

20th Century Chord Progressions (Major key)

Ted Greene 1975-01-18

Major Key:

1) Diatonic Types (mostly)

a) Streams on any diatonic chord

b) Vamps, Chains (reverse any)

ii7 – V7 (normal and Max Steiner type) | ii7 – iii7 | V7 – I | I – IV | IV^Δ7 – iii7 – ii7 |

(ii7 – V7 – I (vi7) | ii7 – iii7 – IV^Δ7 – V7 | I^Δ7 – ii7 – iii7 – ii7 or IV^Δ7 |)

vi7 – ii7 – V7 – I | iii7 – vi7 – ii7 – V7 | I – vi7 – ii7 – V7 |

I – vi7 – IV – V7 | I – iii7 – IV – V7 | vi7 – iii7 – IV – (V) – I |

ii7 – vi7 – IV – I | I – vi – IV – ii (vii^ø7) – vi – IV – (bIII) – V |

IV – ii (vii^ø7) – I – vi – IV – ii – (bIII) – V | IV – ii – vii^ø7 – vi – IV – ii – (bIII) – V (ala “Hell’s Kitchen”)

Diatonic 4ths: I^Δ7 – IV^Δ7 – vii^ø7 – iii7 – vi7 – ii7 – V7 – I^Δ7

Start from anywhere (any degree) ala “Spring Can Really [Hang You Up the Most]” tag.

c) Other Symmetric Progressions

C^Δ7 – F^Δ7, Dm7 – G7... | C^Δ7 – F^Δ7, Am7 – Dm7... | C^Δ7 – F^Δ7, Em7 – Am7... |

C^Δ7 – Am7 – F^Δ7... | C^Δ7 – Em7 – G7... | C^Δ7 – Am7 – F^Δ7, B^ø7 – G7 – Em7... |

C^Δ7 – Am7 – F^Δ7, Dm7 – B^ø7 – G7... | C^Δ7 – Am7, B^ø7 – G7... |

C^Δ7 – Am7 voice-leading to Em7 – C^Δ7... | C^Δ7 – Am7, G7 – Em7... | C^Δ7 – Em7, Dm7 – F^Δ7... |

C^Δ7 – Em7, Am7 – C^Δ7... | C^Δ7 – Em7, B^ø7 – Dm7... | C^Δ7 – Am7, Dm7 – B^ø7... |

C^Δ7 – B^ø7, Em7 – Dm7... | C^Δ7 – Dm7, B^ø7 – C^Δ7... |

C^Δ7 – Dm7 – C^Δ7 – B^ø7, Am7 – B^ø7 – Am7 – G7... |

C^Δ7 – B^ø7 – C^Δ7 – Dm7, Em7 – Dm7 – Em7 – F^Δ7... | C^Δ7 – Em7 – Dm7 – C^Δ7... |

d) Pretty Ascending and Descending Bass Types (with some Secondary Chords):

“Matchmaker” → I – ii7 – I/9⁶₅ – IV^Δ7 – I⁶₄ – IV^Δ7⁶₅ – iii7⁴₃ – IV^Δ7⁴₃ |

I – ii – iii – IV – V – III₆ – vi | ii – iii or VI7b9 – IV – #iv^ø7 – I⁶₄ or V – III₆ – vi |

Above progression from bass angle like: I⁶₄ (passing tone on 4th) iii, iii7₂ (which is also V⁶₄) – IV^Δ7 – V11

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I – V7⁴₃ – I₆ – IV – #iv^ø7 – iv etc. |

Moving line progressions too.

e) Random Scale Harmonizations

2) Diminished 7th and Blues Progressions: Also see 18th and 19th century progressions

I – #i^ø7 (VI7b9) – ii7 – biii^ø7 (i^ø7) – I₆ – iv₆ – #iv^ø7 – I7⁴₃

iii or I₆ – biii^ø7 – ii7 – V7 | I or iii – bVI7 – ii – V | I7 – IV7 – II7 – V7 | I7 – bVII7 – bVI7 – V |

