

The simplest way to think about harmony in the key of G is, using G as the root note, harmonize with that note by using the 3rd (B) and 5th (D) degrees of the scale (the notes that make up the G chord). We can use the B or D notes above or below the G note to form a simple two or three note harmony.

In the standard notation and tablature shown below I've first laid out the G scale on the G string (figure 1-1). Next I've laid out the same scale form on the B string starting with the B note (figure 1-2). In figure 1-3, I've shown how these two scales played together form a harmonized scale. Playing two harmonized notes together on two adjacent strings is referred to as a "double-stop." When you play through the harmonized scale play the two notes as if they were one.

Figure 1-1: G scale—3rd string

Figure 1-2: G scale—2nd string (starting on B note)

Figure 1-3: Harmonized G scale

Figure 1-4: Two Note G chord

“Banks of the Ohio” using the Harmonize Scale

So that you can get an idea of how to put the double-stop technique into use, I've arranged a version of “Banks of the Ohio” using the harmonized scale. I've tried to arrange this version completely using double-stops from the harmonized scale. The single D notes in measures 5 and 7 and the two note G chord in measure 10 are the only times I've deviated from the harmonized scale. The two note G chord is shown above in figure 1-4). It is simply a G chord inversion using the “D-shape” G chord at the 7th fret (see inversion 3 on the previous page).

Banks of the Ohio

Chords: G, D7, G

Fretboard diagram for the first system:

0	0	1	3	3	1	0	3	1	1	1	3	5	7	7	5	3	
0	0	2	4	4	2	0	4	2	0	2	2	4	5	7	7	5	4

Chords: C, G, D, G

Fretboard diagram for the second system:

3	1	3	7	8	8	5	3	7	5	5	3	1	5	3	3	5	3	1	0
4	2	4	7	7	7	5	4	7	5	5	4	2	5	4	4	5	4	2	0

Starting from Scratch: “Home Sweet Home”

Now that I’ve presented the harmonized scale and an example of how it can be used, let’s see how you can develop an arrangement of your own. We are going to work with the first section of the song “Home Sweet Home.” The first thing to do is to find the melody of the song on the G string. I have done this as shown on the next page.

Once you have found the melody on the G string of a given song, the next step is to simply add the harmonized notes from the B string. I’ve shown this on the next page as well. Try playing through the melody and then playing through the double-stop version. You can see how much fuller the sound is on the double-stop version. Try to do this on any simple song that you can think of. The only spot in this arrangement where we are not using notes from the harmonized scale is on the first beat of measure four. Once again, I’ve used the two note G chord here.

Of course, when you employ the double-stop technique, you are not typically going to do it for the entire song. The “Banks of the Ohio” and “Home Sweet Home” examples that I’ve shown here are simply exercises used to demonstrate use of the technique. Once you become accustomed with these exercises, you can make new arrangements of these and other songs by using short double-stops phrases. You can combine these phrases with single string notes and other techniques in order to add texture and interest to your solos.

First section "Home Sweet Home" melody

1

TAB

	0	0	2	4	4	5	9	7	7	5	4	4	0
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6

2	2	4	5	4	2	4	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

First section "Home Sweet Home" using the harmonized scale

1

TAB

	0	0	1	3	3	5	8	8	7	5	3	3	0
	0	0	2	4	4	5	9	7	7	5	4	4	0

6

1	1	3	5	3	1	3	3	0
2	2	4	5	4	2	4	4	0

Next we are going to look the G scale on the D string, starting with the D note. This scale is shown below in figure 2-1. Figure 2-2 shows the D string scale combined with the B string scale. If you play through this tab using the right hand pattern shown in figure 2-3, you may notice that pieces of this phrase are patterns that were used by Jimmie Rodgers in some of his tunes.

Next, practice the crosspicking pattern in figure 2-4. After your right hand becomes familiar with this crosspicking roll, combine the roll with the harmonize scale in figure 2-2 as shown in figure 2-5. The G note acts as a drone note here and produces a nice sounding phrase. Once you are familiar with playing the pattern both forwards and backwards, try incorporating pieces of it over a G chord in an arrangement of a song that you already know.

In the next lesson, I'll show you some more examples of how to use double-stops and crosspicking in conjunction with harmonized scales.

Figure 2-1: G scale—4th string (starting on D note)

Figure 2-2: Harmonized scale—2nd and 4th string

Figure 2-3: Right Hand Pattern

Figure 2-4: Crosspicking Roll

Figure 2-5: Crosspicking G chord scale (with droning G string)