

Chord Progressions For Songwriters

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Richard J. Scott

Writers Club Press
New York Lincoln Shanghai

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Writers Club Press
an imprint of iUniverse, Inc.

For information address:
iUniverse, Inc.
2021 Pine Lake Road, Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68512
www.iuniverse.com

ISBN: 0-595-26384-4

Printed in the United States of America

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Acknowledgement

I want to thank Janis Scott for her support, encouragement, hard work, and invaluable assistance in editing and preparing this book for publication.

Introduction

John Lennon said, “All music is rehash. There are only a few notes. Just variations on a theme.” If this is true, then there is a great deal that can be learned by studying the music that has gone before. Just as every craftsman begins by imitating the masters, a songwriter doesn’t need to reinvent rock and roll when he or she can look at the works of Chuck Berry to see how it’s created.

The recipe for music is part melody, lyric, rhythm, and harmony (chord progressions). The term chord progression refers to a succession of tones or chords played in a particular order for a specified duration that harmonizes with the melody. Except for styles such as rap and free jazz, chord progressions are an essential building block of contemporary western music establishing the basic framework of a song. If you take a look at a large number of popular songs, you will find that certain combinations of chords are used repeatedly because the individual chords just simply sound good together. I call these popular chord progressions the money chords. These money chord patterns vary in length from one- or two-chord progressions to sequences lasting for the whole song such as the twelve-bar blues and thirty-two bar rhythm changes. Many of these money chord progressions are built with just major chords constructed with the first, fourth and fifth notes of the scale such as the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression. The C, F, and G chords are referred to as primary chords because they include all the notes of the C major scale. As all music is about the creation and resolution of tension, each chord change in a progression creates musical tension that suggests another change. In the above rock and roll progression, the “C” (tonic) chord is a chord of rest that provides a feeling of arriving, finality, or resolution. The “G” (dominant) chord is a chord of movement that wants to move forward. These chords create a pull-

ing or tension that needs to be resolved to the “C” (tonic) chord. While the “G-C” movement is the strongest progression in Western music, the “F” (subdominant) chord also creates a tendency to resolve to the “C” (tonic) chord but is more relaxed sounding than the “G” (dominant) chord. By combining both primary and secondary chords you can create progressions such as the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression. Secondary chords are the minor or diminished chords in a harmonized major scale. These chords are important because in addition to the primary chords, they sound good together and provide another place to go to provide color to a progression. Roman numerals are often used to denote a chord’s position in a scale without reference to a specific key. For example, in Roman numerals, the rock and roll progression would be written “I-IV-V” and the doo-wop progression would be written “I-VIm-IV-V.” The box below shows the harmonized major scale in Roman numerals and in the key of C. It also identifies the general musical term for a chord based on that degree of the scale as well as which are primary and secondary chords and their respective chord qualities.

I	Tonic/Root	C	Primary	Major
IIIm	Subtonic	Dm	Secondary	Minor
IIIIm	Mediant	Em	Secondary	Minor
IV	Subdominant	F	Primary	Major
V	Dominant	G	Primary	Major
VIm	Submediant	Am	Secondary	Minor
VIIo	Leading Tone	Bo	Secondary	Diminished
VIII	Octave	C	Primary	Major

The next table below demonstrates general chord movement tendencies. The middle column shows the most common movement from the chord on the left while the last column indicates other less frequent movement tendencies. For example, the “I” chord favors movement to

the “IV” or “V” chords but can move to any other chord. Keep in mind that the strongest harmonic resolution is the V-I (or Im) movement.

I	IV or V	or any chord
IIIm	V or VIIo	or IV
IIIIm	VIIm or IV	or V or IIIm/3 rd
IV	V or I	or VIIm or IIIm or VIIo
V	I	or IV or VIIm
VIIm	IIIm, IV or V	
VIIo	I	or IIIIm

Every songwriter should have a working knowledge of how money chord progressions are created and used in popular music in order to expand his or her pallet of possible harmonies that are available for a specific melody. Songwriters should also be aware that chord progressions, like song titles, cannot be copyrighted as musical compositions. This fact has been well understood and capitalized on by successful songwriters for over a century. Thousands of hit songs have been written using the chord progressions that you will learn about in this book. Whether you create the lyrics, melody, rhythm, or chord progression first, a better understanding of chord progressions will greatly improve your songwriting skills.

In this book you will be introduced to twenty-one chord progressions that every songwriter should know inside and out. Each chapter explores some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used one of these progressions to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, variation (adding or subtracting chords), and displacement (rearranged chord orders) can be used to vary the sound of the progression or create a new one. You will also take a quick look at ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own progressions. Feel free to skip around. Each chapter is intended to be a self-contained lesson on that chord progression. The

examples used in this book were taken primarily from my book *Money Chords—A Songwriter’s Sourcebook Of Popular Chord Progressions* (published July 2000 by Writers Club Press). All examples, unless indicated otherwise, are in the keyboard and guitar friendly keys of C (or Am) and are displayed in four bar phrases as shown below. Each hash mark and letter represent one beat. In the example below, the “C” chord would be played for eight beats and the “F” and “G” chords would be played for four beats each.

C ///	///	F ///	G ///
-------	-----	-------	-------

Although examples are provided in the key of C (or Am), each progression can and should be transposed, played, and learned in all keys. This book assumes that you have a basic knowledge of certain elements of music theory. If you need a quick refresher, the “Appendix” in the back of this book includes primers on chord substitution, modulation, Roman numerals, and transposing as well as a chord glossary.

Chord Progressions

Ascending Bass Lines

Ascending bass lines occur when the lowest (bass) notes of each chord in a progression move higher typically in half or whole steps. Composers as far back as Scott Joplin (1868–1917) have relied on ascending bass lines to brighten their songs. Check out his and other ragtime writers frequent use of the “IV-#IVo-V” sequence in their songs. Later, Broadway show tune writer Richard Rodgers’ used an ascending bass line to create the last eight bars of the chorus progression to his *Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin’* (from “Oklahoma”—1943) shown below.

C //	///	F //	F#o7 //
C/G //	G7 //	C //	G7 //

Ascending bass lines are bright and happy in contrast to descending bass lines that are used to create romantic moods (see the separate “Descending Bass Lines” chapter of this book). There are two main types of ascending bass lines. The first is the ascending diatonic bass line that moves up in scale steps creating “1-2-3-4” and “2-3-4-5” bass note sequences. The second is the ascending chromatic bass line that climbs in half steps from the tonic yielding “1-#1-2-#2” bass note patterns.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used ascending bass lines to write hit songs. You will learn how diatonic and chromatic movement has been used to create this type of bass line. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own ascending bass lines.

DIATONIC BASS LINES

In this section you will look at the “C-Dm-Em-F,” “Dm-Em-F-G,” “C-Dm-F-G,” and “C-Em-F-G” ascending diatonic bass line progressions. Play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Although these examples are presented in the key of C, they should be transposed, played, and studied in other keys.

C-Dm-Em-F Progression

The root notes of the “C-Dm-Em-F” progression form a “1-2-3-4” ascending diatonic bass line progression. These sequences are sometimes referred to as chord streams characterized by sliding stepwise root movement from chord to chord climbing the harmonized scale. An example of this type of chord stream is the verse progression to Bob Dylan’s 1965 hit *Like A Rolling Stone* shown below.

C / Dm /	Em / F /	G ///	////
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. You will notice that several of these progressions continue to move up to the “G” chord creating an extended “C-Dm-Em-F-G” chord stream. Notice that several examples use the “C/E” inversion (see the “Appendix”) substitution for the mediant. The last six examples replace the “Dm” for the “F” chord (a relative minor/major substitution) creating a sequence that both ascends and descends diatonically in second intervals creating a lighter lilting sound. This “C-Dm-Em-Dm” chord stream can generally be substituted for two bars of the “C” chord to provide greater harmonic interest that is referred to as a scalewise substitution (see the “Appendix”).

C	Dm	Em	F	<i>Here, There and Every-where</i> verse (Beatles—1966), <i>Daydream Believer</i> verse (Monkees—1967), and <i>Lean On Me</i> verse (Bill Withers—1972)
C	Dm	Em	Fmaj7	<i>Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing</i> verse (Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell—1968)
C	Dm7	Em7	F	<i>Sexie Sadie</i> chorus (Beatles—1968)
C11-C	Dm7	Em7	Fmaj7-G11-G	<i>You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'</i> verse (Righteous Brothers—1965)
C	D	E	F-G	<i>Bad, Bad Leroy Brown</i> chorus (Jim Croce—1973)
C	Dm	C/E	F-G	<i>Uptown Girl</i> verse (Billy Joel—1983)
C	Dm7	C/E	F-G7	<i>I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair</i> verse (Standard—1949)
C	Dm7	C/E	F	<i>Slow Dancing (Swayin' To The Music)</i> chorus (Johnny Rivers—1977)
C	Dm7	Cmaj7/E	F	<i>Longer</i> verse (Dan Fogelberg—1980)
C	Dm7addG	C/E	FaddG-C/G	<i>Heart Of The Matter</i> chorus (Don Henley—1990)
C	Dm7	C/E	Dm7	<i>Woman</i> verse (John Lennon—1981)

C	Dm	Em	Dm	<i>Yes, I'm Ready</i> verse (Barbara Mason—1965)
C	Dm	Em	Dm-C	<i>It Ain't Me Baby</i> verse (Turtles—1965)
C	Dm7	Em	Dm7	<i>Today's The Day</i> verse (America—1976)
C	Dm7	Em7	Dm7-C	<i>Ask Me Why</i> verse (Beatles—1963)
Cmaj7	Dm7	Em7	Dm7	<i>The Surrey With The Fringe On Top</i> A section (Standard—1943)
Cmaj7	Dm7	Em7	Dm7-G7	<i>Ooh Baby Baby</i> verse (Miracles—1965)

If you reverse the above progression you create the “Fmaj7-Em7-Dm7-Cmaj7” verse progression to *Lovin' You* (Minnie Riperton—1975).

Dm-Em-F-G Progression

The root notes of the “Dm-Em-F-G” progression form a “2-3-4-5” diatonic ascending bass line. An example of this type of chord stream is the chorus progression to Cowsills' 1967 hit *Rain, The Park And Other Things* shown below.

Dm///	Em///	F///	G///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line progression. The last two examples substitute the “Em” for the “G” chord (relative minor/major substitution) in a “Dm-Em-F-G” chord stream creating a bass line that both ascends and then descends. The *Do You Believe In Magic* example demonstrates the lighter lilting sound produced by these vacillating progressions. Try playing the *Do It Again*

example with and without the “Em7” substitution. Notice the subtle difference the substitution makes.

Dm	Em	F	G	<i>Everybody Wants To Rule The World</i> verse (Tears For Fears—1985)
Dm7	Em7	F	G7	<i>Younger Girl</i> verse (Critters—1965)
Dm7	Em7	F	G13	<i>Autumn In New York</i> A section (Standard—1934)
Dm7	Em7	F6	G7-C	<i>Heat Wave</i> verse (Martha & The Vandellas—1963)
Dm7	Em7	Fmaj7	G-C	<i>(You're My) Soul And Inspiration</i> verse (Righteous Brothers—1965)
Dm7	Em7	F7	G7-C7#9	<i>Kid Charlemagne</i> chorus (Steely Dan—1976)
Dm	Em	F	Em	<i>Do You Believe In Magic</i> verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1965)
Dm7	Em7	Fmaj7	Em7-Am7	<i>Do It Again</i> chorus (Steely Dan)

C-Dm-F-G Progression

The root notes of the “C-Dm-F-G” progression form a “1-2-4-5” ascending diatonic bass line that skips a scale step between the second and third chords. An example of this type of progression is the main chorus progression to the Temptations’ 1965 hit *My Girl* shown below.

C / Dm /	F / G /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. The “C-Dm-F-C” example is a further variation of this type of progression that omits the “G” chord and resolves directly to the tonic. Notice the use of a partial pedal point on the *Rock N’ Roll Heaven* example.

C	Dm	F	G7		<i>I've Got To Get A Message To You</i> chorus (Bee Gees—1968), <i>Love Is All Around</i> verse (Troggs—1968), <i>Vincent</i> verse (Don McLean—1972), and <i>Beautiful Loser</i> verse (Bob Seger—1974)
C	Dm7	F	G		<i>Young Americans</i> verse (David Bowie—1975)
Cmaj9	Dm	F	G11		<i>Key Largo</i> verse (Bertie Higgins—1982)
C	Dm	F =>	C		<i>And Your Bird Can Sing</i> (Beatles—1966), <i>Massachusetts</i> verse (Bee Gees—1967), and <i>All Around The World</i> chorus (Oasis—1997)
C	Dm/C	F =>	C		<i>Rock N' Roll Heaven</i> chorus (Righteous Brothers—1972)

Displacements (rearranged chord orders) of the “C-Dm-F-G” sequence include the “C-Dm-G-F-C” opening verse progression to *Morning Has Broken* (Cat Stevens—1972) and the “F/C-G/B-Dm-C” opening verse progression to *Wishing You Were Here* (Pink Floyd—1975).

Replacing the “Dm” with the “D” chord (a parallel major/minor substitution) in the above “C-Dm-F-G” progression creates the “C-D-F-G” substitution. An example of this type of substitution is the verse progression to Tom Petty’s 1976 *American Girl* shown below.

C ///	D ///	F ///	G ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice the parallel minor/major substitution in the *You’ve Got Your Troubles* example. The further “C-D-F-C” variation is an example of a pop rock Lydian progression that gets its name from the harmonized Lydian scale where both the “C” and “D” major chords occur naturally.

C	D	F	G		<i>As Tears Go By</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1966)
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C	D	F	G7	C	<i>She'd Rather Be With Me</i> verse (Turtles—1967), <i>Walk A Mile In My Shoes</i> verse (Joe South—1970), and <i>Old Fashioned Love Song</i> chorus (Three Dog Night—1971)
C	D7	Fm	G	C	<i>You've Got Your Troubles</i> verse (Fortunes—1965)
C	D9	F	G11		<i>Love Train</i> chorus (O'Jays—1973)
C	D	F	=>	C	<i>Eight Days A Week</i> verse (Beatles—1965) and <i>Stay With Me</i> verse/chorus (Faces—1972)
C	D/C	F/C	=>	C	<i>Right Here Right Now</i> chorus (Jesus Jones—1991)
C	D	[D#-E]-F	=>	C	<i>Ride Captain Ride</i> verse (Blues Image—1970)
C	D7	F	=>	C	<i>You Won't See Me</i> verse (Anne Murray—1974)
C7	D7	F7	=>	C7	<i>Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
C5	D5	F5			<i>The Boys Are Back In Town</i> chorus (Thin Lizzy—1975)

A displacement of the above “C-D-F-G” sequence is the “G-C-F-D” verse progression to *Pride (In The Name Of Love)* (U2—1984)

C-Em-F-G Progression

The root notes of the last three chords in the “C-Em-F-G” rock ballad progression form a “3-4-5” ascending diatonic bass line. The use of the mediant (“Em”) in the rock ballad progression was a welcome change from the over-used “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression that was popular at the time. Paul McCartney commenting on the Beatles’ use of the mediant (“III^m”) chord said, “It was a bit of a formula. We knew if you went from “E” (“I”) to “G#m” (“III^m”) you could always make a song

with those chords...that change pretty much always excited you.” Listen to the chorus of their 1964 hit *I Feel Fine*. A more recent example of this type of bass line is the main verse progression to Rod Stewart’s 1989 *Have I Told You Lately* shown below.

C / Em7 /	F / G11 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. You will also find examples of the “C-Em-F” (omitted “G” chord) and “C-Em-G” (omitted “F” chord) variations. Again, notice several examples that use the “C/E” inversion substitution for the mediant.

C	Em	F	G	
				<i>A Summer Song</i> verse (Chad & Jeremy—1964), <i>Fun, Fun, Fun</i> chorus (Beach Boys—1964), <i>Mister Lonely</i> verse (Bobby Vinton—1964), <i>A Lover’s Concerto</i> verse (Toys—1965), <i>I Go To Pieces</i> verse (Peter & Gordon—1965), <i>True Love Ways</i> verse (Peter & Gordon—1965), <i>You Baby</i> verse (Turtles—1966), <i>Georgy Girl</i> verse (Seekers—1967), <i>Different Drum</i> verse (Stone Ponies—1967), <i>Hurdy Gurdy Man</i> verse (Donovan—1968), <i>Woman, Woman</i> verse (Union Gap—1968), <i>Jean</i> (Oliver—1969), <i>I Started A Joke</i> verse (Bee Gees—1969), <i>Sooner Or Later</i> chorus (Grass Roots—1971), <i>Crocodile Rock</i> verse (Elton John—1972), <i>Ziggy Stardust</i> verse (David Bowie—1972), <i>Nice To Be With You</i> verse (Gallery—1972), <i>Every Time You Go Away</i> verse (Paul Young—1979), and <i>Bright Side Of The Road</i> verse (Van Morrison—1979)
C	Em/B	F	G	
				<i>Take My Breath Away</i> chorus (Berlin—1986)

C	Em	F	G7- G7b9		<i>Live And Let Die</i> verse (Wings—1973)
C	Em	F	Dm7- G7	C	<i>I Knew You When</i> chorus (Billy Joe Royal—1965)
C	Em	F	G11		<i>You Didn't Have To Be So Nice</i> verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1966) and <i>Key Largo</i> chorus (Bertie Higgins—1982)
C	Em	Fmaj7	G		<i>Weekend In New England</i> verse (Barry Manilow—1976)
C	Em	Fm	G7		<i>I Don't Want To See You Again</i> verse (Peter & Gordon—1964)
C- Cmaj9	Em	F	G	Am- G-F	<i>Time Passages</i> verse (Al Stew- art—1978)
C	Em7	F	G	F	<i>Changes</i> verse (David Bowie—1971)
C	Em7	F	G11		<i>The Right Time Of The Night</i> chorus (Jennifer Warnes—1977)
C	E	F	G	Am-G	<i>Rock 'N' Roll Suicide</i> verse (David Bowie—1972)
C	E7#5	F	G11		<i>Build Me Up Buttercup</i> chorus (Foundations—1969)
C	C/E	F	G		<i>Expressway To Your Heart</i> verse (Soul Survivors—1967), <i>My Life</i> verse (Billy Joel—1979), <i>Lady In Red</i> chorus (Chris DeBurgh—1987) and <i>You're Still The One</i> verse (Shania Twain—1998)
C	C/E	F	[C/E]- G		<i>You're The Inspiration</i> chorus (Chi- cago—1985)
C	C/E	F	G- G11		<i>Get Off Of My Cloud</i> chorus (Rolling Stones 1965)
C	C/E	F	G11		<i>With A Little Luck</i> verse (Wings—1978)
C	C/E	F	G11- G7		<i>On The Wings Of Love</i> chorus (Jef- frey Osborne—1982)

C	C7/E	F	G11		<i>Take Me To The Pilot</i> chorus (Elton John—1969)
Cadd9	Cmaj7 /E	Fmaj7	G11		<i>Somewhere Out There</i> verse (Linda Ronstadt & James Ingram—1987)
C	Em7	F			<i>This Old Heart Of Mine</i> verse (Rod Stewart—1987)
C	Em7	Fmaj7			<i>Silly Love Songs</i> verse (Wings—1976)
C	E	F-[E-Eb]-D			<i>(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay</i> verse (Otis Redding—1968)
C	Em	F	=>	C	<i>The First Noel</i> chorus (Christmas—1833), <i>My Mammy</i> verse (Al Jolson—1920), <i>You Belong To Me</i> verse (Duprees—1962), <i>Green, Green</i> verse (New Christy Minstrels—1963), <i>Puff The Magic Dragon</i> verse/chorus (Peter, Paul & Mary—1963), <i>Cara, Mia</i> verse (Jay & The Americans—1965), <i>Red Rubber Ball</i> verse (Cyrcle—1966), <i>The Weight</i> verse (The Band—1968), <i>Eleanor</i> chorus (Turtles—1968), <i>In The Ghetto</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1969), <i>Sister Golden Hair</i> verse (America—1975), <i>It's A Heartache</i> verse (Bonnie Tyler—1978), <i>Against The Wind</i> verse/chorus (Bob Seger—1979), and <i>All I Want To Do Is Make Love To You</i> verse (Heart—1990)
C	Em7	F	=>	C	<i>Too Much Heaven</i> chorus (Bee Gees—1978)
C	Em7	Fmaj7	=>	C	<i>Flowers Never Bend With The Rainfall</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1965)
Cmaj7	Em7	F	=>	C	<i>We May Never Pass This Way (Again)</i> verse (Seals & Crofts—1973)

C	E	F-Fm	=>	C	<i>Green Grass</i> verse (Gary Lewis & The Playboys—1966)
C	E7	F	=>	C	<i>Goodbye Yellow Brick Road</i> chorus (Elton John—1973) and <i>You're Sixteen</i> verse (Ringo Starr—1974)
C	E7	F-Fm	=>	C	<i>Space Oddity</i> verse (David Bowie—1973) and <i>The Air That I Breathe</i> verse (Hollies—1974)
C	Em	=>	G7		<i>Count Me In</i> verse (Gary Lewis & The Playboys—1965)
C	Em/B	=>	G7		<i>Let's Spend The Night Together</i> verse (Rolling Stone—1967)

If you insert the “Am7” chord between the “C” and “Em7” chords in a rock ballad progression you create the “C-Am7-Em7-F-G” chorus progression to All-4-One’s 1994 hit *I Swear*.

Songs Based On Ascending Diatonic Bass Lines

Below are five songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of ascending diatonic bass lines.

With A Little Luck

The ten-bar verse progression to Wings’ 1978 hit *With A Little Luck* is shown below. This arrangement features a “C-E-F-G” ascending bass line constructed from the rock and roll progression.

C ///	C/E ///	F ///	G11 ///
C ///	C/E ///	F ///	G11 ///
Am7 ///	////		

Woman

The fourteen-bar verse progression to John Lennon's 1981 hit *Woman* is shown below. John Lennon replaces the "Em" in the "C-Dm-Em-Dm" chord stream with the "C/E" chord (mediant substitution). He also alternates between the chord stream and the "C-Am-Dm-G" standard progression.

C / Dm7 /	C/E / Dm7 /	C / Am /	Dm / Gsus4 G
F / Dm7 /	Em / Gsus4 G	C / Dm7 /	C/E / Dm7 /
C / Am /	Dm / Gsus4 G	F / Dm7 /	Em /
Gsus4 ///	G ///		

Somewhere Out There

The eight-bar A section progression to Linda Ronstadt and James Ingrams' 1987 hit *Somewhere Out There* is shown below. This is another example of an ascending bass line constructed from the rock and roll progression.

Cadd9 / Cmaj7/E /	Fmaj7 / G11 /	Cadd9 / C/E /	F ///
Dm7 / G/F /	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 C/E F /	Gsus4 / G /

The Heart Of The Matter

The twelve-bar chorus progression to Don Henley's 1990 hit *The Heart Of The Matter* is shown below. Notice the use of the dominant ("G") pedal point (see the separate "Pedal Points" chapter). Try playing the pedal point in the soprano or middle voice.

C ///	Dm7addG ///	C/E ///	FaddG ///
C/G ///	Am7 ///	FaddG ///	Gsus4 / G /
C ///	G7sus4 ///	C ///	G7sus4 ///

Right Here, Right Now

The eight-bar verse/outro pop rock Lydian progression to Jesus Jones 1991 hit *Right Here Right Now* is shown below. This progression uses a tonic pedal in the bass with a middle voice that descends chromatically (5-b5-4-3).

C ///	D/C ///	F/C ///	C ///
C ///	D/C ///	F/C ///	C ///

CHROMATIC BASS LINES

In this section you will look at the “C-C#o7-Dm7-D#o7,” “C-C#o7-Dm7-G7,” and “C-Dm-Ebo7-C/E” ascending chromatic bass line progressions. As before, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression.

C-C#o7-Dm7-D#o7 Progression

The root notes of the “C-C#o7-Dm7-D#o7” diminished cliché form a “1-#1-2-#2” ascending chromatic bass line. This progression was used to write numerous 1920s and 1930s ballads. Depending upon the specific melody, this diminished cliché can generally be substituted for the standard progression (see the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter). The definitive example of this diminished cliché is the opening A section progression to Fats Waller’s 1929 standard *Ain’t Misbehavin’* shown below. The “C-Am7-Dm7-G7” standard progression was originally used to write this song. Today however, the Luther Henderson

“C-C#o7-Dm7-D#o7” arrangement is the only way you hear this song played.

C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / D#o7 /	C/E / E7#5 /	F6 / Fm6 /
C/E / A7b9 /	Dm7 / G7 /	E7 / A7 /	D7 / G7 /

The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line progression.

C	C#o7	Dm7	D#o7	<i>Makin' Whoopee</i> A section (Standard—1928), <i>A Fine Romance</i> A section (Standard—1936), <i>The Folks On The Hill</i> A section (Standard—1937), <i>Easy Living</i> A section (from “Easy Living”—1937), <i>Imagination</i> A section (Standard—1939), <i>A Handful Of Stars</i> A section (Standard—1939), <i>Bewitched</i> A section (Standard—1941), and <i>Orange Colored Sky</i> A section (Standard—1950).
C-C6	C#o7	Dm-Dm6	D#o7	<i>Call Me Irresponsible</i> A section (Standard—1962)
C6	C#o7	Dm7	D#o7	<i>Birth Of The Blues</i> A section (Standard—1926)

C-C#o7-Dm7-G7 Progression

The root notes of the first three chords in the “C-C#o7-Dm7-G7” diminished cliché form a “1-#1-2” ascending chromatic bass line. This progression was also used to write numerous 1920s and 1930s ballads and can usually be substituted for the standard progression. The definitive example of this type of diminished cliché is the A section progression to Harold Arlen’s 1933 standard *Stormy Weather (Keeps Rainin’ All The Time)* shown below.

Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7#5 /	Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line progression. This is a good progression to evoke that 1940s Christmas feeling. Before you think that this progression has no modern application, take a look at the *For Once In My Life* example and the “Dm7-G7-C-C#o7” displacement used to write the opening verse progression to *Bennie And The Jets* (Elton John—1974), the “Dm7-G11-Cmaj7-C#o7” opening verse progression to *My Eyes Adored You* (Frankie Valli—1975), and the “Dm9-G13sus-C-C#o7” main verse progression to *Don’t Let Me Be Lonely Tonight* (James Taylor—1972). The last three examples replace the “Dm7” with the “G7” chord or its inversion (IIm-V substitution).

Cmaj7	C#o7	Dm7	G7	<i>Sheik Of Araby</i> A section (Standard—1921), <i>It’s Only A Paper Moon</i> A section (Standard—1933), <i>Solo Flight</i> A section (Charlie Christian—1944), <i>Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!</i> B section (Standard—1945), <i>Hello Young Lovers</i> A section (from “The King And I”—1951), and <i>I Could Have Danced All Night</i> A section (from “My Fair Lady”—1956)
C-C6-Cmaj7	C#o7	Dm7	G7	<i>Mame</i> verse (from “Mame”—1966)
C-Cmaj7-C6	C#o7	Dm7	G7	<i>Little Saint Nick</i> verse (Beach Boys—1963)
C-Cmaj7-C6-Cmaj7	C#o7	Dm7	G7	<i>Jingle Bell Rock</i> verse (Bobby Helms—1957)
C-C+-C6	C#o7	Dm7	Bb-G7	<i>For Once In My Life</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1968)
C6	C#o7	Dm7	G7	<i>Lullaby Of Broadway</i> A section (Standard—1935)
C6	C#o7	Dm11	G13	<i>’S Wonderful</i> A section (Standard—1927)

Cmaj7	C#o7	Dm7	G13	<i>Deep Purple</i> A section (Standard—1934)
Cmaj7	C#o7	Dm11	G7	<i>Winter Wonderland</i> A section (Standard—1934)
C	C#o7	G7/D	G7	<i>America</i> <i>The Beautiful</i> verse (Standard—1895), <i>Ain't She Sweet</i> verse (Standard—1927), <i>Once In Love With Amy</i> verse (from “Where’s Charlie?”—1948), and <i>How Much Is That Doggie In The Window?</i> verse (Patti Page—1952)
C-Cmaj7-C6	C#o7	G7/D	G7	<i>Carolina In The Morning</i> verse (Standard—1922)
C	C#o7	=>	G7	<i>If You Knew Suzie</i> verse (Standard—1925), <i>Baby Face</i> verse (Standard—1926), and <i>Happy Trails To You</i> verse (Roy Rogers & Dale Evans—1952)

C-Dm-Ebo7-C/E Progression

The bass notes of the last three chords in the “C-Dm-Ebo7-C/E” progression form the “2-b3-3” ascending chromatic bass line. The definitive example of this progression is the opening chords to the A section progression to Duke Ellington’s 1942 standard *Don’t Get Around Much Anymore* shown below. Notice that this sequence is in essence an elaborate “C-A7-D7-G7” ragtime progression (see the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter).

C Dm7 Ebo7 C/E	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /	C ///	Dm7 / G7 /

Another example of this type of bass line is the “C-Dm-Ebo7-C/E” chorus progression to Paul McCartney’s 1973 *Pipes of Peace*. You can also try substituting the “Em7” for the “C/E” chord in this progression.

Songs Based On Ascending Chromatic Bass Lines

Below are three songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of ascending chromatic bass lines.

Hello, Young Lovers

The sixteen bar A section progression to *Hello Young Lovers* from the 1951 “The King And I” is shown below. The first eight bars are comprised of the “Cmaj7-C#o7-Dm7-G7” diminished cliché and the last eight bars are made up of back-to-back “Dm7-G7” and “Dm7-G7-Cmaj7” jazz progressions. Try substituting the “Cmaj7-Dm7-Em7-Dm7” chord stream for the first four bars of the “Cmaj7” chord.

Cmaj7 //	///	///	///
Cmaj7 //	C#o7 //	Dm7 //	G7 //
Dm7 //	G7 //	Dm7 //	G7 //
Dm7 //	G7 //	Cmaj7 //	///

Mame

The sixteen bar A section to *Mame* from the 1966 “Mame” is shown below. The first four bars are comprised of the “C-C#o7-Dm7-G7” diminished cliché with an overlaid “C-C6-Cmaj7” pedal point. The next two bars are made up of the “Dm7-G7” jazz progression with an overlaid “Dm-Dm(M7)-Dm7” descending minor cliché.

C / C6 /	Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
Dm / Dm(M7) /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / C6 /	Cmaj7 ///
Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /	Em ///	A7 ///
Dm / Dm(M7) /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

For Once In My Life

The sixteen bar verse progression to Stevie Wonder's 1968 hit *For Once In My Life* is shown below. The first six bars are comprised of the "C-C#o7-Dm7-G7" diminished cliché with overlaid "C-C+-C6" and "Dm-D+-Dm-D+-Dm-Dm(M7)-Dm7" pedal points.

C / C+ /	C6 / C#o7 /	Dm / D+ /	Dm / D+ /
Dm / Dm(M7) /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / G+ /	C ///
C ///	C+ ///	Fmaj7 ///	Dm7 ///
Em ///	Am ///	Dm / Em /	Fmaj7 / G9 /

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Below are two examples of how I used ascending bass lines to write a new song.

Come Dance With Me

The main verse progression to my *Come Dance With Me* is shown below. I used a "C-Dm-Em-Dm" chord stream to complement the light and breezy "The midday pales to a Caribbean night..." lyric.

Cmaj7 ///	Dm7 ///	Em7 ///	Dm7 ///
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Dancing On The Edge

The opening verse progression to my *Dancing On The Edge* is shown below. Here I use inversions to transform a "1-2-4-5" ascending bass line progression to a less obvious bass line movement. Lyrics are "Dancing on the edge, walking that tight rope all alone..."

C ///	Dm ///	F/C ///	G/B ///
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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used ascending bass lines to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own ascending bass lines.

(1) Transform the four original chord progressions below into ascending bass line progressions using inversions.

Original Progression	Ascending Progression
C-F-G7 (Rock And Roll)	
C-F (Basic)	
C-Am-Dm-G7 (Standard Changes)	
C-Am-F-G7 (Doo-Wop)	

Here's how I did it.

C-F-G7 (Rock And Roll)	C-C/E-F-G7
C-F (Basic)	C-C/E-F-F/G
C-Am-Dm-G7 (Standard Changes)	C-Am/E-Dm/F-G7
C-Am-F-G7 (Doo-Wop)	C-Am/E-F-G

(2) Try building two four-bar diatonic bass line progressions in the key of C using the "1-2-3-4" bass note sequence.

Here's how I did it.

C ///	Dm7 ///	Em7 ///	F ///
C ///	Dm7 ///	Cmaj7/E ///	F ///

(3) Try building two four-bar diatonic bass line progressions in the key of C, using the “2-3-4-5” bass note sequence.

Here’s how I did it.

Dm7 ///	Em7 ///	Fmaj7 ///	F/G ///
G7/D ///	C/E ///	F ///	G7 ///

(4) Try substituting the two progressions below for the rock ballad progression in a song such as *Key Largo* chorus (Bertie Higgins—1982).

Original Progression

C ///	Em ///	F ///	G ///
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Substitute Progression #1 (Descending Bass Line)

C ///	Em/B ///	F/A ///	G ///
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Substitute Progression #2 (Pedal Point)

C ///	Em/C ///	F/C ///	G/C ///
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(5) Try substituting the rock ballad progression for the basic progression in a song such as *Do You Believe In Magic* verse (Lovin’ Spoonful—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	F ///
-------	-------

Substitute Progression (Rock Ballad)

C / Em /	F / G /
----------	---------

Now, try substituting the rock ballad progression for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Words Of Love* verse (Diamonds—1957) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	F / G /
-------	---------

Substitute Progression (Rock Ballad)

C / Em /	F / G /
----------	---------

(6) Try substituting the diatonic ascending bass line progression for the basic progression in a song such as *Do You Believe In Magic* verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	F ///
-------	-------

Substitute Progression (Ascending Bass Line)

Dm7 / Em7 /	F / G7 /
-------------	----------

(7) Try replacing the three substitute progressions for the diminished cliché in a song such as *Once In Love With Amy* verse (Standard—1948) as shown below. Listen carefully to the difference in the bass line movements.

Original Progression

C / C#o7 /	G7/D / G7 /
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Substitute Progression #1

C / Ab7 /	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression #2

C / C#m6 /	Dm7 / G7 /
------------	------------

Substitute Progression #3 (Standard)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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(8) Try building a two-bar progression using the “F-G-G#-A” ascending bass line in the key of C.

Here is how Billy Joel did it to create the opening chorus progression to his 1979 hit *Honesty*.

Fmaj7 / G9 /	E/G# / Am[Gadd9]
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(9) Try substituting the diminished cliché for the folk progression in a song such as *Camptown Races* verse (Stephen Foster—1851) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	///	G ///	///
C ///	///	G ///	C ///

Substitute Progression (Diminished Cliché)

Cmaj7 ///	C#o7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
Cmaj7 ///	C#o7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///

(10) Try building a sixteen-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Dm-F-G” ascending bass line progression. (Hint: You can spread the progression over the available bars or repeat the progression

to fill the available space. Keep in mind that chords are typically played for two, four, or eight beats.)

Here is how the Troggs did it to create the verse progression to their 1968 hit *Love Is All Around*.