I – #i^ø7 – V7⁴₃ – biii^ø7 – I₆ – III7+ – IV – #iv^ø7 (II7b9) – V7... |

Descending 1st or 2nd Inversions (start in middle of chain also)

I – i^o – vii^o – bvii^o – vi – vi^o – V – v^o – IV – iv^o – iii – iii^o – II – ii^o – I... |

vi7 – v^o7⁴₃ – V7⁴₃ | IV/9 – v^ø7⁴₃ – V7⁴₃ | IV – #iv^ø7 – I⁶₄... | I7 – i^o7 – iv₆ – I |

i^o7 – I, iv^o7 – IV, v^o7 – V(7) or VI7b9 – ii(7) vamps

iv^o7 – IV – (VI7b9 – ii7) – i^o7 – I – III(7) – vi – iv or II7 etc.

I – III7 – IV – V | I – vi^ø7 – II7 – V |

Other Bluesy Progressions:

a) Use streams on any chord

b) Vamps, Chains (reverses)

IV7 or 9 – I | bVI7 or 9 – I |

Combinations of II7 or 9, IV7 or 9, bVI7 or 9 to I (precede or follow 7ths with 9ths)

I – I7 – IV7 – bVI7 – I | (I – I7) – IV7 – iv6or7 – I | (I – I7) – iv7 – iv6or7 – I |

(I – I7) – II7 – iv7 – I | I – iv | I – IV | I – V7#9 | I – V7+ | I – V+ – I9 – (v) |

I₆ – I – V₆ – I₇ – IV₇⁶₅ or II₇⁴₃ – iv₇⁶₅ – I⁶₄ – bVI₉₂ – V₇₂ – I₇#₉⁶₅ – IV₇₂ – iv₆₂ – I – bVI₉ – V₇ |

I – V₇#₉ – I, I₇(sus), IV₇, iv, [I – bVI₇ – (IV₇ – II₇) – ii₇ – V₇] or bVII₁₃ – vi – II₇... |

I – bVI₉ – I – IV₉ – II₉ – V₇ – I... ← (or 13th or 7ths)

Other original Gospel Progressions, “Swing Low” progression, “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah,”
Subdominant Connection, like in “Young Man with a Horn”

3) Modern Secondary Harmony:

a) Streams: on any chord by itself or in anything below.

b) Vamps: I – II₃sus or 11th | I – v₇ | I^Δ7 – i₇ | I – bII₁₃ |

I – bII^Δ7 | I – IV | I – IV₇ | I – iv₇or₆ | I – i^o₇ ext. | I – I^Δ7+ |

I – V₇ | I – V^Δ7+ | I – v₇+ | I – bVI₇ or ^Δ7 | I – bvi₆ |

I – bVII₁₃ | I – bVII | I – II/9 | I – bvii₆ | I – vi₆ | I – II₇ or 13 |

Also Chains and Reverses.

c) Combined Vamps:

See “Blues” section also

I – IV₉ – I – II₉ – ii – bII₉...

I – IV₁₃ – I₆ – bIII₁₃ – bVI (bII^Δ7 – ii – V) or bII₁₃ – II₃#₁₁

I – IV₉ – I – II₉ – IV – (bVII₉) – bII₉

I – bvii₆ – (I) – vi₆ – (IV or ii) – bvi₆ – I |

I – II₉ – I – bVII₉ – I – bV₉ – IV

I – II₉ – I – bVII₉ – I – bV₉ – IV₉ – bII₉ |

d) Symmetric Mono-Family Types:

Use m₆ family or m₇ and dominant family. Use extensions and overtones.

