

67-button MacCann Duet


C


How to Play Chords
on Any
MacCann Duet Concertina

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(The latest version of this document is available for viewing or printing at www.maccann-duet.com on the web.)

I. Introduction
Table of Contents ..... 2
The Same Chords for All MacCann Duets ..... 3
A Plan for Simplicity ..... 4
How to Read the Charts ..... 5
Fingering for Chords ..... 8
Variant Chord Patterns ..... 9
Variant Chords on Larger Instruments ..... 10
2. Chord Charts
Chord Charts, Positions ..... 11
Chord Charts, Button Names. ..... 15
3. Where the Chords are Located on Actual MacCann Duets ..... 20
Some Actual Instruments ..... 27
"Chidley-Variant" Designs ..... 42
Historical Instrument Designs ..... 46
4. Bibliography
Sources of Information about MacCann Duets and Chords ..... 49
5. Chart for Lid of Concertina Case ..... 51


## 81-button MacCann Duet



MacCann duets come in many different sizes; the largest have about twice as many buttons as the smallest, with a lot of individual variation. But virtually all contain the 45 buttons used in these chord diagrams--shown here in gray and black.

The challenge to preparing simple instructions for chords on MacCann duet concertinas is that the instruments come in so many different configurations. The biggest ones have about twice as many buttons as the smallest; most instruments have between 46 and 81 buttons, always arranged in six columns of buttons per side. There are many "standard" sizes (numbers around 46,55,57,62,67,72, and 81 , plus or minus one, are common). Some of the buttons produce different tones depending on the size, even in the standard designs. To make matters worse, a very large number of custom instruments were built, either with non-standard button arrangements at the factory, or by interchanging or retuning reeds so that some buttons produce non-standard tones. Sometimes it seems that every instrument varies at least a little bit.

Since all the instruments are antiques, hard to find, and very expensive to buy and restore, many players don't expect to play more than one instrument in a lifetime--surely not more than one at the same time. So many players just treat the particular MacCann duet they happen to own as being a standard, and learn to play only that instrument, treating it as a special case.

But after examining a number of MacCann duet concertinas of various sizes and looking at the fingering charts for many more, it turns out that there is a central core of 45 buttons which are nearly always arranged in the same positions, and nearly always have the same note assignments. There's no great mystery why this is so; it just turns out to be a historical fact that all but one of the buttons on a 46 -button instrument were preserved intact as additional buttons were added to make larger instruments, and most of the many custom configurations were also made to affect only the added buttons on larger instruments.

So these chord diagrams portray the button-arrangement and note-assignments of a hypothetical instrument with 45 buttons-- 21 buttons on its left (bass) side, 24 buttons on its right (treble) side. There probably are no actual 45 -button instruments, but this is the part of the keyboard which can be expected to be present on almost every instrument. Charts are given here for all of the frequently-encountered sizes of MacCanns showing where the common 45 buttons are located on actual instruments.

If you learn the chords shown here, and restrict your variations to the rest of the 45 buttons shown in these charts, you should be able to pick up very nearly any MacCann duet and play the same chords on it.

45-button Chord Charts



45 buttons common to all MacCann duets:
C used in chords (26 buttons)also on both sides ( 8 buttons)on only one side ( 11 buttons)

## 67-button MacCann Duet



The 45 total buttons common to virtually all MacCann duets are shown in the chord diagrams (top). These diagrams can be related to any actual MacCann instrument by finding where the 45 buttons are, for instance on an actual 67button instrument.

The charts show 45 buttons ( 21 on the left, 24 on the right) which are the same on nearly all MacCann duets, but not all of these buttons are used in the chords.

Within the 45 -button diagrams, only 26 buttons ( 13 on each side) are actually used to form all the chords. The 26 buttons, 13 on each side, make up a full chromatic octave scale, from $G$ up to $G$, arranged in the same positions on both sides of the instrument. The chord charts will show "the same" chords on both sides of the concertina, so that chords, an octave apart, can be played on both sides at the same time with "the same" fingers in "the same" positions. To achieve this, clearly, only buttons in positions which are matching on the two sides can be used.

