

List of Common Progressions in Standard Type Songs

Ted Greene, 1980-10-01

After analyzing 150 or so standard type songs, it was observed that certain progressions kept appearing over and over. Here then is a list of common progressions in standard type songs (with song listing for reference).

Tunes that start with I – vi7 – ii7 – V7:

Ain't Misbehavin'	Mountain Greenery
A Summer Place	My Foolish Heart
Beyond the Sea	On the Street Where You Live
Emily (optional: IV for ii7)	Polkadots and Moonbeams
I Can't Get Started	Since I Fell for You
I Could Write a Book	Somebody Loves Me
I Got Rhythm	The More I See You
I'm in the Mood for Love	These Foolish Things
I'm Old Fashioned	The Song is You
Love Letters	This Could Be the Start of Something Big
Makin' Whoopee	Time After Time
Moonlight in Vermont	With a Song in My Heart
More	Zing Went the Strings of My Heart (IV for ii)

I – vi7 – ii7 – V7 (in other keys such as III or V, or in home key but not at the beginning):

For Once in My Life (end)	Once in A While (iiø7)
How About You?	Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head (end)
I Love You	Sophisticated Lady
I Remember You	Stella by Starlight
Lover	S' Wonderful
Misty	Tangerine
Moon River (end)	The Boy Next Door
Ol' Man River (end)	You Go to My Head

And many others (many are actually ii7 – V7 then I – vi – ii – V)

iii – vi7 – ii7 – V7:

The Days of Wine and Roses (end)	Waltz for Debby
Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars [Corcovado]	What Kind of Fool Am I
Someone to Watch Over Me	What the World Needs Now
This Guy's in Love	

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LIST OF COMMON PROGRESSIONS IN STANDARD TYPE SONGS (WITH SONG LISTINGS FOR REFERENCE)

TUNES THAT START WITH

I V⁷ ii⁷ V⁷: AIN'T MISBEHAVIN', A SUMMER PLACE, BEYOND THE SEA, EMILY (opt. II for ii⁷), I CAN'T GET STARTED, I COULD WRITE A BOOK, I GOT RHYTHM, I'M IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE, I'M OLD FASHIONED, LOVE LETTERS, MAKIN' WHOOPIE, MOONLIGHT IN VT., MORE, MOUNTAIN GREENERY, MY FOOLISH HEART, ON THE ST. WHERE YOU LOVE, POLKA DOTS & MOONBEAMS, SINCE I FELL FOR YOU, SOMEBODY LOVES ME, THE MORE I SEE YOU, THESE FOOLISH THINGS, THE SONG IS YOU, THIS COULD BE THE START OF SOMETHING BIG, TIME AFTER TIME, WITH A SONG IN MY HEART, ZANE WENT THE STRINGS (II for ii)

I V⁷ ii⁷ V⁷ (in other keys such as III or V, or in home key but not at the beginning):

FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE (and), HOW ABOUT YOU, I LOVE YOU, I REMEMBER YOU, LOVER, MISTY, MOON RIVER (and), OL' MAN RIVER (and), ONCE IN AWHILE (ii for V), RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING' (and), SOPHISTICATED LADY, STELLA BY STARLIGHT, S' WONDERFUL, TANGERINE, THE BOY NEXT DOOR YOU GOT TO MY HEAD, & many others (many are actually ii⁷ V⁷ then I vi ii V)

iii⁷ Vi⁷ ii⁷ V⁷: DAYS OF WINE & ROSES (and), Quiet Thoughts of Quiet Stars, Someone to Watch Over Me, This Guy's in Love', WALTZ FOR DEBBY, WHAT KIND OF FOOL AM I, WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW,