

20th Century Chord Progressions

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In general, the sounds on this page can be give the name: Color Chords

Major Key

The Roman Numerals stand for entire families or sub-families unless otherwise indicated.

1) **Two-Chord Progressions Involving I** (these will be called *I Chord Vamps*)

The progressions of this type are very useful for setting different moods quickly, and therefore a good knowledge of them in all keys will be something worth working for, for nearly any musician.

They are grouped according to their color (color here meaning: their particular type of sound) and the progressions in any group have strong similarities.

- Group 1:** I – IV (including Lydian majors (#11), I – ii7, I – V7sus
Reverse: IV (including Lydian majors) – I, ii7 – I (straight), V7sus – I
- Group 2:** I – V7 + extensions, and unaltered pedal dominants, I – ii6 (vii^ø7)
Reverse: V7 + extensions, and unaltered pedal dominants – I, ii6 (vii^ø7) – I (straight)
- Group 3:** I – vi6, I – II7 extensions, overtone dominants, and unaltered pedal dominants, I – II/9
Reverse: vi6 – I (straight), II7 (as above) – I, II/9 – I
- Group 4:** I – i^o7, I – bVI7 extensions, overtone dominants, I – biii6 (i^ø7)
Reverse: i^o7 – I (straight), bVI7 (as above) – I (straight), biii6 (i^ø7) – I
- Group 5:** I – IV7 extensions, overtone dominants, and miscellaneous, I – i6 (vi^ø7)
Reverse: IV7 (as above) – I (straight), i6 (vi^ø7) – I
- Group 6:** I – iv7, I – bVI (and Lydian), I – iv6 (ii^ø7), I – bVII7 (ext., overtone dom., sus dom's)
Reverse: iv7 – I (straight), bVI (triad) (as above) – I, iv6 (ii^ø7) – I (straight), bVII7 (as above) - I
- Group 7:** I – v7, I – bVII (and Lydian), I – I7sus
Reverse: v7 (big) – I, bVII (big) (and Lydian) – I, I7sus - I
- Group 8:** I – i7, I – bIII (and Lydian), I – IV7sus
Reverse: i7 – I, bIII – I, IV7sus - I
- Group 9:** I – bvii6 (v^ø7), I – bvii7, I – bII (and Lydian), I – bII7 (and 7b5, 7#11, 7/6b5, 7/6#11)
Reverse: bvii6 (v^ø7) (straight) – I, bvii7 (straight) – I, bII (as above) – I, bII7 (as above) – I
- Group 10:** I – V7 altered (including V+, altered pedal dominants),
I – bII7 (extensions and overtone dominants), I – bvi6 (iv^ø7)
Optional: I – bvi7, I – VII (and Lydian)
Reverse: V7 altered (as above) – I, bII7 (as above) – I, bvi6 (iv^ø7) (straight) – I
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Minor Key

i7, i6, include the basic minor triad, and the minor add 9 chord

- Group 1:** i7 – IV7 (IV, IV/9, IV6) extensions, overtone dom., miscellaneous, i7 – ii7
Reverse: IV7 (as above) – i7, ii7 – i7
- Group 2:** i6 – ii6, i6 – V7, V9, unaltered pedal dominants, i7 – V7 (as at left)
Reverse: ii6 – i6, V7 (as above) – i6, V7 (as above) – i7
- Group 3:** i6 – II7 (extensions, overtone dominant, pedal dominants, II), i7 – II7 (as at left)
Reverse: II7 (as above) – i6, II7 (as above) – i7
- Group 4:** i(7) – i^o7, i6 – bVI7 (ext. overtone dom's), i7 – bVI7 (as at left), i6 – biii6
Reverse: i^o7 – i(7), bVI7 (as above) – i6, bVI7 (as above) – i7, biii6 – i6
- Group 5:** i7 – iv6, i6 – iv6, i7 – bVII7 (ext., overtone dom's, suspended), i6 – bVII7 (as at left)
Reverse: iv6 – i7, iv6 – i6, bVII7 (as above) – i7, bVII7 (as above) – i6
- Group 6:** i6 – iv7, i7 – iv7, i6 – bVI (and Lydian major [#11]), i7 – bVI (as at left)
Reverse: iv7 – i6, iv7 – i7, bVI (as above) – i6, bVI (as above) – i7
- Group 7:** i7 – v7, i6 – v7, (i7 – bVII, i6 – bVII)
Reverse: v7 – i7, v7 – i6, (bVII – i7, bVII – i6)
- Group 8:** i6 – bIII (and Lydian)
Reverse: bIII (and Lydian) – i6
- Group 9:** i6 – bII (and Lydian), i7 – bII (and Lydian), i6 – bII7 (and 7b5, 7#11, 7/6b5, 7/6#11),
i7 – bII7 (and 7b5, 7#11, 7/6b5, 7/6#11). Optional: i7 – bvii7.
Reverse: bII (as above) – i6, bII (as above) – i7, bII7 (as above) – i6, bII7 (as above) – i7
Optional: bvii7 – i7
- Group 10:** i6 – V7 altered (including V+, altered pedal dom's), i7 – V7 altered (as at left),
i6 – bII7 (ext., overtone dom's), i7 – bII7 (as at left), i6 – bvi6, i7 – bvi6,
i6 – bvi7, i7 – bvi7, i6 – VII (and Lydian), i7 – VII (and Lydian)
Reverse: V7 alt. (as above) – i6, V7 alt. – i7, bII7 (as above) – i6, bII7 (as above) – i7
bvi6 – i6, bvi6 – i7, bvi7 – i6, bvi7 – i7, VII (as above) – i6, VII (as above) – i7
- Group 11:** i7 – III (and Lydian), i7 – bii7
Reverse: III (and Lydian) – i7, bii7 – i7

All progressions can be played in various *voicings* and *inversion*, and, because each progression is so short, it is wise to learn to string them together into long chains of sounds.