In addition to the 13 buttons making a full scale from $G$ to $G$ on each side ( 26 total), there are four additional matched buttons on each side which extend the scale up to $C$, omitting one note ( 8 more total). These 34 buttons, 17 on each side, are the only common buttons arranged identically on both sides.

Beyond these matched buttons, the 45 common buttons include 4 more buttons lower, on the left side only, and 7 more buttons higher, on the right side only. These can be used to make variant chords played on one side alone.

Not every MacCann duet has all of the 45 buttons (though virtually all do). There are a few MacCann duets with only 39 buttons, for example, and occasionally there are "miniatures" with even fewer. There are a few late (1950s) instruments where the notes have been moved around into a strictly-uniform pattern, called "ChidleyVariant MacCann" or "Chidley-System"duets. There are also quite a number of non-standard instruments which may be lacking one or two of the 45 common buttons. But almost all MacCann duet concertinas have the minimum 26 buttons needed to form the chords shown in the chord charts.

A beginning MacCann duet player can safely learn to play the basic chords using the 26 buttons, as shown in the charts. These 26 buttons will be on nearly every instrument.

A next step would be to go on to learn chord variants and inversions involving the other 8 buttons common to both sides, and to learn to use the remaining 11 buttons for one-side variants. All 45 buttons shown are reasonable to learn and use, since they are almost always present. The remaining buttons beyond these 45 on any particular instrument should be considered carefully, since what you learn to do with them will not necessarily be possible if you pick up any other instrument.

To apply these instructions to play a particular MacCann duet, first locate where the 45 common buttons are located on your instrument (or if not all are present, which ones you have). The provided diagrams of instruments should make this easy. After that is done once, then you can use the chord charts directly to see which buttons to press to play each chord.


Black buttons indicate the notes to play, always within the band of 13 buttons on each side used to make chords.


Take as an example this chord chart for a C chord. It locates (in black with white labels) the notes C, E, and G. The corresponding buttons are played on both sides, and with corresponding fingers. (Owing to a slight bug, namely the fact that human hands are mirror-reversed but the concertina is not, these are the last three fingers of the left hand and the first three fingers of the right hand.) All the other notes (white in the diagram) do not participate in this chord.


A complete set of chord diagrams is provided further on in the form shown above, with the name of the note produced shown on every button. But a simpler set of diagrams is also provided, which focus just on the positions of the fingers, the tones played, and their role in the chord. (This notation for concertina chord charts was invented by Brian Hayden in 1985--his articles introducing it are listed in the Bibliography.)

To visually simplify the chord charts, the names of the notes are not repeated on every button--they are always the same in every chart, after all. Instead, only the buttons participating in the chord are labeled. Other occurences of the same tones, in higher or lower octaves, are left in white but also labeled with the same letters.

For a major chord, the three buttons are labeled $M$, J, and $R$ (think "MajoR"). The root note in the chord (C for a C chord) is labeled " $\mathrm{M}^{\prime}$; the fifth in the chord ( G for a C chord) is labeled " $\mathrm{J}^{\prime}$ "; the third in the chord ( E for a C chord) is labeled "R". Here, for example, is a simplified diagram equivalent to the diagram above; all the C-note buttons are labelled with the letter " $\mathrm{M}^{\prime}$ ", all the G-notes with " J ", all the E-notes with " R ", and the rest blank.

$\} \begin{aligned} & \text { Right-Hand } \\ & \text { Buttons }\end{aligned}$

Right Fingers: ( 1 = index; $2=$ middle; $3=$ ring )

It may look as though identical buttons are being played on both sides, but the tones on the right side are pitched higher, so actually the buttons played on the right side will sound one octave higher. When you play "the same" three buttons on each side, you get six tones over most of two octaves, very roughly the range of a chord played on the six strings of a guitar.

c:
$3 / 42$
$2 / 13$

For every major chord, the charts also show its seventh chord, made by adding the seventh (actually the flatted seventh, as is normal) to the major chord, with that button labelled " $S$ " (think MajoR + Seventh)
$\mathrm{C}^{7}$


$$
\begin{array}{lllll}
\mathrm{C}^{7}: & 3 / 4 & 2 & \text { (1) } & 2 / 1
\end{array}
$$

And also for every major chord, the charts show its relative minor chord. For instance, Am is the relative minor of C , with its three notes labelled " M ", " N ", and " R " (think MiNoR). The root of the minor chord (A for $A m$ ) is " $N$ ", the minor third ( $C$ for $A m$ ) is " $M$ ", and the fifth in the minor chord ( $E$ for Am) is labelled " $R$ ".


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There are some advantages to using the simplified labels on the buttons in the charts. For one thing, in every chord chart the letters have the same "relative" meaning--whether the diagram is for a C chord, an F chord, or an Eb chord, the letter " M " is always used for the root of that chord ( $C, F$, or $\mathrm{E} b$ ), for instance.


Another advantage is that it is easier to adopt a "summarized" form of chord chart, which can combine a major chord, its seventh, and its relative minor, with the fingering for each of them, into a single diagram. This summary chart includes the black buttons for the "M", "J", "R", "S", and "N"; you push the three or four buttons for the particular chord you want. The fingering for all three chords is shown in the same form as for individual charts.

Legend:
(1) (1) MajoR
(1) © ${ }^{(1)}$ MajoR+ flatted Seventh
(1) (1) 8 relative MiNoR


Here, playing the buttons " $M$ ", " $J$ ", and " $R$ " gives a $C$ major chord; playing " $M$ ", " $J$ ", " $R$ ", and " $S$ " gives a $C^{7}$ chord; playing " $\mathrm{M}^{\prime}$, " N ", and " R " gives an Am chord, the relative minor of C major. This diagram makes it easy to see how the fingering for the chords is related.

With summary diagrams, it is easy to show all the common folk chords--majors, sevenths, and minors, for every key, with fingerings--on one side of a single sheet of paper, just right for keeping in the lid of your concertina case. (Such a diagram is provided, see the very last page of this document.)


From the fingering for a $C$ chord, moving to $A m$, to $F$, or to $G$ leaves a finger in place, making it easy to maintain position.

The same fingering will always be used to make the same chord. Rather than learn different fingerings for each chord in different progressions, related chords have been assigned standard fingerings that work smoothly.

Moreover, the fingering is "equivalent" (mirror-reversed) for the left hand and the right hand for every chord, so that the hands move "equivalently" on both sides of the instrument. Constraints such as short fingers and missing buttons have been taken into account in making the patterns the same for both hands. This simplifies learning a great deal; later one can progress to playing so that the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

Below each button-array are shown the finger assignments for the chord: 1 for index finger, 2 for middle, 3 for ring, and 4 for little. Where two buttons in the same row are played, the fingers to be used are indicated by two numbers separated by a virgule (e.g., $3 / 4$ ). In cases where a single finger is to be splayed across two adjacent buttons in the same column, the number of the finger to be used is repeated (e.g., $1 / 1$ ). The chords here have a maximum of two buttons from a single column (and this is the only case where one finger plays two buttons).

In some common chord progressions, successive chords share at least one note; since the standard chords are built within a single octave, this means that often one or more fingers won't move at all but will stay on the same button. It's worth examining successive chords to identify these pivot fingers, and practising the movement from one specific chord to the next in frequently-used chord progressions, rather than lifting all the fingers and positioning them all anew for each chord played.

From C, for example, to get to Am (considering the left hand only--the right hand is the same mirror-reversed) one can lift the fourth finger from " J " (leaving the third finger in place) and roll the second finger on " R " down so that the same second finger also depresses "N". To get from C to F, one can lift the fourth finger, leave the third finger in place, move the second finger down one button, and put the first finger down. To get from $C$ to $G$, one can lift the third finger, leave the fourth finger in place, move the second finger right one column and lower, and put the first finger down.

