm – x24432 (or barre version)

If you prefer a capo, you can place it on the 2nd fret and play as if in F# major (using chords E, A, B, C#m, F#m) but the open G version is the most common for this arrangement. For piano players, the same chords in G major are straightforward: G (G-B-D), C (C-E-G), D (D-F#-A), Em (E-G-B), Am (A-C-E), Bm (B-D-F#).

Verse Chord Progression

The verses in Susan Boyle's cover follow a gentle, repetitive pattern. Each line of the verse uses two chords, with the phrasing breathing around the melody. Here is the progression for one verse section:

1. G – Am – "Childhood living is easy to do"
2. G – Am – "The things you wanted, I bought them for you"
3. C – D – "Graceless lady, you know who I am"
4. G – D – "You know I can't let you slide through my hands"

Notice that the **Wild Horses Susan Boyle chords**in the verse remain diatonic, staying within the G major scale. This simplicity is what allows her voice to take center stage. When you play, hold each chord for a full measure (4 beats) except where the melody dictates a quicker change. The feel is slow and deliberate, around 72 beats per minute.

Chorus Chord Progression

The chorus is the emotional peak of the song. Susan Boyle's version swells with strings, but the underlying chords are consistent. The chorus progression is:

- G – Em – "Wild horses couldn't drag me away"
- C – D – "Wild, wild horses couldn't drag me away"
- G – Em – "I know I dreamed you a sin and a lie"
- Am – D – "I have my freedom but I don't have much time"

The shift from G to Em creates a poignant minor-major contrast that echoes the tension between holding on and letting go. Use a smooth, arpeggiated strumming pattern here for the most emotional effect.

Bridge and Outro

The bridge of "Wild Horses" is shorter in Susan Boyle's cover. It typically moves through a descending bass line:

- C – G – "I watched you suffer a dull aching pain"
- D – G – "Now you decided to show me the same"
- Em – Am – "No sweeping exits or offstage lines"
- C – D – "Could make me feel bitter or treat you unkind"

After the final chorus, the song fades out on a sustained G chord, often with a gently picked C note. This is where a fingerpicking pattern shines. Practice holding the G chord while picking individual strings in a slow pattern: bass note (6th string), then 3rd, 2nd, 1st, 2nd, 3rd. This creates a harp-like effect that mirrors Susan Boyle's atmospheric arrangement.

Strumming and Fingerpicking Patterns for Susan Boyle's Version

To capture the spirit of the **Wild Horses Susan Boyle chords**, your right-hand technique matters as much as the left-hand chord shapes. Susan's cover is built on a foundation of gentle, sustained notes. Avoid aggressive downstrokes; instead, use a soft, brushed strum or a fingerpicked arpeggio.

Suggested Strumming Pattern (for verses)

Use a slow, swung feel. Try this pattern per chord (1 measure = 4 beats):

Down, down-up, up-down-up

Count: 1 (down), 2 and (down-up), 3 and 4 and (up-down-up). The "and" is on the eighth note. Keep your wrist loose and let the pick glide across the strings.

Fingerpicking Pattern (for verses and bridge)

Thumb (bass note of chord) – index (3rd string) – middle (2nd string) – ring (1st string). Then reverse: ring – middle – index. This Travis-picking style works beautifully with the G, C, D, Em, and Am chords. For the chorus, you can add a slight accent on the thumb to emphasize the bass movement (e.g., G to Em has a strong root change).

Playing Wild Horses on Piano (Susan Boyle Style)

Piano players will find the **Susan Boyle Wild Horses chords** equally accessible. The same G major chord set applies, but you can enrich the sound with inversions. For example, play the G chord as G-B-D (root position), but in the chorus, try G with a B in the bass (first inversion) to create a smoother voice leading into the Em chord. The left hand can play single bass notes or simple octaves to mimic the cello lines in Susan's recording.

For the iconic intro, play a slow arpeggio of G major: G (left hand pinky), then B, then D, then G an octave higher (right hand thumb). Repeat with variations. The entire song is about space between notes—do not rush the chord changes.

Key Performance Tips to Channel Susan Boyle

Here are the nuances that separate a casual cover from a moving rendition:

- Dynamics: The verses should be almost whispered. Use a soft touch on the guitar or piano. As you approach the chorus, gradually increase volume and intensity. Susan Doyle's climax on "wild horses" is powerful but never harsh.
- Breathing: Place your chord changes exactly where Susan takes a breath. Listen to the original track and map your chords to her phrasing. For instance, on "drag me away," the chord changes from G to Em on the word "away."
- Embellishments: Add a hammer-on or pull-off within the chord shape. For G, try hammering your ring finger onto the high E string (3rd fret) while keeping the chord shape. This adds a delicate ornament.
- Tempo: Do not rush. Use a metronome set to 70 BPM. The beauty of this song lies in its unhurried, reflective pace.

Lyrics and Emotional Connection

Understanding the lyrics will make your chord changes more intentional. The song tells a story of unconditional love and the pain of separation. When you play the **Wild Horses Susan Boyle chords**, think of each chord as a color in an emotional palette. The G major feels warm and open; the Em adds a touch of melancholy; the D major creates a sense of resolution. Let your playing reflect the narrative—hold the G chord a little longer on "free" and let the D chord ring out on "time."

Resources for Learning Wild Horses Susan Boyle Chords

If you are looking for additional help, here are a few practical resources that can complement this guide:

- YouTube tutorials: Search for "Susan Boyle Wild Horses guitar lesson" or "piano cover tutorial." Many teachers break down the song measure by measure.
- Online tab sites: Websites like Ultimate Guitar and Chordify offer user-submitted tabs for Susan Boyle's version. Cross-check with the chords above.
- Sheet music: For pianists, the official sheet music from the I Dreamed a Dream songbook includes the exact arrangement with orchestral markings.
- Backing tracks: Playing along with a simple backing track (search "Wild Horses karaoke instrumental") helps you lock into tempo and dynamics.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Susan Boyle Wild Horses chords when learning the

1. Strumming too hard: The song requires a soft, flowing touch. Mute the strings slightly with your palm for a warmer tone.

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