

(Book 5.) Lesson 2a.


"Tonality"

Although the key signature in all of these four bar melodies is the same, they are not all in the key of "C".

Tune No:1 is truly in the key of "C" major. The judgement can be made from the fact that the tune is totally diatonic in the key of "C". Similarly, the chords are drawn from the scale harmony of "C" major. Finally, the melody "resolves" to the note "C".

Tune No:1

C(I) G7(V7) C(I) F(IV) C(I) Dm7(ii7) G7(V7) C(I)

Musical notation for Tune No:1 in C major. The melody consists of the notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, and C5. The chords are C(I), G7(V7), C(I), F(IV), C(I), Dm7(ii7), G7(V7), and C(I).

Tune No:2 is in the key of "A Minor". The re-occurring accidental "G#" is the immediate give-away. Similarly, the chords are drawn from the key of "A minor." The song also resolves on to the tonic note "A".

Tune No:2

Am(I) E7(V7) Am(I) Dm7(IV7) E7(V7) Am(I)

Musical notation for Tune No:2 in A minor. The melody consists of the notes A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G#4, F4, E4, and A4. The chords are Am(I), E7(V7), Am(I), Dm7(IV7), E7(V7), and Am(I).

Tune No:3

C E7 A7 Dm7 G7 C

Musical notation for Tune No:3 in C major. The melody consists of the notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, and C5. The chords are C, E7, A7, Dm7, G7, and C.

Tune No:3 seems to be a bit mixed up because, while it does eventually resolve to "C" which indicates the possibility of the key of "C", the chords do not all belong to the key of "C". The chords also do not all belong to the key of "A Minor" (the relative minor of C major). The "A7" chord is the dominant 7th chord in the key of D major or D minor.

In actual fact, the song is in the "tonality" of "C" major. A tonality is a group of related major and minor keys. (This will be explored in detail on the next page)

The exploration of "tonality" focuses on closely related keys, but in actual fact, all keys are related to each other in some manner. As an example: The key of C (no sharps or flats) is related to the key of Ab (flats on B-E-A-D). The common bond is that the note "C" is the 3rd note in the Ab scale and consequently the "3rd" of the Ab chord. This may seem a bit far-fetched because the scales only have three notes in common.