The fingerings have been chosen using these criteria: (1) easy to finger without stretching or squeezing; (2) easy to move to the seventh, the minor, the relative minor, the sub-dominant (and its relative minor), and the dominant (and its relative minor); (3) natural fingering in common progressions of chords; (4) limited degree of arching of the hands, so that the hand-straps may be reasonably tight; and (5) easy to maintain position. In the description above of moving from $C$ to $A m$, to $F$, and to $G$, in each case there is a finger which remains on the same button; but there are less-obvious ways to maintain position in other progressions, for instance where a finger moves to an adjacent button, or to a button previously occupied by a different finger.

When you begin, your fingers will frequently hit the wrong buttons. When this happens, it's worth remembering that the notes making up the chords form a narrow band across the instrument, really all very close together. You are apt to be reaching too far rather than too near.

## Variant Chord Patterns



Other occurances of the notes making up the
chords can be added or substituted.


After it has become easy and automatic to play the standard chord patterns in all kinds of progressions in all kinds of songs, it's possible to consider learning some variant patterns. These variants are not necessary to play chord accompaniments, but can be used to emphasize a particular note at a particular moment.

Variants can be found by considering the labeled white buttons in the chord charts (octaves above or below the black buttons) which can be used as additions or alternates in chord patterns. For a C chord, for example, the "extra" finger on each hand can be used to add a fourth note of high C , the " M " high in the fifth column on both sides (see variant a). Since the corresponding buttons occur on both sides, the hands continue to do "the same thing". Similarly, again on both sides, the two fingers in the second column can both be moved up a button, with the effect of moving the $G$ (the " $]^{\prime \prime}$ ) from below the root note of the chord (the " $M$ ") to above it (see variant $b$ ).


Variants need not be the same on both sides, although it is distinctly more difficult to learn to do "different" chord patterns with the two hands than to do the same thing. For example, again in a C chord, it is possible to move both the third and fourth fingers of the left hand one button lower in the second column (possible on the left side only). This still gives you all the notes ( $M, J$, and $R$ ) on the left side, but now with $C$ (" $M^{\prime \prime}$ ) as the lowest note-like variant $b$, but moved lower (see variant $c$ ). These variants of the $C$ chord can also be combined, since they all employ the same fingering (see the example with $a$ on both sides, $b$ on the right, plus $c$ on the left).

There is a similar left-side-only variant of the F chord in which $\mathrm{F}($ " M ") is the lowest note, again with the same fingering as the standard F chord. The standard G chord already has $G$ (" $\mathrm{M}^{\prime}$ ) as its lowest note, so all three chords can be played with their root (" M ") notes as the lowest notes on the left side.


## 67-button MacCann Duet



There is a lower set of chord-notes on the lefthand side of many instruments with 67 buttons or more. The same is true of the right-hand side on many instruments with 80 buttons or more.

A larger instrument, with additional buttons beyond the common 45, offers the possibility of still further variations for chord positions. There is always the consideration that the additional buttons are not found (and are not the same) on all instruments, but for many people this may not be a major issue.

Beginning at the 67-button size, most (but far from all) instruments will have the complete set of buttons used in chords duplicated exactly, one octave lower, on the left-hand side.

So on such a 67-button, you could theoretically just move your left-hand fingers two rows closer to the palm rest and play the identical chord patterns, an octave lower. This usually doesn't sound very good, since the low notes sound "muddy" together. It generally sounds much better to use one finger to "reach down" to get a single lower note, or possibly two fingers for two notes. Once you have learned the chords in their usual positions, it is straightforward in almost every case to move any finger down two buttons in the same row (to lower one note by an octave) without any other adjustments in fingering, or with only minor adjustments. The variants of C and F chords mentioned before are instances of the same idea, but confined to the lower buttons found within the common 45; by using all the lower notes of a 67-button instrument, any note at all in any chord can be lowered on the left-hand side.

A similar complete second octave lower on the right-hand side is rare--the smallest standard size with this property is the giant 80 - or 81 -button size--but a lower right-hand octave would merely duplicate the usual octave of the left-hand side anyway. The very late-period "Chidley-Variant MacCann duets" of 67 buttons or more do have a duplicated octave of buttons on the right side, but pitched higher instead of lower--too high to be of much use.