C / Dm /	F / G7 /	C / Dm /	F / G7 /
C / Dm /	F / G7 /	C / Dm /	F / G7 /
C / Dm /	F / G7 /	C / Dm /	F / G7 /
C / Dm /	F / G7 /	C / Dm /	F / G7 /

(11) Try building a sixteen-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Em-F-G” rock ballad progression.

Here is how Elton John did it to create the verse progression to his 1972 hit *Crocodile Rock*. Notice how he used a popular progression from the early rock and roll period to reinforce the retro lyrics.

C ///	////	Em ///	////
F ///	////	G ///	////
C ///	////	Em ///	////
F ///	////	G ///	////

(12) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Em-F-C” rock ballad variation.

Here is how the Band did it to create the verse progression to their 1968 classic *The Weight*.

C / Em /	F / C /	C / Em /	F / C /
C / Em /	F / C /	C / Em /	F / C /

Basic Progressions

The often repeated “I-IV” basic progression, comprised of two of the three primary chords, is one of the least complex and most popular changes in all popular music with numerous examples found throughout the twentieth century. While it is possible for the “I” chord to progress to any chord, it favors cyclical movement to the “IV” and “V” chords. The “I-IV” progression, which represents the circle of fifths movement by descending fifths, is lighter and more relaxed sounding than “I-V” movement by descending fourths. Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones has made millions of dollars over the years writing and playing hard rock songs with just these two chords played on an open G tuned electric guitar. Listen to *Honky Tonk Women* (1969), *You Can’t Always Get What You Want* (1969), *Brown Sugar* (1971), and *Start Me Up* (1981). Many songs written on an open-tuned guitar are created with basic progressions. These are also the first changes in most blues progressions. Notice the similarity of the basic progression to the authentic cadence (see separate “Folk Progressions” chapter of this book) as shown below. These two progressions are easily confused.

I-IV (Basic Progression)	C-F (key of C)
V-I (Authentic Cadence)	C-F (key of F)

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the basic progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, variation, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at several ideas from my songwriter’s notebook.

Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own basic progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the basic progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play each chord for four beats each. This is the main verse progression for songs such as the Beatles' 1964 hit *Love Me Do*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Now, play the basic progression replacing the "V" with the "V7" chord listening carefully to the difference in sound this subtle substitution makes. Notice that the "V7" choice makes a stronger resolution to the tonic than the "V" chord. In most cases, the decision to use the "V" or "V7" is a matter of personal choice.

A-D	C-F	Eb-Ab	Gb-B
Bb-Eb	Db-Gb	E-A	G-C
B-E	D-G	F-Bb	Ab-Db

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, practice playing the "C-F" basic progression for the durations shown below. The majority of the hit songs written with the basic progression have been created using just these three simple progression patterns. As you can see, each chord is typically played for two, four, or eight beats.

C / F /			
C ///	F ///		
C ///	////	F ///	////

You should listen to as many hit songs written using basic progressions as possible to better understand the power of these two primary chords. Examples of the first pattern (two beats per chord) include *Greenback Dollar* chorus (Kingston Trio—1963), *Sugar Shack* verse (Jimmy Gilmer/Fireballs—1963), *Walk Like A Man* chorus (4 Seasons—1963), *Thank You Girl* verse (Beatles—1964), *Glad All Over* verse (Dave Clark Five—1964), *Bread And Butter* verse/chorus (Newbeats—1964), *In The Midnight Hour* verse (Wilson Pickett—1965), *Go Where You Wanna Go* verse (5th Dimension—1967), *Mighty Quinn (Quinn The Eskimo)* verse (Manfred Mann—1968), *Lady Madonna* verse (Beatles—1968), *Domino* chorus (Van Morrison—1971), *Sunshine On My Shoulders* verse (John Denver—1974), *One More Night* chorus (Phil Collins—1985), and *Angel of Harlem* verse (U2—1989).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats per chord) include *Misery* verse (Beatles—1963), *Love Me Do* verse (Beatles—1964), *Sha La La* verse (Manfred Man—1964), *Little Honda* chorus (Hondells—1964), *There's A Place* verse (Beatles—1964), *What You're Doing* verse (Beatles—1964), *Do You Believe In Magic* verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1965), *Drive My Car* verse (Beatles—1965), *Rescue Me* chorus (Fontella Bass—1965), *The Pied Piper* verse/chorus (Crispian St. Peters—1966), *For What It's Worth (Stop, Hey What's That Sound)* verse (Buffalo Springfield—1967), *You Can't Always Get What You Want* verse/chorus (Rolling Stones—1969), *Rocket Man* chorus (Elton John—1972), *Garden Party* verse (Rick Nelson—1972), *Peaceful Easy Feeling* verse (Eagles—1973), *Rock Me Gently* verse (Andy Kim—1974), *Some Kind Of Wonderful* chorus (Grand Funk—1975), *Feel Like Makin' Love* verse (Bad Company—1975), *You Sexy Thing* verse/chorus (Hot Chocolate—1976), *Glory Days* verse/chorus (Bruce Springsteen—1985), *Forever Young* verse (Rod Stewart—1988), and *Downtown Train* chorus (Rod Stewart—1989).

Examples of the last pattern (eight beats per chord) include *Dawn (Go Away)* (4 Seasons—1964), *Forever In Blue Jeans* verse (Neil Dia-

mond—1979), and *Once Bitten Twice Shy* chorus (Great White—1989).

Other durations include the main chorus progression to *Heat Wave* (Martha & The Vandellas—1963) that has only one beat per chord as shown below.

C F C F	C F C F
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Another duration is the main verse progression to *Take It To The Limit* verse (Eagles—1976) that has six beats per chord as shown below. The Eagles choose 3/4 for this song instead of the more popular 4/4 time.

C //	///	F //	///
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SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression, is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. The box below shows examples of basic progression substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any basic progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. The most popular substitutions create the “C-F6,” “C-Fmaj7,” “Cmaj7-Fmaj7,” and “C7-F7” progressions. Notice the use of a tritone substitution in the *Just The Way You Are* example. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions. Listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make.

C	F6	<i>My Girl</i> verse (Temptations—1965), <i>Walk On The Wild Side</i> verse (Lou Reed—1973), and <i>Calypso</i> verse (John Denver—1975)
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C	Fmaj7	<i>Baby, I Need Your Loving</i> verse (Four Tops—1964), <i>Band On The Run</i> verse/chorus (Wings—1974), <i>Tonight's The Night (Gonna Be Alright)</i> verse (Rod Stewart—1976), and <i>The Living Years</i> verse (Mike & The Mechanics—1989)
C	Fadd9	<i>Catch The Wind</i> (Donovan—1965) and <i>The Wind Beneath My Wings</i> verse (Bette Midler—1989)
C	F6/ 9(no3)	<i>Only Wanna Be You</i> verse (Hootie & The Blowfish—1994)
C	F7	<i>Last Train To Clarksville</i> verse (Monkees—1966)
C	F9	<i>Hi-De-Ho</i> verse (Blood, Sweat & Tears—1970)
C	F11	<i>Get On Up</i> verse (Esquires—1967)
C	Fmaj7-F	<i>Wildfire</i> verse (Michael Murphy—1975)
C	F-Dm	<i>Manic Monday</i> chorus (Bangles—1986)
C-Cmaj7	F	<i>Imagine</i> verse (John Lennon—1971)
C-Cmaj7	Fmaj7-F6	<i>MacArthur Park</i> bridge (Richard Harris—1968)
C-Cmaj7-C7	F-Fm6	<i>I Love The Night Life</i> chorus (Alicia Bridges—1978)
C-Cmaj9	F	<i>Salvation</i> verse (Elton John—1972)
C-Csus4-C	F-Fsus4	<i>Hot Blooded</i> verse (Foreigner—1978)
C-C7	F	<i>Itchycoo Park</i> chorus (Small Faces—1968)
C-C7/E	F	<i>Dream Weaver</i> chorus (Gary Wright—1976)
C-C7	F-Fm	<i>Santa Claus Is Coming To Town</i> verse (George Hall—1934)
C-C7	F7	<i>Mercy, Mercy, Mercy</i> verse (Buckingham—1967)
C-C9	F-Fm6	<i>Desperado</i> verse (Eagles—1973)
C-C11	Fsus4-F	<i>Rhythm Of The Night</i> verse (DeBarge—1985)
C5	F	<i>Simply Irresistible</i> verse (Robert Palmer—1988)

C6	F6	<i>Wonderful! Wonderful!</i> verse (Johnny Mathis—1957) and <i>And When I Die</i> verse (Blood, Sweat & Tears—1969)
Cmaj7	F	<i>A Rainy Night In Georgia</i> verse (Brook Benton—1970) and <i>Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?</i> chorus (Chicago—1971)
Cmaj7	Fmaj7	<i>Don't Let The Sun Catch You Crying</i> verse (Gerry & The Pacemakers—1964), <i>We've Only Just Begun</i> bridge (Carpenters—1970), <i>Song Of The Wind</i> verse (Santana—1972), <i>Tin Man</i> verse (America—1974), and <i>I Can't Tell You Why</i> verse (Eagles—1980)
Cmaj7	F7	<i>In The Still Of The Night</i> A section (Standard—1937)
Cmaj7-Cm7	F7	<i>How High The Moon</i> A section (from "Two For The Show"—1940) and <i>Ornithology</i> A section (Charlie Parker—1946)
Cmaj7	F13	<i>Willow Weep For Me</i> verse (Chad & Jeremy—1965)
Cmaj7-C7	Fmaj7	<i>God Bless' The Child</i> A section (Billie Holiday—1941)
Cmaj7-Cmaj7/E	Fmaj7	<i>Every Woman In The World</i> chorus (Air Supply—1981)
Cadd9	Fmaj7	<i>Even Now</i> verse (Barry Manilow—1978)
Cadd9	Fadd9	<i>The End Of The Innocence</i> verse (Don Henley—1989)
Csus2	F	<i>Hold My Hand</i> verse (Hootie & The Blowfish—1994)
C7	F7	<i>When I Get Home</i> verse (Beatles—1964), <i>Can't They See That She's Mine</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1964), <i>Season Of The Witch</i> verse (Donovan—1966), <i>Respect</i> chorus (Aretha Franklin—1967), <i>The End</i> D section (Beatles—1969), and <i>Feeling Alright</i> verse (Joe Cocker—1972)

C7	F7sus4- F7	<i>Don't Bring Me Down</i> verse (Animals—1966)
C7#9	F7	<i>Cross Town Traffic</i> chorus (Jimi Hendrix—1968) and <i>Ease On Down The Road</i> verse (from "The Wiz"—1974)
C13	F11	<i>God Bless The Child</i> verse (Blood, Sweat & Tears—1969)
C	F	C <i>I Hear You Knocking</i> verse (Gale Storm—1955), <i>Do Wah Diddy Diddy</i> verse (Manfred Mann—1964), <i>Bits And Pieces</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1964), <i>I'm A Believer</i> chorus (Monkees—1966), <i>I Fought The Law</i> verse (Bobby Fuller Four—1966), <i>Substitute</i> verse (Who—1966), <i>These Boots Are Made for Walking</i> verse (Nancy Sinatra—1966), <i>Born Free</i> verse (Roger Williams—1966), <i>Darling Be Home Soon</i> verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1967), <i>Kentucky Woman</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1967), <i>Mony, Mony</i> verse (Tommy James & The Shondells—1968), <i>Sky Pilot</i> chorus (Animals—1968), <i>Master Jack</i> chorus (Four Jacks & A Jill—1968), <i>Turn Around, Look At Me</i> verse (Vogues—1968), <i>Dance To The Music</i> verse (Sly & The Family Stone—1968), <i>Revolution</i> verse (Beatles—1968), <i>Take A Letter Maria</i> verse (R.B. Greaves—1969), <i>Get Back</i> verse (Beatles—1969), <i>Son Of A Preacher Man</i> chorus (Dusty Springfield—1969), <i>Sugar, Sugar</i> verse (Archies—1969), <i>Shilo</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1970), <i>Day After Day</i> verse (Badfinger—1971), <i>I Can See Clearly Now</i> verse (Johnny Nash—1972), <i>Rocket Man</i> chorus (Elton John—1972), <i>Anticipation</i> verse (Carly Simon—1972), <i>Bang A Gong (Get It On)</i> verse (T. Rex—1972), <i>Bodhisattva</i> verse (Steely Dan—1973), <i>Driving My Life Away</i> verse (Eddie Rabbit—1980), <i>Watching The Wheels</i> verse (John Lennon—1981), and <i>I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For</i> verse (U2—1987)

C-C/B	F	C	<i>Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad</i> verse (Meat Loaf—1978)
C	F	C/E	<i>Minuet In G Major</i> opening progression (Johann Sebastian Bach—1725)
C	F-[Em-Dm]	C	<i>I Am I Said</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1971)
C	F/C	C-F-C	<i>Footloose</i> chorus (Kenny Loggins—1984)
C	Fmaj7	C	<i>On The Way Home</i> verse (Buffalo Springfield—1968)
C-Cmaj7-C7	F	Cadd(b10)	<i>Maybe I'm Amazed</i> chorus (Wings—1977)
C	Fadd9	C	<i>Golden Slumbers</i> verse (Beatles—1969)
C	F7	C	<i>96 Tears</i> verse (? & The Mysterians—1966)
C	F-Fm	C	<i>Positively 4th Street</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1965)
C	Fm	C	<i>Do You Want To Know A Secret</i> intro (Beatles—1964)
C	Fm6	C-[C7-B7-Bb7-A7]	<i>The Stripper</i> verse (David Rose—1962)
C	F-Fsus4-F	C	<i>Holly Holy</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1969)
C-C7	F	C	<i>One Toke Over The Line</i> verse (Brewer & Shipley—1971) and <i>Islands In The Stream</i> verse (Kenny Rogers & Dolly Parton—1983)
C-C11	F	C	<i>Listen To The Music</i> bridge (Doobie Brothers—1972)
C5	F	C	<i>Sweet Emotion</i> verse (Aerosmith—1975)
C5	F	C5	<i>Woodstock</i> verse (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young—1970)
Cmaj7-F#m7b5	Fmaj7	Cmaj7	<i>Just The Way You Are</i> verse (Billy Joel—1978)

C7	F	C7	<i>Paperback Writer</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
C7	F7	C	<i>I've Got The Music In Me</i> verse (Kiki Dee Band—1974)
C7	F7	C7	<i>Day Tripper</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
C11	F	C	<i>You Keep Me Hangin' On</i> bridge (Supremes—1966)
C	F	C-F6	<i>Domino</i> verse (Van Morrison—1971)
C	F	C/E-F- [Fsus4] -F	<i>Candle In The Wind</i> verse (Elton John—1997)
C	F/C	C-F	<i>Don't Go Breaking My Heart</i> verse (Elton John & Kiki Dee—1976)

If you saw the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus*, you will recall that the Toys' 1965 hit *A Lover's Concerto* was based on J. S. Bach's 1725 *Minuet I In G Major*. The Toys' version was reharmonized and changed to a 4/4 instead of the original 3/4 time. The opening eight bars to both progressions are shown below for comparison.

Minuet I In G Major

C //	///	F //	C/E //
Dm //	C //	G C /	G7 //

A Lover's Concerto

C ///	///	F ///	C ///
F / G7 /	C ///	G7 / C /	G7

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “C-Dm,” “Am-F,” and “Am-Dm” basic progression substitutions. Again, be sure to play each progression example with and without the substitutions.

C-Dm Substitution

Replacing the “F” of the “C-F” basic progression with the “Dm” chord (relative minor/major substitution) creates the mellower sounding “C-Dm” substitution. An example of this substitution is the chorus progression to the Young Rascals’ 1967 hit *Groovin’* shown below.

Cmaj7 ///	Dm7 ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. The two most frequently encountered embellishments include “C-Dm7” and “Cmaj7-Dm7.” The reverse “Dm-C” displacement is discussed in the separate “Jazz Progressions” chapter.

C	Dm	<i>Suzanne</i> verse (Leonard Cohen—1967), <i>Lady Willpower</i> verse (Gary Puckett & The Union Gap—1968), <i>Treat Her Like A Lady</i> chorus (Cornelius Brothers & Sister Rose—1971), <i>Sweet City Woman</i> verse/chorus (Stampede—1971), and <i>Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go</i> chorus (Wham!—1984)
C	Dm-Dm7	<i>And I Love Her So</i> verse (Perry Como—1973)
C	Dm7	<i>Walk Like A Man</i> verse (4 Seasons—1963), <i>Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me)</i> verse/chorus (Temptations—1971), <i>The Best Of My Love</i> chorus (Eagles—1974), <i>Afternoon Delight</i> verse (Starland Vocal Band—1976), <i>Weekend In New England</i> chorus (Barry Manilow—1976), <i>Smoke From A Distant Fire</i> verse (Sanford/Townsend Band—1977), and <i>Ebony And Ivory</i> chorus (Paul McCartney & Stevie Wonder—1982)
C6	Dm7	<i>Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)</i> verse (John Lennon—1980) and <i>Like A Virgin</i> verse (Madonna—1984)

Cmaj7	Dm7		<i>Venus</i> verse (Frankie Avalon—1959), <i>Poor Side Of Town</i> verse (Johnny Rivers—1966), and <i>Crystal Blue Persuasion</i> verse (Tommy James & The Shondells—1969)
Cmaj9	Dm7		<i>Ooh, Baby Baby</i> chorus (Miracles—1965)
Cmaj9	Dm7/G		<i>I Think Of You</i> verse (Janet Jackson—1986)
Cmaj9-C	Dm9		<i>The Best Of My Love</i> verse (Eagles—1974)
C	Dm7	C	<i>Over My Head</i> verse (Fleetwood Mac—1976)
C-Cmaj7/E	Dm7	C	<i>Escape (The Pina Colada Song)</i> verse (Rupert Holmes—1980)
C	D		<i>You Know What I Mean</i> verse (Turtles—1967)

Am-F Substitution

Replacing the “C” of the “C-F” basic progression with the “Am” chord (relative minor/major substitution) in the key of C creates the “Am-F” substitution in the key of Am. An example of this substitution is the opening chorus progression to Fleetwood Mac’s 1976 hit *Rhiannon* shown below.

Am ///	////	F ///	////
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice the use of the suspended chord on the *Cold As Ice* example.

Am	F	<i>My World Is Empty Without You</i> verse (Supremes—1966), <i>Cowgirl In The Sand</i> verse (Neil Young—1966), <i>Listen To The Music</i> chorus (Doobie Brothers—1972), <i>Show Me The Way</i> chorus (Peter Frampton—1976), and <i>Hurricane</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1976)
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Am	F7		<i>Pink Panther Theme</i> verse (Henry Mancini—1964), <i>Ticket To Ride</i> chorus (Beatles—1965), <i>Drive My Car</i> chorus (Beatles—1965), <i>Glass Onion</i> verse (Beatles—1968), and <i>Call Me</i> verse (Blondie—1980)
Am	Fmaj7		<i>Jesus Is Just Alright</i> intro (Doobie Brothers—1973)
Am7	Fmaj7		<i>Brandy (You're A Fine Girl)</i> chorus (Looking Glass—1972) and <i>Pretzel Logic</i> verse (Steely Dan—1974)
Am/C	Fmaj7		<i>That's The Way I've Always Heard It Should Be</i> verse (Carly Simon—1971)
Am(sus4)-Am (2x)	F6-F (2x)		<i>Cold As Ice</i> verse (Foreigner—1977)
Am	F	Am	<i>Eleanor Rigby</i> verse (Beatles—1966) and <i>You're So Vain</i> verse (Carly Simon—1972)
Am-Am/G	F	Am	<i>Holiday</i> chorus (Bee Gees—1967) and <i>Time Of The Season</i> verse (Zombies—1969)

The “F-Am” displacement is the reverse of the above progression. Examples include the intro to the Beatles’ 1966 hit *Eleanor Rigby* and the verse/chorus progression to Lynyrd Skynyrd’s 1977 hit *That Smell*.

Am-Dm Substitution

Replacing the “C” of the “C-F” basic progression with the “Am” chord and the “F” with the “Dm” chord (both relative minor/major substitutions) in the key of C creates the “Am-Dm” substitution in the key of Am. An example of this substitution is the opening verse progression to the Rolling Stones’ 1978 hit *Miss You* shown below. These are also the

first changes in most minor blues progressions (see the separate “Minor Blues Progressions” chapter).

Am ///	////	Dm ///	////
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. The last two examples are the “Dm-Am” reverse displacement of this substitution.

Am	Dm	<i>Pipeline</i> verse (Chantays—1963), <i>Brother Louie</i> verse (Stories—1973), <i>Bungle In The Jungle</i> verse (Jethro Tull—1974), and <i>Woman In Love</i> verse (Barbara Streisand—1980)	
Am7	Dm7	<i>Legend In Your Own Time</i> verse/chorus (Carly Simon—1971) and <i>You Belong To The City</i> verse (Glenn Frey—1985)	
Am	Dm	Am	<i>I Shot The Sheriff</i> chorus (Eric Clapton—1974)
Am6	Dm	Am-Dm	<i>Nature Boy</i> verse (Nat Cole—1948)
	Dm	Am	<i>And I Love Her</i> verse (Beatles—1964) and <i>Double Vision</i> chorus (Foreigner—1978)
	Dm7	Am7	<i>Ain't No Woman (Like The One I've Got)</i> verse (Four Tops—1973)

Am-D Minor Rock Vamp

Replacing the “Dm” of the above-mentioned “Am-Dm” minor basic substitution with the “D” chord (parallel major/minor substitution) creates the popular “Am-D” minor rock vamp. Notice the similarity of this progression to the “IIm-V” jazz variation as presented below. These two progressions are easily confused.

IIm-IV (Minor Rock Vamp)	Am-D (key of Am)
IIm-V (Jazz Variation)	Am-D (key of G)

An example of the minor rock vamp is the verse progression Christina Aguilera's 2001 hit *Lady Marmalade* shown below.

Am7 ///	D ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of vamp.

Am	D	<i>She's Not There</i> verse (Zombies—1964), <i>A Taste Of Honey</i> chorus (Herb Alpert—1965), <i>Somebody To Love</i> verse (Jefferson Airplane—1967), <i>I Heard It Through The Grapevine</i> chorus (Gladys Knight & The Pips—1967), <i>I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night)</i> chorus (Electric Prunes—1967), <i>You Showed Me</i> verse (Turtles—1969), <i>Venus</i> verse (Shocking Blue—1970), <i>Evil Ways</i> verse (Santana—1970), <i>Ready For Love</i> chorus (Bad Company—1974), <i>You're No Good</i> verse (Linda Ronstadt—1975), <i>New Kid In Town</i> chorus (Eagles—1976), <i>Grease</i> verse (Frankie Valli—1978), and <i>Power Of Love</i> verse (Huey Lewis & The News—1985)
Am	D7	<i>Love Potion Number Nine</i> verse (Clovers—1959) and <i>Lies</i> verse (Knickerbockers—1966)
Am-Am7	D-Dm7	<i>Say Say Say</i> verse (Paul McCartney & Michael Jackson—1983)
Am7	D6	<i>It's Too Late</i> verse/chorus (Carol King—1971)
Am7	D7	<i>Lover Man (Oh Where Can You Be?)</i> B section (Standard—1941), <i>Cold Turkey</i> verse (Plastic Ono Band—1969), and <i>Shake Your Booty</i> verse (KC & The Sunshine Band—1976)

Am7	D7/A		<i>Right Place Wrong Time</i> verse (Dr. John—1973)
Am7	D9		<i>Spooky</i> verse (Classics IV—1968), <i>Oye Como Va</i> verse (Santana—1971), and <i>Rocket Man</i> verse (Elton John—1972)
Am	D11		<i>Rocket Man</i> verse bars 9–12 (Elton John—1972)
Am7	D7-D11-D7		<i>Spill The Wine</i> chorus (Eric Burdon & War—1970)
Am9	D		<i>Holding Back The Years</i> verse (Simply Red—1986)
Am9	Dsus2	Am9	<i>Smoking Gun</i> verse (Robert Cray—1987)
Am9	D13		<i>Stormy</i> verse (Classics IV—1968) and <i>Low Down</i> verse (Boz Scaggs—1976)
Am	D	Am	<i>Another Brick In The Wall Part Two</i> verse (Pink Floyd—1980)
Am	D	Am/D-D	<i>I Feel The Earth Move</i> verse (Carole King—1971)
Am7	D	Am7	<i>Hummingbird</i> chorus (Seals & Crofts—1973)

VARIATION

Variations occur when you add chords to or subtract chords from a specific progression. The “C-Am-F” variation that adds the “Am” chord (relative minor/major substitution) between the “C” and “F” chords is discussed in the separate “Doo-Wop Progressions” chapter of this book. Similarly, the “C-Em-F” variation that inserts the “Em” chord (mediant substitution) between the “C” and “F” chords is discussed in the separate “Ascending Bass Lines” chapter.

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as “displaced” progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will find a table showing the two possible combinations of the basic progression in the key of C.

C-F (Basic Progression)	F-C (Displacement)
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The “F-C” displacement, which is the reverse of the “C-F” basic progression, is an example of a plagal cadence that is also referred to as an amen cadence because it is frequently used to end church hymns. The “F” chord creates a delayed resolution to the “C” chord. A cadence is a chord progression that moves to a harmonic close, point of rest, or sense of resolution. Sometimes songwriters will begin a verse, chorus or bridge with a chord progression beginning with the “F” (“IV”) chord in order to differentiate and contrast it with a corresponding verse, chorus or bridge built around a chord progression starting with the “C” (“I”) chord. An example of this displacement is the chorus progression to the Everly Brothers’ 1957 hit *Bye, Bye Love* shown below.

F ///	C ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. In the *Devil In Her Heart* example, the “F-Fm-C” sequence is referred to as a minor plagal cadence that utilizes a parallel major/minor substitution. On the last example, the displacement returns to the “F” chord that has been replaced by its relative minor.

F	C	<i>That'll Be The Day</i> verse/chorus (Crickets—1957), <i>Baby, It's You</i> verse (Shirelles—1962), <i>Viva Las Vegas</i> chorus (Elvis Presley—1964), <i>P.S. I Love You</i> chorus (Beatles—1964), <i>Oh Me Oh My (I'm A Fool For You)</i> verse (Lulu—1970), <i>Won't Be Fooled Again</i> chorus (Who—1971), <i>Sunshine (Go Away Today)</i> chorus (Jonathan Edwards—1971), <i>Nice To Be With You</i> chorus (Gallery—1972), <i>Peaceful Easy Feeling</i> chorus (Eagles—1973), <i>It's Only Rock 'N' Roll (But I Like It)</i> chorus (Rolling Stones—1974), <i>Calypso</i> chorus (John Denver—1975), <i>Philadelphia Freedom</i> chorus (Elton John—1975), <i>Take It To The Limit</i> chorus (Eagles—1976), <i>Heart Of Glass</i> bridge (Blondie—1979), <i>Late In The Evening</i> verse (Paul Simon—1980), and <i>Wild, Wild West</i> chorus (Escape Club—1988).
F	C7	<i>Wake Up Little Susie</i> verse (Everly Brothers 1957)
F-Fmaj9	C	<i>Time After Time</i> outro (Cyndi Lauper—1984)
F-Fm	C-C7	<i>Devil In Her Heart</i> B section (Beatles—1964) and <i>Nobody Does It Better</i> verse (from “The Spy That Loved Me”—1977)
F6	Cmaj7	<i>Ventura Highway</i> verse/chorus (America—1972)
Fmaj7	Cmaj7	<i>Daisy Jane</i> verse (America—1975)
F7	C	<i>Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On</i> verse (Jerry Lee Lewis—1957), <i>Ain't She Sweet</i> bridge (Beatles—1964), and <i>Stuck In The Middle With You</i> bridge (Stealers Wheel—1973)
F7	C7	<i>You Don't Mess Around With Jim</i> chorus (Jim Croce—1972)
F	C/E-Dm7	<i>Someone Saved My Life Tonight</i> chorus (Elton John—1975)

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at several ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Below are six examples of how I used the basic progression to write a new song.

1000 Lonely Sunsets

The opening verse progression to my *1000 Lonely Sunsets* is shown below. In this progression, I used inversions to give the changes a more dreamy sound. Also, I substituted the “Em7” for the “Cmaj7” chord in the fourth bar. These chords work well with the “No more flowers in the fields, just scattered blues all around...” beat-inspired lyrics.

Cmaj7/G ///	Fmaj7/C ///	Cmaj7/G ///	Em7 ///
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Tonight

The main verse progression to my *Tonight* is shown below. Here, I employed infrequently used embellishments. If finger picked on an acoustic guitar, you lose the jazzy sound that is replaced with an open feeling particularly in the key of E. The sparse accompaniment keeps the focus on the lyrics that go “Let me sing my song of love to you tonight, you’re the only one I want to hold me tight, tonight, tonight.”

Cmaj9 ///	////	Fadd9 ///	////
Cmaj9 ///	////	Fadd9 ///	////
Cmaj9 ///	////	Fadd9 ///	////

Somewhere There’s A Girl

The main verse progression to my *Somewhere There’s A Girl* is shown below. Beside the embellishments, I substituted the “Fmaj7-F6” chords for the “F” chord. The jazz chords keep this song bright and breezy. The lyrics start “If I had the time you know I’d go and find myself a girl.”

Cmaj7 ///	////	Fmaj7 ///	F6 ///
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Rock N' Roll Woman

The main verse progression to my *Rock N' Roll Woman* is shown below. For this song, I borrowed the “C7#9” Jimi Hendrix chord that creates a great hard rock feel complimenting the “Rock and roll woman’s gonna move your soul, you know what she wants to do...” lyric.

C7#9 ///	////	F7 ///	C7#9 ///
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The Braden River

The main verse progression to my *The Braden River* is shown below. This song uses an embellished basic displacement and a lot of space. The autobiographical lyric begins “Just this side of paradise on the slippery rocks we played.”

Fadd9 ///	////	////	////
C ///	Cadd9 ///	C ///	Cadd9 ///

Forever

The main verse progression to my *Forever* is shown below. This progression begins with the “Am-D7” basic substitution. The lyric goes “Once upon a time, when she used to love me, she’d hold me close through the night.”

Am ///	D7/F# ///	G ///	Fmaj7 ///
Dm ///	G ///	Am ///	////

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

If you play guitar, you will want to explore alternate tunings to help you discover new basic progression chord voicings, inversions and embellishments. Also, if most songs use 4/4 (common) time, you will

want to look at other times such as 3/4 time. Broadway show composer Richard Rodgers (1902–1979) was a master of the 3/4-show waltz when most other songwriters stayed away from it. Examples of the Rodgers waltz include *Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin'* (from “Oklahoma!”—1943), *Hello, Young Lovers* (from “The King And I”—1951), and *My Favorite Things* (from “The Sound Of Music”—1959).

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used basic progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own basic progressions.

(1) Transform the basic progression shown below into an ascending “E-F” bass line progression using inversions.

C ///	F ///
-------	-------

Here’s how I did it.

C/E ///	F ///
---------	-------

Try substituting the ascending bass line progression for the basic progression in a song such as such as *Imagine* verse (John Lennon—1971) as shown below. Listen to hear how the ascending bass line affects the sound of the progression. Keep in mind that a primary goal of chord substitution is to create more interesting bass lines.

Original Progression

C // Cmaj7	F ///
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Substitute Progression (Ascending Bass Line)

C // Cmaj7/E	F ///
--------------	-------

Now, still using inversions, try transforming the “C-F6-C-F” basic progression below into a diatonic ascending “C-D-E-F” bass line progression.

C ///	F6 ///	C ///	F ///
-------	--------	-------	-------

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	F6/D ///	C/E ///	F ///
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(2) Transform the basic progression shown below into a descending “G-F” bass line sequence using inversions.

C ///	F ///
-------	-------

Here’s how I did it.

C/G ///	F ///
---------	-------

Now, still using inversions, try transforming the basic progression below into a diatonic descending “C-B-A-G-F” bass line progression.

C / Cmaj7 /	F ///	C ///	F ///
-------------	-------	-------	-------

Here’s how I did it.

C / Cmaj7/B /	F/A ///	C/G ///	F ///
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(3) Transform the basic progression shown below into a tonic pedal point progression. (Hint: Both chords in the progression should have the “C” as a bass note.)

C ///	F ///
-------	-------

Here's how I did it.

C ///	F/C ///
-------	---------

(4) Try playing the “I-IV” basic progression in its eight possible inversions (chords that use notes other than their roots as the bass note) as shown below in the key of C. First, play each progression with the bass notes moving up (ascending). Then, play each progression with the bass notes moving down (descending). Listen carefully to the difference the movement in the bass note makes.

C-F	C/E-F	C/G-F
C-F/A	C/E-F/A	C/G-F/A
C-F/C (pedal point)	C/E-F/C	C/G-F/C

(5) Try embellishing and adding substitutions to the opening eight-bar progression to *A Lover's Concerto* (Toys—1965) shown below.

C ///	///	F ///	C ///
F / G7 /	C ///	G7 / C /	G7

Here's how the Ventures did it on their 1965 recording of this song.

C ///	Em ///	F / G7 /	C / Am /
Dm / G7 /	C / Am /	Dm7 / G7 /	C ///

(6) Try substituting the eighteen substitute progressions shown below for the basic progression in a song such as *Love Me Do* verse (Beatles—1964). Listen to hear how the dominant seventh chord quality change sounds harder edged, bluesy, or funky while the major sev-

enth embellishments create a bright, jazzy or romantic sounding progression. Notice how well the melody fits in with the more complex progressions. Most basic progressions, where the chords are played for four or more beats and continue to the “I” chord, can be transformed into these more complex harmonies that can be subjected to further chord substitution and/or embellishment. Conversely, more complex progressions can be simplified to a basic progression.

Original Progression

C ///	F ///
-------	-------

Substitute Progression (Quality Changes #1)

C7 ///	F7 ///
--------	--------

Substitute Progression (Tritone Substitution #2)

C7 / F#7 /	F7 ///
------------	--------

Substitute Progression (Embellishments #3)

Cmaj7 ///	Fmaj7 ///
-----------	-----------

Substitute Progression (Relative Minor #4)

C ///	Dm ///
-------	--------

Substitute Progression (Relative Minor #5)

Am ///	F ///
--------	-------

Substitute Progression (Relative Minor #6)

Am ///	Dm ///
--------	--------

Substitute Progression (Major One-Chord #7)

C7 ///	////
--------	------

Substitute Progression (Minor One-Chord #8)

Am7 ///	////
---------	------

Substitute Progression (Ascending Bass #9)

C / C/E /	F / F/G /
-----------	-----------

Substitute Progression (Descending Bass #10)

C / C/Bb /	F/A / F/Ab /
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Substitute Progression (Pedal Point #11)

C ///	F/C ///
-------	---------

Substitute Progression (Ragtime #12)

C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Diminished Cliché #13)

C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Jazz Progression #14)

C ///	Dm7 / G7 /
-------	------------

Substitute Progression (Standard #15)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
-----------	------------

Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop #16)

C / Am /	F / G7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Rock Ballad #17)

C / Em /	F / G7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Rock and Roll #18)

C ///	F / G7 /
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(7) Try substituting the ascending bass line progression for the basic progression in a song such as *Sunshine On My Shoulders* verse (John Denver—1974) as shown below. Denver uses this substitution in subsequent verses to provide more harmonic interest. This substitution can be used with most basic progressions where each chord is played for two beats. For more variety, try substituting the “C-F/C-G/C-F/C” progression.

