Good Chord Charts Make a Difference

I first put these thoughts together in 2007 and decided to add a few things…..
   eg: What should be clearly displayed? What is a good chart?

When I was in the Silverpeaks CMC backing band, I valued the requirements that artists provide good charts as I don't know every song that is out there or how you want it played.

We are always looking to raise the *standard of performance* and *listening pleasure* of the audience Consider why the standard of Charts that you provide have benefits in three areas.

a. **Artist**   -   Here you are on stage, perhaps a little nervous or enjoying the opportunity and entertaining all those wonderful people in the audience. You want to appear and perform to the best of your ability. What are you in control of? You may have practiced enough and confident you can pull-off a great performance. What are you <u>not</u> in control of? The Band of course. Have you made their task as easy as possible or just want them to *wing it*?

b. **Band**   -   Here they are and they have similar desires to you. The band wans to enjoy the opportunity and entertain. We might assume they know the song and the key we sing it in. Your arrangement of the song might be different than what they know. <u>Yes the Band does have to play what is on the chart</u> but if it is not or it is not clear, they will make it up. This could send you the Artist into a bit of panic because you are not hearing what you need to hear.

c. **Audience** - Like Artist and Musician we want to enjoy the music. We all like good music and good performances. We can also be forgiving of poor performances and poor music but there is a limit.

What is a Good Chart?

In my opinion it is one that doesn't need explanation before your performance and lays out the song exactly as you want it – start to finish. It reduces the time you spend with your back to the audience explaining what you want to happen and how much the band has to guess.

These items should be very clear:

- **Key**
- **Intro/Outro**
- **Tempo**
- **Chords**
- **Style/Feel**
- **Instrumental/Tags**

1. Key   - "**G**" Maybe an obvious point but very necessary
2. Tempo   - The **speed** of the song marked **bpm/130** or ♩ = 130
3. Style/Feel   -   - $\frac{3}{4}$ **Waltz,** $\frac{4}{4}$ **Country Rock,** $\frac{6}{8}$ **Ballad,** $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{12}{8}$
4. Intro/Outro   - Put the **actual chords** and words that may be associated
5. Chords   - Put the chord for **each bar** rather than once until the next chord. How does the band know it's four bars of "D"? Are they large enough and clear?
6. Instrumentals   - Put each Chord and the part of the song it is based on if that is the case.

Band Members

Please play what is in front of you. I have seen band members look at the title and the key and that's about it. Just because you think you know it, doesn't mean you know the arrangement or the choice of chords.

There is more I could add but there is a couple of examples on the website. Even if you don't have a computer, a hand-written chart can still show clearly all the information necessary.

Don't be afraid to accept criticism of your charts as the point of all this is:

Good Chord Charts – Good Playing
Good Playing - Good Performance
Good Performance - Good Audience