A note on the spelling "MacCann": John Hill Maccann of Plymouth, concertina soloist and patentee of the improved duet concertina, invariably spelled his own name with a single capital and seven letters. In contemporaneous printed materials (e.g., the patent specification of 1884, a booklet published in 1888, notices of performances prepared under his direction), the name of the inventor is spelled "Maccann". For unknown reasons, most secondary sources have altered the spelling to "McCann"; the most likely explanation is a mistake endlessly repeated. In modern usage, the spelling "MacCann" is a normalized spelling referring to the concertina system. But "Maccann" is how the Professor always printed his own name.

| C | ${ }^{0}{ }^{0} 0$ |  |  | Am |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\mathrm{D}: 4 / 4 \quad 1$ | $0_{0} 0$ |  |  | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{Bbm} \\ 00 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \times{ }^{(B)} \\ & 0 \\ & 0 \\ & 0 \\ & 0 \\ & 0 \\ & 0 \end{aligned}$ |
|  |  |  |  | 2 |  |
|  |  |  |  | Bm $\begin{array}{lll} 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{lll} (1) & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 8 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}$ |
|  |  |  |  | 32 |  |
|  |  |  |  | $\begin{gathered} \hline \mathrm{Cm} \\ \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{array}{lll} 00 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ \mathbf{B} & 0 \end{array}$ |
|  |  |  |  | $\mathrm{Cm}:{ }^{3 / 4} \quad 2$ |  |


|  | $\begin{array}{ll} \circledR 8 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 \end{array}$ |  |  | C\#m |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | cm: ${ }^{\text {a }}$ / |  |
|  | $\begin{array}{lll} \hline 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 3 & 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$ |  |  | Dm | $\begin{array}{llll} 10 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}$ |
|  |  |  |  | Dm: $\quad 3{ }^{2} 1$ |  |
|  | $\begin{array}{llll} 10 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 4 / 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$ |  |  | $\begin{gathered} \hline \mathrm{D} \# \mathrm{~m} \\ \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{array}{ll} \hline & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 \end{array}$ |
|  |  |  |  | D=m: |  |
| G | $\begin{array}{llll} 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & (1) & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 3 & 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$ |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | 4 |  |


|  | $\begin{array}{lll} (\Omega) & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}$ |  |  | Fm <br> © |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | $\overline{\text { Fm: } 43}$ |  |  |  |  |
| A |  |  |  | $⿸ 厂 \underset{F=m:}{ }$ |  | $\begin{array}{ll} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 \end{array}$ |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Gm |  | $\begin{array}{ll} 0 & 0^{®} \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 \end{array}$ |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | ¢m: |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 0_{0}^{0} \\ & 0_{0}^{0} \\ & 0 \end{aligned} 0_{0}^{(0)}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { B\#m } \\ & \text { en } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | com: 4 |  |  |  |  |


|  |  | F/Dm |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Bom: 4 2 | $\begin{array}{ll}14 & 3\end{array}$ | Dm: $3{ }^{21}$ | 234 | Ftm: |  |  |  |
|  |  | C/Am |  | $\begin{array}{lll} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{array}$ |  |  |  |
| 4 | 124 | Am: | ${ }^{2} 3 / 3$ | $\mathrm{C}=\mathrm{m}: \mathrm{t}_{4}$ |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| cm: 3 | ${ }^{2 / 1} \quad 3$ | Em: 4 4 31 | 2 | G=m: 4 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | $\begin{array}{lll} \mathbf{0} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \mathbf{B} \\ 0 & 0 \end{array}$ |  |  |  |
| $8 \mathrm{~B}(\mathrm{f}):(4) \quad 3 \quad 3$ | (1) $2^{23}$ | $\mathrm{D}(\mathrm{l}): \quad \text { (4) } 321$ | (1) 23 |  |  | (2) |  |