Original Progression

C / F /	C / F /
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Substitute Progression (Ascending Bass Line)

C / Dm7 /	Em7 / F /
-----------	-----------

(8) Try substituting the nine progressions shown below for the “Am7-D9” vamp in a song such as *Spooky* verse (Classics IV—1968). Notice that the similarity between the “D9” and “Am6” chords.

Original Progression

Am7 ///	D9 ///
---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Inversion #1)

Am7 ///	Am6 ///
---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Embellishment #2)

Am7 ///	D6 ///
---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Embellishment #3)

Am7 ///	D13 ///
---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Embellishment #4)

Am9 ///	D13 ///
---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Inversion #5)

Am7 ///	D7 / D7/A /
---------	-------------

Substitute Progression (Inversion #6)

Am7 ///	D9 / D9/A /
---------	-------------

Substitute Progression (Embellishment #7)

Am7 / D7 /	D11 / D7 /
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Substitute Progression (Chordal Shuffle #8)

Am / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /
-------------	-------------

Substitute Progression (Chordal Shuffle #9)

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
-------------	--------------

(9) Try building your own eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-F” basic progression.

Here's how I did it adding "IIm-V-I" substitutions to the basic progression.

Cmaj7 ///	Gm7 / C7 /	Fmaj7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /
Cmaj7 ///	Gm7 / C7 /	Fmaj7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /

Here is how the Beatles did it to create the verse progression to their 1966 hit *Drive My Car*. Notice the use of the "G7" chord to transition out of the repeated "C-F" sequences.

C ///	F ///	C ///	F ///
C ///	F ///	G7 ///	///

Here is how the Beatles did it to create the verse progression to their 1969 hit *Get Back*.

C ///	///	F ///	C ///
C ///	///	F ///	C ///

Here is how Rod Stewart did it to create the verse progression to his 1976 hit *Tonight's The Night (Gonna Be Alright)*.

C ///	Fmaj7 ///	C ///	Fmaj7 ///
C ///	Fmaj7 ///	C ///	Fmaj7 ///

Here is how Hootie & The Blowfish did it to create the verse progression to their 1994 hit *Only Wanna Be With You*. Notice the unique "F" embellishment.

C / F6/9(no3) /	C / F6/9(no3) /	C / F6/9(no3) /	C / F6/9(no3) /
C / F6/9(no3) /	C / F6/9(no3) /	C / F6/9(no3) /	C / F6/9(no3) /

(10) Try building your own eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “Am-Dm” minor-key basic progression.

Here is how Eric Clapton did it to create the chorus progression to his 1974 hit cover of Bob Marley’s *I Shot The Sheriff*.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////
Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////

(11) Try building your own sixteen-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “F-C” basic displacement progression.

Here is how America did it to create the verse progression to their 1972 hit *Ventura Highway*.

F6 ///	////	Cmaj7 ///	////
F6 ///	////	Cmaj7 ///	////
F6 ///	////	Cmaj7 ///	////
F6 ///	////	Cmaj7 ///	////

(12) Try playing the “Cmaj7-Fmaj7” basic progression over a poem. There are thousands of public domain poems available on the web by just searching the word “poem.” Romantic music (1820-1880) often used poems as their source of inspiration. Numerous well-known songs have been written by adapting a poem to music (or vice versa). For

example, *Ode To Joy*, *Silent Night*, and *The Star Spangled Banner* as well as most of Elton John's hit songs were created in this manner.

A variation on this approach is to create a song by adapting new lyrics to older well-known melodies. Several examples of adding new lyrics to a well-known melody are shown below.

This type of reworking of an established song for comic effect is called a parody.

Original Song	Adaptation
<i>The Wabash Cannonball</i>	<i>The Gospel Cannonball</i> (Delmore Brothers—1941), <i>The Juke Box Cannonball</i> (Bill Haley—1952), and <i>Big Wheel Cannonball</i> (Dick Curless—1970)
<i>This Train (Is Bound For Glory)</i>	<i>My Babe</i> (Little Walker—1955)
<i>Aura Lee</i>	<i>Love Me Tender</i> (Elvis Presley—1956)
<i>Minuet I In G Major</i> (J.S. Bach—1725)	<i>A Lover's Concerto</i> (Toys—1965)

Lastly, some songs are inspired by classical music themes. John Lennon said we wrote the Beatles' 1969 *Because* by taking the chord progression to Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* and playing it backwards. Barry Manilow's *Could It Be Magic* (1975) was inspired by Chopin's *Prelude In C Minor* and Celine Dion's 1996 *All By Myself* was based on a musical theme by Rachmaninoff. Obtain a classical fake book and see if any of the chord progressions inspire you to create a new hit song.

Blues Progressions

The blues is a simple but expressive style of music that evolved in the nineteenth century from southern African-American spirituals and work songs. The blues is America's original music and spawned other styles such as jazz, rhythm and blues, and rock. A twelve-bar three-chord structure, a syncopated 4/4 rhythm, flatted third and seventh notes, and lyrics in a three-line AAB stanza form all characterize the blues. The lyrics are earthy and direct concerned with basic human conditions such as love, sex, money, jealousy, joy, bad luck, drinking, and death. The tempo may vary, and the mood ranges from total despair to cynicism, satire, and jubilation. Willie Dixon said, "The blues is the true facts of life expressed in words and songs with feeling, inspiration and understanding." B.B. King said, "The blues is an expression of anger against shame and humiliation."

The standard twelve-bar blues form is divided into three four-bar phrases as shown below. Typically, the first two and a half bars of each phrase are devoted to singing, and the last one and a half bars consists of an instrumental solo that repeats, answers, or complements the vocal line. The first phrase is four bars of the "I" chord. The second phrase starts on the "IV" chord and the lyrics from the first phrase are repeated. The third phrase starts on the "V" chord followed by the "IV" chord. This is the answer phrase that lyrically and musically completes the statement that was made earlier. The last two bars of the "I" chord are typically replaced by any number of possible turnarounds (see the separate "Turnarounds" chapter of this book). Notice that the "IV-I" plagal/amen cadences in bars six and seven, as well as, ten and eleven reveal gospel influences.

Phrase 1

I ///	I ///	I ///	I ///
-------	-------	-------	-------

Statement: *Ain't it hard to stumble when you've got no place to fall?*
[solo]

Phrase 2

IV ///	IV ///	I ///	I ///
--------	--------	-------	-------

Repetition: *Ain't it hard to stumble when you've got no place to fall?*
[solo]

Phrase 3

V ///	IV ///	I ///	I ///
-------	--------	-------	-------

Response/Answer: *In this whole wide world I've got no place at all.*
[turnaround]

The blues scale is shown in the box below. The blues scale consists of the five notes from the minor pentatonic scale plus the flatted fifth note. The b3 and b7 scale notes are referred to as the blue notes.

1	b3	4	b5	5	b7	8
C	Eb	F	Gb	G	Bb	C

The term “blues” was first used to refer to the musical style around 1900. W.C. Handy (1873–1958) published the first blues song, *Memphis Blues*, in 1912. The first blues recordings featured singers such as Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith in the early 1920s using jazz accompanists. Around this same time, the blues became standardized most commonly as a twelve-bar form using the three primary chords (“I,” “IV,” and “V”) with a melodic emphasis on the blue notes. During the Dixieland and swing eras (1917–1947) the dominant seventh chord quality preference emerged, the quick change to the “IV7” chord in bar two was added to provide greater harmonic motion, and the “IIm7-

V7-I” jazz cadence replaced the “V7-IV7-I7” cadence in bars nine through eleven. The Basie Blues progression presented later embodies these swing era changes. During the bebop era (1947 to 1955) that was associated with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk, musicians created complex blues progressions by using various substitution techniques such as backcycling (see the “Appendix”) and the use of extended and altered chords. The Bird Blues progression presented later embodies these bebop era changes.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the twelve-bar blues progressions to create hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a look at some songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the blues progressions. You will explore other blues forms including the eight, sixteen, and twenty-four bar progressions as well as talking and axe fall blues. You will also take a quick look at several ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own blues progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the standard twelve-bar blues progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Each bar is numbered across the top of the box. Play each chord for four beats each. This is the main progression for numerous blues, rock, and country songs including Leiber & Stoller’s 1952 *Kansas City*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Although the blues can be played in any key, different musical instruments lend themselves to certain keys. Try playing this progression in common blues guitar keys such as E and A. Also, try playing several of the progressions using dominant seventh instead of the major chord quality. Notice how the dominant seventh quality change gives the progression

a harder edged, bluesy sound. Many blues progressions are comprised of just three chords. As a result, these progressions are sometimes referred to as the “I, IV, V” or three-chord progressions. You will quickly find that the blues is deceptively easy to learn but very difficult to master.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	A	A	A	D	D	A	A	E	D	A	A
Bb	Bb	Bb	Bb	Eb	Eb	Bb	Bb	F	Eb	Bb	Bb
B	B	B	B	E	E	B	B	F#	E	B	B
C	C	C	C	F	F	C	C	G	F	C	C
Db	Db	Db	Db	Gb	Gb	Db	Db	Ab	Gb	Db	Db
D	D	D	D	G	G	D	D	A	G	D	D
Eb	Eb	Eb	Eb	Ab	Ab	Eb	Eb	Bb	Ab	Eb	Eb
E	E	E	E	A	A	E	E	B	A	E	E
F	F	F	F	Bb	Bb	F	F	C	Bb	F	F
Gb	Gb	Gb	Gb	B	B	Gb	Gb	Db	B	Gb	Gb
G	G	G	G	C	C	G	G	D	C	G	G
Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Db	Db	Ab	Ab	Eb	Db	Ab	Ab

DURATION

Unlike most popular music that is divided into eight or sixteen bar sections, most blues songs are in the twelve-bar format. Although various blues forms emerged in the 1920s, by far the most common blues structure remains the twelve-bar progression with four beats to the bar. The chord duration for a standard twelve-bar blues progression is shown below.

C ///	////	////	////
F ///	////	C ///	////

G///	F///	C///	///
------	------	------	-----

The shuffle, straight eight, and slow blues are the three basic blues rhythms. The shuffle uses a triplet feel in which the eighth notes are not played evenly but are broken up into uneven pairs of eighths notes, the first being longer than the second. An example of this type of rhythm is found on Stevie Ray Vaughan's 1983 *Pride And Joy*. In the straight-eight rhythm as the name implies, the eighth notes are played evenly. An example of this type of rhythm is found on Chuck Berry's 1958 hit *Johnny B. Goode*. Lastly, slow blues is played in 12/8 time. A measure of 12/8 music has twelve counts, each an eighth note long. The counts are divided into four groups of three. An example of this type of rhythm is found on T-Bone Walker's 1946 *Stormy Monday*.

You should listen to as many songs written using blues progressions as possible to appreciate this style's reliance on the uniqueness of each performer to deliver his or her interpretation of the blues. Below are examples of blues, rock, jazz, and folk/country songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression.

Blues

Examples of blues songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression include *See See Rider* (Ma Rainey—1924), *Corrine Corrina* verse (Blind Lemmon Jefferson—1926), *Matchbox* (Blind Lemmon Jefferson—1927), *Blues Before Sunrise* (Leroy Carr—1935), *Ramblin' On My Mind* (Robert Johnson—1936), *Walkin' Blues* (Robert Johnson—1936), *Love In Vain* (Robert Johnson—1937), *Good Morning Blues* (Huddie Ledbetter—1938), *Shake, Rattle & Roll* (Big Joe Turner—1951), *Hey Hey* (Big Bill Broonzy—1952), *I'm Ready* chorus (Willie Dixon—1954), *Got My Mojo Working* (Muddy Waters—1960), *Baby, What You Want Me To Do* (Jimmy Reed—1960), *Back Door Man* (Howlin' Wolf—1961), *Little Red Rooster* (Howlin' Wolf—1961), *Hideaway* (Freddie King—1961), *Boom Boom* (John Lee Hooker—1962), *Killing Floor* (Howlin'

Wolf—1964), *Rock Me Baby* (B.B. King—1964), *Got The Blues Can't Be Satisfied* (Mississippi John Hurt—1967), *Ice Pick* (Albert Collins—1978), *Too Broke To Spend The Night* (Buddy Guy—1991), and *Damn Right I've Got The Blues* (Buddy Guy—1991).

Examples of blues songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression with a quick change in bar two include *St. Louis Blues* (W.C. Handy—1914), *Backwater Blues* (Bessie Smith—1927), *Sweet Home Chicago* (Robert Johnson—1936), *Traveling Riverside Blues* (Robert Johnson—1937), *Malted Milk* (Robert Johnson—1937), *I Believe I'll Dust My Broom* (Elmore James—1951), *Everyday I Have The Blues* (Lowell Fulson—1952), *Five Long Years* (Eddie Boyd—1952), *Reconsider Baby* (Lowell Fulson—1954), *All My Love In Vain* (Sonny Boy Williamson—1955), *Before You Accuse Me* (Eugene McDaniels—1957), *Blues With A Feeling* (Little Walter—1963), *Rock Me Baby* (B.B. King—1964), *Sweet Little Angel* (B.B. King—1965), *Mean Old World* (Otis Rush—1966), and *Gambler's Blues* (B.B. King—1967).

Rock

The blues is the heart of rock and roll. Rock and roll borrowed its musical structure, emotion, and intensity directly from the blues. Shoutin' Joe Turner said, "Rock and roll ain't nothing but the blues pepped up." Examples of rock songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression include *Rock Around The Clock* (Bill Haley 1955), *Long Tall Sally* (Little Richard—1956), *Tutti' Frutti* (Pat Boone—1956), *Slipin' And Slidin'* (Little Richard—1956), *Rip It Up* (Little Richard—1956), *Roll Over Beethoven* bridge (Chuck Berry—1956), *Blue Suede Shoes* (Elvis Presley—1956), *Honey Don't* chorus (Carl Perkins—1956), *Rock And Roll Music* chorus (Chuck Berry—1957), *Lucille* (Little Richard—1957), *Matchbox* (Carl Perkins—1957), *Jenny, Jenny* (Little Richard—1957), *Too Much* (Elvis Presley—1957), *Bird Dog* verse (Everly Brothers—1958), *Oh, Boy* (Crickets—1958), *Rock And Roll Is Here To Stay* (Danny & The Juniors—1958), *Hard Headed*

Woman (Elvis Presley—1958), *Good Golly Miss Molly* (Little Richard—1958), *At The Hop* (Danny & The Juniors—1958), *Rockin' Robin* (Bobby Day—1958), *The Stroll* (Diamonds—1958), *What'd I Say* (Ray Charles—1959), *Kansas City* (Wilbert Harrison—1959), *Charlie Brown* (Coasters—1959), *A Big Hunk O' Love* (Elvis Presley—1959), *The Twist* (Chubby Checker—1960), *Money (That's What I Want)* (Barrett Strong—1960), *Little Sister* chorus (Elvis Presley—1961), *Corrina, Corrina* (Ray Peterson—1961), *The Wanderer* (Dion—1962), *Chains* (Cookies—1962), *Let's Go* (Routers—1962), *Night Train* (James Brown—1962), *Wipe Out* (Surfaris—1963), *Mean Woman Blues* (Roy Orbison—1963), *Boys* verse (Beatles—1963), *G.T.O.* (Ronny & The Daytonas—1964), *Hippy Hippy Shake* (Swinging Blue Jeans—1964), *Little Honda* verse (Hondells—1964), *You Can't Do That* verse (Beatles—1964), *Mountain Of Love* verse (Johnny Rivers—1964), *Wooley Bully* (Sam The Sham & The Pharos—1965), *Seventh Son* (Johnny Rivers—1965), *I Got You (I Feel Good)* (James Brown—1965), *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* (James Brown—1965), *She's About A Mover* (Sir Douglas Quintet—1965), *Dizzy Miss Lizzy* verse (Beatles—1965), *Everybody's Trying To Be My Baby* verse (Beatles—1965), *Barbara Ann* (Beach Boys—1966), *Hanky Panky* (Tommy James & The Shondells—1966), *Creeque Alley* verse (Mamas & Papas—1967), *Strange Brew* (Cream—1967), *Birthday* verse (Beatles—1968), *Why Don't We Do It In The Road* verse (Beatles—1968), *In The Summertime* (Mungo Jerry—1970), *One Way Out* (Allman Brothers—1972), *Some Kind Of Wonderful* (Grand Funk—1975), *Tush* (ZZ Top—1975), *Wasn't That A Party* (Rovers—1981), *Guitar Man* verse (Elvis Presley—1981), *Pride And Joy* (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1983), and *Love Struck Baby* verse (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1983).

Examples of rock songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression with a quick change in bar two include *Roll Over Beethoven* verse (Chuck Berry—1956), *Carol* chorus (Chuck Berry—1958), *Heart Of Stone* (Rolling Stone—1965), *Crossroads* (Cream—1969), *(They Call It) Stormy Monday* (Allman Brothers—1971), *Statesboro Blues* (Allman

Brothers Band—1971), *Never Been To Spain* (Three Dog Night—1972), *Your Mama Don't Dance* (Loggins & Messina—1973), *Steamroller Blues* (Elvis Presley—1973), *Spiders And Snakes* (Jim Stafford—1974), *She Loves My Automobile* (ZZ Top—1979), *Texas Flood* (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1983), *Boot Hill* (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1989), *The Sky Is Crying* (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1991), *Give Me One Reason* (Tracy Chapman—1996), and *Merry Christmas Baby* (Bobby Womack—2000).

Jazz

Examples of jazz songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression include *In The Mood* A section (Glenn Miller—1940), *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy* verse (Andrew Sisters—1941), *C Jam Blues* (Duke Ellington—1942), *Cool Blues* (Charlie Parker—1947), *Jump, Jive, An' Wail* (Louis Prima—1957), *Blue Train* (John Coltrane—1957), and *All Blues* (Miles Davis—1959).

Examples of jazz songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression with a quick change in bar two include *Fine And Mellow* (Billie Holiday—1940), *Hootie Blues* (Charlie Parker—1941), *Blue Flame* (Woody Herman—1942), *Billie's Bounce* (Charlie Parker—1945), *(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66* (Nat King Cole—1946), *Blues For Alice*, (Charlie Parker—1949), *Straight, No Chaser* (Thelonious Monk—1951), *Au Privave* (Charlie Parker—1955), *Honky Tonk* (Bill Doggett—1956), and *Freddie The Freeloader* (Miles Davis—1959).

Folk/Country

Examples of folk and country songs written using the twelve-bar blues progression include *Move It On Over* verse (Hank Williams—1947), *Long Gone Lonesome Blues* (Hank Williams—1950), *I'm Movin' On* verse (Hank Snow—1950), *Worried Man* (Kingston Trio—1959), *Runnin' Behind* verse (Tracy Lawrence—1991), and *Ain't Going Down ('Til The Sun Comes Up)* verse (Garth Brooks—1993).

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. Like the rhythm changes (see the separate “Rhythm Changes” chapter), many chord substitutions are possible within twelve-bar blues progressions. Below you will find bar-by-bar examples of blues substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can usually be used for any twelve-bar blues song permitting many harmonic possibilities. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions. Listen carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make. The first example shows the standard twelve-bar blues progression. Chords are divided equally within each bar while those in parentheses are played for just one beat. For ease of comparison, all chords are shown as flats where applicable.

<i>Bar 1</i>	<i>Bar 2</i>
C	C
C	F7
C—Co7	C—Co7
C—G7	C—G7
C—G7#5	C—G7#5
C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6
C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6
C7	C7
C7	F7
C7	Co7
C7	F7—B7
C7	F7—Gbo7
C7—C7/E	F7—Gbo7

Bar 1	Bar 2
C7	Dm7—G7
C7—Dbo7	Dm7—G7
Cmaj7	Fmaj7
Cmaj7	Bm7—E7
Cmaj7	Dbm7—Gb7
Dbm7—Gb7	Bm7—E7
Gm7—C7	Gm7—C7
Gm7	C7
Gm7—C7	Cm7—F7
Bar 3	Bar 4
C	C
C	C7
C	Gm7—C7
C—Co7	C7
C—G7	C7
C—G7#5	C7
C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6
C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6
C7	C7
C7	Gb7
C7	C7—Gb7
C7	Db7—C7
C7	Gm7—C7
C7	Gm7—Gb7
C7—G7	C7
C7—Db7	C7

Bar 3	Bar 4
C7—Db7	C7—Gb7
C7	Eb7
Em7—Dm7	Dbm7—Gb7
Am7—D7	Gm7—C7
Am7—[D7 Ab7]	Gm7—[C7 Gb7]
Am7—D7	Gm7—Gb7
Am7—D7	Dbm7—Gb7
Am7—Ab7	Gm7—C7
Am7—Ab7	Gm7—Gb7
Am7—Abm7	Gm7—Gb7
Bmaj7—Bbmaj7	Abmaj7—Amaj7
Gm7—C7	Gm7—C7
Gm7—C7	Dbm7—Gb7
Gm7	C7
Db7—C7	E7
Bar 5	Bar 6
F	F
F	Fm
F	Fm—Bb7
F	F7
F5 F6 F5 F6	F5 F6 F5 F6
F5 F6 F7 F6	F5 F6 F7 F6
F7	F7
F7	Fm7
F7	Fm7—Bb7
F7	Bb7

Bar 5	Bar 6
F7	Eb7—B7
F7	Gbm7—B7
F7	Gbo7
F7	Gb7—F7
F7	Dm7—G7
Fmaj7	Fm7
Fmaj7	Fm7—Bb7
Fmaj7	Fm7—[Bb7 E7]
Fmaj7	Bb7
Fmaj7	Gbm7—B7
Cm7—F7	Cm7—F7
Cm7	F7
Bar 7	Bar 8
C	C
C	C7
C	Dbo7
C	C—Dbo7
C	C—Co7
C—G7	C
C—G7	C—Co7
C—G7	C—Dbo7
C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6
C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6
C7	C7
C7	C7—[C7 Ab7]
C7	A7

Bar 7	Bar 8
C7/G	A7
C7	Am7—D7
C7	Eb7
C7	Em7—A7
C7—Dm7	Em7—A7
C7	Bb7—A7
C7—B7	Bb7—A7
C7—F7	Em7—A7
C7—F7	G7—Eb7
C7—F7	E7—Eb7
Cmaj7—Dm7	Em7—Eb7
Cmaj7—Dm7	Em7—Ebm7
Cmaj7	Am7
Em7	A7
Em7	Em7—A7
Em7	Eb7
Em7	Ebm7
Em7	Ebm7—Ab7
Em7—A7	Ebm7—Ab7
Ebmaj7	Ebm7—Ab7
Ebmaj7	Ebm7—D7
Gm7—C7	Gm7—C7
Gm7	C7
Bar 9	Bar 10
G	F
G5 G6 G5 G6	F5 F6 F5 F6

Bar 9	Bar 10
G5 G6 G7 G6	F5 F6 F7 F6
G	G
G7	F7
G7—[G7 Gb7]	F7
G7—Dm7	F7—[Ab7 G7]
G7	G7
G7	Dm7—G7
G7	F—G7
G7	Ab7—G7
Dm7	G7
Dm7	Ab7
Dm7	Fm7—Bb7
Dm7	Db7
Dm7—G7	Cm7—F7
Dm7—G7	Abm7—Db7
D7	G7
Dbmaj7	Dm7—G7
Dbmaj7	Dm7—Db7
Ab7	G7
Abmaj7	Bb6
Bar 11	Bar 12
C	C
C	G7
C	Dm7—G7
C—C7	Dm7—G7
C—Ab7	G7

Bar 11	Bar 12
C—F	C—G7
[C Co7]—G7	C—G7
C C7 F Fm	[C G7]—G7
C C/Bb F/AFm/Ab	C/G—G7
C C7/Bb Am7 Ab7	G7
C C7 F Ab7	[C Ab]—G7
C C7/Bb F/A Ab7	[C/G Ab7]—G7
C C7/E F Ab7/Gb	[C/G Gb7]—G7
C C7/E F7 Gb7	[G7 Db7]—C7
C C7 F Gbo7	[C F7 Gb7]—G7
C C7/E F Gbo7	C7/G—G7
C C7/Bb Ao7 Ab6	C/G—G7
C C7/Bb C/A C/Ab	C/G—G7
C C7 Co7 Fm6	C—G7
C C7 Co7 Fm/C	[C G7]—C
C C7 Co7 Bo7	[C Dbo7]—G7
C Eo7 Ebo7 Do7	C—G7
C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6
C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6
C7	C7
C7	G7
C7	C7—G7
C7—G7	C7—G7
C7—F7	C7—G7
C7—[F D7]	[C Ab]—G7
C7	Dm7—G7
C7	Dm7—Db7

Bar 11	Bar 12
C7—A7	D7—G7
C7—A7	Ab7—G7
C7—A7	Gb7—Eb7
C7—A7	Dm7—G7
C7—A7	Dm7—Db7
C7—Eb7	Dm7—Db7
C7—Ebm7	Dm7—Db7
C7—Eb7	D7—Db7
C7—Eb7	Ab7—Db7
Cmaj7—Eb7	Abmaj7—Db7
Cmaj7—Eb7	Ab7—Db7
Cmaj7—Ebmaj7	Abmaj7—Dbmaj7
Cmaj7—Ebmaj7	Abmaj7—G7
Cmaj7—Ebmaj7	Dmaj7—Dbmaj7
Cmaj7—Am7	Dm7—G7
Cmaj7—Dbo7	Dm7—G7
Cmaj7—Ebo7	Dm7—G7
Dm7—G7	Dm7—G7
Em7—Am7	Dm7—G7
Em7—A7	Dm7—G7
Em7—A7	D7—G7
Em7—A7	Abm7—Db7
Em7—Ebm7	Dm7—Db7
Eb7	F7
Gm7—C7	Gm7—C7
Gm7	C7

Now here's where it becomes really interesting. You can build your own blues progressions by mixing and matching the chord sequences from each box above. After that you can add chord embellishments ("7," "9," "11," and "13"), altered (b5th, #5th, b9th, & #9th), and other substitutions to construct yet more blues progression variations. The possibilities are almost limitless.

SONGS BASED ON TWELVE-BAR BLUES PROGRESSIONS

Below are a number of different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the twelve-bar blues progression to create new songs. The musical genre of each performer is indicated after each performer's name.

Frankie And Johnny

The chord progression to the traditional *Frankie And Johnny* is shown below. It deviates from the standard twelve-bar blues progression by extending the "F" chord into bar seven and omitting the "F" chord change in bar ten.

C ///	////	////	C7 ///
F ///	////	////	C ///
G7 ///	////	C ///	////

St. Louis Blues

The chord progression to W.C. Handy's (blues) 1914 *St. Louis Blues* is shown below. W.C. Handy is known as the "Father of the Blues." While he did not invent the blues, he was the first person to use the term "blues" in a song title (*Memphis Blues*—1912) and include "blue notes" in published musical compositions. This arrangement uses a

quick change in bar two and omits the change to the “F” chord in bar ten.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C ///	C7 ///
F ///	F7 ///	C ///	////
G7 ///	////	C ///	////

Sweet Home Chicago

The chord progression to Robert Johnson’s (blues) 1936 *Sweet Home Chicago* is shown below. Robert Johnson (1911-1938) as legend has it, sold his soul to the Devil in return for a short life as a blues guitar genius. Eric Clapton calls him the most important blues musician who ever lived. This arrangement uses a quick change in bar two and a “C-G7” folk progression turnaround.

C ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	// G7 /

Basie Blues

The Basie Blues progression is shown below. The progression evolved during the swing era and features a quick change in bar two and the “Dm7-G7-C7” jazz progression substitution for bars nine through eleven. Count Basie used this progression for blues songs such as his 1937 *One O’Clock Jump*.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C7 ///	G7 ///

In The Mood

The “A” section progression to Glenn Miller’s (swing) 1940 instrumental hit *In The Mood* is shown below. It deviates from the standard twelve-bar blues progression by embellishing the “C” and “F” chords, omitting the “F” chord change in bar ten, and adding a jazz turnaround. Swing is a type of popular dance music that developed in the mid 1930s based on jazz but was characterized by larger bands, less improvisation, and simpler harmonic and rhythmic patterns.

C6 ///	////	////	////
F6 ///	////	C6 ///	////
G7 ///	////	C6 / F7 /	Ab7 G7 C6 /

Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy

The verse progression to the Andrew Sisters’ (swing) 1941 hit *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy* is shown below. The verse progression is repeated to create the twenty-four bar verse progression. This arrangement closely follows the standard twelve-bar blues progression.

C ///	////	////	C7 ///
F ///	////	C ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	C ///	////

(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66

The chord progression to Nat King Cole’s (jazz) 1946 hit *(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66* is shown below. This arrangement features a quick change in bar two, the “F9” and “G9” embellishments, the “Dm7-G7-C7” jazz progression substitution for bars nine through eleven, and adds a jazz turnaround. The song also breaks from the typical AAB blues lyric form.

C ///	F9 ///	C ///	////
F9 ///	////	C ///	////
Dm7 ///	G9 ///	C / Eb7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

Bird Blues

The Bird Blues progression (also referred to as Parker Blues) is shown below. The progression evolved during the bebop era and it backcycles after the first bar creating a series of “IIm-V” jazz progressions until reaching the target “F7” chord in bar five. Bars seven through eleven are another series of “IIm-V” jazz progression substitutions that descend chromatically into the standard turnaround. Charlie Parker used this progression for blues songs such as his 1949 *Blues For Alice*.

Cmaj7 ///	Bm7 / E7b9 /	Am7 / D7b9 /	Gm7 / C7 /
Fmaj7 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Ebm7 / Ab7 /
Dm7 ///	G7(alt) ///	Cmaj7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

Straight, No Chaser

The chord progression to Thelonious Monk’s (jazz) 1951 *Straight, No Chaser* is shown below. This is an example of a jazz blues song that features a quick change in bar two, an “Em7-A7-Dm7-G7” circle progression substitution for bars eight through ten, and adds a jazz turnaround. This progression was also used for Charlie Parker’s *Billie’s Bounce*.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	Em7 / A7 /
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /

In The Evening (When The Sun Goes Down)

The chord progression to Big Bill Broonzy's (blues) 1955 cover of Leroy Carr's 1935 *In The Evening (When The Sun Goes Down)* is shown below. This arrangement features a chromatic ascending diminished cliché substitution for bars eight through ten.

C ///	////	// F7 /	C / C7 /
F9 ///	////	C / G7 /	C / D♭7 /
Dm7 ///	E♭7 / G7 /	C / F7 /	C / G7#5 /

Rock Around The Clock

The verse progression to Bill Haley And The Comets' (rock) 1955 hit *Rock Around The Clock* is shown below. This was the first rock and roll hit song. The sequence deviates from the standard twelve-bar blues progression by omitting the "F" chord change in the tenth bar and adding the jazzier "F9" and "G9" for the "F" and "G" chords. This progression was also used to write Elvis Presley's 1956 hit *Blue Suede Shoes*.

C ///	////	////	////
F9 ///	////	C ///	////
G9 ///	////	C ///	////

Roll Over, Beethoven

The verse progression to Chuck Berry's (rock) 1956 hit *Roll Over, Beethoven* is shown below. This arrangement that features a quick change to the "F" chord in bar ten and omits the usual change to the "F" chord in the tenth bar and has only a basic turnaround.

C ///	F ///	C ///	////
F ///	////	C ///	////

G ///	////	C ///	////
-------	------	-------	------

Hound Dog

The verse progression to Elvis Presley's (rock) 1956 *Hound Dog* is shown below. This arrangement closely follows the standard twelve-bar blues progression. Elvis Presley also used this same formula for his *Too Much* (1957) and *Hard Headed Woman* (1958). Non-Elvis rock examples of this variation include *Be-Bop-A Lula* (Gene Vincent—1956), *Hi-Heel Sneakers* (Tommy Tucker—1964), *Barefootin'* (Robert Parker—1966), and *Reelin' And Rockin'* (Dave Clark Five—1965). Country song examples include *I'm Movin' On* verse (Hank Snow—1950) and *Runnin' Behind* verse (Tracy Lawrence—1991).

C ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	C ///	////

Let The Good Times Roll

The verse progression to Shirley & Lee's (rock) 1956 hit *Let The Good Times Roll* is shown below. It deviates from the standard twelve-bar blues progression by substituting "Dm7-G7-C" jazz progression for bars nine through eleven and the replacement of the "F" with the "F9" chord. If you replace the "F9" with the "F" chord, you have the verse progression to Elvis Presley's (rock) 1956 hit *Don't Be Cruel (To A Heart That's True)*.

C ///	////	////	C7 ///
F9 ///	////	C ///	////
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Johnny B. Goode

The verse progression to Chuck Berry's (rock) 1958 hit *Johnny B. Goode* is shown below. It deviates from the standard twelve-bar blues progression by omitting the "F" chord change in the tenth bar. Chuck Berry also used this same formula for his *Maybellene* chorus (1955), *School Day* (1957), *Around And Around* (1958), *Let It Rock* (1959), and *No Particular Place To Go* (1964). Non-Berry rock examples of this bare bones blues progression include the verse progression to Canned Heat's 1968 hit *Goin' Up Country*. Country song examples include *Move It On Over* verse (Hank Williams—1947) and *Long Gone, Lonesome Blues* verse (Hank Williams—1950). A jazz example is *Jump, Jive, An' Wail* (Louis Prima—1957). Notice that several of these examples use a musical device referred to as stop-time during the first four measures of the song in which the forward flow of the music stops, or seems to stop, suspended in a rhythmic unison, while the singer continues with the forward flow of the meter and tempo. Such stop-time moments are repeated, creating an illusion of starting and stopping.

C ///	////	///	////
F ///	////	C ///	////
G ///	////	C ///	////

I Ain't Superstitious

The chord progression to Howlin' Wolf's (blues) 1961 *I Ain't Superstitious* is shown below. In this tune songwriter Willie Dixon substitutes the "F7" chord for the "C" chord in the first bar.

F7 ///	////	C ///	////
F7 ///	////	C ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	C ///	////

Boom Boom

The chord progression to John Lee Hooker's (blues) 1962 *Boom Boom* is shown below. This song adds the "C-F-C" basic progression pedal point substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression.

C / F/C /	C ///	C / F/C /	C ///
F / Bb/F /	F ///	C / F/C /	C ///
G / C/G /	G ///	C / F/C /	C ///

Green Onions

The verse progression to Booker T. & The M.G.s' (rock) 1962 instrumental hit *Green Onions* is shown below. This progression adapts the axe fall (discussed in a later section) to a twelve-bar blues format.

C / Eb F	C / Eb F	C / Eb F	C / Eb F
F / Ab Bb	F / Ab Bb	C / Eb F	C / Eb F
G / Bb C	F / Ab Bb	C / Eb F	C / Eb F

I'm Into Something Good

The verse progression to Herman's Hermits' (rock) 1964 hit *I'm Into Something Good* is shown below. This arrangement adds a "C-F" basic progression substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression.

