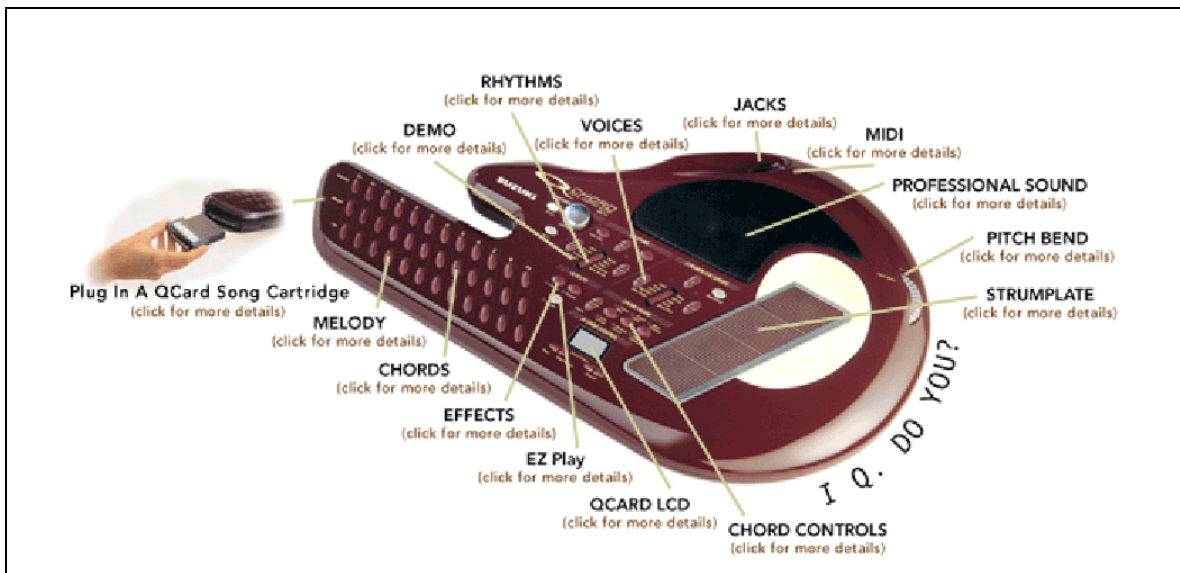


The QChord and Music Therapy

An Expert's Views...An Interview with Dr. Arthur Harvey by the QChord Network

The QChord is a uniquely well-suited musical instrument for the wide variety of settings where music is known to be an effective therapeutic and educational tool. In the words of Dr. Arthur Harvey, an internationally recognized authority on music for special needs individuals, music and the brain, and music and learning:



"One instrument that has proven to be exceptionally versatile and adaptable for any situation, from special education to geriatric programs, is the QChord, made by the Suzuki Corporation."

For those unfamiliar with the capabilities of this multi-faceted instrument, Dr. Harvey describes the QChord as

"an electronic sound generated instrument that utilizes modern technology to extend, expand, and combine the capabilities of the traditional autoharp, a rhythm machine, and a keyboard into one portable, lightweight 'super instrument'. The instrument can be powered by either batteries, or AC or DC current, and may be additionally amplified, patched into a MIDI setup, or used with headphones."

Dr. Harvey has over forty years experience as a music educator, primarily focusing his energy on school music education (with an emphasis on special needs students), church music education, and health care music education. The QChord's touch-sensitive Strumplate, which requires no physical training to play, has proven particularly advantageous in his work:

"In recent years, using the Omnichord (*an earlier version of the QChord*) with many individuals, both handicapped and non-handicapped, I have had the Omnichord's sound source, the Strumplate, played with everything from fingers and hands to elbows, chin, nose, shoulder, knuckles, and even toes."

The remarkable accessibility of the QChord is illustrated by Dr. Harvey's experience with multi-handicapped individuals at Waiialae Baptist Church, Hawaii, where he served as Minister of Music from 1991-1994:

"This population included blind / CP, deaf / blind, autistic / blind, orthopedically handicapped / retarded, and OH / blind / retarded individuals. In each of the above situations, the QChord has proven to be the one instrument that all individuals can interact with and be actively involved in the process of music making."

Dr. Harvey has observed **many therapeutic benefits** from using the QChord in his work including motor development, perceptual development, social development, language development, and even cognitive or precognitive development:

"The playing of the QChord can provide alternative communication opportunities as well as expressive possibilities for many disabled individuals with limits in their communicative/expressive skills. I have seen increases in range of motion, muscle strength, digital dexterity, attention, eye tracking, auditory perception, eye-hand-motor skills, emotional release, memory, alertness, and focused and appropriate behavior, through the use of the QChord. I have used it for language development in special education classes for song writing, diction, and articulation practice."

He offers some examples of what can be achieved with the QChord in therapeutic applications:

"We have seen major developmental steps in several of the participants in our therapeutic QChord program due to the adaptability of the instrument as well as the immediate musical feedback available with limited skills. One client responded so well to the use of the QChord that she initiated behavior for the first time during our sessions. Her parents realized that their disabled daughter had potential greater than they had previously thought and have already enrolled her in additional programs. Another client has increased the use of the left hand, one that had limited muscle strength, through alternating strumming patterns from left to right hand while playing familiar songs."

Apparently the benefits of using the QChord aren't limited to those who are receiving the therapy:

"The ease of learning the QChord and the immediacy of its music-making capabilities have made it an excellent instrument for training staff with limited or no previous musical training. There was a noticeable attitudinal improvement in both staff and clients and a decrease in personnel change for the first few years after the beginning of the therapeutic music program."

Summarizing his thoughts on the QChord as a therapeutic tool, Dr. Harvey states:

"Because we know that music can produce both significant and potentially rehabilitative psychological and physiological changes in individuals, it is necessary to have a means of making music that is accessible, transportable, adaptable, and authentic musically. I have found the QChord to be an instrument that is uniquely qualified to meet these requirements."