| C |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | Am: $\quad 3^{2 / 2}$ | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Bm: $4 \ldots 2$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Bm: $\quad 321$ | 234 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Eb: $4 \quad 2 \quad 1$ | $1{ }^{1} 4$ | Epr ${ }^{\text {P }}$ (4) ${ }^{(3)}$ | (1) (2) |  | ${ }^{2} / 1$ |


|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  | C $=\mathrm{m}$ : $\mathrm{A}_{4} \quad 3$ | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Dm: ${ }^{\text {a }}$ 2 1 | 3 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| FE: $4 \quad 1 / 1$ | 4/4 | EF7? 4 (3) $1 / 1$ | 1 (2) 4/4 |  |  |
| G |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Em: 431 | 124 |





## Where the Chords are Located on Actual MacCann Duets

Wheatstone "Standard" Pre-War Designs:
46-button Standard MacCann ..... 20
55-button Standard MacCann ..... 21
57-button Standard MacCann ..... 22
62-button Standard MacCann ..... 23
67-button Standard MacCann ..... 24
71-button Standard MacCann ..... 25
80-button Standard MacCann ..... 26
Some Actual Instruments:
39-button "Gregory" (Lachenal) \#885 ..... 27
46-button Wheatstone \#261 16 ..... 28
46-button Lachenal \#1746 ..... 29
46-button Lachenal \#3538 ..... 30
57-button Wheatstone \#26989 ..... 31
57-button Wheatstone \#29195 ..... 32
57-button Wheatstone \#31374 ..... 33
60-button Lachenal \#4083 ..... 34
61-button Lachenal \#4161 ..... 35
66-button Wheatstone \#34366 ..... 36
67-button Wheatstone \#29500 ..... 37
67-button Wheatstone \#32096 ..... 38
67-button Wheatstone \#27917 ..... 39
67-button Crabb ..... 40
68-button Lachenal ..... 41
"Chidley-Variant" Designs and Instruments:
67-button Chidley-Variant Design ..... 42
71-button Chidley-Variant Design ..... 43
72-button Chidley-Variant Design ..... 44
67-button Chidley-Variant \#36645 ..... 45
Historical and Special Instrument Designs:
24-button 1840s Prototype Duet ..... 46
24-button Wheatstone \#32199 ..... 47
Maccann's Patent of 1884 ..... 48

## 46-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: A Practical and Comprehensive Tutor for the Duet Concertina, C. Wheatstone \& Co., 4th edition, mid-1930s (where it is called "46-key").
$\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
$\mathrm{C}^{2}=2$ octaves above
$\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
$\mathrm{C}=$ middle C
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below


Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 55-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina


$C^{3}=3$ octaves above
$C^{2}=2$ octaves above
$\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
$\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below
C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instruments--
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 57-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: A Practical and Comprehensive Tutor for the Duet Concertina, C. Wheatstone \& Co., 4th edition, mid-1930s (where it is called " 58 -key" counting the air valve).
$C^{3}=3$ octaves above
$C^{2}=2$ octaves above
$\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
$\mathrm{C}=$ middle C
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below
C

Notes used in all of the standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 62-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: A Practical and Comprehensive Tutor for the Duet Concertina, C. Wheatstone \& Co., 4th edition, mid-1930s (where it is called "62-key").
$C^{3}=3$ octaves above
$C^{2}=2$ octaves above
$\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
$\mathrm{C}=$ middle C
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)
, Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 67-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: A Practical and Comprehensive Tutor for the Duet Concertina, C. Wheatstone \& Co., 4th edition, mid-1930s (where it is called " 67 -key").
$C^{3}=3$ octaves above
$C^{2}=2$ octaves above
$C^{1}=1$ octave above
$C=$ middle $C$
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instruments-special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 71-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: A Practical and Comprehensive Tutor for the Duet Concertina, C. Wheatstone \& Co., 4th edition, mid-1930s (where it is called "72-key", including the air valve).

[^0]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 80-button Standard MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: A Practical and Comprehensive Tutor for the Duet Concertina, C. Wheatstone \& Co., 4th edition, mid-1930s (where it is called "81-key", including the air valve).