C / F /	C / F /	C / F /	C ///
F / Bb /	F / Bb /	C / F /	C ///
G ///	F ///	C / F /	C / F /

I'm Crying

The verse progression to the Animals' (rock) 1964 *I'm Crying* is shown below. This progression adapts an axe fall variation to a twelve-bar blues format.

C / Eb F Eb	C / Eb F Eb	C / Eb F Eb	C / Eb F Eb
F / Ab Bb Ab	F / Ab Bb Ab	C / Eb F Eb	C / Eb F Eb
G / Bb C Bb	F / Ab Bb Ab	C / Eb F Eb	C / Eb F Eb

Can't Buy Me Love

The verse progression to the Beatles' (rock) 1964 hit is shown below. It deviates from the standard twelve-bar blues progression by extending the "F" chord into bar eleven and using all dominant chord qualities. The Beatles were particularly astute at making these types of minor adjustments to well-worn progressions to give them new life.

C7 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	////	C7 ///

The Word

The verse progression to the Beatles' (rock) 1965 *The Word* is shown below. This arrangement adds "C7#9" Jimi Hendrix and suspended chord substitutions.

C7#9 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C7#9 ///	////
Gsus4 / G /	Fsus4 / F /	C7#9 ///	////

Heart Of Stone

The verse progression to the Rolling Stone's (rock) 1965 *Heart Of Stone* is shown below. This is a slow blues song with many chord substitutions. The "Am" replaces the "F" (mediant substitution) and "C" chords (relative minor substitution) in bars five through eight and the "F" substitutes for the "Dm" chord (relative minor substitution) in bar nine.

C ///	F ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
Am ///	////	////	////
F ///	G7 ///	Am ///	C / G7 /

Little Latin Lupe Lu

The verse progression to Mitch Rider & The Detroit Wheels' (rock) 1966 hit *Little Latin Lupe Lu* is shown below. This arrangement adds a "C-F-C" basic progression substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression.

C / F /	C ///	// F /	C ///
F / Bb /	F ///	C / F /	C ///
G7 ///	F7 ///	C / F /	C ///

Hey Joe

A unique approach to the blues is the Leaves (rock) 1966 hit *Hey Joe*. The chord progression is shown below. This is a circle progression (see the separate "Circle Progressions" chapter) that descends in fourths to the tonic. Notice that this progression is twelve-bars in length and the lyrics follow the AAB form. Try singing the lyrics of another twelve-bar blues song over this chord sequence. This progression sounds best in the key of E or A.

Ab / Eb /	Bb / F /	C ///	////
Ab / Eb /	Bb / F /	C ///	////
Ab / Eb /	Bb / F /	C ///	////

On The Road Again

The chord progression to Canned Heat's (rock) 1968 hit *On The Road Again* is shown below. This progression was inspired by the axe fall following the chord sequence and feel. This progression is also twelve-bars in length and the lyrics follow the AAB form. Try singing the lyrics of another twelve-bar blues song over this chord sequence. This progression sounds best in the key of E.

C ///	////	// Eb F	C ///
C ///	////	// Eb F	C ///
C ///	////	// Eb F	C ///

Yer Blues

The opening verse progression to the Beatles' (rock) 1968 *Yer Blues* is shown below. This is the closest the Beatles came to recording an actual blues song even though it is over-wrought and highly stylized. Highlights of this arrangement include the choice of a unique 6/8 time (2 beats per measure), and the substitution of the "Eb" chord in the ninth bar.

C /	//	//	//
F /	//	C /	//
Eb /	G7 /	C7 F7	C G7

Steamroller Blues

The chord progression to James Taylor's (rock) 1970 *Steamroller* is shown below. This arrangement features a quick change in bar two and several common blues substitutions for bars nine through twelve.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	C7#9 ///
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
G7#9 ///	F-Bb/F-F7-Bb/F	C7-C7/E-F7-F#o7	C/G / Ab7 G7

(They Call It) Stormy Monday

The chord progression to the Allman Brothers' (rock) 1971 *(They Call It) Stormy Monday* (Allman Brothers—1971) is shown below. This was a cover of T-Bone Walker's original 1946 song. This version includes a half step substitution in bar three, the "C-Dm7-Em7-Eb7-Dm7-Ab9" substitution for bars seven through ten, and a unique turnaround.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 / Db7 /	C7 ///
F7 ///	////	C / Dm7 /	Em7 / Eb7 /
Dm7 ///	Ab9 ///	C7 / F7 /	C7 / G+ /

I Can Help

The verse progression to Billy Swan's (rock) 1974 hit *I Can Help* is shown below. This arrangement adds the "C-C6" organ vamp substitution to the twelve-bar blues format.

C / C6 /	C / C6 /	C / C6 /	C / C6 /
F / F6 /	F / F6 /	C / C6 /	C / C6 /
G ///	Bbsus4 F G /	C / C6 /	C / C6 /

Tush

The chord progression to ZZ Top's (rock) 1975 hit *Tush* is shown below. This arrangement adds both "5-6" and "5-6-7-6" shuffle sequences and a walkup in bar six.

C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6
F5-F6-F7-F6	F5-A5-Bb5-B5	C5 C6 C5 C6	C5 C6 C5 C6
G5 G6 G7 G6	F5 F6 F5 F6	C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 Ab9 G9 /

Peg

The verse progression to Steely Dan's (rock) 1978 hit *Peg* (Steely Dan—1978) is shown below. This arrangement adds the "Cmaj7-Gadd9" vamp substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression. I usually replace the "Gadd9" with the "Bm7#5" chord (common tone substitution) creating the "Cmaj-Bm7#5" vamp. You will want to try replacing a relative minor vamp with this substitution.

Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /
Fmaj7 / Cadd9 /	Fmaj7 / Cadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /
Gmaj7 / Dadd9 /	Fmaj7 / Cadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /	Cmaj7 / Gadd9 /

Mercury Blues

The verse progression to Alan Jackson's (country) 1992 cover of K.C. Douglas' 1948 country song *Mercury Blues* is shown below. Notice the difference replacing the "Am" for the "Dm7" chord (common tone substitution) in bar nine makes.

C7 ///	///	///	///
F7 ///	///	C7 ///	///
Am ///	G7 ///	C7 ///	///

Give Me One Reason

The verse progression to Tracy Chapman's (rock) 1996 hit *Give Me One Reason* is shown. This song adds the "C-F-G" rock and roll progression substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression.

C ///	F / G /	C ///	///
F ///	// G /	C ///	///
G ///	F ///	C ///	///

Blues For The Lost Days

The chord progression to John Mayall's (rock) 1997 *Blues For The Lost Days* is shown below. This song adds the "C-Bb-F" classic rock progression substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C / Bb F	C / C7 /
F7 ///	///	C / Bb F	C / C7 /
G7 ///	F7 ///	C / Bb F	C / G7 /

EIGHT-BAR BLUES

The eight-bar blues progression is similar to the standard twelve-bar blues progression except that bars three, four, eight, and ten are omitted in order to shorten the sequence. The turnaround continues to be comprised of the last two bars of the progression with many possible substitutions available. Due to its shorter length, the eight-bar blues is another way to create an A section for a new AABA form song. Although there are a number of variations, the standard eight-bar blues progression is shown below. In some variations the second bar is the "G7" ("V") chord and the third bar is the "C" ("I") chord.

C7 ///	///	F7 ///	///
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C7 ///	G7 ///	C7 ///	////
--------	--------	--------	------

Examples of songs written using the eight-bar blues progression include *Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do* (Bessie Smith—1923), *Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out* (Bessie Smith—1923), *Shave 'Em Dry* (Ma Rainey—1925), *Trouble In Mind* (Chippie Hill—1926), *How Long Blues* (Leroy Carr—1929), *Georgia On My Mind* (Standard—1930), *Key To The Highway* (Big Bill Broonzy—1941), *Darlin', You Know I Love You* (B.B. King—1952), *Walkin' After Midnight* (Patsy Cline—1957), *It Hurts Me Too* (Mel London—1957), *Stagger Lee* verse (Lloyd Price—1959), *Sea of Love* (Phil Phillips with The Twilights—1959), *Night Life* (Willie Nelson—1962), *Bring It On Home To Me* (Sam Cooke—1962), *Come Back Baby* (Mance Lipscomb—1964), *(The) Midnight Special* (Johnny Rivers—1965), *Mary Had A Little Lamb* (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1986), *Come On In My Kitchen* (Allman Brothers—1991), and *Someday After A While (You'll Be Sorry)* (Eric Clapton—1994).

Songs Based On Eight-Bar Blues Progressions

Below are a number of different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the eight-bar blues progression to create new songs.

Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do

The verse progression to Bessie Smith's (blues) 1922 *Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do* is shown below. This arrangement features the replacement of the "G7" in bar two with the "E7" chord (common tone substitution) and the replacement of the "F" in bar three with the "Am" chord (mediant substitution). Also, diminished ("Gbo7" for "F" and "Dbo7" for "C") substitutions are used.

C ///	E7 ///	Am / C7/G /	F / Gbo7 /
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C / D \flat o7 /	G7 ///	C / A7 /	D9 / G7 /
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Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out

The chord progression to Bessie Smith's (blues) 1923 *Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out* is shown below. This progression is a unique eight-bar blues progression.

C / E7 /	A7 ///	Dm / A7 /	Dm ///
F / G \flat o7 /	C / A7 /	D7 ///	G7 ///

Trouble In Mind

The chord progression to Chippie Hill's (blues) 1926 *Trouble In Mind* is presented below. This is a typical variation of the standard eight-bar blues progression that is similar to the *Key to The Highway* variation below except that the "C7" is additionally substituted for the "F" chord in the third bar. You will want to try substituting "F-G \flat o7" for the "F7" in bar four and a "Dm7-G7" for the "G7" in bar six.

C ///	G7 ///	C7 ///	F7 ///
C ///	G7 ///	C C7 F Fm	C / G /

How Long, How Long Blues

The chord progression to Leroy Carr's 1929 *How Long, How Long Blues* is shown below. In my mind, this is the definitive eight-bar blues progression. The arrangement alternates major and dominant seventh chord qualities. Try substituting the "G \flat o7-Ao7" sequence for bar four.

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	F7 ///
C ///	G7 ///	C / F /	C / G7 /

Georgia On My Mind

The A section progression to Hoagy Carmichael's 1930 standard *Georgia On My Mind* is shown below. This arrangement also features the replacement of the "G7" in bar two with the "E7" chord (common tone substitution), the replacement of the "F" in bar three with the "Am" chord (mediant substitution), and the ragtime progression substitution for bars five and six. You can also substitute "D/Gb-Fm6" for bar four or "Em7-A7-Dm7-G7" for bars five and six.

C ///	E7 ///	Am / Am/G /	F / Gbø7 /
C/E / A7 /	D7 / G7 /	Em7 / A7b9 /	Dm7 / G7+ /

Key To The Highway

The chord progression to Big Bill Broonzy's (blues) 1941 *Key To The Highway* is shown below. This is a typical variation of the standard eight-bar blues progression in which the "C" chord in the second bar is replaced with the "G7" chord. You can also substitute "Dm7-G7" for bar six.

C ///	G7 ///	F ///	F / Gbø7 /
C ///	G7 / F7/A /	C C7 Co Fm6	C / G7 /

Darlin', You Know I Love You

The verse progression to B.B. King's (blues) 1952 *Darlin', You Know I Love You* is shown below. This is a slow blues that features the "C-A7-Dm7-G7" standard progression substitution for bars five and six. You will also want to try replacing the "Fm7" with the "Fm7-Bb7" chords in bar four.

C ///	C7 ///	F7 ///	Fm7 ///
C / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Dm7 /	F Gb G7 /

It Hurts Me Too

The chord progression to Mel London's (blues) 1957 *It Hurts Me Too* is shown below. This arrangement is a slow blues that features the addition of the "F" chord in bar six.

C ///	////	F ///	////
C ///	G / F /	C ///	////

Walkin' After Midnight

The verse progression to Patsy Cline's (country) 1957 hit *Walkin' After Midnight* is shown below. This progression rushes the change to "C" in bar four and includes a tritone substitution ("Ab" for "D7") in bar six.

C ///	////	F ///	// C /
C ///	Ab / G /	C / F /	C / F /

Sometime Tomorrow

The chord progression to Bobby Bland's 1958 *Sometime Tomorrow* is shown below. This song features the doo-wop progression substitution for bars five and six.

C ///	C9 ///	F7 ///	// Gbø7 /
C / Am /	F / G7 /	C7 / F /	C / G7 /

Sea Of Love

The verse progression to Phil Phillips with The Twilights' (rock) 1959 hit *Sea of Love* is shown below. This slow blues features the replacement of the "G7" in bar two with the "E7" chord and the "F7" in bar four

with the “D7” chord (common tone substitutions). Also, the “G7” is omitted in the “D7-G7” “IIIm-V” for “V” substitution in bar six.

C ///	E7 ///	F ///	D7 ///
C ///	D7 ///	C / F /	C ///

Night Life

The verse progression to B.B. King’s cover of Willie Nelson’s (country) 1962 *Night Life* is shown below. This is another slow blues that features a “C-Am7-Dm7-G11” standard progression substitution in bars five and six.

C ///	C9 ///	F ///	Fm(M7) ///
C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G11 /	C ///	Dm7 / G11 /

Bring It On Home To Me

The verse progression to Sam Cooke’s (rock) 1962 *Bring It On Home To Me* is shown below. This progression follows the *Trouble In Mind* variation above. It also features a “C-G-F-G” rock and roll variation substitution in bars five and six.

C ///	G ///	C7 ///	F ///
C / G /	F / G /	C / F /	C / G /

Come Back Baby

The chord progression to Mance Lipscomb’s (blues) 1964 *Come Back Baby* is shown below. This arrangement features an “Ab7” substitution in bar four.

C ///	C7 ///	F9 ///	Ab ///
C ///	G7 ///	C C7 F /	C Ab7/Eb G7 /

(The) Midnight Special

The chorus progression to Johnny Rivers' (rock) 1965 hit *(The) Midnight Special* is shown below. Omitting the first four bars of the standard twelve-bar blues progression creates this eight-bar sequence. Repeating the eight-bar pattern below creates the sixteen-bar verse progression.

F7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	C7 ///
G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	C7 ///

Oh! Darling

The verse progression to the Beatles' 1969 *Oh! Darling* is shown below. This song follows the *Trouble In Mind* variation with the "Am" replacing the "F" chord (relative minor/major substitution) in bar three and the "Dm7-G7-Dm7-G7" substitution for bars five and six.

C ///	G ///	Am ///	F ///
Dm7 / G7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / F /	C / G /

Ask Me No Questions

The chord progression to B.B. King's (blues) 1970 *Ask Me No Questions* is shown below. B.B. King replaces the "Ab7" for "F7" chord (common tone substitution) in bar four and uses a ragtime progression substitution for bars five and six.

C7 ///	////	F7 ///	Ab7 ///
C7 / A7 /	D7 / G7 /	C7C7/EEbo7Dm7b5	C G7 //

Mary Had A Little Lamb

The chord progression to Stevie Ray Vaughan's 1983 cover of Buddy Guy's (blues) 1968 *Mary Had A Little Lamb* is shown below. This is a

variation of the standard eight-bar blues progression that spreads the standard “C7-F7-C7-G7-F7-C7” blues changes using different chord durations.

C7 ///	F7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///
C7 ///	G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///

Come On In My Kitchen

The verse progression to Allman Brothers’ 1991 cover of Robert Johnson’s (blues) *Come On In My Kitchen* is shown below. Here the Allman Brothers also replace the “Ab” for the “F7” chord (common tone substitution) in bar four and add an additional bar to the turnaround.

C7 ///	C7 ///	F7 ///	Ab ///
C7 ///	G7 ///	C7 ///	////
C7 ///			

Someday After A While (You’ll Be Sorry)

Below is the chord progression to Eric Clapton’s 1994 cover of Freddie King and Sonny Thompson’s (blues) 1965 *Someday After A While (You’ll Be Sorry)*. This is a slow blues that uses a “C-Am-Dm-G7” standard progression substitution for bars five and six.

C9 ///	////	F7 ///	Gbo7 ///
C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C C/E F Gbo7	C/G / G7 /

SIXTEEN-BAR BLUES

Blues progressions longer than twelve bars are referred to as extended-form blues. The sixteen-bar blues progression is similar to the standard twelve-bar blues progression except the first four bars of the “C” (“I”) chord are doubled in length to eight bars. Keep in mind that a repeated

sixteen-bar blues progression creates a 32-bar sequence ready made for your new song. Another way a sixteen-bar blues progression can be created is by doubling an eight-bar blues progression as was done to create the verse progression for Lloyd Price's 1959 hit *Stagger Lee*. Although there are variations, the standard sixteen-bar blues progression is shown below.

C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////

Examples of songs written using the sixteen-bar blues progression include *Careless Love* (Traditional—N/A), *My Babe* (Little Walker—1955), *I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man* (Willie Dixon—1957), *Jailhouse Rock* (Elvis Presley—1957), *Ready Teddy* (Elvis Presley—1957), *Chantilly Lace* (Big Bopper—1958), *Sweet Little Sixteen* (Chuck Berry—1958), *(I Wanna Get) Close To You* (Willie Dixon—1958), *Baby, Let's Play House* verse (Elvis Presley—1959), *Surfin' U.S.A.* (Beach Boys—1963), *Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues* (Bob Dylan—1965), *Too Young To Die* (Sonny Boy Williamson—1965), *Paying The Cost To Be The Boss* verses 2 & 3 (B.B. King—1968), *The Ballad Of John And Yoko* (Beatles—1969), *Watermelon Man* (Herbie Hancock—1973), *Stone Cold Deal* verse (John Mayall—1997), and *How Blue Can You Get?* verse (B.B. King—1998).

Songs Based On Sixteen-Bar Blues Progressions

Below are a number of different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the extended sixteen-bar blues progression to create new songs.

Careless Love

The progression to the traditional folk song *Careless Love* is shown below. This is one of the oldest known blues songs that is believed to have originated in the early nineteenth century in the mountain areas of Kentucky. The only substantive difference between this progression and the sixteen-bar *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression, which is discussed in the separate “Combination Progressions” chapter, is the quick change to the “G7” chord in the second bar. Try playing this song without the quick change.

C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	C7 ///	F7 ///	////
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

My Babe

The chord progression to Little Walker’s (blues) 1955 *My Babe* is shown below. This was a reworking by songwriter Willie Dixon of the traditional gospel song *This Train (Is Bound For Glory)*. This progression is the same as the sixteen-bar *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	////	F7 ///	////
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Jailhouse Rock

The chord progression to Elvis Presley’s (rock) 1957 hit *Jailhouse Rock* is shown below. This progression features a vamp created by inserting a chord a half step below the “C” chord that keeps the eight bars of “C”

moving in the spirit of the axe fall. Keep in mind that the half-step substitution rule lets you insert a chord a half step above or below another chord.

C ///	///[B]	C ///	///[B]/
C ///	///[B]	C ///	///
F7 ///	///	C ///	///
G7 ///	F7 ///	C ///	///[B]

Chantilly Lace

The chorus progression to the Big Bopper's (rock) 1958 hit *Chantilly Lace* is shown below. This progression features a backcycled "G" substitution in bars one, two, five, and six. This sequence was also used to create the chorus progression to Chuck Berry's (rock) 1958 hit *Sweet Little Sixteen* and the verse progression to the Beach Boys' (rock) 1963 hit *Surfin' U.S.A.* The Beach Boys substituted the optional "F" for the "G" chord in bar fourteen.

G ///	///	C ///	///
G ///	///	C ///	///
F ///	///	C ///	///
G ///	///	C ///	///

The Ballad Of John And Yoko

The verse progression to the Beatles' (rock) 1969 hit *The Ballad Of John And Yoko* is shown below. This progression omits the change to the "F" chord in bar 14.

C ///	///	///	///
C7 ///	///	///	///
F ///	///	C ///	///

G7 ///	////	C ///	////
--------	------	-------	------

Watermelon Man

The progression to Herbie Hancock's (jazz) 1973 *Watermelon Man* is shown below. Despite the fact that this progression does not strictly follow the standard sixteen-bar form, it is generally considered an example of a sixteen-bar jazz blues progression.

C7 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	G7 ///	F7 ///
G7 ///	F7 / G7 /	C7 ///	////

TWENTY-FOUR BAR BLUES

The extended twenty-four bar blues progression is similar to the standard twelve-bar blues progression except that each chord is doubled in duration. In this case the turnaround is comprised of the last four bars of the progression. Another way to create a twenty-four bar blues progression is to simply repeat a twelve-bar blues progression as Chuck Berry did to create the verse progression to his 1959 *Little Queenie*. The standard twenty-four bar blues progression is shown below.

C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
G7 ///	////	F7 ///	////
C7 ///	////	////	////

Examples of songs written using the twenty-four bar blues progression include *Folsom Prison Blues* (Johnny Cash—1956), *Carol* verse (Chuck Berry—1958), *Blusette* (Toots Thielemans—1959), *I Can't Be Satisfied* (Muddy Waters—1959), *Big Boss Man* (Jimmy Reed—1961), *Howlin' For My Darling* (Howlin' Wolf—1962), *Slow Down* (Beatles—1964), *She's A Woman* (Beatles—1965), *Mustang Sally* (Wilson Pickett—1966), *Sunshine Superman* verse (Donovan—1966), *Rock And Roll* verse (Led Zeppelin—1971), *See See Rider* (Elvis Presley live version—1974), *Life In The Fast Lane* (Eagles—1977), and *Smuggler's Blues* (Glenn Frey—1985).

Songs Based On Twenty-Four Bar Blues Progressions

Below are a number of different songs that are note worthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the extended twenty-four bar blues progression to create new songs.

Folsom Prison Blues

The chord progression to Johnny Cash's (country) 1956 *Folsom Prison Blues* is shown below. In this progression Johnny Cash shortened the four-chord turnaround to two bars. Although this song consists of only twenty-two bars, it is essentially a twenty-four bar blues progression.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	////	C7 ///
F ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	////	////
G7 ///	////	////	////
C ///	////		

Slow Down

The verse progression to the Beatles' 1964 cover of Larry Williams' (rock) 1957 *Slow Down* is shown below. In this progression, the Beatles shortened the standard "G" and "F" changes by one bar each.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	////	////
F ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	////	////
G ///	F ///	C ///	////
C ///	////	////	////

Blusette

The chord progression to Toots Thielemans' (jazz) 1959 *Blusette* is shown below. This song is played in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and is an example of a twenty-four bar backcycled jazz blues progression.

Cmaj7 //	///	Bm7b5 //	E7 //
Am7 //	D7 //	Gm7 //	C7 //
Fmaj7 //	///	Fm7 //	Bb7 //
Ebmaj7 //	///	Ebm7 //	Ab7 //
Dbmaj7 //	///	Dm7 //	G7 //
Em7 //	Eb7 //	Dm7 //	G7 //

She's A Woman

An interesting variation of the twenty-four bar blues is the verse progression to the Beatles' (rock) 1965 hit *She's A Woman* shown below. This song adds the "C-F-C" basic progression substitution to the twelve-bar blues progression. Try playing this song with and without

the substitutions. Notice how these simple substitutions add a great deal of harmonic interest to this progression.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
F7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
G7 ///	////	F7 ///	////
C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	G7 ///

Life In The Fast Lane

The chord progression to the Eagles' (rock) 1977 hit *Life In The Fast Lane* is shown below. This is a variation of the standard twenty-four bar blues progression that reduces the standard duration of the "F" chord in bar nine by two measures and likewise the subsequent "C" by the same amount which is added back to the final "C" chord change.

C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C ///	////
G ///	////	F7 ///	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////

TALKING BLUES

Talking blues is a spoken story with a simple acoustic guitar accompaniment. According to Alan Lomax, talking blues partly originated from African-American blues and spirituals, but its final form and popularity was primarily due to American folk singer/songwriter Woody Guthrie (1912–1967).

The typical repeated “C-F-G7” three-chord guitar accompaniment is played in a basic strum and bass note pattern where alternate bass notes are played on the first and third beats and the chord is strummed on the second and fourth beats. The root note is played on the first beat and the third scale note is played on the third beat for C (“I”) and “F” (“IV”) chords while the fifth scale note is played for the “G7” (“V”) chord. In addition to the alternating bass pattern, single bass note walkup patterns are sometimes added between chord changes.

Examples of talking blues songs include *The Original Talkin’ Blues* (Traditional—N/A), *Dust Bowl Blues* (Woody Guthrie—1940), *Talkin’ Atomic Blues Talking* (Vern Partow—1945), *Talking World War III Blues* (Bob Dylan—1963), and *Candy Bar Blues* (Peter, Paul and Mary—1965). Arlo Guthrie’s 1967 *Alice’s Restaurant* was a type of talking blues played over a standard sixteen-bar ragtime progression (see the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter). Below are several different talking blues songs.

The sixteen-bar verse progression to the traditional *The Original Talkin’ Blues* is shown below.

C ///	F ///	G7 ///	////
C ///	F ///	G7 ///	////
C ///	////	F ///	////
G7 ///	////	C ///	////

The twelve-bar verse progression to Vern Partow’s 1945 *Talkin’ Atomic Blues* is shown below.

C ///	F ///	G7 ///	////
C ///	F ///	G7 ///	////
C ///	F ///	G7 ///	////

The seventeen-bar verse progression to Bob Dylan's (rock) 1963 *Talkin' World War III Blues* is shown below.

C ///	////	F ///	G7 ///
G7 ///	C ///	////	F ///
C ///	G7 ///	////	C ///
C ///	F ///	////	G7 ///
G7 ///			

AXE FALL

The "C-F-Eb" progression shown below likely evolved from a type of work song known as an axe fall. In an axe fall the "C" played right after the "Eb" is when the axe (or sledgehammer on a train crew) would fall in order to synchronize the workers at their task. The axe fall progression includes the borrowed "Eb" ("bIII") chord whose root is the "b3" blue note. This sequence of chords in other durations has been used to write numerous classic rock songs (see the separate "Classic Rock Progressions" chapter). The definitive example of an axe fall is the repeated verse progression to Bo Diddley's 1955 *I'm A Man* [aka *Mannish Boy*] shown below. Each diagonal hash mark [/] equals one-eighth note. This progression sounds best in the guitar key of E.

C	C	C	F Eb
/]	/]	/]	/]

Other examples of an axe fall include *I'm Mad (Again)* verse (John Lee Hooker—1961), *Back Door Man* chorus (Howlin' Wolf—1962), and *I'm A Hoochie Coochie Man* verse (Willie Dixon—1957).

ZZ Top reversed the last two chords to create the main riff to their 1973 *La Grange* as shown below.

C	C	C	E♭ F
/	/	/	/

George Thorogood altered the axe fall slightly to create the main riff to his 1981 *Bad To The Bone* as shown below. This progression sounds best in a guitar tuned to open G.

C	C	C F	C E♭
/	/	/	/

The Nashville Teens borrowed the axe fall concept to create their 1964 hit *Tobacco Road* as shown below. Each chord is played for one beat and the “Am-G” flamenco vamp replaces the typical chord sequence.

Am	Am	Am	G
/	/	/	/

ONE-CHORD BLUES

One-chord blues and boogie riffs are found in the separate “One-Chord Progressions” chapter.

SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

Let’s take a quick look at several ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Below are three examples of how I used the blues progression to write a new song or reharmonize an old one.

Blue River

The blues progression to my *Blue River* is shown below. This twelve-bar blues progression was clearly Parker-inspired. The first verse lyrics are as follows:

I will never see the sunlight shining in your eyes,
 And I will never touch your heart again,
 Since you said goodbye, feels like a blue river running through my
 soul.

Cmaj7 ///	Bm7b5 / E7 /	Am7 / D7 /	Gm7 / C7 /
Fmaj7 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /	Ebmaj7 ///	Ebm7 / Ab7 /
Dm7 ///	Dm11 / Db7b5 /	C13 / A7#9 /	Dm7 / G7b9 /

Like The Day We First Met

The ten-bar blues progression to my *Like The Day We First Met* is shown below. I created this sequence by omitting the first two bars from the standard twelve-bar blues progression. This approach was used to create the chorus progression to *Midnight Special* discussed earlier. I also used parallel minor/major substitutions for the “F” and “G” chords. The first verse lyrics go as follows:

How could you leave and not say a word,
 How could you leave and not say a word,
 'Cause I still love you like the day we first met.

		C7 ///	C7 ///
Fm7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
Fm7 ///	Gm7 ///	C7 ///	////

Kansas City

By adding “IIIm-V” substitutions to the standard twelve-bar blues progression, I created the arrangement for *Kansas City* shown below.

Gm7 / C7 /	Gm7 / C7 /	Gm7 / C7 /	Gm7 / C7 /
Cm7 / F7 /	Cm7 / F7 /	Gm7 / C7 /	Gm7 / C7 /
G13 // [Gb13]	F13 ///	Gm7 / C7 /	Gm7 / C7 /

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used blues progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own blues progressions. If most blues songs are twelve bars in length, then your next blues-based hit should be an eight, sixteen, or twenty-four bar blues tune.

(1) Try building your own twelve-bar blues progression in the key of C by mixing and matching chords from each of the substitution boxes presented earlier in this chapter.

Here's how I did it using the "C-A7-D7-G7" ragtime progression substitution for bars seven through ten. It's one of my favorites.

C ///	F7 ///	C ///	C7 ///
F7 ///	Gbo7 ///	C ///	A7 ///
D7 ///	G7 ///	C C7 F Fm	C Ab7 G7 /

Try singing the lyrics to *Roll Over Beethoven*, *Birthday*, or *Pride And Joy* over these changes.

(2) Try substituting the turnarounds shown below for the first two bars of the standard twelve-bar blues progression. Be sure to refer to the separate “Turnarounds” chapter for more turnaround examples.

Bar 1	Bar 2
C / D ^b o /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / A7 /	A ^b 7 / G7 /
Cmaj7 / Ebmaj7 /	Abmaj7 / Dbmaj7 /

(3) Try substituting the turnarounds shown below for bars seven through ten of the standard twelve-bar blues progression.

Bar 7	Bar 8	Bar 9	Bar 10
C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
C / Dm7 /	Em7 / Ebm7 /	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
Em7 ///	E ^b 7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

(4) Try substituting the “C7-C7/G” alternating bass progression for one bar of the “C7” chord in a song such as *Can’t Buy Me Love* verse (Beatles—1964) as shown below.

C7 / C7/G /	C7 / C7/G /	C7 / C7/G /	C7 / C7/G /
F7 ///	////	C7 / C7/G /	C7 / C7/G /
G7 ///	F7 ///	////	C7 / C7/G /

(5) Try substituting the “5-6-7-6” shuffle sequence for one bar of each chord in the standard twelve-bar blues progression in a song such as *Kansas City* (Wilbert Harrison—1956) as shown below. Blues shuffle sequences are frequently substituted to provide greater interest to the blues progression.

C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6
F5-F6-F7-F6	F5-F6-F7-F6	C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 C6 C7 C6

G5-G6-G7-G6	F5-F6-F7-F6	C5 C6 C7 C6	C5 F5 F#5 G5 /
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(6) Try reharmonizing the chord progression to *Frankie And Johnny* presented earlier by mixing and matching chords from the substitution boxes presented previously in this chapter.

Here is how I did it using a “C-G7#5” vamp to create more interest during the long four bars of the “C” chord.

C / G7#5 /	C / G7#5 /	C / G7#5 /	C / C7 /
F / C7#5 /	F ///	// Gb7 /	C / A7 /
D7 ///	G7 ///	C / Eb7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

(7) Try applying half-step substitutions to the standard twelve-bar blues progression with a quick change in the key of C. If you are not sure what a half-step substitution is, check the tutorial in the “Appendix.”

Here’s how I did it.

C7 // [Gb7]	F7 // [Db7]	C7 // [Db7]	C7 // [Gb7]
F7 // [Gb7]	F7 // [Db7]	C7 // [Db7]	C7 // [Ab7]
G7 // [Gb7]	F7 // [Db7]	C7 // [Ab7]	G7 // [Db7]

Although I have used half-step substitutions to approach each chord in order to demonstrate this technique, it is generally best to use this type of substitution judiciously.

(8) Try substituting the minor blues progression as shown below for the twelve-bar major blues progression in a song such as (*Get Your Kicks On) Route 66* (Nat King Cole—1946).

Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	Am7 ///	///
Dm7 ///	///	Am7 ///	///
F7 ///	E7 ///	Am7 ///	E7 ///

(9) Try adding “IIm7-V7-I” jazz progression substitutions to the standard twelve-bar blues progression in the key of C.

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	Dm7 / G7 /	C ///	Gm7 / C7 /
F ///	Dm7 / G7 /	C ///	Am7 / D7 /
G ///	F ///	C ///	Dm7 / G7 /

(10) Try building your own eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the standard eight-bar blues progression in the key of C.

Here’s how I did it using the diminished (“Gbo7-Ao7” for “F”) and ragtime progression substitutions. Try substituting the “Gbo7-Ao7” in

bar four with the “Ab” chord (common tone substitution for “F7”). Another possible substitution for bar four is the “Fm6” chord.

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Gbo7 / Ao7 /
C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /	C ///	// Ab7 G7

(11) Try building an eight-bar section for a new song by using only a section of the standard twelve-bar blues progression.

Here’s how I did it. Also, see the *Midnight Special* example presented earlier.

C ///	////	////	////
F ///	////	C ///	////

(12) Try substituting the following turnarounds for the bars five and six of the standard eight-bar blues progression.

Bar 5	Bar 6
C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /
C / Dbo7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / Am /	Dm / G7 /
C / Am /	F / G7 /
C ///	F / G7 /
C ///	Dm7 / G7 /

(13) Transpose and play the standard sixteen-bar blues progression in the key of E. If you don’t know how to transpose, you should review the material on transposing in the “Appendix.”

Key of C	C7 ///	////	////	////
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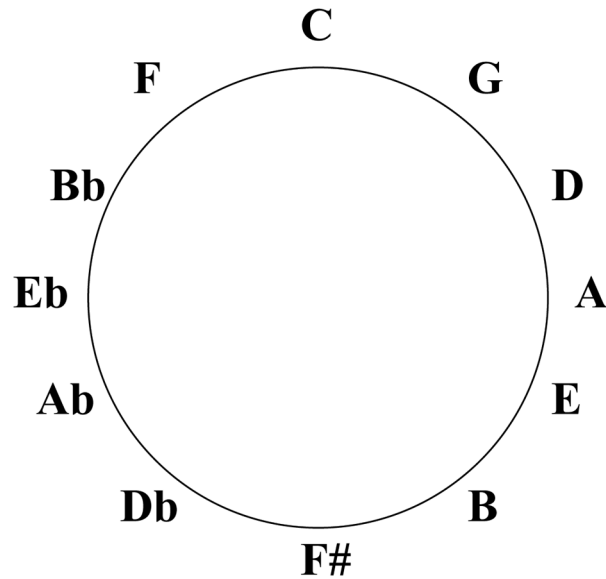
Key of E				
Key of C	C7 ///	////	////	////
Key of E				
Key of C	F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
Key of E				
Key of C	G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
Key of E				

(14) The twelve-bar blues progression is the standard, however, Bob Dylan wrote his *Subterranean Homesick Blues* (1965) and *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965) using an eighteen-bar blues progression as shown below. There are no hard and fast rules. Try creating a blues progression using different lengths. While you're at it, why not try varying accents, time signatures, rhythm, key, and add substitutions.