Voice-leading or irregular sequences.

vi } iv – i – bvi = II₇ } bVII₇ – IV₇ – bII₇

iv } vi – i – bvi = bVII₇ } II₇ – IV₇ – bII₇

biii } i – vi – iv – (bvi) = bVI₇ } IV₇ – II₇ – bVII₇ – (bII₇)

vi } i – iv – bvi = II₇ } IV₇ – bVII₇ – bII₇

I – vi } i – biii (or ii) – iv – bvi = I – II₇ – IV₇ – bVI₇ (or V₇) – bVII₇ – bII₇

biii – i – vi – bvi = bVI7 – IV7 – II7 – bII7
 ii – V, iv – bVII, bvi – bII and other combinations of same.
 bii – iv – bvi = bV7 – bVII7 – bII7
 iv – vi – bii to IV or iv
 i } bvi – iv – (ii) – V7 = IV7 – bII7 – bVII7 – (ii) – V7
 ii – V – vi – II – iv – bVII – ii – V or other ii–V groups

e) Cycles and Turnarounds:

Some substitutes: I7; ii^ø7; bII^A7, bII7 (or bvi7, bII7) for ii7 – V7 or V7 | IV7
 or V7 – I7 for or after ii – V; I – iv before bVII.

Start in middle of any pattern. Also mix up parts of different ones.

I – IV – vii – III – vi – II – ii – V
 I – VII – iv – bVII7 – bIII – bVI – ii – V
 I – #iv^ø7 – iv – bVII7 – bIII – bVI – ii – V
 I – (ii – iii) iv7 – bVII – bIII – vi – II – ii – V
 I – (ii – iii) iv – bVII – bIII – bVI – bII – ii – V
 I – vii – bvii – bIII7 – bVI – bII – ii – V
 I – IV – #iv – VII – iii – VI – ii – V
 I – IV – III – VI – II – bVI7 – ii – V
 I – IV – bVII7 – bIII7 – bVI – bII – ii – V
 I – IV – III – VI – vi – II – ii – V
 I – IV – III – VI – II – V – I
 I – bVII7 or iv7 – iii7 – VI – vi – II – ii – V
 I or v7 – I7 – IV – bVII7 – iii – VI – ii – V
 I or v7 – I7 – IV – bVII7 – vi – II – ii – V
 I (or iii) – vi – ii – V – I (or v7) – I7 – IV – bVII – iii (or I) – vi – II – V – iii (or I) – bIII7 – bVI – ii – V
 I (or iii) – vi – ii – V – I (or v) – I7 – IV – bVII – vi – II – ii – V – I – bIII7 – bVI – ii – V
 I (or iii) – vi – ii – V – I (or v) – I7 – IV – bVII – I – VII – bVII – VI etc.
 I (or iii) – vi – ii – V – I (or v) – I7 – IV – bVII – vii – III – vi – II – ii – V – bvi – bII
 #iv^ø7 (or iv6/9#11 or #iv7#9b5) – iv6 or iv7 or IV7 – iii or I – bIII7 – bVI – bII – ii – V } or
 #iv^ø7 – VII – iv – bVII – iii – vi or VI – biii – bVI etc. } combine
 #iv^ø7 – VII – iii^ø7 or iii7 – VI7 – ii^ø7 or ii7 – V7
 iii – vi (VI) – ii – V – I – IV – vii – III – vi – II etc.
 III – VI – II – V – I – IV – III – VI etc.

Chromatic descending from any degree

All majors in 4ths to ii – V.

vii – III – iii – VI – vi – II – ii – V or vii^ø7 – III – iii^ø7 – VI – vi – II – ii^ø7 – V
 vii – III – bvii – bIII – vi – II – bvi – bII
 vii – III – iv – bVII – iii – VI – bvii – bIII – vi – II – biii – bVI – ii – V – bvi – bII
 iv – bVII – iii – VI – biii – bVI – ii – V
 iv – bVII – bvii – bIII7 – bVI – bII – ii – V
 I or v – I7 – IV – bVII – iii – VI – bvii – bIII7 – bVI – vi – II (ii – V) (bvi – bII)
 v7 – I7 – i7 – IV7 – vii – III – iii – VI – vi – II – ii – V – I....
 v7 – I7 – i7 – IV7 – vii – III – iii – VI – vi – II – biii – bVI – ii – V – bvi – bII
 v7 – I7 – i7 – IV7 – vii – III – bvii – bIII – vi – II – biii – bVI – ii – V – bvi – bII
 Retrogressions like: iii – bVII7 – bVI7 or bIII – ii – V
 I – I7 – IV7 – VII7 – iv – bVII – iii – VI – vi – II – biii – bVI – ii – V – bvi – bII