[^1]

Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 39-button "Gregory" (Lachenal) \#885 (early 1900s) MacCann Duet Concertina



## This instrument is missing several of the "common 45" buttons. But the standard chord patterns all work.



Notes used in all of the standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)



Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
C' on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

46-button Wheatstone \#26116 (c. 1913) MacCann Duet Concertina


Source: direct examination.
C

Notes used in all of the standard chords-found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 46-button Lachenal \#1746 (c.1888) MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: direct examination.

[^2]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 46-button Lachenal \#3538 (c.1904) MacCann Duet Concertina



AIR

Source: direct examination.

[^3]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

57-button Wheatstone Æola \#26989 (c. 1916) MacCann Duet Concertina


Source: direct examination.


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

57-button Wheatstone \#29195 (c. 1922) MacCann Duet Concertina


Source: direct examination.
C

Notes used in all of the standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## Wheatstone \#31374 (c.1927) 57-button Custom MacCann Duet Concertina

This instrument is missing on its left side six of the "common 45 " buttons--all four of the non-chord notes normally found on both sides, and (more seriously) the highest F\# and G used in chords! Chords using either of these notes must substitute the corresponding note an octave lower (always the same fingering). Note that this instrument has a full "lower octave" below the chords on the left side, like a standard 67-key instrument.


Source: an instrument offered for sale by Chris Algar, May 2000; verified by direct observation.
$C^{3}=3$ octaves above
$C^{2}=2$ octaves above
$C^{1}=1$ octave above
$C=$ middle $C$
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)
-- Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 60-button Lachenal Edeophone \#4083 (c.1909) MacCann Duet Concertina



This instrument is missing two of the "common 45" buttons, the highest $B$ and $C$ normally on the left side. But the standard chord patterns all work.

Source: Marc G. Lamb's home page http://members.home.com/mglamb/ an instrument owned by him.

[^4]Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instrumentsfor use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
'C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 61-button Lachenal Edeophone \#4161 (c.1910) MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: Marc G. Lamb's home page http://members.home.com/mglamb/ an instrument owned by him.

[^5]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
ound on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

Wheatstone Æola \#34366 (c.1937) Custom 66-button MacCann Duet Concertina


Source: direct examination. Said to be typical of instruments made for Henry Stanley and his students. (This instrument has Stanley's name on the inner faces of both action boards.)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
C' on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## Wheatstone Æola \#29500 (c.1922) 67-button MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: direct examination.

[^6]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## Wheatstone Æola \#32096 (c.1929) 67-button MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: direct examination.

[^7]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## Wheatstone \#27917 (c.1918) 67-button Custom MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: chart from Randall Merris, from Bob Snopes and Mario Cote, at The Button Box.
$C^{3}=3$ octaves above
$C^{2}=2$ octaves above
$C^{1}=1$ octave above
$C=$ middle $C$
$\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
$\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instruments--
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

Crabb (c.1908-1925) 67-button MacCann Duet Concertina


Source: from Joel Whittemore, an instrument belonging to him. No serial number, but marked "H. Crabb", a style used 1908-1925.

[^8]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 68-button Lachenal MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: Don Nichols's home page, http://www.d-and-d.com/dnichols/DoN.html an instrument belonging to Kevin McKeogh.

[^9]

Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)
,-1 Notes NOT the same on all instruments-special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 67-button Chidley-Variant MacCann Duet Concertina Design

On Chidley-Variant MacCann Duets, the " $E b$ " button used in the standard chords produces a note one octave lower than usual, on both sides. Also, not all of the buttons in the "common 45 " are the same. But the standard chord patterns all work.


Source: Wheatstone \& Co. "The Wheatstone Concertina" Catalogue, apparently from 1950s (where this is called a " 68 -key" size, including the air valve).

[^10]C

Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

- Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## 71-button Chidley-Variant MacCann Duet Concertina Design

On Chidley-Variant MacCann Duets, the " $E b$ " button used in the standard chords produces a note one octave lower than usual, on both sides. Also, not all of the buttons in the "common 45 " are the same. But the standard chord patterns all work.