C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
F7 ///	////	C7 ///	////
C7 ///	////	G7 ///	////
C7 ///	////		

Circle Progressions

Below is the circle of fifths (also referred to as cycle of fifths, chords, or keys) that shows the most logical, natural movement of one chord to another in Western music. Each of the twelve letters is arranged like numbers on a clock representing the root notes of a chord of some quality (major, minor, or dominant seventh). As you move counterclockwise around the circle, each chord root descends in an interval of a perfect fifth (three and a half whole steps). Moving clockwise, each chord root descends in an interval of a perfect fourth (two and a half whole steps). This series of chords demonstrates the strong tendency or pull of the “V” (dominant) to “I” (tonic) chord. This is the strongest chord movement, or cadence in Western music. Moving counterclockwise through the circle of fifths is often referred to as backcycling. Some of the best songs ever written have been created using cycles of descending fifths such as the “Am7-Dm7-G7-Cmaj7” progression that moves through the circle until ultimately arriving at the tonic.



The circle of fifths can be used to create chord progressions by starting with any chord on the circle and moving in either direction using as many or as few consecutive chord roots as you like to produce a new chord sequence. Circle progressions often begin with the “I” (tonic) chord before proceeding through the circle of fifths. The resulting chords can be major, minor or dominant seventh qualities (or any combination) that can be further embellished, altered, or substituted. For example, if you start with “E” and move counterclockwise to “C” you create the “E-A-D-G-C” chord sequence. Then, by designating a major, minor, or dominant seventh chord quality to each root note you can create the “E7-A7-D7-G7-C” and “Em-Am-Dm-G7-C” progressions. You can also start the sequence with the “C” (tonic) before proceeding through the circle of fifths creating the “C-E7-A7-D7-G7-C” progression. Although many of the progressions you will explore in this book including the basic (C-F), classic rock (C-Bb-F-C), folk (C-G), jazz (Dm7-G7-C), ragtime (C-A7-D7-G7), and standard (C-Am7-Dm7-G7) utilize chord sequences based on circle of fifths movement,

generally only cycles of four or more chords from the circle of fifths in succession are referred to as circle (circular or circle of fifths) progressions. The possible progression combinations that can be created using the circle of fifths are almost endless and are found in classical music as well as in jazz and popular songs.

In this chapter you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used circle progressions to create hit songs. You will learn about the two types of circle progressions, those that descend in fifths and fourths. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own circle progressions.

DESCENDING FIFTHS

In this section you will look at six chord progressions that move counterclockwise around the circle in descending fifths. Play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Although these examples are presented in the key of C or Am, they should be transposed (see "Appendix"), played, and studied in other keys.

B-E-A-D-G-C Cycle

This cycle travels counterclockwise from "B" to "C." The "B7-E7-A7-D7-G7-C" and "Bm-E7-Am-Dm-G7-C" progressions are two common types of this cycle. The first type is called a cycle of dominant seventh chords. An example of this type of cycle that uses secondary dominant sevenths is the verse progression to the Chordettes' 1954 hit *Mister Sandman* shown below. A secondary dominant is a chord that serves as the "V" of another. For example, in the "B7-E7-A7-D7-G7-C" progression the "B7" is the "V" of the "E7" chord and the "E7" is

the “V” of the “A7” chord. Similarly, the “A7” is the “V” of the “D7” chord and the “D7” is the “V” of the “G7” chord.

C ///	B7 ///	E7 ///	A7 ///
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	Ab7 / G7 /

An example of the second cycle type that uses both primary and secondary chords is the A section to the 1965 standard *The Shadow Of Your Smile* shown below.

Bm7 ///	E7b9 ///	Am7 ///	////
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of progression. Most of the progressions begin with the “C” (“I”) chord before proceeding through the circle. Notice the relative major/minor substitution for the “Dm” chord in the *Yesterday* example. Although the last three examples are not true circle progressions, they are circle-based sequences.

C	B7	E7	A9	Dm7	G7		<i>Red Roses For A Blue Lady</i> verse (Wayne Newton—1965)
C	Bm	E7	Am-Am/G	F	G7	C	<i>Yesterday</i> verse (Beatles—1965)
C6	Bm7	E7	Am7	D7	Gm7	C7#5-F6-Fm7-Bb7	<i>Blues For Alice</i> (Charlie Parker—1949)

Cmaj7	Bm7 b5	E7	Am7	D7	Gm7	C7-F7- Em7	<i>Confirma- tion</i> (Char- lie Parker— 1946)
Cmaj7	Bm7 b5	E7	Am7	D7- Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	<i>Come Rain Or Come Shine</i> A section (Stan- dard— 1946)
Csus4- C (2x)	Bm7 b5	E7	Am- Am(M7)- Am7-Am6	Dm7	G7		<i>She Believes In Me</i> chorus (Kenny Rog- ers—1979)
C	Bm7	E7	Am7	=>	Gm7	C7- Fmaj7- G7-Em7- G11	<i>Through The Years</i> verse (Kenny Rog- ers—1982)
C	Bm7 b5	E7	Am7	=>	Gm7	C7-F	<i>Whenever I Call You “Friend”</i> verse (Kenny Loggins— 1978)
C	B7#9	Em9	A13				<i>What You Won’t Do For Love</i> verse (Bobby Cald- well—1979)

The A section progression to Charlie Parker's 1949 *Confirmation* and the twelve-bar blues progression to his 1946 *Blues For Alice* are shown below. Both progressions start with the tonic then move counterclockwise from "B" to "F" creating a series of "II-V" movements that temporarily pass through several tonalities. In *Confirmation*, the progression moves down a half step to break the cycle and end the section with a circle progression turnaround. In *Blues For Alice*, the progression continues to "Bb" then follows the standard blues sequence. The first four bars of both progressions can be thought of as a sophisticated backcycled substitution for four bars of the "C" chord. See the separate "Blues Progressions" chapter for a discussion of backcycled blues during the bebop era.

Confirmation

Cmaj7 ///	Bm7b5 / E7 /	Am7 / D7 /	Gm7 / C7 /
F7 ///	Em7 / A7 /	D7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /

Blues For Alice

C6 ///	Bm7 / E7 /	Am7 / D7 /	Gm7 / C7#5 /
F6 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /	C6 ///	Ebm7 / Ab7 /
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

E-A-D-G-C Cycle

This cycle travels counterclockwise from "E" to "C." The "E7-A7-D7-G7-C" and "Em-Am-Dm-G7-C" progressions are two common types of this cycle. Again, the first type is called a cycle of dominant seventh chords. An example of this type of cycle that uses secondary dominant sevenths is the verse progression to the 1925 standard *Five Foot Two*,

Eyes Of Blue shown below. This sequence is also the standard eight-bar ragtime progression.

C ///	E7 ///	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	G7 ///

An example of the second cycle type that uses both primary and secondary chords is the last four bars of the chorus progression to the Beatles' 1964 hit *Can't Buy Me Love* shown below that leads into the opening "C" chord in the verse.

Em ///	Am ///	Dm7 ///	G ///
--------	--------	---------	-------

The box below shows other examples of this type of circle progression. "E-A-D-G" cycles are often used as turnarounds and "E-A-D-G-C" cycles are frequently used as endings (see the separate "Turnarounds" and Endings" chapters). *The Windmills of Your Mind* is an example of a minor circle progression. Notice the descending chromatic bass line on the *One Note Samba* example and the parallel major/minor substitution on the last example.

C	E7	A7	D7	G7	C	<i>Basin Street Blues</i> chorus (Standard—N/A), <i>Charleston</i> verse (Standard—1923), <i>Who's Sorry Now?</i> chorus (Connie Francis—1958), <i>Sherry</i> verse (4 Seasons—1962), <i>Spanish Flea</i> verse (Herb Alpert—1966), and <i>Blue</i> chorus (LeAnn Rimes—1997)
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Cmaj7	E7	A7	D7	G7		<i>Just In Time</i> A section (Standard—1956)
C	E7	A7	D7-Dm	G7	C6	<i>The Night Has A Thousand Eyes</i> verse (Bobby Vee—1962)
C	E7	A7	Dm	G7	C	<i>You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You</i> verse (Dean Martin—1965)
C	E	A	Dm	G-G7-G6-G		<i>Still The Same</i> chorus (Bob Seger—1978)
	E7	A7	D7	G7		<i>I Got Rhythm</i> bridge (Standard—1930) and <i>Be My Baby</i> verse (Ronettes—1963)
	E7	Am	D9	G7	C	<i>Falling In Love Again</i> bridge (Marlene Dietrich—1930)
	E7sus4-E7	Am	D7	Gmaj7	C-F-Fmaj7-F6-Em-Em7-Am	<i>Never My Love</i> bridge (Association—1967)
Am7	E7	Am7-A7	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7-Fmaj7-Bm7b5-E7-Eb-E7	<i>The Windmills of Your Mind</i> verse (from "The Thomas Crown Affair"—1968)
C	Em	Am	Dm7	G7		<i>Sign Of The Times</i> verse (Petula Clark—1966)

Cmaj7	Em7	A7	Dm7	G7		<i>Mona Lisa</i> A section (from “Captain Carry, U.S.A.—1949) and <i>Who Can I Turn To</i> verse (Standard—1964)
	Em	Am	Dm7	G7	C	<i>Long And Winding Road</i> verse (Beatles—1970)
	Em7	A7b5/ Eb	Dm11	G7b5/ Db		<i>One Note Samba</i> verse (Antonio Carlos Jobim—1961)
	Emaj7- Em7	A7	Dmaj7 -Dm7	G7		<i>Mr. Dieingly Sad</i> verse (Critters—1966)

A-D-G-C Cycle

This cycle travels counterclockwise from “A” to “C.” The “A7-D7-G7-C” (displaced ragtime) and “Am-Dm-G7-C” (displaced standard) progressions are the two common types of this cycle. As in prior examples, the first type is called a cycle of dominant seventh chords. An example of this type of cycle that uses secondary dominant sevenths is the verse progression to Blood, Sweat & Tears 1969 hit *Spinning Wheel* shown below.

A7 / D7 /	G7 / C /
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An example of the second cycle type that uses both primary and secondary chords is the sixteen-bar A section to Jerome Kern’s 1939 *All The Things You Are* shown below. This is an example of a minor circle progression that descends in fifths from the “Am7” chord through the “Fmaj7” chord then descends an augmented fourth (a tritone of three whole steps) from “Fmaj7” to the “B7” chord in order to break the cycle and end with the “Emaj7” (dominant) chord in bars seven and

eight. Then, Kern makes a parallel major/minor substitution (“Em7” for “Emaj7”) and again descends in fifths from the “Em7” chord through the “Cmaj7” chord then again descends an augmented fourth from the “Cmaj7” to the “F#7” chord in order to break the cycle again and end with the “Bmaj7” chord in bar fifteen. All songwriters should become familiar with this jazz/standard progression.

Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///
Fmaj7 ///	B7 ///	Emaj7 ///	////
Em7 ///	Am7 ///	D7 ///	Gmaj7 ///
Cmaj7 ///	F#7 ///	Bmaj7 ///	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of progression. Notice the use of the augmented fourth technique discussed above on *Fly Me To The Moon* and *You Never Give Me Your Money* examples to break the cycle and end the progression. Also note the use of the mediant substitution (“Em7” for “Cmaj7”) in the *Even The Nights Are Better* example.

A7	D7	G7	C	<i>Shine On Harvest Moon</i> chorus (Standard—1908), <i>Ballin’ The Jack</i> verse (Standard—1913), <i>Sweet Georgia Brown</i> A section (Standard—1925), <i>Lazy River</i> (from “The Best Years Of Our Lives”—1931), <i>Take Love Easy</i> A section (Standard—1947), <i>You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby</i> A section (Bobby Darin—1961), <i>Sunny Afternoon</i> verse (Kinks—1966), and <i>Mrs. Robinson</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1968)
A7#9	D13	G7#9	C	<i>Spinning Wheel</i> verse 2 (Blood, Sweat & Tears—1969)
Am	D7	G	C	<i>Love Is Blue</i> verse (Paul Mauriat—1968)
Am	D	G	C	<i>Crocodile Rock</i> chorus (Elton John—1973)

Am	D7	G	Cmaj7-F- Dm-E	<i>Wild World</i> verse (Cat Stevens—1971)
Am7	D7	Gmaj 7	Em7	<i>Even The Nights Are Better</i> chorus (Air Supply—1982)
Am7	Dsus4- D	G7	C-C/B	<i>Rocky Raccoon</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
Am7	D7	G7	C7	<i>No Matter What</i> chorus (Badfinger—1970)
Am7	D9	G11	C	<i>Saturday In The Park</i> verse (Chi- cago—1972) and <i>Isn't She Lovely</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1976)
Am7	D7	Gm7	C7- Fmaj7- Bm7b5- E7	<i>Never Let Go</i> A section (from "The Scarlet Hour—1956)
Am	Dm	G	Cmaj7-F- Dm-G- Abo	<i>Lonely Days</i> verse (Bee Gees—1971)
Am	Dm	G	Cmaj7- Fmaj7- Bm7b5- Esus4-E	<i>I Will Survive</i> verse (Gloria Gaynor—1979)
Am	Dm	G7	C	<i>Those Were The Days</i> chorus (Mary Hop- kins—1968)
Am— Am/G	Dm7	G	C- Bm7b5- E7	<i>Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word</i> verse (Elton John—1976)
Am7	Dm7	G7	C	<i>I Say A Little Prayer For You</i> verse (Dionne Warwick—1967), and <i>Golden Slumbers</i> verse (Beatles—1969)
Am7	Dm	G7	C-Fmaj7- Bm7b5- E7-Am	<i>You Never Give Me Your Money</i> verse (Beatles—1969)
Am7	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	<i>Angie Baby</i> verse (Helen Reddy—1974)

Am7	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7-F- Bm7b5- E7b9- Am7-A7	<i>Fly Me To The Moon</i> A section (Stan- dard—1954)
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D-G-C-F Cycle

This cycle travels counterclockwise from “D” to “F.” The “Dm-G7-C-F” progression is the most common type of this cycle. The definitive example of this type of cycle is the A section to Roger Williams’ 1955 hit *Autumn Leaves* shown below. Note again how the progression descends an augmented fourth from the “Fmaj7” to the “Bm7b5” chord in order to ultimately return to the “Am” (tonic) chord.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Fmaj7 ///
Bm7b5 ///	E7 ///	Am ///	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of circle progression. Again, notice the use of the augmented fourth technique discussed above on *Yesterday When I Was Young* and *Still Got The Blues* examples to break the cycle and end the progression. Also, note that the *Laugh, Laugh* example continues to follow circle movement through a total of six changes.

Dm	G	C	F-Bb-G7-C	<i>Goodbye Yellow Brick Road</i> verse (Elton John—1973)
Dm	G7	Cmaj7	Fmaj7	<i>Ain’t No Way To Treat A Lady</i> chorus (Helen Reddy—1975)
Dm7	G	C	F-Dm7-G-Am	<i>Killing Me Softly With His Song</i> verse (Roberta Flack—1973)
Dm7	G7	C-C+/E	F-G7-C-C+/E	<i>My Love</i> chorus (Paul McCart- ney—1973)
Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	F-Bm7b5-E7- Am	<i>Yesterday, When I Was Young</i> verse (Roy Clark—1969).

Dm7	G11	Cmaj7	Fmaj7- Bm7b5-E7- Am	<i>Still Got The Blues</i> verse (Gary Moore—1990)
D	G	C	F-Bb-Eb-Ab-G	<i>Laugh, Laugh</i> chorus (Beau Brummels—1965)
D7/F#	Gm	C7/E	F	<i>Lady Jane</i> bridge (Rolling Stones—1966)

F-Bb-Eb-Ab Cycle

This cycle travels counterclockwise from “F” to “Ab.” The “F-Bb-Eb-Ab” and “Fm-Bb7-Eb-Ab” progressions are the two common types of this cycle. An example of the first type of cycle is the chorus progression to Roberta Flack & Donny Hathaway’s 1972 hit *Where Is The Love* shown below. Notice that this progression contains the same three borrowed chords found in classic rock progressions and moves down a half step from the “Abmaj7” to break the cycle and end the progression on the “G7sus4” (dominant) chord.

C ///	C7 ///	F6 ///	Bb7 ///
Eb6 ///	Abmaj7 ///	G7sus4 ///	////

An example of the second cycle type that uses both primary and secondary chords is the opening verse progression to the Christopher Cross 1981 hit *Arthur’s Theme (Best That You Can Do)* shown below. This progression continues to the “Db” then moves down an augmented fourth from the “Db” to “G7” (dominant) chord to break the cycle and return to the “C” (tonic) chord.

Fm7 ///	Bb7 ///	Eb ///	Ab ///
Db ///	G7sus4 / G7 /	C ///	C G/C C C/E

Other examples of this type of progression include the “F-Bb-Eb-Ab” intro progression to the Doors’ 1967 hit *Light My Fire* that moves

up a half step from the “Ab” to the “A” chord to lead into the “Am” (parallel minor) at the beginning of the verse and the “C-F-Bb-Eb” verse progression to the Beatles’ 1967 *Lovely Rita*.

***Cherokee* Cycle**

The *Cherokee* cycle travels counterclockwise from “Eb” to “G.” This sequence was used to create the sixteen-bar B section progression to Ray Nobles’ 1938 bebop standard *Cherokee*. Notice how Ray Nobles replaces the major seventh chords of each line with the minor seventh of the same name while continuing to work his way through the circle of fifths to the “G7#5” (dominant) chord creating a series of “II-V-I” jazz progressions that temporarily pass through several tonalities.

Ebm7 ///	Ab7 ///	Dbmaj7 ///	////
Dbm7 ///	Gb7 ///	Bmaj7 ///	////
Bm7 ///	E7 ///	Amaj7 ///	////
Am7 ///	D7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7#5 ///

DESCENDING FOURTHS

In this section you will look at three chord progressions in the key of C that move clockwise around the circle in descending fourths. This is the darker classic rock version of the more popular progression that descends in fifths. As before, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression.

Ab-Eb-Bb-F-C Cycle

This cycle travels clockwise from “Ab” to “C.” An example of this type of cycle is the verse progression to Wings’ 1977 hit *Maybe I’m Amazed*

shown below. Notice that this progression contains the three borrowed chords found in classic rock progressions and an interesting bass line.

Ab / Eb/G /	Bb/F / F/A /
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Other examples of this type of progression include the “Ab-Eb-Bb-F-C” verse progression to the Leaves’ 1966 hit *Hey Joe* (see the separate “Blues Progressions” chapter), the chorus progression to deep Purple’s 1968 hit *Hush*, and the chorus progression to the 1975 *Time Warp* from the “Rocky Horror Picture Show.”

Eb-Bb-F-C Cycle

This cycle travels clockwise from “Eb” to “C.” An example of this type of cycle is the chorus progression to the Rolling Stones 1968 hit *Jumpin’ Jack Flash* shown below.

Eb ///	Bb ///	F ///	C ///
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Other examples of this type of progression include the “C-Eb-Bb-F” verse progression to Neil Young’s 1972 *Old Man* and the “C-[D]-Eb-Bb-F-Fsus4-C” chorus progression to Lenny Kravitz’ 1998 *Fly Away*.

Bb-F-C-G Cycle

This cycle travels clockwise from “Bb” to “G.” An example of this type of cycle is the bridge progression to the Grass Roots’ 1967 hit *Midnight Confession* shown below.

Bb ///	F ///	C ///	G ///
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Another example of this type of progression is the “C-Bb-F-C-G” chorus progression to the Beatles’ 1967 *Lovely Rita*.

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Below are two examples of how I used circle progressions to write a new song and reharmonize an old one.

Shelter From The Storm

The verse progression to my *Shelter From The Storm* is shown below. This circle progression descends an augmented fourth from the "Fmaj7" to the "Bm7sus" chord to break the cycle and end on the "E" (dominant) chord. The lyrics are "If I could touch your heart, if I could make you smile, if I could turn your nighttime into sunshine once in a while."

Am9 ///	Dm9 ///	Gmaj9 ///	Cadd9 / C Cmaj7
Fmaj7 ///	Bm7sus ///	Bm7sus/E ///	E ///

Yesterday

The A section progressions to the Beatles' 1965 standard *Yesterday* and my reharmonization are shown below. Comparing these two progressions you will notice that I replaced the "C" with the "Am7" chord (relative minor/major substitution), the "D7" with the "Fmaj7/A" chord (common tone substitution), and the "G7" with the "G6/A" (chord quality change & embellishment). I also added an additional bar to the end of the progression to create a typical eight-bar A section.

Beatles' Progression

C ///	Bm / E7 /	Am / Am/G /	F / G7 /
C // [C/B]	Am7 / D7 /	F / C /	

Substitute Progression

Am7 ///	Bm7 / E11 /	Am7 ///	Fmaj7/A / G6/A /
Am7 ///	// Fmaj7/A /	G6/A / Am7 /	////

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used circle progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own circle progressions. First of all, you should take some time to memorize the circle of fifths provided at the beginning of this chapter.

(1) Try building an eight-bar circle progression for a new song that begins with the “Am” (tonic) and ends with the “E” (dominant) chord.

Here's how Cat Stevens did it to create the verse progression to his 1971 hit *Wild World*. Notice that Cat Stevens replaced the “Dm” for the typical “Bm7b5” chord (common tone substitution) to break the cycle and end on the “E” (dominant) chord. Keep in mind that the “Dm” is also the relative minor substitution for the “F” chord.

Am / D7 /	G / Cmaj7 /	F / Dm /	E ///
Am / D7 /	G / Cmaj7 /	F / Dm /	E / [G7] /

Here's how Gloria Gaynor did it to create the verse progression to her 1979 *I Will Survive*. Notice that this progression travels counter-clockwise from “A” to “F” then applies the augmented fourth technique to break the cycle.

Am ///	Dm ///	G ///	Cmaj7 ///
Fmaj7 ///	Bm7b5 ///	Esus4 ///	E ///

(2) Try building an eight-bar circle progression for a new song that begins with the “Dm” and ends with the “Am” (tonic) chord.

Here’s how Roy Clark did it to create the verse progression to his 1969 hit *Yesterday When I Was Young*.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	F ///
Bm7b5 ///	E7 ///	Am ///	////

This progression uses the shorter diatonic cycle shown below. It is similar to the circle of fifths except that the non-diatonic chords (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, and Gb) are removed. Notice that the movement from “F” to “B” is an augmented fourth.

C =>	F	=>	B	=>	E	=>	A	=>	D	=>	G	=>	C
I =>	IV	=>	VII	=>	III	=>	VI	=>	II	=>	V	=>	I

(3) Transform the circle progression shown below into a descending chromatic bass line progression by replacing the “A7” and “G7” chords with their respective tritone substitutions (see the “Appendix”).

Em7 ///	A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
C ///			

Here’s how I did it.

Em7 ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	Db7 ///
C ///			

(4) Try breaking the cycle in the circle progression shown below by using the augmented fourth technique discussed earlier and complete the eight-bar section.

Fm7 ///	Bb7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///
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Here's how I did it.

Fm7 ///	Bb7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////

(5) This time, try breaking the cycle in the above circle progression by moving down a half step from the “Abmaj7” chord and complete the eight-bar section.

Fm7 ///	Bb7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///
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Here's how I did it.

Fm7 ///	Bb7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///
G7sus4 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////

(6) Try building an eight-bar circle progression for a new song that begins and ends with the “Cmaj7”(tonic) chord.

Here's how I did it.

Cmaj7 ///	F#m11 ///	B7 ///	Em7 ///
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A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///
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(7) Try building an eight-bar circle progression for a new song that begins with the “C” (tonic) and ends with the “G7” (dominant) chord.

Here’s how I did it going all the way around the circle of fifths.

Cmaj7 ///	Cm7 / F7 /	Bbm7 / Eb7 /	Abm7 / Db7 /
F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

Here’s how Kenny Rogers did it to create the opening chorus progression to his 1979 hit *She Believes In Me*. This progression features a suspended vamp and descending minor cliché. The progression was repeated to create the complete sixteen-bar chorus progression.

Csus4 / C /	Csus4 / C	Bm7b5 ///	E7 ///
Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /	Dm7 ///	G7sus4 ///

(8) Try building an eight-bar circle progression for a new song that begins with the “E7” and ends with the “G7” (dominant) chord.

Here’s how George Gershwin did it to create the B section to his 1930 *I Got Rhythm* from “Girl Crazy” (see the separate “Rhythm Changes” chapter of this book).

E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

Classic Rock Progressions

Classic rock is the umbrella term used to describe the best work of guitar-based hard rock bands from 1967 to 1980 such as the Rolling Stones, Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Who, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Bachman-Turner Overdrive, Fleetwood Mac, Bad Company, Eagles, ZZ Top, Cream, Boston, Doors, Queen, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Following the early days of rock and roll that relied heavily on the blues and the “I-IV-V” progressions, classic rock moved on to new progressions created with the bIII, bVII, and/or bVI “borrowed chords” from other keys. The addition of these three chords significantly increased the number of possible chord combinations available to build new progressions. The roots of the first two borrowed chords correspond to the blue scale notes creating a darker overall blues feel. As most classic rock songs are guitar-based, they sound best in common guitar keys such as E, D, A, and G.

Most popular songs from the classic rock period forward are written in the verse/chorus song form that has been around since the mid-nineteenth century (see *Oh, Susanna*—1849). The verse/chorus form consists of two or three verses that alternate with a second musical section referred to as the chorus. The chorus usually contains the song’s main message and title. It is differentiated from a bridge in that it sounds complete on a stand-alone basis. This song form has been described as energetic and assertive. As with blues progressions, not all verse/chorus songs are found in the typical 32-bar length. Verses and choruses can be any length, however, most are four, eight, twelve, sixteen, or twenty-four bars long. Examples of the verse/chorus song form built on typical eight-bar verses and choruses include *Get Back* (Beatles—1969), *Proud Mary* (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969), *Hotel California*

(Eagles—1977), and *Don't Stop* (Fleetwood Mac—1977). A typical verse/chorus song form is shown below.

Verse 1			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Chorus			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Verse 2			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Chorus			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Verse 3			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Chorus			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////

Below are several common verse/chorus song form variations. The pre-chorus (also referred to as the climb or lift) is a short section between the verse and the chorus that increases tension by delaying the start of the chorus.

Form #1	Form #2	Form #3	Form #4
Verse	Chorus	Verse	Verse
Chorus	Verse	Verse	Pre-Chorus
Verse	Chorus	Chorus	Chorus
Chorus	Verse	Verse	Verse
Bridge	Chorus	Chorus	Pre-Chorus
Chorus		Chorus	Chorus

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used "C-Bb-F," "C-Eb-F," and "C-Ab" classic rock progressions with borrowed "bVII," "bIII," and "bVI" chords to create hit songs. You will learn how substitution, variation (adding or subtracting chords), and displacement (rearranged chord orders) can be used to vary the sound of these progressions. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own classic rock progressions using borrowed chords.

C-Bb-F PROGRESSION

In this section you will look at the "C-Bb-F" classic rock progression as well as its "C-Bb-F-G," "C-G-Bb-F," "C-Bb-F-Bb," "C-Bb," "C-Bb-Eb-F" variations and "C-F-Bb" displacement created with the borrowed "bVII" chord. Play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Although these examples are presented in the key of C, they should be transposed (see "Appendix"), played, and studied in other keys especially in common guitar keys such as E, D, A, and G. In hard rock and heavy metal music, it is common to replace major chords with power chords constructed from just the first and fifth scale

notes that sound better when distorted. In most cases the decision to use the major or power (“5”) chord is a matter of personal choice. Keep in mind that the “Bb” is a common tone substitution for the “G7” chord and replacing the “G” chord with a “Bb-G” combination is common in country music. Also, the “Gm” is the relative minor of the “Bb” chord. You should try substituting the “Gm” for the “Bb” chord in several of the examples that follow to hear the difference the each chord makes.

Inserting the borrowed “Bb” between the “C” and “F” chords of the basic progression creates the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression. In this progression, the “Bb” (“bVII”) functions as the “G” (“V”) chord. If you substitute the “G” for the “Bb” chord, you create the “C-G-F” rock and roll displacement that can be substituted for this progression. An example of this classic rock progression is the main chorus sequence to Fleetwood Mac’s 1977 hit *Don’t Stop* shown below.

C / Bb/	F ///
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Notice the similarity of this classic rock progression to the rock and roll displacement (see the separate “Rock And Roll Progressions” chapter) as shown below. These two progressions can be easily confused.

I-bVII-IV (Classic Rock Progression)	C-Bb-F (key of C)
V-IV-I (Rock And Roll Displacement)	C-Bb-F (key of F)

The box below shows other examples of this type of classic rock progression. The “Bb-F-C” displacement is sometimes referred to as a double plagal cadence that moves in descending fourths to the tonic. Notice that the “Bb/G” in the *Nowhere To Run* example is the same as the “Gm7” chord.

C	Bb	F	<i>Last Time</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1965), <i>Hush</i> verse (Deep Purple—1968), <i>Magic Bus</i> verse (Who—1968), <i>Good Times, Bad Times</i> chorus (led Zeppelin—1969), <i>Won't Get Fooled Again</i> verse (Who—1971), <i>Living In The Past</i> verse (Jethro Tull—1972), <i>Good Lovin' Gone Bad</i> chorus (Bad Company—1975), <i>Whip It</i> verse (Devo—1980), <i>Back In Black</i> verse (AC/DC—1981), <i>Centerfold</i> chorus (J. Geils Band—1982), <i>Southern Cross</i> verse (Crosby, Still & Nash—1982), and <i>Sharp Dressed Man</i> verse (Z Z Top—1983)
C	[B]-Bb	F	<i>Heart Of Rock & Roll</i> verse (Huey Lewis & The News—1984)
C	Bb	F-Dm	<i>Main Street</i> verse (Bob Seger—1977)
C	Bb	F/G	<i>Tell Her About It</i> verse (Billy Joel—1983)
C	Bb	F/A	<i>Tuesday Afternoon (Forever Afternoon)</i> bridge (Moody Blues—1968) and <i>Raspberry Beret</i> chorus (Prince—1985)
C	Bb/G	F	<i>Nowhere To Run</i> chorus (Martha & The Vandellas—1965)
C	Bbmaj7	F-Fadd9	<i>The Way It Is</i> chorus (Bruce Hornsby & The Range—1986)
C	Bbadd9	F	<i>Signs</i> chorus (Five Man Electrical Band—1971)
C	Bbadd9	F/A-F	<i>More Than A Feeling</i> verse (Boston—1976)
C7	Bb	F	<i>She Said She Said</i> verse (Beatles—1966) and <i>Born On The Bayou</i> chorus (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1968)

C	Bb	F	C	<i>I Can't Explain</i> verse (Who—1965), <i>If I Were A Carpenter</i> verse (Bobby Darin—1966), <i>Sympathy For The Devil</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1968), <i>Dear Mr. Fantasy</i> verse (Traffic—1968), <i>Hey Jude</i> outro (Beatles—1968), <i>Take A Letter Maria</i> chorus (R.B. Greaves—1969), <i>Fortunate Son</i> verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969), <i>Good Times, Bad Times</i> verse (Led Zeppelin—1969), <i>All Right Now</i> chorus (Free—1970), <i>Sugar Magnolia</i> chorus (Grateful Dead—1970), <i>Rock'n Me</i> verse (Steve Miller—1976), <i>Take The Money And Run</i> verse (Steve Miller—1976), <i>Peace Of Mind</i> verse (Boston—1977), <i>Take Me To The River</i> verse/chorus (Talking Heads—1978), <i>Addicted To Love</i> verse (Robert Palmer—1986), <i>Sweet Child O' Mine</i> verse (Guns N' Roses—1988), and <i>You Got It</i> verse (Roy Orbison—1989)
C	Bb	F/A	C	<i>Cool Change</i> verse (Little River Band—1980)
C	Bb	Dm	C	<i>All Night Long (All Night)</i> verse (Lionel Ritchie—1983)
C	Bbadd9	F/A	C	<i>Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)</i> verse (Beatles—1965)
	Bb	F	C	<i>Magical Mystery Tour</i> intro (Beatles—1968), <i>With A Little Help From My Friends</i> chorus (Beatles—1968), <i>Hurdy Gurdy Man</i> chorus (Donovan—1968), <i>Polythene Pam</i> verse (Beatles—1969), and <i>Gimme All Your Lovin'</i> chorus (Z Z Top—1983)
	Bb	Fadd9	C	<i>Rikki Don't Lose That Number</i> verse (Steely Dan—1974)

C-Bb-F-G Variation

Adding the “G” chord to the end of the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-Bb-F-G” variation. If you substitute the “G” for the “Bb” chord you create the “C-G-F-G” rock and roll displacement that can be substituted for this progression. Similarly, if you substitute the

“Dm” for the “Bb” chord (mediant substitution) you create the “C-Dm-F-G” ascending bass line progression (see the separate “Ascending Bass Lines” chapter) that can also be substituted for this sequence. An example of this variation is the verse progression to the Association’s 1967 hit *Windy* shown below.

C / Bb /	F / G /
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Several other examples of this type of variation include *The Night Before* verse (Beatles—1965), *Just Like Me* verse (Paul Revere & The Raiders—1966), *Rock And Roll Part 2* verse (Gary Glitter—1972), and *Carefree Highway* chorus (Gordon Lightfoot—1974). Displacements of this variation include The “C-F-Bb-G” chorus progression to Petula Clark’s 1965 hit *I Know A Place*, the “Cmaj7-F11-Bbmaj7-G7sus-G7” verse progression to Stevie wonder’s 1969 hit *My Cherie Amour* and the “G-Fmaj7-C-Bb” chorus progression to the Jefferson Starship’s 1976 hit *With Your Love*.

C-G-Bb-F Variation

Inserting the “G” between the “C” and the “Bb” chords in the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-G-Bb-F” variation. This sequence is often transformed into an “8-7-b7-6” descending chromatic bass line progression by substituting the “G/B” and “F/A” inversions for the second and fourth chords respectively (see the separate “Descending Bass Lines” chapter). An example of this variation is the opening verse progression to Billy Joel’s 1980 hit *It’s Still Rock And Roll To Me* shown below.

C ///	G ///	Bb ///	F ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation and the “C-G-Bb-C” further variation. Notice that several examples employ “Gm” for “G” parallel minor/major substitutions.

C	G/B	Bb	F		<i>(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman</i> verse (Aretha Franklin—1967)
C	G/B	Bb6	F		<i>Give Me Just A Little More Time</i> verse (Chairman Of The Board—1970)
C	G	Bb	F		<i>Build Me Up Buttercup</i> verse (Foundations—1969)
C	G/C	Bb/C	F		<i>I Honestly Love You</i> verse (Olivia Newton-John—1974)
C	Gm	Bb	F	C	<i>Let It Rain</i> verse (Eric Clapton—1970), <i>It Don't Come Easy</i> verse (Ringo Starr—1971), and <i>Baker Street</i> verse (Gerry Rafferty—1978)
C	Gm7	Bb	F	C	<i>Cinnamon Girl</i> verse (Neil Young—1969)
C	G	Bb	=>	C	<i>You've Got To Hide Your Love Away</i> verse (Silkie—1965), <i>I'm A Believer</i> verse (Monkees—1966), and <i>Lay Down (Candles In The Rain)</i> chorus (Melanie/Edward Hawkins Singers—1970)
C	G	Bbadd 9	=>	C	<i>I'm A Loser</i> verse (Beatles—1964)
C	Gm	Bb	=>	C	<i>Good Morning Good Morning</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
	G-[A]	Bb	=>	C	<i>Sweet Child O' Mine</i> chorus (Guns N' Roses—1988).