Especially, please note that sounds of great beauty arise out of stringing together progressions from different groups.

To make all sounds really come to life, think *melodically*, that is, try to link your progressions together with nice melodies. (This is pretty easy, fortunately, because melodies are built right into chords, if you look for them.)

For clearer understanding of all this, see the example pages and notice in particular that *voice-leading* (the science of minimum movement) is the norm rather than the exception.

Finally, with the application of the concept of *modulation*, you will really have something going for you.

20th CENTURY CHORD PROGRESSIONS (MAJOR KEY)

The Roman Numerals stand for entire families or sub-families unless otherwise indicated.

① 2 CHORD PROGRESSIONS involving I (these will be called I CHORD YAMPS):

The progressions of this type are very useful for setting different moods quickly, and therefore a good knowledge of them in all keys will be something worth working for, for nearly any musician.

They are grouped ACCORDING TO THEIR COLOR (color here meaning their particular type of sound) and the progressions in any group have strong similarities.

GROUP 1: I IV I ii7 I V7sus | Reverse: IV I ii7 I V7sus I

GROUP 2: I V7 + EXTENSIONS, UNALTERED PEDAL DOM'S I ii6 | Reverse: V7 EXT. I ii6 I

GROUP 3: I vi6 I II7 EXTENSIONS, OVERTONE DOM'S, UNALTERED PEDAL DOM'S I II/9 | Reverse: vi6 I II7 I II/9 I

GROUP 4: I i07 I bVII7 EXTENSIONS, OVERT. DOM'S I biii6 | Reverse: i07 I bVII7 I biii6 I

GROUP 5: I IV7 EXT. OVERT. MISCELLANEOUS I i6 | Reverse: IV7 I i6 I

GROUP 6: I iv7 I bVI I iv6 I bVII7 EXT. OVERT. SUS DOM'S | Reverse: iv7 I bVI I iv6 I bVII7 I

GROUP 7: I V7 I bVII I I7sus | Reverse: V7 I bVII I I7sus I

GROUP 8: I i7 I bIII I IV7sus | Reverse: i7 I bIII I IV7sus I

GROUP 9: I bvi6 I bvii7 I bII I bII7 | Reverse: bvi6 I bvii7 I bII I bII7 I

GROUP 10: I V7 ALTERED (INCLUDING I+, ALT. PEDAL DOM'S) I bII7 EXT. OVERT. I bvi6 | Reverse: V7 ALT. I bII7 I bvi6 I

OPT: I bvi7, I VII (+LYDIAN)

MINOR KEY

i7, i6 include the basic minor triad, and the minor add 9 chord

GROUP 1: i7 IV7 EXT. OVERT. MISCELL. i7 ii7 | Reverse: IV7 i7 ii7 i7

GROUP 2: i6 ii6 i6 V7, V9, UNALT. PEDAL DOM'S i7 V7 | Reverse: ii6 i6 V7 i6 V7 i7

GROUP 3: i6 II7 i7 II7 | Reverse: II7 i6 II7 i7

GROUP 4: i7 i07 i6 bVI7, i7 bVII7 i6 biii6 | Reverse: i07 i7 bVI7 i6 bVII7 i7 biii6 i6

GROUP 5: i7 iv6 i6 iv6 i7 bVII7, i6 bVII7 | Reverse: iv6 i7 iv6 i6 bVII7 i7 bVII7 i6

GROUP 6: i6 iv7 i7 iv7 i6 bVI i7 bVI | Reverse: iv7 i6 iv7 i7 bVI i6 bVI i7

GROUP 7: i7 v7 i6 v7 (i7 bVII i6 bVII) | Reverse: v7 i7 v7 i6 (bVII i7 bVII i6)

GROUP 8: i6 bIII | Reverse: bIII i6

GROUP 9: i6 bII i7 bII i6 bII7 i7 bII7 | Reverse: bII i6 bII i7 bII7 i6 bII7 i7

GROUP 10: i6 V7 ALTERED (including I+, ALT. PEDAL DOM'S) i7 V7 ALTERED i6 bII7, i7 bII7 i6 bvi6 i7 bvi6 | Reverse: V7 ALT. i6 V7 ALT. i7 bII7 i6 bII7 i7 bvi6 i6 bvi6 i7

OPT: i7 bvii7 and LYDIAN and 7b5, 7+11, 7/6b5, 7/6+11

GROUP 11: i6 bvi7 i7 bvi7 i6 VII i7 VII | Reverse: VII i6 VII i7 VII i6 bvi7 i7 bvi7 i6 VII i7 VII

GROUP 12: i7 III i7 bii7 | Reverse: III i7 bii7 i7

OPT: and LYDIAN

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In general, the sounds on this page can be given the name: COLOR CHORDS