Source: Wheatstone \& Co. "The Wheatstone Concertina" Catalogue, apparently from 1950s (where this is called a "72-key" size, including the air valve).

[^11]C

Notes used in all of the standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

## - - Notes NOT the same

 on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)
## 72-button Chidley-Variant MacCann Duet Concertina Design

On Chidley-Variant MacCann Duets, the " $E b$ " button used in the standard chords produces a note one octave lower than usual, on both sides. Also, not all of the buttons in the "common 45" are the same. But the standard chord patterns all work.



Source: K. V. Chidley, The Duet Concertina -its History and the Evolution of its Keyboard, Free Reed, no. 17 (1974), pp. 15-17 (with notes by Neil Wayne, written "about 1950").

[^12]C
Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

-     - Notes NOT the same on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

67-button Chidley-Variant \#36645 (c. 1960) Wheatstone MacCann Duet Concertina

On Chidley-Variant MacCann Duets, the " $E b$ " button used in the standard chords produces a note one octave lower than usual, on both sides. Also, not all of the buttons in the "common 45 " are the same. But the standard chord patterns all work.


Source: private communication.

[^13]C
Notes used in all of the
standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 24-button Wheatstone 1840s Prototype Duet Concertina



The 1840s prototypes were not chromatic, so chords in all keys cannot be played. But the standard chord patterns all work as far as the notes allow: C , Am, F, Dm, G, G7, Em, D, D7, and Bm are the most obvious chords, which cover many songs.

Source: "The Wheatstone English Concertina," by Neil Wayne, in Galpin Society Journal, XLIV (1991), pp. 117-149. Examples of these 1840s prototype duets are owned by Chris Algar and by Neil Wayne.

[^14]Notes used in all of the standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)
 of all instruments-for two-side variant and inversions (shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(') on all instrumentsspecial to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## 24-button Wheatstone Æola \#32199 (c. 1929) MacCann Duet Concertina



Source: private communication. A much smaller than normal instrument, measuring $45 / 8$ inches across, but otherwise made in Wheatstone's best professional style.

[^15]Notes used in all of the
C standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants and inversions (shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instruments-for use in melodies or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)

## John Hill Maccann’s 1884 56-button Duet Concertina Patent Specification



The patent specification has two of the "common 45" buttons, a Bb and D on the right side, interchanged with respect to later "standard" instruments. But the standard chord patterns all work.

Source: British Patent No. 4752 of 1884, "Specification of John Hill Maccann, Improvements in Concertinas." From "Specifications of Patents. 1884: No. 4601-4800",
British Library, St. Pancras, consulted 12 October 1999.

[^16]C

Notes used in all of the standard chords--
found on all instruments, on both sides (shown in chord charts)


Notes also on both sides of all instruments--
for two-side variants
and inversions
(shown in chord charts)


Notes on one side of all instrumentsfor use in melodie or one-side variants (shown in chord charts)

Notes NOT the same
(C) on all instruments-
special to this size or this instrument (NOT in chord charts)


## Sources of Information about MacCann Duet Concertinas and Chords

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Wheatstone \& Co. "The Wheatstone Concertina" (catalogue). London, undated (1950's ?). (Seen only in part.)



[^0]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle C
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^1]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle C
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^2]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^3]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^4]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $C=$ middle $c$
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^5]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle C
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^6]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^7]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^8]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^9]:    $C^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $C=$ middle C
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^10]:    $C^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^11]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $C=$ middle $c$
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^12]:    $C^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^13]:    $C^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $C^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^14]:    $C^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^15]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $\mathrm{C}=$ middle c
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

[^16]:    $\mathrm{C}^{3}=3$ octaves above
    $C^{2}=2$ octaves above
    $\mathrm{C}^{1}=1$ octave above
    $C=$ middle $c$
    $\mathrm{C}^{-1}=1$ octave below
    $\mathrm{C}^{-2}=2$ octaves below