C-Bb-F-Bb Variation

Adding the “Bb” chord to the end of the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-Bb-F-Bb” variation. If you substitute the “G” for the “Bb” chords, you create the “C-G-F-G” rock and roll displacement

variation that can be substituted for this progression. An example of this variation is the main verse progression to Bob Seger’s 1977 hit *Night Moves* shown below. Notice that this progression uses the “Bb” as a passing chord in what is essentially the “C-F” basic progression. Try playing the *Night Moves* progression without the passing chords shown in brackets.

C ///	/// [Bb]	F ///	/// [Bb]
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. The chorus to *We Are Family* is an example of how a well-chosen embellishment can disguise and renew an overused progression.

C	Bb	F	Bb	<i>Communications Breakdown</i> verse (Led Zeppelin—1969), <i>Centerfold</i> verse (J. Geils Band—1982), and <i>Don’t You (Forget About Me)</i> chorus (Simple Minds—1985)
C7	Bbadd9	F	Bb11	<i>We Are Family</i> chorus (Sister Sledge—1979)
C	Bb	F	Bb	C <i>Closer To The Heart</i> verse (Rush—1977)

C-Bb Vamp

Omitting the “F” chord in the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression creates the two-chord “C-Bb” vamp. This vamp dates back to the late 1950s and probably is the origin of other borrowed “bVII” classic rock progressions that followed. This vamp can be used to provide a feeling of movement when the “I” chord is used for one or two bars. An example is the verse progression to the Young Blood’s 1969 hit *Get Together* shown below.

C ///	///	Bb ///	///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of vamp. The last two examples are reverse displacements (“bVII-I”) referred to as Ae-

lian cadences. When John Lennon was asked about the Aeolian cadence he gave this now famous reply, “I don’t have any idea what they are. They sound like exotic birds.”

C	Bb	<i>Tequila</i> verse (Champs—1958), <i>I Only Have Eyes For You</i> verse (Flamingos—1959), <i>She Cried</i> verse (Jay & The Americans—1962), <i>Only In America</i> verse (Jay & The Americans—1963), <i>Five O’clock World</i> verse (Vogues—1965), <i>Psychotic Reaction</i> verse (Count Five—1966), <i>Up, Up And Away</i> verse (5 th Dimension—1967), <i>Talk Talk</i> verse (Music Machine—1967), <i>Fire</i> chorus (Jimi Hendrix—1967), <i>Soul Man</i> chorus (Sam & Dave—1967), <i>L.A. Woman</i> verse (Doors—1967), <i>Hello I Love You</i> verse (Doors—1968), <i>Whole Lotta Love</i> chorus (Led Zeppelin—1969), <i>Here Comes That Rainy Day</i> <i>Feeling Again</i> verse (Fortunes—1971), <i>Boogie Fever</i> chorus (Sylvers—1976), <i>Cocaine</i> verse (Eric Clapton—1980), <i>All Night Long (All Night)</i> chorus (Lionel Richie—1983), and <i>I’ll Be There For You (Theme from “Friends”)</i> verse (Rembrants—1995)
C	Bb/G	<i>Uptight (Everything’s Alright)</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1966) and <i>Shapes Of Things</i> verse (Yardbirds—1966)

C	Bbadd9		<i>Tired Of Waiting</i> verse (Kinks—1965) and <i>Closer To Home</i> verse (Grand Funk Railroad—1970)
C-Csus4 (5x) C	Bb		<i>Monday, Monday</i> verse (Mamas & Papas—1966)
Cmaj7	Bbmaj7		<i>Old Devil Moon</i> A section (from “Finian’s Rainbow”—1946)
C	Bb	C	<i>Well All Right</i> verse (Buddy Holly—1959), <i>You Really Got Me</i> verse (Kinks—1964), <i>Time Won’t Let Me</i> verse (Outsiders—1966), <i>Sunshine Of Your Love</i> verse (Cream—1968), <i>Delta Dawn</i> verse (Helen Reddy—1973), and <i>Ramblin’ Man</i> chorus (Allman Brothers Band—1973)
C	Bb	C-[G-Bb]	<i>American Woman</i> verse (Guess Who—1970)
C-Csus4 (2x)	Bbadd9	C	<i>We Can Work It Out</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
C5	Bb5	[Eb5-Bb5]-C5	<i>Paranoid</i> verse (Black Sabbath—1970)
Cmaj9	Bb13(#11)		<i>Christmas Time Is Here</i> verse (Vince Guaraldi—1965)
	Bb	C	<i>Big Bad John</i> verse (Jimmy Dean—1961), <i>The Lonely Bull</i> verse (Herb Alpert—1962), <i>You’ve Got Your Troubles</i> chorus (Fortunes—1965), <i>How Can I Be Sure</i> intro (Young Rascals—1967), <i>Mississippi Queen</i> chorus (Mountain—1970), and <i>How Long</i> verse (Ace—1975)
	Bbmaj9	C	<i>Reeling In The Years</i> chorus (Steely Dan—1973)

Examples of a further variation of this type of progression is the “C-Bb-Eb-C” verse progression to the Kink’s 1965 hit *All Day And All Of The Night* and the chorus progression to the Doors’ 1968 hit *Hello, I Love You*. I wrote a term paper in college identifying the Kinks’ use of borrowed chords in both the *All Day And All Of The Night* (1965) and *You Really Got Me* (1964) as the dividing point between early rock and roll and what is now referred to as classic rock. Another further variation is the “C-Bb-C-Eb” progression to the Young Rascals’ 1966 *You Better Run*.

C-Bb-Eb-F Variation

Inserting the borrowed “Eb” between the “Bb” and “F” chords of the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-Bb-Eb-F” variation. An example of this variation is the opening chorus progression to Harry Chapin’s 1974 hit *Cat’s In The Cradle* shown below.

C ///	Bb ///	Eb ///	F ///
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C-F-Bb Displacement

Reversing the order of the “Bb” and “F” chords in the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-F-Bb” displacement. If you substitute the “G” for the “Bb” chord, you create the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression that can be substituted for this progression. An example of this displacement that continues on to the “Bb” chord is the verse progression to John Cougar Mellencamp’s 1986 hit *R.O.C.K. In The U.S.A.* shown below.

C / F /	Bb / F /
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Notice the similarity of this variation to the rock and roll displacement as shown below. These two progressions can be easily confused.

I-IV-bVII-IV (Classic Rock Variation)	C-F-Bb-F (key of C)
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V-I-IV-I (Rock And Roll Displacement)

C-F-Bb-F (key of F)

The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement and the “C-F-Bb-F” further variation. Notice the use of relative minor/major substitutions in the *Rescue Me* and *Michelle* examples.

C	F	Bb		<i>Never</i> verse (Heart—1985)
C	F	Bb—Gm		<i>Rescue Me</i> verse (Fontella Bass—1965)
C	Fm7	Bb6		<i>Michelle</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
C-C7	F	Bb11		<i>Bluer Than Blue</i> verse (Michael Johnson—1978)
C-C7/E	F	Bb7		<i>Still Crazy After All These Years</i> verse (Paul Simon—1976)
C7	F—Am	Bb		<i>All She Wants To Do Is Dance</i> verse (Don Henley—1985)
C	F	Bb	C	<i>49 Bye-Byes</i> verse (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1969), <i>Lola</i> verse (Kinks—1970), and <i>Good Lovin’ Gone Bad</i> verse (Bad Company—1975)
C	Fmaj7	Bbmaj7	C	<i>This Guy’s In Love With You</i> verse (Herb Alpert—1968)
C-Cmaj7-C7	Fmaj7	Bb9	C	<i>You Are So Beautiful</i> verse (Joe Cocker—1975)
	F	Bb	C7	<i>Brother Love’s Traveling Salvation Show</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1969)

C	F	Bb	=>	F	<i>Note Fade Away</i> verse (Buddy Holly—1957), <i>(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1965), <i>Dirty Water</i> verse (Stan-dells—1966), <i>Tears Of A Clown</i> verse (Miracle—1970), and <i>Crazy Little Thing Called Love</i> verse (Queen—1980)
C	F	Bb	=>	F-C	<i>Like A Rock</i> verse (Bob Seger—1986)
C	F	Bbadd9	=>	F-C	<i>Paradise City</i> chorus (Guns N' Roses—1989)

A further variation of the above displacement is the “C-F-Bb-F-Bb-F-C” progression found in the verse to *Roundabout* (Yes—1972).

C-Eb-F PROGRESSION

In this section, you will look at the “C-Eb-F” classic rock progression as well as its “C-Eb-F-G,” “C-Eb-F-Eb,” “C-Eb-F-Ab,” and “C-Eb-F-Bb” variations and “C-F-Eb” displacement created with the borrowed “bIII” chord. As before, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Keep in mind that the “Eb” is a common tone substitution for the “C7” chord and the relative major of the “Cm” chord. You should try substituting the “Cm” for the “Eb” chord in several of the examples that follow to hear the difference the each chord makes.

Inserting the borrowed “Eb” between the “C” and “F” chords of a basic progression creates the “C-Eb-F” classic rock progression. An

example of this type of progression is the verse sequence to Eric Clapton's 1970 hit *After Midnight* shown below.

C ///	Eb / F /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of classic rock progression. The “C-Eb-F” sequence in the *Green Onions* example is used as a substitution for one bar of the “C” chord in a blues progression (see the separate “Blues Progressions” chapter).

C	Eb	F	<i>Green Onions</i> verse (Booker T. & The MG's—1962), <i>Magical Mystery Tour</i> chorus (1966), <i>Back In The USSR</i> chorus (Beatles—1968), and <i>Shakedown</i> chorus (Bob Seger—1987)	
C	Eb	F7	<i>Bad Wisdom</i> verse (Suzanne Vega—1992)	
C	Eb/C	F	<i>You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet</i> pre-chorus (Bachman-Turner Overdrive—1974)	
C	Eb6	F7	<i>50 Ways To Leave Your Lover</i> chorus (Paul Simon—1976)	
C7#9	Eb	F	<i>Purple Haze</i> verse (Jimi Hendrix—1967) [key of Cm]	
Cm	Eb	F	<i>Suicide Blonde</i> verse (INXS—1990) [key of Cm]	
C	Eb	F	C	<i>On The Road</i> verse (Canned Heat—1965), <i>Hold On, I'm Comin'</i> intro/chorus (Sam & Dave—1966), <i>Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)</i> verse (Sly & The Family Stone—1970), <i>Bang A Gong (Get It On)</i> chorus (T. Rex—1972), <i>Will It Go Round In Circles</i> verse (Billy Preston—1973), and <i>Cat's In The Cradle</i> verse (Harry Chapin—1974)

C	Eb6	F7	C	<i>Long Cool Woman (In A Black Dress)</i> verse (Hollies—1972)
C-C7	Eb	F	C-C7	<i>I Am The Walrus</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
C5-C6-C7 (4x)	Eb	F	C	<i>Born To Be Wild</i> verse (Steppenwolf—1968)
C7	Eb	F	C7	<i>Helter Skelter</i> verse (Beatles—1968) and <i>Higher Ground</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1973)
C7	Eb	F7	C7	<i>Superstar</i> verse (Murray Head—1971)
C7	Eb7	F7	C7	<i>Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band</i> chorus (Beatles—1967)

Further variations include the “C-Eb-F-C-F-Eb” progression used to write the verse to Spirit’s 1969 hit *I Got A Line On You*. Examples of a variation (omitted “F”) and reverse displacement is the “Ebmaj7-Cmaj7” main C section progression to Cole Porter’s 1932 standard *Night And Day* and the “Eb-C” chorus progression to Nancy Sinatra’s 1966 *These Boots Are Made For Walking*.

C-Eb-F-G Variation

Adding the “G” chord to the end of the “C-Eb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-Eb-F-G” variation. An example of this variation is the intro progression to Eddie Floyd’s 1966 hit *Knock On Wood* shown below.

C // Eb	F ///	G // Bb	G ///
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An example of a further variation of the above progression is the “Eb-F-G” verse sequence to Jethro Tulls’ 1972 hit *Aqualung*. An example of a displacement of the above progression is the “C-Eb-Gm-F”

verse sequence to the Castaways' 1965 hit *Liar, Liar* that also features a parallel minor/major substitution for the "G" chord.

C-Eb-F-Eb Variation

Adding the "Eb" chord to the end of the "C-Eb-F" classic rock progression creates the "C-Eb-F-Eb" variation. An example of this variation is the opening chorus progression to Steely Dan's 1974 hit *Rikki Don't Lose That Number* shown below.

C9 ///	////	Eb ///	////
F ///	Eb ///		

Other examples of this type of variation include the "C-Eb-F-Eb" verse progression to the Animal's 1964 *I'm Crying*, the "C5-Eb5-F5-Eb5" verse progression to Rick Derringer's 1974 *Rock And Roll, Hootchie Koo*, and the "C-Cmaj7-Ebmaj7-F-Ebmaj7-F" verse progression to Jefferson Starship's 1976 *With Your Love*.

C-Eb-F-Ab Variation

Adding the "Ab" chord to the end of the "C-Eb-F" classic rock progression creates the "C-Eb-F-Ab" variation where the root notes form an ascending bass line. This variation can be looked at as a substitution of the "C-C7-F-Fm" basic progression. An example of this variation is the chorus progression to the Spencer Davis Group's 1967 hit *Gimme Some Lovin'* shown below.

C ///	Eb ///	F ///	Ab ///
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Other examples of this type of variation includes the "C-Eb-F-Ab" verse progression to the Monkees' 1967 *(I'm Not Your) Steppin' Stone* and the "Cm-Eb/Bb-F7/A-Ab" descending verse progression to the Grass Roots' 1971 *Temptation Eyes*.

C-Eb-F-Bb Variation

Adding the “Bb” chord to the end of the “C-Eb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-Eb-F-Bb” variation. An example of this type of variation is the “C-Eb-F-Bb” verse progression to American Breed’s 1968 hit *Bend Me, Shape Me* as shown below.

C / Eb /	F / Bb /
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An example of a displacement of this variation is the “C-Eb-Bb-F” verse progression to Neil Young’s 1972 hit *Old Man*. This sequence follows the circle of fifths movement (see the separate “Circle Progressions” chapter). An example of a further variation is the “C-Eb-Bb-C” chorus progression to Steam’s 1969 hit *(Na Na Hey Hey) Kiss Him Goodbye*.

C-F-Eb Displacement

Reversing the order of the “Eb” and “F” chords in the “C-Eb-F” classic rock progression creates the “C-F-Eb” displacement. These progressions were spinoffs on a type of blues progression known as the axe fall (see separate “Blues Progression” chapter). An example of this displacement is the verse progression to Rare Earth’s 1970 hit *Get Ready* shown below.

C ///	// F Eb
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The box below shows other examples of this displacement. The second to last example is a variation and the last example is a reverse displacement.

C F Eb	<i>Bitch</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1971) and <i>My Sharona</i> verse (Knack—1979)
C7 F Eb	<i>I Just Want To Make Love To You</i> verse (Foghat—1977)

C	F	Eb	C	<i>Rocky Mountain Way</i> verse (Joe Walsh—1973), <i>I've Got The Music In Me</i> chorus (Kiki Dee Band—1974), <i>It's Only Rock 'N' Roll (But I Like It)</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1974), and <i>Slow Ride</i> chorus (Foghat—1976)
C	F	Eb	F	<i>Back In The USSR</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
		Eb5	F5-C5	<i>Bang A Gong (Get It On)</i> chorus (T. Rex—1972)

A variation of this displacement is the “C-F-Eb-C-Eb-F” intro progression to *Spirit In The Sky* (Norman Greenbaum—1970).

C-Ab PROGRESSION

In this section, you will look at the “C-Ab” classic rock progression as well as its “C-Ab-Bb,” “C-Eb-Ab,” “C-Ab-Eb,” “C-Bb-Ab,” and “C-F-Ab” variations created with the borrowed “bVI” chord. Again, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Keep in mind that the “Ab” is a common tone substitution for the “F7” chord and the relative major of the “Fm” chord. You should try substituting the “Fm” for the “Ab” chord in several of the examples that follow to hear the difference the each chord makes.

Adding the borrowed “Ab” chord to the “C” chord creates the “C-Ab” classic rock progression. The definitive example of this progression is the bridge progression to Buddy Holly’s 1957 hit *Peggy Sue* shown below. The borrowed “bVI” chord (flatted submediant) is often referred to as the *Peggy Sue* chord for its use in this song.

C ///	///	Ab ///	C ///
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The box below shows other examples of this classic rock progression.

C	Ab	<i>Honey Don't</i> verse (Carl Perkin—1956), <i>Gold Finger</i> verse (Shirley Bassey—1965), <i>She's My Girl</i> chorus (Turtles—1965), and <i>Smokin' In The Boy's Room</i> verse (Brownsville Station—1974)
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C/G	Ab		<i>Sunset Grill</i> verse (Don Henley—1985)
C	Ab	C	<i>It Won't Be Long</i> verse (Beatles—1963) and <i>Barracuda</i> verse (Heart—1977)
C	Ab6	C	<i>Everybody Knows</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1964)

C-Ab-Bb Variation

Adding the borrowed “Bb” chord to the “C-Ab” classic rock progression creates the “C-Ab-Bb” variation. An example of this variation is the verse/chorus progression to Sheryl Crow’s 1993 hit *All I Wanna Do* shown below.

C7 ///	////	Ab7 ///	Bb7 ///
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Other examples of this variation include the “C-Ab-Bb-C” verse progression to Gary Lewis & The Playboys 1966 hit *She’s Just My Style*, the “C-Ab-Bb” verse progression to David Bowie’s 1972 *Suffragette City*, and the “C-Abmaj7-Bb-C” chorus progression to Seal’s 1994 hit *Kiss From A Rose*.

C-Eb-Ab Variation

Inserting the borrowed “Eb” between the “C” and “Ab” chords in the “C-Ab” classic rock progression creates the “C-Eb-Ab” variation. An example of this variation is the opening chorus progression to Steely Dan’s 1974 *Doctor Wu* shown below.

Cmaj7 ///	////	Ebmaj7 ///	////
Abmaj7 ///	Cm7 ///	Fm7 ///	Bb11 ///

The “C-Eb-Ab-G” and “C-Eb-Ab-Db” progressions are tritone substitutions for the ragtime progression (see the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter).

C-Ab-Eb Variation

Adding the borrowed “Eb” to the end of the “C-Ab” classic rock progression creates the “C-Ab-Eb” variation. An example of this variation is the verse progression to Spanky & Our Gang’s 1967 hit *Lazy Days* shown below. In this example, the borrowed chords move clockwise around the circle of fifths in descending fourths (see the separate “Circle Progressions” chapter).

C / Ab /	Eb / Bb /
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C-Bb-Ab Variation

Inserting the borrowed “Bb” between the “C” and “Ab” chords in the “C-Ab” classic rock progression creates the “C-Bb-Ab” variation. An example of this variation is the chorus progression to the Rolling Stones’ 1969 *Gimme Shelter* shown below.

C ///	Bb ///	Ab ///	////
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A further variation is the “Cmaj7-Bbmaj7-Abmaj7-Bbmaj7” chorus progression to Strawberry Alarm Clock’s 1968 hit *Tomorrow*.

C-F-Ab Variation

Inserting the “F” between the “C” and “Ab” chords in the “C-Ab” classic rock progression creates the “C-F-Ab” variation. This variation can be looked at as a substitution of the “C-F” basic progression. An example of this variation is the chorus progression to Three Dog Night’s 1970 hit *Mama Told Me (Not To Come)* shown below.

C / C7/E /	F / Ab /
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Other examples of this variation include the “C-F-Ab-G-C” progression Creedence Clearwater Revival’s 1968 hit *Suzie-Q*, the “C-

Fm7-Ab-Bb-C” verse progression to Stevie Wonder’s 1967 hit *I Was Made To Love Her*, and the [Bb-B]-C (3x)-C7-F-Ab-C-G7-C” verse progression to Three Dog Night’s 1971 hit *Joy To The World*.

SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

Let’s take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Below are a couple examples of how I use borrowed chords to write a new song.

Do What You Do To Me

The main chorus progression to my *Do What You Do To Me* is shown below. In this progression, I used the borrowed “bVII” and “bIII” chords to give the chorus a classic rock sound a la Robert Palmer in contrast to the riff oriented verse. “And just do what you do to me, and just do what you do to me.” is the opening chorus lyric and hook.

Bb / Eb /	C ///	Bb / Eb /	C ///
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Everyday

The twelve-bar progression to my *Everyday* is shown below. In this progression, I used the borrowed “bIII” and “bVI” chords that, in this case, with the other chord qualities created a light jazzy feel. The lyric goes “Everyday I want you, everyday I need you, everyday the sun shines, every night my heart cries for you.”

Cmaj7 ///	Eb13 ///	Abmaj7 ///	C#maj7 / Do7 /
Em7 ///	A7b9 ///	Dm7 ///	G7b9 ///
Cmaj7 ///	Eb13 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Eb13 ///

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

We've only scratched the surface of what can be built with these borrowed chords. For example, if you add the three borrowed chords ("Bb," "Eb," and "Ab"), discussed in this chapter, to the three primary chords ("C," "F," and "G") you can create 720 possible displaced progressions before you get into applying chord substitutions. Adding these three borrowed chords to four chord sequences such as the "C-Am-Dm-G7" standard progression can create 5,040 possible displaced progressions, again before applying substitutions. Here's the math: $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 = 5,040$. This is clearly fertile ground to mine for fresh progressions for your new songs.

The other two available borrowed chords are the "bII" ("Db") and "bV" ("Gb") chords. These chords have typically been used as chromatic passing chords (i.e., "C-Dbo7-Dm7" and "F-Gbo7-G7") and as tritone substitutions (i.e., "Db7" for "G7" and "Gb7" for "C7") Examples of songs that use these two chords include the main "C-Db7" vamp in *Luck Be A Lady* (from "Guys And Dolls"—1950), the opening "Cmaj7-Gb7" verse progression to *One* (from "A Chorus Line"—1975), and in the minor quality to create the "C-Gbm7-Fmaj7-Dm7-G11" chorus progression to *Sir Duke* (Stevie Wonder—1977). You will want to try substituting these borrowed chords in common progression types such as the "C7-F7" basic creating the "C7-Gb7-F7" sequence and the "C-G7" folk turnaround creating the "Cmaj7-Db7b5" substitution.

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used borrowed chords to create classic rock progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own classic rock progressions.

(1) Transform the classic rock progression shown below into an ascending "C-D-F-G" bass line progression using inversions.

C ///	Bb ///	F ///	G ///
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Here's how I did it.

C ///	Bb/D ///	F ///	G ///
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(2) Transform the classic rock progression shown below into a descending chromatic “C-B-Bb-A” bass line progression using inversions.

C / G /	Bb / F /
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Here is how the Commodores did it to create the main chorus progression to their 1978 hit *Three Times A Lady*. For more information on this type of progression, see the separate “Descending Bass Lines” chapter in this book.

C / G/B /	Bb / F/A /
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(3) Transform the classic rock progression shown below into a tonic pedal point progression using inversions. (Hint: Make “C” the bass note of each chord.)

C ///	Eb ///	F ///	C ///
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Here is how the Guess Who did it to create the main chorus progression to their 1970 hit *No Time*. For more information on this type of progression, see the separate “Pedal Points” chapter of this book.

C ///	Ebmaj7/C ///	F/C ///	C ///
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(4) Try substituting the “C-Bb/C” pedal point for the “C-Bb/G” vamp in a song such as *Uptight (Everything's Alright)* verse (Stevie Wonder—1966) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	Bb/G ///
-------	----------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point)

C ///	Bb/C ///
-------	----------

(5) Try replacing the “Gm7” for the “Bb” chord (relative minor/major substitution) in the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression in a song such as *Magic Bus* verse (Who—1968) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	Bb / F /
-------	----------

Substitute Progression (Relative Minor)

C ///	Gm7 / F /
-------	-----------

(6) Try substituting the “C-Bb” vamp and the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression for four bars of “C” in a song such as *Proud Mary* verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969) as shown below.

Original Progressions

C ///	////	C ///	////
-------	------	-------	------

Substitute Progression #1 (C-Bb Vamp)

C ///	Bb ///	C ///	Bb ///
-------	--------	-------	--------

Substitute Progression #2 (Classic Rock Progression)

C ///	Bb / F /	C ///	Bb / F /
-------	----------	-------	----------

(7) Try substituting the “C-C11” pedal point for the “C-Bb-F” classic rock progression in a song such as *Don’t Stop* verse (Fleetwood Mac—1976) as shown below.

Original Progressions

C / Bb /	F ///
----------	-------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point)

C ///	C11 ///
-------	---------

(8) Try substituting the “C-G-F-G” rock and roll displacement for the classic rock progression in a song such as *Last Time* verse (Rolling Stones—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	Bb / F /
-------	----------

Substitute Progression (Rock And Roll Displacement)

C ///	G / F /
-------	---------

(9) Try substituting the “C-Cm7-F-C” progression for the classic rock progression in a song such as *After Midnight* verse (Eric Clapton—1970) as shown below. Notice that the “Cm7” and the “Eb/C” are the same chords.

Original Progression

C ///	Eb / F /
-------	----------

Substitute Progression

C ///	Cm7 / F /
-------	-----------

Now, try substituting the “C-Cm7-F-C” progression for the basic progression in a song such as *Get Back* verse (Beatles—1969) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	///	F ///	C ///
-------	-----	-------	-------

Substitute Progression

C ///	Cm7 ///	F ///	C ///
-------	---------	-------	-------

(10) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Bb” classic rock vamp.

Here is how Burton Lane did it to create the A section progression to his 1946 *Old Devil Moon* from “Finian’s Rainbow.”

Cmaj7 ///	Bbmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Bbmaj7 ///
Cmaj7 ///	Bbmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Gm7 / C7 /

Here is how the Beatles did it to create the verse progression to their 1966 hit *We Can Work It Out*.

C / Csus4 C	// Csus4 /	Bbadd9 / C /	C / Csus4 C
C / Csus4 /	Bbadd9 / C /	F / C /	F / G7 /

(11) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Bb-F-C” classic rock progression.

Here is how the Who did it to create the verse progression to their 1965 *I Can’t Explain*.

C / Bb /	F / C /	C / Bb /	F / C /
C / Bb /	F / C /	C / Bb /	G ///

Here is how Bachman-Turner Overdrive did it to create the main verse progression to their 1974 hit *Takin' Care Of Business*.

C ///	Bb ///	F ///	C ///
C ///	Bb ///	F ///	C ///

Here is how Fleetwood Mac did it to create the verse/chorus progression to their 1977 hit *Don't Stop*. Notice the use of the “G” (“V”) chord in this and the *I Can't Explain* example to transition out of the repeated “I-bVII-IV” classic rock sequences.

C / Bb /	F ///	C / Bb /	F ///
C / Bb /	F ///	G7 ///	///

Here is how Robert Palmer did it to create the verse/chorus progression to his 1986 hit *Addicted To Love*. Notice how Palmer spreads the progression out over the eight bars instead of quickly repeating the progression to fill the space.

C5 ///	///	Bb5 ///	///
F5 ///	///	C5 ///	///

(12) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Bb-F-Bb” classic rock variation.

Here is how Sister Sledge did it to create the chorus progression to their 1979 hit *We Are Family*.

C7 ///	Bbadd9 ///	F ///	Bb11 ///
C7 ///	Bbadd9 ///	F ///	Bb11 ///

Coltrane Changes

The Coltrane changes are named after the jazz saxophonist/composer John Coltrane (1926-1967) and refer to the harmonic approach he used on his landmark 1959 *Giant Steps* album. Tunes from this album such as *Giant Steps* and *Countdown* used symmetric chord progressions that consisted of “V-I” cadences that moved in a cycle of descending major thirds (two whole steps).

If you begin on any note and descend in intervals of a major third, you will cycle back to the beginning note essentially dividing the octave into three equal parts as shown in the box below. This is also referred to as an augmented cycle as the notes in our example enharmonically form the “C” augmented chord (C-G#-E).

C	B	Bb	A	Ab	G	Gb	F	E	Eb	D	Db	C
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If you make these notes the roots of major seventh chords, you create the progression shown in the box below.

Cmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	Emaj7 ///	Cmaj7 ///
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Then, if you precede each of the chords above with their respective “V” chords (backcycle), you build “V-I” cycles (“Eb7-Abmaj7,” “B7-Emaj7,” and “G7-Cmaj7”) as shown below that are referred to as Coltrane changes.

Cmaj7 / Eb7 /	Abmaj7 / B7 /	Emaj7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///
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In this chapter, you will look at several songs that feature Coltrane changes. Then, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started using Coltrane changes.

GIANT STEPS

The sixteen-bar progression to *Giant Steps* is shown below in the key of Eb (based on the final cadence). This progression was created using the approach discussed above. The first key center is B (bar one), followed by G (bar five), and then Eb (bar nine). These keys are a major third apart. This progression is one of the most well known in jazz and has been used by improvisers to demonstrate technical proficiency. It is believed that *Giant Steps* was based on Richard Rodgers' 1937 *Have You Met Miss Jones?* discussed later in this chapter.

Bmaj7 / D7 /	Gmaj7 / Bb7 /	Ebmaj7 ///	Am7 / D7 /
Gmaj7 / Bb7 /	Ebmaj7 / F#7 /	Bmaj7 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /
Ebmaj7 ///	Am7 / D7 /	Gmaj7 ///	C#m7 / F#7 /
Bmaj7 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /	Ebmaj7 ///	C#m7 / F#7 /

COUNTDOWN

The first box below shows the standard jazz progression. The next box shows the Coltrane changes superimposed over the jazz progression. In this example, Coltrane replaces his changes for the original progression and switches the opening "Cmaj7" with the "Dm7" chord from the jazz progression. The original jazz progression is still there, but between the original "Dm7" and "Cmaj7" chords, he inserted three "V-I" progressions that create tonal centers that descend by major thirds to the next.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 ///
Dm7 / Eb7 /	Abmaj7 / B7 /	Emaj7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///

The chord progression to *Countdown* is shown below. This song was a reharmonization of the Miles Davis jazz standard *Tune-Up* that was

constructed using three “IIm-V-I” jazz progressions (see the separate “Jazz Progressions” chapter) over which Coltrane changes were superimposed as discussed above.

Em7 / F7 /	Bbmaj7 / Db7 /	Gbmaj7 / A7 /	Dmaj7 ///
Dm7 / Eb7 /	Abmaj7 / B7 /	Emaj7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///
Cm7 / Db7 /	Gbmaj7 / A7 /	Dmaj7 / F7 /	Bbmaj7 ///
Em7 ///	F7 ///	Bbmaj7 ///	Eb7 ///

HAVE YOU MET MISS JONES?

It is believed that Coltrane became interested in this type of key transition by studying Richard Rodgers’ 1937 *Have You Met Miss Jones?* The eight-bar bridge progression to *Have You Met Miss Jones?* is shown below. Notice how the progression descends in major thirds from B (bar one) to G (bar three) to Eb (bar five). You should compare this progression with Coltrane’s *Giant Steps* above.

Bmaj7 ///	Am7 / D7 /	Gmaj7 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /
Ebmaj7 ///	Am7 / D7 /	Gmaj7 ///	Abm7 / Db7 /

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to listen to the songs mentioned in this chapter. Other examples of Coltrane changes can be found on his covers of standards such as *But Not For Me*, *Body And Soul*, and *The Night Has A Thousand Eyes*. Although these types of progressions will likely have little use in creating hit songs, knowledge of Coltrane changes will expand your understanding of harmonic possibilities.

(1) Try transforming the one-chord progression below into Coltrane changes.

C ///	////	C ///	////
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Here's how John Coltrane did it on his 1959 *Giant Steps*. These changes can be thought of as a sophisticated substitution for four bars of the "C" (tonic) chord.

Cmaj7 / Eb7 /	Abmaj7 / B7 /	Emaj7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///
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Try substituting the above Coltrane changes for the first four bars of the major blues progression.

(2) Try transforming the standard jazz progression below into Coltrane changes.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////
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Here's how John Coltrane did it on his 1959 *Countdown*.

Dm7 / Eb7 /	Abmaj7 / B7 /	Emaj7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///
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(3) Try substituting the Coltrane changes for the jazz progression in a song such as *Everybody's Talkin'* chorus (Nilsson—1969) as shown below.

Original Progression

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C / Cmaj7 /	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression (Coltrane Changes)

Dm7 / Eb9 /	Abmaj7 / B9 /	Emaj7 / G9 /	Cmaj7 ///
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(4) Try transforming the folk progression below into Coltrane changes.

C ///	///	G7 ///	C ///
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Here's how I did it. Try playing it over a simple folk song such as *Mary Had A Little Lamb*.

Cmaj7 / Eb9 /	Abmaj7 / B9 /	Emaj7 / G13 /	Cmaj7 ///
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Combination Progressions

Songwriters often put two or more progressions together to create new longer combination progressions. For example, combining the “C-F” basic with the “C-G7” folk progression creates the “C-F-C-G7” sequence used to write the sixteen-bar verse progression to Van Morrison’s 1967 hit *Brown Eyed Girl* as shown below.

C ///	F ///	C ///	G7 ///
C ///	F ///	C ///	G7 ///
C ///	F ///	C ///	G7 ///
C ///	F ///	C ///	G7 ///

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used combination progressions to create hit songs. You will learn about the basic & folk, folk & basic, basic & jazz, and folk & rock and roll combinations and how duration and chord substitutions can be used to vary the sound of these progressions. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own combination progressions.

BASIC & FOLK

Combining the “C-F” basic with the “C-G” folk progression creates the “C-F-C-G” sequence that has been used since at least the late 1700s. Notice the similarity of this sequence to the “C-F-C-G-C” blues progression that resolves to the tonic.

Duration

Grab your keyboard or guitar and practice playing the “C-F-C-G” combination progression for the durations shown below. Although you will find many different chord durations, these are several common patterns. Now, play each progression replacing the “V” with the “V7” chord listening carefully to the difference in sound this substitution makes. Notice that the “V7” choice makes a stronger resolution to the tonic than the “V” chord. In most cases, the decision to use the “V” or “V7” is a matter of personal choice.

C / F /		C / G /	
C ///	F ///	C ///	G ///
C ///	////	F ///	////
C ///	////	G ///	////

It’s a good idea to listen to as many hit songs as possible written using this progression to understand the harmonic possibilities of this combination. Examples of the first pattern (two beats per chord) include the *Peggy Sue* intro (Buddy Holly—1957) and the *American Pie* chorus (Don McLean—1972).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats per chord) include *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* verse (Tokens—1961), *Another Saturday Night* chorus (Sam Cooke—1963), *Rhythm Of The Rain* verse (Cascades—1963), *Mellow Yellow* verse (Donovan—1966), *Brown Eyed Girl* verse (Van Morrison—1967), *Sunday Will Never Be The Same* chorus (Spanky and Our Gang—1967), *Solitary Man* chorus (Neil Diamond—1970), *Every Night* chorus (Paul McCartney—1971), and *Macho Man* chorus (Village People—1978).