Shorter formulas (but do streams on each) iii, iii^ø7, or III7 may replace I

I or vi – II – ii or IV – V

I – VI9 (vi) – II – ii – V

I or vi – II – iv – V

I – VI – ii or II – V

I – bIII7 – bVI – ii – V

I – VI – ii^ø7 – V

iii – bIII9 – ii – bII9

III – VI – II – V

bVII7 – bIII7 – bVI7 – bII7

bIII^Δ7 – bVI^Δ7 – ii^ø7 – V

bVII – VI – bVI – V

III – bIII – II – bII

4) Borrowed Majors (mainly):

Symmetric or Voice-leading

I – bVI – bIII – bVII – IV (V11) – I | bVI – bIII – bVII – IV (V11) – I |

I (bVII) – bVI, IV (bIII) – bII or bII7 | I – IV – bIII – bVII (or V or v) – I |

bVI – bIII, iv or IV – I | I – bIII – bVII – IV (V11) – I | bIII – bVII – i – V11 or other to I |

I – bVII – bIII – IV – I | I – bVI – bIII – V – ii – I | IV – bVI – bIII – V – ii – I |

(I) – bIII – IV – bVI – bVII (or v) – I | IV – bVII – bVI – iv – I | iv – v – bVI – bVII – I |

bII – bIII – (IV) – bVI – bVII – I |

Random Use

Use Tritone Relation (like vi – bIII ala “Unchained”)

Also: Chord Scales, Pedals, Contrary (like C – Dm/Bb – Eb/Ab – F/G) Progressions all in either borrowed keys or with borrowed chords. Don’t forget Parallel Minor and all its devices and treasures. Mixtures may precede, replace or follow their diatonic brothers.

1 DIATONIC TYPES (MOSTLY)

Streams on any diatonic chord

VAMPS CHAINS (REVERSE any)

II7 IV7 I II7 III7 IV7 I I IV

MAX STEINERTYPE

II7 IV7 I (VI7) II7 III7 IV7 V7 I I7 II7 III7 IV7 V7 I

VI7 II7 IV7 I III7 VI7 II7 V7 I VI7 II7 IV7 I

I VI7 IV7 V7 I I III7 IV7 V7 VI7 III7 IV7 (V7) I

II7 VI7 IV7 I I VI7 IV7 II7 (VI7) VI7 IV7 (bIII) V7

IV7 II7 (VI7) I VI7 IV7 II7 (bIII) V7 IV7 II7 VII7 VI7 IV7 II7 (bIII) V7

DIATONIC THRS: I7 IV7 VII7 III7 VI7 II7 V7 I7

START from anywhere (any degree) also SPRING CAN REALLY TAG

OTHER SYMMETRIC PROGRESSIONS:

C7 F7, Em7 Am7 | C7 Am7 F7, Dm7 G7... | C7 F7, Am7 Dm7 |

C7 Am7 F7, Bb7 G7 Em7 | C7 Am7 F7, Dm7 Bb7 G7... |

C7 Am7, Bb7 G7... | C7 Am7 voice leading to Em7 C7... |

C7 Am7, G7 Em7... | C7 Em7, Dm7 F7... | C7 Em7, Am7 C7... |

C7 Em7, Bb7 Dm7 | C7 Am7, Dm7 Bb7... | C7 Bb7, Em7 Dm7... |

C7 Dm7, Bb7 C7 | C7 Dm7 C7 Bb7, Am7 Bb7 Am7 G7... |

C7 Bb7 C7 Dm7, Em7 Dm7 Em7 F7... | C7 Em7 Dm7 C7... |

PRETTY ASC + DESC BASS TYPES (with some SECONDARY CHORDS):

