

Practical Exercise in Primary and Secondary Diatonic Progressions

Primary-----Secondary-----

Primary		Secondary									
up 4 strongest	up 2	down 3 weakest primary	down 4 strongest secondary	down 2	up 3 weakest of all						
C I	F IV	C I	Dm ii	C I	Am vi	C I	G V	C I	Bdim vii	C I	Em iii
Dm ii	G V	Dm ii	Em iii	Dm ii	Bdim vii	Dm ii	Am vi	Dm ii	C I	Dm ii	F IV
Em iii	Am vi	Em iii	F IV	Em iii	C I	Em iii	Bdim vii	Em iii	Dm ii	Em iii	G V
F IV	Bdim vii	F IV	G V	F IV	Dm ii	F IV	C I	F IV	Em iii	F IV	Am vi
G V	C I	G V	Am vi	G V	Em iii	G V	Dm ii	G V	F IV	G V	Bdim vii
Am vi	Dm ii	Am vi	Bdim vii	Am vi	F IV	Am vi	Em iii	Am vi	G V	Am vi	C I
Bdim vii	Em iii	Bdim vii	C I	Bdim vii	G V	Bdim vii	F IV	Bdim vii	Am vi	Bdim vii	Dm ii

These "campfire" type chords all carry their Root bass notes and will adequately depict the basic "root movements" within the diatonic scope of the Key of C. The first staff, showing the movement from the Tonic, while not incorrect, may be a bit deceptive. The Tonic chord being the most stable of all the chords in the key, exhibits no particular desire to move to any particular chord. The Tonic chord can simply move to any chord be it one of the diatonic chords of the key or perhaps a chord in some other key. A movement away from the Tonic is not so much a progression as it is a "succession" or "leap." Some of the secondary progressions while being theoretically weaker than the primary progressions, do have a feeling of strength. As an example, G to F is a down 2 secondary progression but perhaps because the chords are both major chords, the progression has a feeling of some strength. The two major chords reflect the quality of the key more so than the minor chords associated with the key. **Isolate and play each chord pair and listen to the aural impact.**