Examples of the last pattern (eight beats per chord) include *Hello Mary Lou* chorus (Ricky Nelson—1961), *Fun, Fun, Fun* verse (Beach Boys—1964), *Dead Man’s Curve* verse (Jan & Dean—1964), *Sweet*

Caroline verse (Neil Diamond—1969), and *Teach Your Children* verse (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young—1970).

Other durations include the sixteen-bar verse progression to *Amazing Grace* verse (1779) shown below. This song uses a 3/4 instead of the more popular 4/4 time. Where there are two repeated lines, it is a common practice to end the first line on the dominant while the last line ends on the tonic as highlighted below. You will see this in the standard rhythm changes (see separate “Rhythm Changes” chapter of this book) and the *Green, Green* example.

C //	///	F //	C //
C //	///	G7 //	///
C //	///	F //	C //
C //	G7 //	C //	///

Substitution

The box below shows examples of songs that use chord substitutions to provide more interest to this combination. This box provides a quick reference to proven embellishments and chord quality changes that can usually be substituted for any basic & folk combination permitting many additional harmonic possibilities. Notice that several examples replace the “G” with the “Bb-G” chords. (“bVII-V” for “V” substitution). Also, see the similarity of the standard eight-bar blues progression to Scott Joplin’s ragtime classic *The Entertainer* that is the same sequence with the chord durations cut in half.

C	F	C	G7	<i>Old Folks At Home [Swanee River]</i> verse (Stephen Foster—1851), <i>Swing Low, Sweet Chariot</i> verse (Folk—1925), <i>Act Naturally</i> verse (Buck Owens—1963), <i>Desolation Row</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1965), and <i>Delta Dawn</i> chorus (Helen Reddy—1973)
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C	F	C- [Eb—F]	G7	<i>Please, Please Me</i> verse (Beatles—1964)
C	F	C/E	G7 sus4 —G	<i>Glory Of Love</i> chorus (Peter Cet- era—1986)
C	F	C	Bb— G7	<i>Little Children</i> verse (Billy J. Kramer with The Dakotas—1964) and <i>Thank God I'm A Country Boy</i> verse (John Den- ver—1975)
C	F	C7	G7	<i>Little Sister</i> chorus (Elvis Presley—1961)
C	F6	C	G	<i>Me And Julio Down By The School Yard</i> intro (Paul Simon—1972)
C	Fsus2	C	Gadd4	<i>Free Fallin'</i> verse (Tom Petty—1990)
C	F9	C	G7	<i>Hi-De-Ho</i> verse (Blood, Sweat & Tears—1970)
C-C7	F	C	G-G7	<i>Green, Green Grass Of Home</i> chorus (Tom Jones—1967)
C-C+	F-Fm	C	G7	<i>Crying</i> verse (Roy Orbison—1961) and <i>It's My Party</i> chorus (Lesley Gore—1963)
C5	F	C5	G	<i>Katmandu</i> verse (Bob Seger—1974) and <i>Bad Case Of Loving You</i> chorus (Robert Palmer—1979)
C5	F5	C5	Gsus4	<i>Suite: Judy Blue Eyes</i> verse 1 (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1969)
C5	Fadd9	C/E	G5	<i>You Shook Me All Night Long</i> chorus (AC/ DC—1980)
C7	F7	C7	G7	<i>I Saw Her Standing There</i> verse (Beat- les—1964) and <i>Pink Cadillac</i> verse (Natalie Cole—1988)
C9	F-Fm	C	G7	<i>If I Fell</i> bridge (Beatles—1964)
C	F	C-[Dm- Em-F]	G	<i>The Cheater</i> verse (Bob Kuban—1966)

C	F	C	G7	C	<i>Rock Of Ages</i> verse (Thomas Hastings—N/A), <i>Will The Circle Be Unbroken</i> verse (Gospel—N/A), <i>For He's A Jolly Good Fellow</i> verse (Traditional—N/A), <i>Old MacDonald</i> verse (Children's Song—N/A), <i>On Top Of Old Smokey</i> verse (Traditional—1841), <i>Dixie</i> verse (Dan Emmett—1859), <i>Daisy Bell (A Bicycle Built For Two)</i> verse (Harry Dacre—1893), <i>Spanish Harlem</i> verse (Ben E. King—1961), <i>Green, Green</i> chorus (New Christy Minstrels—1963), (<i>The Lights Went Out In</i>) <i>Massachusetts</i> chorus (Bee Gees—1967), and <i>Spirit In The Sky</i> verse (Norman Greenbaum—1970)
C-C7	F7	C	G7	C	Eight-Bar Blues (see separate "Blues Progressions" chapter) and <i>The Entertainer</i> verse (Marvin Hamlisch—1974)

FOLK & BASIC

Combining the "C-G" folk with the "C-F" basic progression creates the "C-G-C-F" sequence that has also been around since, at least, the late 1700s. This combination can also be looked at as a displaced "C-F-G-C" rock and roll progression.

Duration

Grab your keyboard or guitar and practice playing the "C-F-C-G" combination progression for the durations shown below. Although you will find many different chord durations, these are two common patterns.

C / G /	C / F /		
C ///	G ///	C ///	F ///

Again, it's a good idea to listen to as many hit songs as possible written using this progression to understand the harmonic possibilities of this combination. An example of the first pattern (two beats per chord) is *Kentucky Rain* verse (Elvis Presley—1970).

An example of the second pattern (four beats per chord) is *Crying, Waiting, Hoping* chorus (Buddy Holly—1958).

Other durations include the sixteen-bar *When The Saints Go Marching In* (Traditional Spiritual—N/A) progression shown below. Combining the “C-G7” folk, the “C-F” basic, and “C-G7-C” folk progression creates this progression. Other songs based on this progression include *This Train (Is Bound For Glory)* (Traditional Gospel—N/A), *She'll Be Comin' 'Round The Mountain* (Folk—1870), and *My Babe* (Little Walker—1955). *My Babe*, was a reworking by songwriter Willie Dixon of *This Train (Is Bound For Glory)*. In the old blues and rhythm and blues tradition, Dixon replaced the sacred with profane lyrics. Ray Charles also did this type of gospel reworking to create his *I Got A Woman*. If you substitute the “Dm7” for the second bar of the “F” chord, you have the verse progression to the Beach Boys 1966 hit *Sloop John B* verse (Beach Boys—1966). This was a cover version of the 1927 folk song that originated in the West Indies. Some believe that the Beatles used a variation of this progression to pen the verse to their 1964 pot-boiler hit *I Saw Her Standing There*. Just substitute dominant seventh chord qualities, the “F7” for the “C” chord in bar three, and the “Ab” for the “F” chord in bar twelve.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	////
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Many songs, such as one of the most popular songs of all time *The Birthday Song (Happy Birthday To You)* (Mildred and Patty Hill—1935) shown below, were written using a shortened version of

the *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression above. This same progression was changed to a 4/4 time and used by the Beatles to write the verse to their 1968 *Ob-La-Di Ob-La-Da*.

C //	G7 //	///	C //	C7 //	F //	C / G7	C //
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Substitution

The box below shows examples of songs that use chord substitutions to provide more interest to this combination. This box provides a quick reference to proven embellishments and chord quality changes that can usually be substituted for any folk and basic combination permitting many additional harmonic possibilities. Notice the parallel minor/major substitutions and the many songs written using the longer folk, basic, and folk combination.

C	G7	C	F	<i>Lullaby (Wiegenlied)</i> (Johannas Brahms), <i>Bridal Chorus</i> “from <i>Lohengrin</i> ” (Richard Wagner), <i>Auld Lang Syne</i> verse (Scottish Folk- song—1799), <i>Silent</i> <i>Night</i> verse (Franz Gru- ber—1818), <i>Down In The</i> <i>Valley</i> verse (Folk—1835), <i>Sunshine</i> (<i>Go Away Today</i>) verse (Jonathan Edwards—1971), and <i>Peace Train</i> verse (Cat Stevens—1971)
C	G	C7	F	<i>Bring It On Home To Me</i> verse (Sam Cooke—1962) [Eight-Bar Blues Variation]

C	G	C-C7	F		<i>Song Sung Blue</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1972)
C	G5	C	F5		<i>Glory Of Love</i> verse (Peter Cetera—1986)
C	G/B	C-[C/E]	F		<i>If You Know What I Mean</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1976)
C	G7	C-C7	F		<i>Blue Bayou</i> chorus (Roy Orbison—1963)
C5	G7sus4	C5	F		<i>Sundown</i> verse (Gordon Lightfoot—1974)
C7	G7	C	F7		<i>Mockingbird</i> verse (Carly Simon & James Taylor—1974)
C	G	C	F	C-G-C	<i>If You're Happy (and You Know It)</i> verse (Traditional—N/A), <i>Good Night, Ladies</i> verse (Traditional—N/A), <i>Twelve Days Of Christmas</i> verse (Traditional—N/A), <i>Save The Last Dance For Me</i> verse (Drifters—1960), <i>Under The Boardwalk</i> verse (Drifters—1964), and <i>(I Washed My Hands In) Muddy Water</i> verse (Johnny Rivers—1966)
C	G-G7-G7sus4	C	F	C-G7-C	<i>Hey Jude</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
C	G	C-C7	F-Ab	C-G7-C	<i>Joy To The World</i> chorus (Three Dog Night—1971)
C	G7	C-C7	F-Fm	C-A-D-G7-C	<i>When I'm Sixty-Four</i> verse (Beatles—1967)

C	Gm7	C7	F	<i>The Most Beautiful Girl</i> chorus (Charlie Pride—1973)
C	Gm7	C7	F-F#o	<i>There! I've Said It Again</i> verse (Bobby Vin- ton—1964)
Cadd9-C	Gm7	C9	Fadd9-F	<i>September Morn</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1980)
Cmaj7	Gm9	C7b9	Fmaj7- Fm7	<i>Misty</i> A section (Erroll Garner—1954)

Below are two songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of the “C-Gm7-C7-F” substitution. This type of substitution uses the “IIIm-V-I” secondary dominant approach to create new songs. In this approach, the “Gm7-C7” function as the “IIIm-V” to the “IV” chord.

Misty

The opening A section progression to Erroll Garner’s 1954 *Misty* is shown below.

Cmaj7 ///	Gm9 / C7b9 /	Fmaj7 ///	Fm7 / Bb9 /
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September Morn

The opening verse progression to Neil Diamond’s 1980 hit *September Morn* is shown below.

Cadd9 / C /	Gm7 / C9 /	Fadd9 ///	F ///
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BASIC & JAZZ

Combining the “C-F” basic with the “C-Dm (or D7)-G7” jazz progression creates the “C-F-C-Dm (or D7)-G7” sequence that has been around since at least the mid 1800s.

Duration

Grab your keyboard or guitar and practice playing the “C-F-C-D7-G7” combination progression for *My Bonnie* verse (Beatles/Tony Sheridan—1964) shown below. Although little similarity of chord duration is seen with these combinations, if there are two repeated lines, the first line tends to end on the dominant while the last line ends on the tonic as highlighted below. You will also see this pattern in the *Jingle Bells* and *Home On The Range* progressions.

C ///	F ///	C ///	////
C ///	D7 ///	G7 ///	////
C ///	F ///	C ///	////
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Substitution

The box below shows examples of songs that use chord substitutions to provide more interest to this combination. This box provides a quick reference to proven basic and jazz combination embellishments and chord quality changes that can usually be substituted for any basic and jazz combination permitting many additional harmonic possibilities. Notice the parallel major/minor substitutions (“D7” for “Dm7”).

C	F	C	Dm7	G7	<i>A Must To Avoid</i> verse (Herman's Hermits—1966) and <i>Help Me Make It Through The Night</i> verse (Sammi Smith—1971)
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C	F	C	Dm7-Dm6	G7	<i>Turn Around, Look At Me</i> verse (Vogues—1968)
C	F	C	D7	G7	<i>Jingle Bells</i> chorus (James Pierpont—1857) and <i>I'm Henry VIII I Am</i> verse (Herman's Hermits—1965)
C-C7	F	C	D7	G7	<i>Home On The Range</i> verse (Folk—1873)

FOLK & ROCK AND ROLL

Combining the “C-G” folk with the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creates the “C-G-C-F-G” sequence that has been around since at least the mid 1800s.

Duration

Grab your keyboard or guitar and practice playing the “C-G-C-F-G” combination progression for *Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms* chorus (Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and The Foggy Mountain Boys—1951) shown below. Notice the similarity of this sequence to the *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression discussed earlier. The only difference is the “G” instead of the “C” chord in bar thirteen.

C ///	///	///	///
C ///	///	G ///	///
C ///	///	F ///	///
G ///	///	C ///	///

Substitution

The box below shows examples of songs that use chord substitutions to provide more interest to this combination. This box provides a quick reference to proven embellishments and chord quality changes that can

usually be substituted for any folk and rock and roll combination permitting many additional harmonic possibilities.

C	G7	C	F-G7-C	<i>Blue Danube Waltz</i> (Johann Strauss, Jr.), <i>Go Tell Aunt Rhody</i> (Traditional—N/A), and <i>Blue Tail Fly</i> [<i>Jimmy Crack Corn</i>] chorus (Traditional—1848)
C	G7	C-C7	F-G7-C	Cover Of “ <i>Rolling Stone</i> ” verse (Dr. Hook—1973)

SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

Let’s take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Below is an example of how I used a combination progression to write a new song.

The opening chorus progression to my *Rock ‘N’ Roll Woman* is shown below. This basic and folk combination features the substitution of the “C7#9” Jimi Hendrix chord that creates a hard rock vibe. The lyric here is “So many women, so many women.”

C7#9 ///	F7 ///	C7#9 ///	G7 ///
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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used combination progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own combination progressions.

(1) Try building an eight-bar A section for your new song your using the basic & folk combination progression in the key of C.

Here's how Sam Cooke did it to create the chorus progression to his 1963 hit *Another Saturday Night*. Notice that Cook ended the first line with the dominant and the last line with the tonic chord.

C ///	F ///	C ///	G ///
C ///	F ///	C / G /	C ///

(2) Using relative minor substitutions, transform the above progression in the key of C into a minor progression in the key of Am.

Here's how I did it.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	E ///
Am ///	Dm ///	Am / E /	Am ///

(3) Try building an eight-bar A section for your new song your using the folk & basic combination progression in the key of C.

Here's how I did it. The second progression adds a tonic pedal point.

C ///	G ///	C ///	F ///
C ///	G ///	C / F /	C ///
C ///	G/C ///	C ///	Fadd9/C ///
C ///	G/C ///	C / Fadd9/C /	C ///

(4) Try putting two chord progressions together to create your own new combination progressions. To get you started, I have provided you with several examples.

Combinations	Progressions	Examples
Basic & Rock And Roll	C-F-C-F-G	<i>Blowin' In The Wind</i> verse (Peter, Paul & Mary—1963), and <i>Revolution</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
Basic & Relative Minor Vamp	C-F-C-Am	<i>Chain Gang</i> verse (Sam Cooke—1960)
Basic & Classic Rock Vamp	C-F-C-Bb-C	<i>A Hard Day's Night</i> verse (Beatles—1964), <i>Brown Sugar</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1971), <i>Jive Talkin'</i> verse (Bee Gees—1975)

(5) Try embellishing and adding substitutions to a song such as *Auld Lang Syne* verse (Scottish Folksong—1799) shown below.

C ///	G7 ///	C ///	F ///

Here's how I did it by adding the standard progression to the folk & basic combination progression.

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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(6) Now, try adding the standard progression to a song such as *Twelve Days Of Christmas* first verse (Traditional—N/A) as shown below.

C ///	G7 / C /	C F C G7	C ///
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Here's how I did it.

C / Am7 /	Dm7 G7 C /	C F C G7	C ///
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(7) Try embellishing and adding substitutions to a song such as *Dixie* verse (Dan Emmett—1859) shown below.

C ///	C ///	F ///	F ///
C ///	C ///	G ///	C ///

Here is how Mickey Newbury did it to create the verse progression to his 1972 *An American Trilogy*. Notice that he creates an ascending bass line for the first line, and then adds the standard progression to the last line.

C ///	C/E ///	F ///	F#o ///
C ///	Am ///	Dm7 / G7 /	C / F /

Try replacing the “C/E” chord with the “Gm7-C7” chords.

(8) Try inserting the “D7” and the “Bb” prior to the “G7” chord in the basic & folk combination progression in a song such as *Rhythm Of The Rain* verse (Cascades—1963) as shown below.

Original Substitution

C ///	F ///	C ///	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression #1

C ///	F ///	C ///	D7 /G7 /
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Substitute Progression #2

C ///	F ///	C ///	Bb /G7 /
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(9) Try adding chord substitutions to the basic & folk combination progression shown below.

C ///	////	F ///	C ///
C ///	F ///	C /G /	C ///

Here is how Roger McGuinn did it on his 2002 Folk Den version of *Michael Row The Boat Ashore*. Notice how much difference the mediant and relative minor/major substitutions makes.

C ///	////	F ///	C ///
Em ///	Dm ///	C /G /	C ///

(10) Try embellishing and adding substitutions to the sixteen-bar *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression shown below.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	////
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Here is how I did it for several songs based on this progression.

When The Saints Go Marching In

C ///	// G7 /	C ///	// G7 /
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	F#o7 ///
C / Am7 /	D7 / G7 /	C ///	G7 ///

Sloop John B

C // Csus4	C ///	/// Csus4	C ///
C // Csus4	C ///	G7 ///	////
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Dm7 ///
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

This Train

C ///	////	/// F	C ///
C ///	////	G7 / Dm7 /	G7 ///
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Fm ///
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Now, try transforming the sixteen-bar *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression above into a minor progression in the key of Am.

Here is how Peter, Paul & Mary did it on their 1962 version of *This Train (Is Bound For Glory)*.

Am // C	D ///	Am ///	////
C ///	////	E7 ///	////
Am ///	A7 ///	Dm ///	////
Am ///	E7 ///	Am ///	////

Try playing the Peter, Paul & Mary substitutions for a song such as *I Saw Her Standing There* verse (Beatles—1964).

Descending Bass Lines

Descending bass lines occur when the lowest (bass) notes of each chord in a progression move down typically in half or whole steps. Composers as far back as J. S. Bach (1685-1770) have relied on descending bass lines to create romantic moods. The opening progression to Bach's *Air On The G String* is shown below.

C C/B Am Am/G

F D/F# G G/F

There are two main types of descending bass lines. The first is the descending diatonic bass line that moves down in scale steps from the octave creating "8-7-6-5" note sequences as in the Bach example above. The second is the descending chromatic bass line that moves down in half steps from the octave yielding "8-7-b7-6" note patterns. The discussion of the "Am-G-F-E" descending diatonic bass line progression is found in the separate "Flamenco Progressions" chapter of this book.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used descending bass lines to write hit songs. You will learn how inversions (see "Appendix") have been used to create descending diatonic and chromatic bass lines. Then you will review several songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of descending bass lines. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own descending bass lines.

DIATONIC BASS LINES

In this section you will look at the “C-C/B-Am-C/G” and “Am-Am/G-F-E” descending diatonic bass line progressions. Play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Although these examples are presented in the key of C or Am, they should be transposed (see “Appendix”), played, and studied in other keys.

C-C/B-Am-C/G Progression

The bass notes of the “C-C/B-Am-C/G” progression form an “8-7-6-5” descending diatonic bass line. This progression is sometimes referred to as the Bojangles bass line after the opening verse sequence to the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band’s 1971 hit *Mr. Bojangles* shown below.

C //	C/B //	Am //	C/G //
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The box below shows other examples of the Bojangles bass line. Notice that the “C/B,” “Am,” and “Am/G” chords can be replaced by several other chords to create the “8-7-6-5” diatonic descending bass line. Some of these progressions continue to move down to the “F” chord creating an extended “C-C/B-Am-C/G-F” Bojangles progression. *New York State Of Mind* is an example of how a songwriter can update a popular progression from the 1920s to create a modern standard.

C	C/B	Am	C/G	<i>All The Young Dudes</i> verse/ chorus (Mott The Hoople—1972)
C	C/B	Am	Cmaj7/G	<i>Aubrey</i> verse (Bread—1973)

C	C/B	Am7	C/G	<i>America</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1968), <i>Our House</i> verse (Crosby, Stills, Nash, & Young—1970), <i>Changes</i> chorus (David Bowie—1971), and <i>Everything I Own</i> verse (Bread—1972)
C	C/B	Am	Am/G	<i>Something</i> bridge (Beatles—1969)
C	C/B	Am7	Am/G	<i>Hello Goodbye</i> chorus (Beatles—1967)
C	G/B	Am7	C/G	<i>Your Smiling Face</i> verse (James Taylor—1977)
C	G/B	Am	C7/G	<i>In My Life</i> verse (Beatles—1965) and <i>She's Got A Way</i> verse (Billy Joel—1982)
C	G6/B	Am	C/G	<i>Mind Games</i> chorus (John Lennon—1973)
C	G/B	Am	Am/G	<i>For No One</i> verse (Beatles—1966), <i>I Got A Name</i> verse (Jim Croce—1973), <i>When Will I See You Again</i> verse (Three Degrees—1974), <i>Always Of My Mind</i> verse (Willie Nelson—1982), and <i>Tears In Heaven</i> verse (Eric Clapton—1992)
C	G/B	Am	Em/G	<i>Let It Be Me</i> verse (Everly Brothers—1960), <i>End Of The World</i> verse (Skeeter Davis—1963), <i>I'll Be There</i> verse (Jackson 5—1970), <i>Don't Pull Your Love</i> chorus (Hamilton, Joe, Frank & Reynolds—1971), and <i>Love Takes Time</i> verse (Mariah Carey—1990)

C	G/B	Am	G	<i>Dust In The Wind</i> verse (Kansas—1978)
C	G/B	Am7	G	<i>Reelin' In The Years</i> verse (Steely Dan—1973)
C	G/B	Am7	G6	<i>I Got The Sun In The Morning</i> chorus (Standard—1946) and <i>When A Man Loves A Woman</i> verse (Percy Sledge—1966),
C	G/B	F/A	G	<i>Wonderful Tonight</i> verse (Eric Clapton—1978)
C	G/B	F/A	G11-G7	<i>He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother</i> verse (Hollies—1970)
C	G/B	F/A-[F]	G	<i>All Out Of Love</i> chorus (Air Supply—1980)
C	G/B	Dm/A	G7	<i>With A Little Help From My Friends</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
C	Em/B	Am	C/G	<i>Piano Man</i> verse (Billy Joel—1974)
C	Em/B	Am	Am/G	<i>A Whiter Shade Of Pale</i> chorus (Procol Harum—1967)
C	Em/B	Am	G	<i>I Want You</i> chorus (Bob Dylan—1966) and <i>I Think We're Alone Now</i> verse (Tiffany—1987)
C	Em/B	Am	G7	<i>I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry</i> verse (Hank Williams—1949)
C	Em/B	Dm/A	G11	<i>Midnight Train To Georgia</i> verse (Gladys Knight & The Pips—1973)
C	Em/B	Dm/A	C/G-F	<i>Just Like A Woman</i> chorus (Bob Dylan—1965)
C	E/B	A5	C/G	<i>Bell Bottom Blues</i> verse (Eric Clapton—1970)

C	E7/B	Am	C/G	<i>Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)</i> verse (New Kids On The Block—1989)
C	E7/B	Am	C7/G	<i>T'aint Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do</i> B section (Standard—1922), <i>Love Me Tender</i> chorus (Elvis Presley—1956), <i>Georgia On My Mind</i> verse (Ray Charles—1960), and <i>There's A Kind Of Hush (All Over The World)</i> verse (Carpenters—1976)
C	E7#9/B	Am7	[Gm7]-C7/G	<i>New York State Of Mind</i> verse (Billy Joel—1975)
C	Bm7	Am7	G	<i>You're In My Heart</i> verse (Rod Stewart—1977)
Cmaj7	Bm7	Am7	Gmaj7	<i>Hey There Lonely Girl</i> chorus (Ruby And The Romantics—1963)
C	B+	Dm/A-F		<i>Cold As Ice</i> verse (Foreigner—1977)

Am-Am/G-F-E7 Progression

The bass notes of the “Am-Am/G-F-E7” progression form a minor key “8-7-6-5” descending diatonic bass line. An example of this type of bass line is the opening A section to Duke Ellington’s 1932 *It Don't Mean A Thing* shown below.

Am ///	Am/G ///	F7 / E7 /	Am ///
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This sequence is often played as the chromatic descending bass line progression shown below.

Am / Am/G# /	Am/G / Am/F# /	F7 / E7 /	Am ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. This progression is similar to the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression except that the “Am/G” replaces the “G” chord. Notice that the “Am/G” and “E” chords can be replaced by several other chords to create the “8-7-6-5” diatonic descending bass line.

Am	Am/G	Fmaj7	E-E7	<i>Standing In The Shadows Of Love</i> chorus (Four Tops—1967)
Am	Am/G	Fmaj7	E7	<i>Anji</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1965) and <i>Help Me Girl</i> verse (Animals—1966)
Am	Am/G	Fmaj7	C/E	<i>Suddenly</i> verse (Billy Ocean—1985)
Am	Am/G	Fmaj7	Am/E	<i>Summer In The City</i> verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1966)
Am7	Am7/G	F7	E7#5	<i>Steppin' Out With My Baby</i> A section (from “Easter Parade”—1947)
Am	C/G	F	E	<i>An Old Fashioned Love Song</i> verse (Three Dog Night—1971)
Am	C/G	F	F/E	<i>The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down</i> verse (The Band—1971)
Am	C/G	F	C/E	<i>Superstar</i> verse (Carpenters—1971)
Am	C7/G	F	E7	<i>Sunday Morning</i> verse (Spanky & Our Gang—1968)
Am	C7/G	F7	E7	<i>Sunny</i> verse (Bobby Hebb—1966)
Am	Em/G	Fmaj7	Em	<i>Roxanne</i> verse (Police—1979)

A variation on the above descending bass line is the “Am-C7/G-D/F#-E7” opening verse progression to *I Love You* (People—1967).

Songs Based On Descending Diatonic Bass Lines

Below are six different examples that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of descending diatonic bass lines to create new songs.

Sunny

The sixteen-bar minor progression to Bobby Hebb's 1966 hit *Sunny* is shown below. The first four bars descend in scale steps from the "A" to the "E" note. This sequence is repeated to create the first eight bars of this progression.

Am ///	C7/G ///	F7 ///	E7 ///
Am ///	C7/G ///	F7 ///	E7 ///
Am ///	Am/G / F#m7b5 /	Fmaj7 ///	Bb7#11
Bm7b5 ///	E7 ///	Am ///	E7 ///

Whiter Shade Of Pale

The eight-bar chorus progression to Procol Harum's 1967 hit *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* is shown below. The bass line of this progression descends a full octave in scale steps from the "C" to the "C" note and then descends in scale steps from the "G" to the "C" note leading into the turnaround.

C / Em/B	Am / Am/G /	F / F/E /	Dm / Dm/C /
G / G/F /	Em7 / G/D /	C / F /	C / G /

Mind Games

The sixteen-bar chorus progression to John Lennon's 1973 hit *Mind Games* is shown below. The bass line of this progression also descends a full octave in scale steps from the "C" to the "C" note that is repeated four times.

C / G6/B /	Am / C/G /	Fmaj7 / C/E /	D / D/C /
C / G6/B /	Am / C/G /	Fmaj7 / C/E /	D / D/C /
C / G6/B /	Am / C/G /	Fmaj7 / C/E /	D / D/C /
C / G6/B /	Am / C/G /	Fmaj7 / C/E /	D / D/C /

Piano Man

The eighteen-bar verse progression to Billy Joel's 1974 hit *Piano Man* is shown below. The first eight bar progression descends in scale steps from the "C" to the "D" note before ending on the dominant.

C //	Em/B //	Am //	C/G //
F //	C/E //	D7 //	G //
C //	Em/B //	Am //	C/G //
F //	G11 //	C //	F/C //
G/C //	F C/E G/D		

You're In My Heart

The sixteen-bar verse progression to Rod Stewart's 1977 hit *You're In My Heart* is shown below. The root notes of the "C-Bm7-Am7-G" progression form an "8-7-6-5" descending diatonic bass line that is repeated four times.

C ///	Bm7 ///	Am7 ///	G ///
C ///	Bm7 ///	Am7 ///	G ///
C ///	Bm7 ///	Am7 ///	G ///
C ///	Bm7 ///	Am7 ///	G ///

Tears In Heaven

The eight-bar verse progression to Eric Clapton's 1992 hit *Tears In Heaven* is shown below. The bass line of this progression descends in

scale steps from the “C” to the “G” note and then ascends to the “A” note before ending with a dominant pedal point. This sequence is repeated to create the eight-bar verse progression.

C / G/B /	Am / Am/G /	F/A / C/G /	G / C/G G7
C / G/B /	Am / Am/G /	F/A / C/G /	G / C/G G7

CHROMATIC BASS LINES

In this section, you will look at the “C-G/B-Bb-F/A,” “Am-Am/G#-Am/G-Am/F#,” “C-C/Bb-F/A-Fm/Ab,” “Am-Am/G-Am/F#-F,” and “C/E-Eb7-Dm7-G7” descending chromatic bass line progressions. As before, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression.

C-G/B-Bb-F/A Progression

The bass notes of the “C-G/B-Bb-F/A” progression form an “8-7-b7-6” descending chromatic bass line. An example of this type of bass line is the opening verse progression to the Association’s 1967 hit *Never My Love* shown below.

C ///	G/B ///	Bb ///	F/A / C/G /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. Notice that the “G/B,” “Bb,” and “F/A” chords can be replaced by several other chords to create the “8-7-b7-6” chromatic descending bass line.

C	G/B	Bb	F/A	<i>Walk Away Renee</i> verse (Left Banke—1966) and <i>Three Times A Lady</i> chorus (Commodores—1978)
C	G/B	Bb	Am	<i>Dim All The Lights</i> verse (Donna Summers—1979)

C	G/B	Gm6/Bb	A7	<i>Homeward Bound</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1966)
Cadd9	G/B	Gm/Bb	Am11	<i>If</i> verse (Bread—1971)
C	Em/B	Gm/Bb	A7	<i>Rainy Days And Mondays</i> verse (Carpenters—1971), <i>Until It's Time For You To Go</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1972), and <i>All By Myself</i> chorus (Eric Carmen—1976)
C	Em/B	Gm6/Bb	A7	<i>My Way</i> verse (Frank Sinatra—1969)
C	Em7/B	Em7b5/Bb	A7b9-A7	<i>Together Again</i> verse (Janet Jackson—1998)
C	Em/B	Bb	Dm/A	<i>Lay Lady Lay</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1963)
C	C/B	Gm6/Bb	A	<i>Life On Mars</i> verse (David Bowie—1971)
C	C/B	Bb	Bb/A	<i>Hold On Loosely</i> verse (38 Special—1981)
C	B	Bb	Am7	<i>I'm A Man</i> chorus (Spencer Davis Group—1967)
C	B+	Bb6	A7	<i>It Won't Be Long</i> bridge (Beatles—1963)

Several variations on the above descending bass line progressions include the “C-G/B-Am-E/G#” opening verse progression to *The Star Spangled Banner* (U.S. National Anthem—1814), the “C-Em/B-Am-Fm/Ab-C/G” verse progression to *Anytime At All* (Beatles—1964), and more recently, the “C-G/B-F/A-Fm/Ab” verse progression to *How Am I Supposed to Live Without You* (Michael Bolton—1990).

Am-Am/G#-Am/G-Am/F# Progressions

The bass notes of the “Am-Am/G#-Am/G-Am/F#” descending minor cliché (see separate “Pedal Points” chapter) form a minor key “8-7-b7-6” descending chromatic bass line. An example of this type of bass line is the opening verse progression to Led Zeppelin’s 1972 classic *Stairway To Heaven* shown below. The chord voicings used in the *Stairway To Heaven* progression create movement in the top as well as the bottom. You can also hear this type of top and bottom movement in the intro to *Roundabout* (Yes—1972) and verse to *Babe I’m Gonna Leave* (Led Zeppelin—1969).

Am / Am9/G# /	C/G / D/F# /	Fmaj7 ///	G Am ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. Notice that the “Am/G#,” “Am/G,” and “Am/F#” chords can be replaced by several other chords to create the “8-7-b7-6” chromatic descending bass line. Several of these progressions continue to move down to the “E” chord creating an extended “Am-Am/G#-Am/G-Am/F#-F-E7” descending chromatic bass line progression.

Am	Am/G#	Am/G	Am/F#-Fmaj7	<i>What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life</i> A section (Standard—1969)
Am	Am/G#	Am/G	Am/F#-Dm/F-E7	<i>Time In A Bottle</i> verse (Jim Croce—1973)
Am	Am/G#	Am/G	D9/F#	<i>Something</i> verse (Beatles—1969)
Am	E7/G#	C/G	F#m7b5	<i>A Song For You</i> verse (Leon Russell—1970)
Am-F/A	Emaj9/G#-E/G#	Gmaj7-G6	F#m7-F7-Esus4-E	<i>Could It Be Magic</i> chorus (Barry Manilow—1975)
Am6	G#o7 (add E)	Gm7	F#7b5-Fmaj7	<i>Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars</i> verse (Getz/ Gilberto—1962)

Am7/G	F#m7b5- Fmaj7-Dm7	<i>Ain't No Mountain High</i> <i>Enough</i> verse (Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell—1967)
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C-C/Bb-F/A-Fm/Ab Progression

The bass notes of the last three chords in the “C-C/Bb-F/A-Fm/Ab” progression form a “b7-6-b6” descending chromatic bass line. An example of this type of bass line is the opening verse progression to the 1934 Christmas favorite *Santa Claus Is Coming To Town* shown below.

C / C/Bb /	F/A / Fm/Ab /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. Notice that the “F/A” and “Fm/Ab” chords can be replaced by several other chords to create the “b7-6-b6” chromatic descending bass line. Several of these progressions continue to move down to the “G” chord creating an extended “C-C/Bb-F/A-Fm/Ab-G” descending chromatic bass line progression.

C	C/Bb	F/A	Fm/Ab-C/G- G6	<i>Magical Mystery Tour</i> chorus (Beatles—1967)
	C/Bb	F/A	Fm/Ab-C/G	<i>Can't Find My Way Back Home</i> verse (Blind Faith—1969)
C	C/Bb	F/A	Fm6/Ab	<i>Theme From “The Andy Griffith Show”</i> verse (1960)
C	C/Bb	F/A	Ab7	<i>Short People</i> verse (Randy Newman—1978)
C	C/Bb	Am7	C/Ab	<i>Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds</i> verse (Beatles—1967) and <i>Dear Prudence</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
C	C/Bb	Am	Fm/Ab	<i>Celebrate</i> verse (Three Dog Night—1970)
C	C/Bb	Am7	Abmaj7- Gsus4-F7	<i>Hand Me Down World</i> verse (Guess Who—1970)

C	C/Bb	Am7	Ab6-G7sus4	<i>Takin' It To The Street</i> pre-chorus (Doobie Brothers—1976)
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Two similar descending bass line progressions include the “C-Bbadd9-Ab-G” opening verse progression to *Bernadette* (Four Tops—1967) and the “C-Bb-F/A-F-C” main riff progression to *China Grove* (Doobie Brothers—1973).