MATCHMAKER -> I II7 I9/5 IV7 I9/5 IV7 6 II7 3 IV7 3 |

I II III IV V VI VII II III IV V VI VII I II III IV V VI VII I

above prog from bass angle like: I 2/4 (passing tone on 4th)

III, 7 (which is also I 2/4) IV7 V7 I I V7 2 I IV 2/4 V7 etc |

MOVING LINE PROGS. TOO

RANDOM SCALE HARMONIZATIONS

MODERN SECONDARY HARMONY-

Streams: on any chord below

VAMPS: I I13 sus or 11th | I V7 | I7 I7 | I bII13 |

bII7 | I IV | I IV7 | I IV7 or 6 | I I7 or 9 | I I7 #9 |

I V7 | I V7 #9 | I V7 #9 | I bVII7 or 9 | I bVII6 |

I bVII13 | I bVII | I II/9 | I bVII6 | I VI6 | I II7

etc

COMBINED VAMPS:

See BIVES section also

I IV9 I II9 ii bII9...

I IV13 I8 bIII13 bVI (bII7 ii V) or bII13 I13+11

I IV9 I II9 IV (bVII9) bII9

I bVII6 (I) VI6 (II iii) bVI6 I |

I II9 I bVII9 I bV9 IV

I II9 I bVII9 I bV9 IV9 bIII9 |

SYMMETRIC MONO-FAMILY TYPES:

use m6 family use m7, + OVERTONES

VI7 IV7 bVI = II7 (bVII7 IV7 bII7

IV7 VI7 bVI = bVII7 II7 IV7 bII7

bIII7 i VI7 IV (bVI) = bVII7 IV7 II7 bVII7 (bII7)

VI7 i IV7 bVI = II7 IV7 bVII7 bII7

II7 i VI7 bVI = bVI7 IV7 II7 bVII7 bII7

II V, IV bVII, bVI bII + OTHER COMBIN of same

bII i IV bVI = bV7 bVII7 bII7

IV VI bII to IV or IV

I7 bVI IV (ii) V7 = IV7 bII7 bVII7 (ii) V7

II V VI II IV bVII ii V or other II V groups

CYCLES + TURNAROUNDS:

some substitutes: I7, II7, bIII7, bII7, III7, IV7, V7, VI7, VII7

START IN MIDDLE of ANY PATTERN

also MIX UP PARTS of DIFFERENT ONES

I IV VII III VI II V

I VII IV bVII bIII bVI II V

I #IV i IV bVII bIII bVI II V

I IV bVII bIII bVI bII II V

I VII bVII bIII bVI bII II V

I IV #IV VII III VI II V

I IV III VI II bVI, II V

I IV bVII, bIII, bVI bII II V

I IV III VI II V I

I bVII, or bIII, III VI VI II V

I or V, I7 IV bVII, III VI II V

I or V, I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I or III, VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

I (or III) VI II V I (or V), I7 IV bVII, VII II V

BORROWED MAJORS (MAINLY):

bVI bIII bVII IV (V II) I

I (bVII) bVII IV (bIII) bII or bII7

I IV bIII bVII (or V or V) I

bVI bVII, IV or II I

I bIII bVII IV (V II) I

I bIII bVII IV I

I bVI bIII V II I

IV bVI bIII V II I

(I) bIII IV bVI bVII (or V) I

IV bVII bVI IV I

bII bIII (IV) bVI bVII I

RANDOM USE | use TRITONE relation (like VI bIII aka "UNCHAINED")

also CHORD SCALES, PEDALS, CONTR (LXKE C Dm Eb F), PROG all in OTHER borrowed keys or with borrowed chords MIXTURES MAY PRECEDE, REFLECT OR FOLLOW THEIR DIATONIC BROTHERS DON'T FORGET PARALLEL MINOR + all its devices + treasures

SYMMETRIC OR VOICE LEADING

VOICE LEADING OR IRREGULAR SEQUENCES