Am-Am/G-Am/F#-F Progression

The bass notes of the last three chords in the “Am-Am/G-Am/F#-F” progression form a “7-b7-6” descending chromatic bass line. An example of this type of bass line is the verse progression to Chicago’s 1970 hit *25 or 6 to 4* shown below.

Am ///	Am/G ///	Am/F# ///	Fmaj7 / E /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of bass line. Notice that the “Am/G” and “Am/F#” chords can be replaced by several other chords to create the “7-b7-6” chromatic descending bass line. Several of these progressions continue to move down to the “E” chord creating an extended “Am-Am/G-Am/F#-F-E” descending chromatic bass line progression as in the above example.

Am	Am/G	Am/F#	F-E-E/D- E/C-E/B	<i>Sunny Afternoon</i> intro/verse (Kinks—1966)
Am	Am/G	Am/F#	Fmaj7	<i>Traces</i> chorus (Classics IV—1969)
Am	Am/G	Am/F#	F6	<i>Your Song</i> bridge (Elton John—1970)
Am	Am/G	Am/F#	Dm6/F	<i>Dream On</i> verse (Aerosmith—1976)
Am7	Am7sus4/ G-Am7/G	D7/F#	F-E	<i>Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You</i> verse (Led Zeppelin—1969)
Am	Am/G	D7/F#	F-C-E	<i>Coming Into Los Angeles</i> verse (Arlo Guthrie—1969)
Am	Am/G	D7/F#	F	<i>Piano Man</i> bridge (Billy Joel—1974)

Am	C/G	D9/F#	F	<i>While My Guitar Gently Weeps</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
Am	C/G	Am/F#	Fmaj7	<i>One</i> verse (Three Dog Night—1969)
A5	G	D/F#	F—[G]	<i>White Room</i> verse (Cream—1968)

C/E-Ebo7-Dm7-G7 Progression

The bass notes of the first three chords in the “C/E-Ebo7-Dm7-G7” diminished cliché form a “3-b3-2” descending chromatic bass line. This diminished cliché was frequently used in 1930s ballads and in polka music. An example of this type of bass line is the opening A section progression to Ray Conniff’s 1966 hit *Somewhere, My Love* as shown below.

C ///	////	C/E / Ebo7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of progression. The first example replaces the “Em7” for the “C/E” chord (mediant substitution). The last six examples substitute the “C” for the “C/E” inversion.

C	Em7	Ebo7	Dm7	G7	<i>Smoke Gets In Your Eyes</i> A section (Platters—1959)
	C/E	Ebo7	Dm7	G7b9	<i>Let's Call The Whole Thing Off</i> A section (Standard—1936)
C- Cmaj7	C/E	Ebo7	Dm7	G13	<i>How About You?</i> A/B section (Stan- dard—1941)
C	C/E	Ebo7	G7/D	G7	<i>Beer Barrel Polka</i> verse (Polka—1934) and <i>My Melody Of Love</i> chorus (Bobby Vinton—1974)

C6	=>	Ebo7	Dm7	G7	<i>Embraceable You</i> chorus (Standard—1930), <i>Moonlight Serenade</i> A sections (Glenn Miller—1939), <i>In The Mood</i> B section (Glenn Miller—1939), and <i>I'll Be Home For Christmas</i> A section (Standard—1943)
C6	=>	Ebo7	Dm7	G11-G7	<i>Witchcraft</i> Section A (Standard—1957)
Cmaj7	=>	Ebo7	Dm7	G7	<i>I'm Thru With Love</i> A section (Standard—1931), <i>Love Is A Simple Thing</i> B section (Standard—1952), and <i>Young At Heart</i> A section (from "Young At Heart"—1954)
Cmaj7	=>	Ebo7	Dm7	G9	<i>The Song Is You</i> A/B sections (Standard—1932)
Cmaj7	=>	Ebo7	Dm7	G13	<i>I've Got A Crush On You</i> A section (Standard—1930)
C- Cmaj7 -C6	=>	Ebo7	Dm7	G7	<i>Just A Gigolo</i> A section (David Lee Roth—1985)

Songs Based On Descending Chromatic Bass Lines

Below are six different examples that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of the descending chromatic bass lines to create new songs.

Someone To Watch Over Me

The eight-bar A section to George Gershwin's 1926 standard *Someone To Watch Over Me* is shown below. After the tonic, the bass line of this progression descends in half steps from the "F#" to the "C#" note then

shifts gears and moves up from the “D” to the “G” note that leads into the turnaround.

Cmaj7 ///	F#m7#5 / Fo7 /	Em7#5 / Ebo7 /	G7/D / C#o7 /
Dm7 / A7/E F6	F#m7b5 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / E7#5 /	Fmaj7 / G7 /

Night And Day

The sixteen-bar A section to Cole Porter’s 1932 standard *Night And Day* is shown below. Sandwiched between the “IIIm-V-I” jazz progressions (with tritone substitutions), Porter inserts a four-bar descending chromatic sequence. Notice how the descending progression flows into the last “IIIm-V-I” jazz progression.

Abmaj7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
Abmaj7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
F#m7b5 ///	Fm7 ///	Em7 ///	Ebo7 ///
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///

One Note Samba (Samba de Uma Nota So)

The sixteen-bar A section to the Stan Getz 1962 *One Note Samba* is shown below. The bass line to the first four bars of this progression descends in half steps from the “E” to the “Db” note and then is repeated to create bars five through eight. The last eight bars descend in half steps from the “G” to the “C” note.

Em7 ///	A7b5/Eb ///	Dm11 ///	G7b5/Db ///
Em7 ///	A7b5/Eb ///	Dm11 ///	G7b5/Db ///
Gm11 ///	C7b5/Gb ///	Fmaj7 ///	Fm6 ///
Em7 / A7b5/Eb /	Dm11 ///	G7b5/Db ///	C6/9 ///

Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars (Corcovado)

The sixteen-bar A section progression to Stan Getz and Joao Gilberto's 1963 *Quiet Nights Of Quiet Stars* is shown below. The bass line of this progression descends in half steps from the "A" to the "E" note, then back to the tonic leading into the turnaround.

Am6 ///	////	G#o7(add E) ///	////
Gm7 ///	F#7b5 ///	Fmaj7 ///	F6 ///
Fm7 ///	Fm6 ///	Em7 ///	A7(#5/b9) ///
Am6 ///	////	G13 ///	G#o7 ///

If

The sixteen-bar verse progression to Bread's 1971 hit *If* is shown below. The bass line of this progression descends in half steps from the "C" to the "G" note, then continues to move down a whole step to the "F" note before ending on the dominant and then is repeated. The song portfolio of this seventies group is filled with creative descending bass line progressions.

Cadd9 ///	G/B ///	Gm/Bb ///	F(6/9)/A ///
Fm6/Ab ///	C/G ///	Fm6 ///	G7 ///
Cadd9 ///	G/B ///	Gm/Bb ///	F(6/9)/A ///
Fm6/Ab ///	C/G ///	Fm6 ///	G7 ///

Time In A Bottle

The sixteen-bar verse progression to Jim Croce's 1973 hit *Time In A Bottle* is shown below. The first eight bars descend in half steps from the "A" to the "E" note. The "Dm/F" can also be written as "F6."

Am //	Am/G# //	Am/G //	Am/F# //
Dm/F //	///	E7 //	///

Am //	Am/G //	Dm/F //	///
Am //	Dm/F //	E7 //	///

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at a couple ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Below are two examples of how I used descending bass lines to write a new song.

Old Time Jazz

The verse progression to my *Old Time Jazz* is shown below. I borrowed this 1930s diminished cliché to evoke a bygone era consistent with the “Just give me some of that raz-ma-taz, give me some of that old time jazz” lyrics.

C6/E ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7#9 / G9 /
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How I Feel

The main verse progression to my *How I Feel* is shown below. In this progression I created an “A-G-F#-F-E” bass line in a minor key to reinforce a dark lyric (“When the night runs dry and there's no more tears to cry”).

Am ///	Am/G ///	F#m7b5 ///	F6 / E7 /
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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used descending bass lines to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own descending bass lines.

(1) Transform the four original chord progressions below into descending bass line progressions using inversions.

Original Progression	Descending Progression
C-F (Basic)	
C-Am (Relative Minor Vamp)	
Am-Am(M7)-Am7-Am6 (Minor Cliché)	
C-Em-F-G7 (Rock Ballad)	

Here's how I did it.

C-F (Basic)	C-C/Bb-F/A-Fm/Ab
C-Am (Relative Minor Vamp)	C-C/B-Am-Am/G
Am-Am(M7)-Am7-Am6 (Minor Cliché)	Am-Am/G#-Am/G-Am/F#
C-Em-F-G7 (Rock Ballad)	C-Em/B-F/A-G7

(2) Try building two four-bar descending diatonic bass line progressions in the key of C using the “C-B-A-G” bass note sequence.

Here's how I did it.

C ///	C/B ///	Am ///	C/G ///
C ///	G/B ///	F/A ///	G ///

(3) Try building two four-bar descending chromatic bass line progressions in the key of C using the “C-B-Bb-A” bass note sequence.

Here's how I did it.

C ///	Em/B ///	Gm6/Bb ///	A7 ///
C ///	G/B ///	Bb ///	F/A ///

(4) Try building two four-bar descending diatonic bass line progressions in the key of Am using the “A-G-F-E” bass note sequence.

Here's how I did it.

Am ///	Am/G ///	F6 ///	E7 ///
Am ///	C/G ///	Dm/F ///	E ///

(5) Try building two four-bar descending chromatic bass line progressions in the key of Am using the “A-G#-F-F#” bass note sequence.

Here's how I did it.

Am ///	Am/G# ///	Am/G ///	Am/F# ///
Am ///	E7/G# ///	C/G ///	F#m7b5 ///

(6) Try playing the verse progression to *Always On My Mind* (Willie Nelson—1982) with the bass note as the root of the chord as shown in the first box below. Now, try playing the verse progression with the

descending bass line as shown in the second box. Which progression do you think best frames the lyric?

C ///	G ///	Am / C /	F / G /
C ///	G/B ///	Am / C/G /	F / G /

(7) Try creating a “C-B-A-G” descending diatonic bass line progression from the “C-G-F-G” rock and roll variation. Now, try playing this progression on a song such as *Jack & Diane* verse (John Cougar—1982). Which progression do you prefer?

Here’s how I did it.

C / G/B /	F/A / G /
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(8) Try substituting the verse progression to *Stairway To Heaven* (Led Zeppelin—1972) for the *Feelings* (Morris Albert—1975) verse progression as shown below. Notice how well it works. The *Feelings* descending minor cliché progression is subtler with the moving line taken out of the bass and placed in the middle voice.

Original Progression (*Feelings*)

Am ////	Am(M7) ///	Am7 ///	Am6 ///
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Substitute Progression (*Stairway To Heaven*)

Am ////	Am9/G# ///	C/G ///	D/F# ///
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(9) Try building a four-bar progression using the “F-E-D-C” descending diatonic bass line in the key of C.

Here is how the Five Man Electrical Band did it to create the opening verse progression to their 1971 hit *Signs*.

F / C / E /	G / D / C /
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Here is how Steely Dan did it to create the outro progression to their 1976 *Kid Charlemagne*.

Fmaj7 ///	Em7 ///	Dm7 ///	Cmaj7 ///
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(10) Try using passing chords to add a descending diatonic bass line to the doo-wop progression in a song such as *Unchained Melody* verse (Righteous Brothers—1965) as shown below.

C ///	Am ///	Fmaj7 ///	G7 ///
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Here's how I did it using "G" as a passing chord.

C /// [G/B]	Am /// [G]	Fmaj7 ///	G7 ///
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(11) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the "C-B-Bb-A-Ab-G" descending chromatic bass line progression in the key of C.

Here is how the Left Banke did it to create the verse progression to their 1966 hit *Walk Away Renee*. The bass line of this progression descends in half steps from the "C" to the "G" note then continues to

move down a whole step to the “F” note before ending on the dominant.

C ///	G/B ///	Bb ///	F/A ///
Abo7 ///	C/G ///	F ///	G7 ///

(12) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “A-G-F-E” descending diatonic bass line progression in the key of Am.

Here is how the Four Tops did it to create the chorus progression to their 1967 hit *Standing In The Shadows Of Love*.

Am ///	Am/G ///	Fmaj7 ///	E / E7 /
Am ///	Am/G ///	Fmaj7 ///	E / E7 /

Doo-Wop Progressions

Doo-Wop is a style of vocal music popular from 1958 until the British Invasion in 1963 that developed from rock and roll and rhythm and blues on the street corners and building stoops of inner cities such as New York and Philadelphia. It is characterized by a lead singer along with several other singers with a range of voices (falsetto, first tenor, second tenor and baritone or bass) providing background harmony. The name is taken from the nonsense “doo-wop” sounds made by the group as they provided harmonic background for the lead singer. Musical arrangements had a simple beat and very little or no instrumentation as many early groups lacked the money to buy musical instruments. The most common change in doo-wop music is the “I-VIm-IV-V” progression. The doo-wop cycle is a major progression that contains the “I-IV-V” primary (major) and the “VIm” secondary (minor) chords. The doo-wop progression (sometimes referred to as the fifties cliché) is similar to the earlier “I-VIm-IIIm-V” standard progression (see separate “Standard Progressions” chapter of this book) except that the harder sounding “IV” major chord is substituted for the softer “IIIm” minor chord. Generally, either chord progression can readily be substituted for the other. Another way to build the doo-wop progression is to insert the relative minor (“VIm”) chord between the “I” and “IV” chords of the “I-IV-V” rock and roll progression (see separate “Rock And Roll Progressions” chapter).

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the doo-wop progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, variation, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly,

your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own doo-wop progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the doo-wop progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play each chord for two beats each. This is the main verse progression for songs such as Maurice Williams' 1960 hit *Stay*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Also, try playing several of the progressions using the dominant seventh substitution instead of the major chord quality for the “V” chord. Generally, the use of either chord quality is a matter of personal taste.

A-F#m-D-E	C-Am-F-G	Eb-Cm-Ab-Bb	Gb-Ebm-B-Db
Bb-Gm-Eb-F	Db-Bbm-Gb-Ab	E-C#m-A-B	G-Em-C-D
B-G#m-E-F#	D-Bm-G-A	F-Dm-Bb-C	Ab-Fm-Db-Eb

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, practice playing the “C-Am-F-G7” doo-wop progression chords for the durations shown below. The majority of the hit songs written with this progression have been created using just the three progression patterns below. As you can see, each chord is typically played for two, four, or eight beats.

C / Am /	F / G7 /		
C ///	Am ///	F ///	G7 ///
C ///	////	Am ///	////
F ///	////	G7 ///	////

You should listen to as many hit songs written using doo-wop progressions as possible to better understand the potential of these changes. Examples of the first pattern (two beats per chord) include *Donna* verse/chorus (Ritchie Valens—1958), *Stay* verse (Maurice Williams—1960), *If I Had A Hammer* verse (Peter, Paul & Mary—1962), *Keep On Dancing* verse (Gentrys—1965), *Eve Of Destruction* chorus (Barry McGuire—1965), *Happiness Is A Warm Gun* chorus (Beatles—1968), and *Real Love* chorus (Beatles—1996).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats per chord) include *Poor Little Fool* verse (Ricky Nelson—1958), *A Teenager In Love* verse (Dion & The Belmonts—1959), *Wonderful World* verse (Sam Cooke—1960), *Duke of Earl* verse (Gene Chandler—1962), *Where Have All The Flowers Gone* verse (Kingston Trio—1962), *I Can't Explain*—bridge (Who—1965), *D'yer Maker* verse (Led Zeppelin—1973), *Love Hurts* verse (Nazareth—1976), *Do That To Me One More Time* verse (Captain & Tennille—1980), *Nothing's Gonna Stop Us* chorus (Starship—1989), and *Last Kiss* chorus (Pearl Jam—2000).

Examples of the last pattern (eight beats per chord) include *This Magic Moment* verse (Drifters—1960), *Runaround Sue* verse/chorus (Dion—1961), *Please Mr. Postman* verse (Marvelettes—1961), *Let's Twist Again* verse (Chubby Checkers—1961), *Monster Mash* chorus (Bobby “Boris” Pickett—1962), *Just One Look* verse (Doris Troy—1963), and *Octopus's Garden* verse (Beatles—1969).

Other durations include the main verse progression to *Stand By Me* (Ben E. King—1961) and *It's Cold Outside* chorus (Choir—1967) that has eight beats per chord for the first two chords then four beats per chord for the next two chords with the last chord having eight beats as shown below.

C ///	////	Am ///	////
F ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. The box below shows examples of doo-wop progression substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any doo-wop progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Keep in mind that any of these progressions can also be substituted for the standard progression. Notice the use of passing chords (in brackets) on the *Handy Man* example and the parallel major/minor substitution on *Sleep Walk*. The *Oh, Pretty Woman* and *Leggs* examples both precede the doo-wop progression with the “C-Am” relative minor vamp, discussed later, creating an extended doo-wop cycle. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make.

C	Am	F	G	<i>He's A Rebel</i> verse (Crytals—1962), <i>Oh, Pretty Woman</i> verse (Roy Orbison—1964), and <i>Leggs</i> verse (ZZ Top—1984)
C	[G/B]-Am	[G]-F	G	<i>Handy Man</i> verse (James Taylor—1977)
C	Am	F	[Dm7]-G7	<i>Go All The Way</i> chorus (Raspberries—1972) and <i>In The Still Of The Night (I'll Remember)</i> verse Boyz II Men—1990)
C	Am	F	G7sus4-G7	<i>Making Love Out Of Nothing At All</i> chorus (Air Supply—1983)
C	Am	F	G11	<i>Rain Drops</i> verse (Dee Clark—1961)
C	Am	F	G-G11-G	<i>Y.M.C.A</i> verse (Village People—1979)

C	Am	F	G-Ab-Fm-G	<i>Dead Man's Curve</i> chorus (Jan & Dean—1964)
C	Am	F6	G7	<i>Dedicated To The One I Love</i> verse (Shirelles—1961)
C	Am	Fmaj7	G7	<i>Unchained Melody</i> verse (Righteous Brothers—1965) and <i>I Will Always Love You</i> chorus (Whitney Houston—1992)
C	Am	Fm	G7	<i>Sleep Walk</i> verse (Santo & Johnny—1959)
C	Am7	F	G11	<i>I Wanna Be With You</i> chorus (Raspberries—1972) and <i>I Wanna Dance With Somebody (Who Loves Me)</i> chorus (Whitney Houston—1987)
C	Am7	Fm	G7b9	<i>Since I Don't Have You</i> verse (Skyliners—1959)
C	Am	F	G7—C	<i>I've Just Seen A Face</i> verse (Beatles—1965), <i>My Old School</i> verse (Steely Dan—1973), and <i>Freedom</i> chorus (Paul McCartney—2001)
C	Am	F	G-C-G7	<i>Judy's Turn To Cry</i> verse (Leslie Gore—1963)
C	Am7	F	G11-C	<i>Up On The Roof</i> verse (Drifters—1963)
Cadd9	Am(add9)	Fadd9	Gadd9	<i>Every Breath You Take</i> verse (Police—1983)
C5	Am	F	Gsus-G	<i>American Storm</i> chorus (Bob Seger—1986)
C5	Am7	Fsus2	Gsus4	<i>Hero</i> verse (Enrique Iglesias—2001)
C5	A5	F	G	<i>Tell Me</i> chorus (Rolling Stones—1964)

C	Am	F	Em	<i>Memory</i> verse (from “Cats”—1983)
C	Am	Fmaj7	Em7	<i>I’ll Never Fall In Love Again</i> verse (Dionne Warwick—1970)
C	Am9	F-Fm	Em7	<i>Let’s Stay Together</i> verse (Al Green—1971)

VARIATION

Variations occur when you add chords to or subtract chords from a specific progression. In this section, we will look at the “C-Am,” “C-Am-F-G-F,” “C-Am-F,” and “C-Am-G” variations of the doo-wop progression. Play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how the variation was created before moving on to the next progression.

Relative Minor Vamp

Omitting the “F” and “G” chords in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-Am” relative minor vamp. This vamp moves back and forth between the tonic and relative minor, alternating between major (happy) and minor (sad) confusing our sense of key. The relative minor vamp is sometimes repeated before moving to the “F” and “G” chords creating an extended doo-wop progression. An example of this variation is the opening verse progression to Jan & Dean’s 1963 hit *Surf City* shown below.

C ///	Am ///	C ///	Am ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. A jazzy tritone substitution for the “C-Am” relative minor vamp is the “Cmaj7-Eb13” progression. The last four examples are “Am-C” displacements created by simply reversing the order of the two chords in the “C-Am” vamp.

C	Am	<i>Maybe Baby</i> verse (Crickets—1958), <i>Dream Lover</i> verse (Bobby Darin—1959), <i>(Til) I Kissed You</i> verse (Everly Brothers—1959), <i>He Don't Love You</i> chorus (Jerry Butler—1960), <i>Travelin' Man</i> verse (Ricky Nelson—1961), <i>Calendar Girl</i> verse/chorus (Neil Sedaka—1961), <i>Shout</i> verse (Joey Dee & The Starlites—1962), <i>Locomotion</i> verse (Little Eva—1962), <i>Baby It's You</i> intro/outro (Shirelles—1962), <i>Having A Party</i> verse (Sam Cooke—1962), <i>Johnny Get Angry</i> chorus (Joanie Sommers—1962), <i>Anna Go To Him</i> verse (Beatles—1963), <i>From Me To You</i> intro (Beatles—1963), <i>Not A Second Time</i> verse (Beatles—1963), <i>Sukiyaki</i> verse (Kyu Sakamoto—1963), <i>I Only Want To Be With You</i> verse (Dusty Springfield—1964), <i>Any Way You Want It</i> verse/chorus (Dave Clark Five—1964), <i>Needles And Pins</i> verse (Searchers—1964), <i>Catch Us If You Can</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1965), <i>Run For Your Life</i> verse (Beatles—1965), <i>At The Zoo</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1967), <i>It's Cold Outside</i> verse (Choir—1967), <i>Itchycoo Park</i> chorus (Small Faces—1968), <i>Nobody But Me</i> verse (Human Beinz—1968), <i>Mrs. Robinson</i> chorus (Simon & Garfunkel—1968), <i>My Sweet Lord</i> chorus (George Harrison—1970), <i>Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1970), <i>Doctor My Eyes</i> chorus (Jackson Browne—1972), <i>Love's Theme</i> verse (Love Unlimited Orchestra—1974), <i>Heartache Tonight</i> verse (Eagles—1979), <i>One Way Or Another</i> verse (Blondie—1979), <i>Shake It Up</i> verse (Cars—1982), <i>Shame On The Moon</i> verse (Bob Seger—1982), and <i>A Matter Of Trust</i> verse (Billy Joel—1986)
C	[E7]-Am	<i>Viva Las Vegas</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1964)
C-C/B	Am	<i>A Well Respected Man</i> verse/chorus (Kinks—1966) and <i>Instant Karma</i> verse (John Ono Lennon—1970)

C- C+(3x)	Am		<i>Strange Magic</i> verse (Electric Light Orchestra—1976)
C	Am7- Am7/G		<i>On And On</i> verse (Stephen Bishop—1977)
C	A		<i>(Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay</i> chorus (Otis Redding—1968)
Cmaj7	Am7		<i>Buttons And Bows</i> A section (from “Paleface”—1948) and <i>What's Going On</i> verse/chorus (Marvin Gaye—1971)
Cadd9	Am		<i>Can't Get It Out Of My Head</i> verse (Electric Light Orchestra—1975)
C- Cmaj7- C7	Am-A7		<i>Let's Stay Together</i> chorus (Al Green—1971)
C-[G/ B]	Am-[G]	C	<i>America</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1981)
C	A-Am	C	<i>Heart Of Glass</i> verse (Blondie—1979)
	Am	C	<i>When Johnny Comes Marching Home</i> verse (Folk—1898), <i>Soldier Of Love</i> chorus (Arthur Alexander—1962), <i>Greenback Dollar</i> verse (Kingston Trio—1963), <i>It Won't Be Long</i> chorus (Beatles—1963), <i>All I've Got To Do</i> verse (Beatles—1963), <i>Let's Live For Today</i> verse (Grass Roots—1967), <i>El Condor Pasa</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1970), and <i>Bad Boys</i> (Inner Circle—1994)
	Am	C+-C	<i>All My Loving</i> bridge (Beatles—1964)
	Am	C-[Bm]	<i>Leader Of The Pack</i> recitation (Shangri-Las—1964)
	Am7	C	<i>Wish You Were Here</i> intro (Pink Floyd—1975) and <i>Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?</i> chorus (Rod Stewart—1978)

C-Am-F-G-F Variation

Adding the “F” chord to the end of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-Am-F-G-F” variation. An example of this variation is the chorus to Barry Manilow’s 1974 hit *Mandy* shown below. In this song, Barry Manilow makes use of both duration and variation to change the sound of the doo-wop progression.

C ///	Am / F /	G ///	F ///
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Several other examples of this type of variation include *Silhouettes* verse (Diamonds—1957), *Wasted On The Way* verse (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1982), and *Nightshift* verse (Commodores—1985).

C-Am-F Variation

Omitting the “G” chord in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-Am-F” variation. An example of this variation is the verse progression to Bob Dylan’s 1963 *The Times They Are A-Changing* shown below.

C //	Am //	F //	C //
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation.

C	Am	F		<i>Girls Just Want To Have Fun</i> verse (Cyndi Lauper—1984) and <i>He Thinks He'll Keep Her</i> verse (Mary Chapin Carpenter—1992)
C	Am	Fadd9		<i>Coming Around Again</i> verse (Carly Simon—1986)
C	Am	F	C	<i>Walk Away Renee</i> chorus (Left Banke—1966), <i>What Have They Done To My Song Ma</i> verse (Melanie—1970), <i>Lookin' Out My Back Door</i> verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1970), <i>Take It Easy</i> chorus (Eagles—1972), and <i>You're Only Lonely</i> verse (J.D. Souther—1979)
C	Am	F	C/E	<i>Moon River</i> (Henry Mancini—1961)

C-Am-G Variation

Omitting the “F” chord in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-Am-G” variation. An example of this variation is the verse progression to the Impressions’ 1965 hit *The People Get Ready* shown below.

C / Am7 /	G11 / C /
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The box below shows other examples of this variation. The *Julia* example uses a parallel minor/major substitution.

C	Am7	G	Sunshine, Lollipops, And Rainbows verse (Leslie Gore—1965), Same Old Lang Syne verse (Dan Fogelberg—1981), When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going chorus (Billy Ocean—1985), and The Motown Song verse (Rod Stewart—1991)	
C	Am	Gm-Gm9	Julia verse (Beatles—1968)	
C	Am	G	C	The Boxer verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1969)

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as “displaced” progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will find a table showing the twenty-four possible combinations of the doo-wop progression in the key of C. If you substitute the “Em” chord for the “Am” chord, you will create the table of possible “C-Em-F-G” rock ballad progressions. Similarly, if you substitute the “Dm” chord for the “Am” chord, you create the table of possible “C-Dm-F-G” ascending bass line progressions (see the separate “Ascending Bass Lines” chapter).

C	Am	F	G	Am	F	G	C
C	Am	G	F	Am	F	C	G
C	F	G	Am	Am	G	C	F
C	F	Am	G	Am	G	F	C
C	G	Am	F	Am	C	F	G
C	G	F	Am	Am	C	G	F
F	G	C	Am	G	C	Am	F
F	G	Am	C	G	C	F	Am
F	C	Am	G	G	Am	F	C
F	C	G	Am	G	Am	C	F
F	Am	G	C	G	F	C	Am
F	Am	C	G	G	F	Am	C

In the remainder of this section, you will look at eighteen different doo-wop displacements. There are five underused doo-wop displacements (“F-Am-G-C,” “F-Am-C-G,” “G-C-Am-F,” “G-Am-C-F,” and “G-F-Am-C”) that you may want to consider using for your next song. As you did with the variations, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how the displacement was created before moving on to the next progression.

C-Am-G-F Displacement

Reversing the order of the “F” and “G” chords in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-Am-G-F” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to John Denver’s 1971 hit *Take Me Home, Country Roads* shown below.

C ///	Am ///	G ///	F / C /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The last three examples are relative minor/major substitutions.

C	Am	G	F		<i>Two Princes</i> verse (Spin Doctors—1993)
C	Am	G	F	Am	<i>Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood</i> chorus (Animals—1965)
C	Am	G7- [Gb7]	F7		<i>How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)</i> verse (Marvin Gaye—1965)
C	Am	GaddC	F	GaddC-Am	<i>We Just Disagree</i> verse (Dave Mason—1977)
Cadd9	Am7(add4)	G	Fadd9		<i>Purple Rain</i> verse (Prince—1984)
C	Am	Em	F	G-G7sus4	<i>Look In My Eyes</i> <i>Pretty Woman</i> chorus (Dawn—1975)
Cmaj7	Am7	Em	F		<i>Give Me Just A Little More Time</i> chorus (Chairman Of The Board—1970)
C	Am	Em	Dm		<i>East West</i> verse (Herman's Hermits—1966)

C-F-G-Am Displacement

Moving the “Am” chord to the last position in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-F-G-Am” displacement. Another way to look at this sequence is as a “C-F-G” rock and roll progression that continues on to the “Am” chord. An example of this displacement is

the chorus progression to the Band's 1970 *Up On Cripple Creek* shown below.

C ///	////	F ///	////
G ///	////	Am ///	Bb ///

Two other examples of this type of displacement are the “C-F-G-Am” verse progression to Looking Glass’ 1972 hit *Brandy (You’re A Fine Girl)* and the “C-Csus4-F-G-Am” verse progression to John Denver’s 1974 hit *Anne’s Song*.

C-F-Am-G Displacement

Moving the “Am” chord to the third position in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-F-Am-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main chorus progression to Boston’s 1976 hit *More Than A Feeling* shown below.

C / F /	Am / G /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement.

C	F	Am	G	<i>Hit Me With Your Best Shot</i> chorus (Pat Benatar—1980) and <i>She Drives Me Crazy</i> chorus (Fine Young Cannibals—1989)
C	F	Am7	Gsus4	<i>Because You Loved Me</i> chorus (Celine Dion—1996)

C-G-Am-F Displacement

Moving the “Am” and “F” chords to the third and fourth positions respectively in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-G-Am-F” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening progression to John Cougar’s 1982 *Hurts So Good* shown below.

C ///	G ///	Am ///	F ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The *Strawberry Fields Forever* example uses both a parallel and relative minor/major substitutions. The last three examples are “C-G-Am” variations that omit the “F” chord in the “C-G-Am-F” displacement.

C	G	Am	F	<i>To Know Him Is To Love Him</i> verse (Teddy Bears—1958), <i>One Fine Day</i> verse (Chiffons—1963), <i>Don't Think Twice, It's All Right</i> verse (Peter, Paul & Mary—1963), <i>Smile A Little Smile For Me</i> chorus (Flying Machine—1969), <i>Everything's Alright</i> verse (from “Jesus Christ Superstar”—1970), <i>Take Me Home, Country Roads</i> chorus (John Denver—1971), <i>Down Under</i> chorus (Men At Work—1983), <i>With Or Without You</i> verse (U2—1987), <i>Ghost Town</i> verse (Cheap Trick—1988), <i>Right Here Waiting</i> chorus (Richard Marx—1989), <i>Under The Bridge</i> verse (Red Hot Chili Peppers—1991), <i>When I Come Around</i> verse (Green Day—1994), and <i>Passionate Kisses</i> verse (Mary Chapin Carpenter—1994)
C	G	Am	[G]-F	<i>Let It Be</i> verse (Beatles—1970)
C	G/B	Am	F	<i>Baby, I Love Your Way</i> verse (Peter Frampton—1976), <i>Slow Dancing (Swayin' To The Music)</i> verse (Johnny Rivers—1977), <i>Beast Of Burden</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1978), <i>Not Enough Love In The World</i> chorus (Don Henley—1985), <i>Can You Feel The Love Tonight</i> chorus (Elton John—1994), and <i>Push</i> verse (Matchbox Twenty—1996)
C5	G5	A5	F5	<i>We Didn't Start The Fire</i> verse (Billy Joel—1989)
C	Gm7	A7	F	<i>Strawberry Fields Forever</i> chorus (Beatles—1967)

C	G	Am	<i>Another Brick In The Wall Part Two</i> chorus (Pink Floyd—1980)
C	G/B	Am	<i>All You Need Is Love</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
C	G	A5	<i>Magic Man</i> chorus (Heart—1976)

C-G-F-Am Displacement

Reversing the “F” and “G” chords and moving the “Am” chord to the last position in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “C-G-F-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the verse progression to the Beatles’ 1969 hit *Come Together* shown below.

C7#9 ///	////	////	////
G ///	////	F7 ///	////
Am // G	F / G /		

Another example of this type of displacement is the “C-G-F-Am-G” verse progression to Mott The Hoople’s 1970 *Sweet Jane*.

Am-F-G-C Displacement

Moving the “C” chord to the last position in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “Am-F-G-C” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main verse progression to Neil Young’s 1972 hit *Heart Of Gold* is shown below.

Am / F /	G / C /
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Two other examples of this type of displacement are *The Lord’s Prayer* verse (Sister Janet Mead—1974) and *W.O.L.D* verse (Harry Chapin—1974).

Am-F-C-G Displacement

Moving the “C” and “G” chords to the third and fourth positions respectively in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “Am-F-C-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening chorus progression to Boston’s 1977 *Peace Of Mind* shown below.

Am / F /	C / G /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The last example is an “Am-F-C” variation that omits the final “G” chord in the “Am-F-C-G” displacement.

Am	F	C	G	<i>San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair)</i> verse (Scott McKenzie—1967), <i>Foolish Games</i> verse (Jewel—1996), and <i>Building A Mystery</i> verse (Sarah McLachlan—1997)
Am	F	C/E-C		<i>Invisible Touch</i> verse (Genesis—1986)

Am-G-C-F Displacement

Moving the “Am” and “G” chords to the first and second positions respectively in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “Am-G-C-F” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Foreigner’s 1985 hit *I Want To Know What Love Is* shown below. This progression uses the “G” triad as a passing chord (in brackets).

Am // [G]	C ///	F ///	Am ///
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The “Am-G-C” variation that omits the “F” chord in the “Am-G-C-F” displacement is the verse progression to Tom Petty’s 1989 hit *I Won’t Back Down*.

Am-G-F-C Displacement

Reversing the order of the “F” and “G” chords and moving the “C” chord to the last position in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “Am-G-F-C” displacement.

An example of this displacement is the verse progression to the Moody Blues 1972 *Nights In White Satin* shown below.

Am //	///	G //	///
Am //	///	G //	///
F //	///	C //	///
Bb //	///	Am //	///

Am-C-F-G Displacement

Moving the “Am” chord to the beginning of a “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “Am-C-F-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Paul Simon’s 1977 hit *Slip Slidin’ Away* shown below.

Am7 ///	///	C6 ///	///
F / G /	F ///	F7 ///	

Am-C-G-F Displacement

Reversing the order of the “F” and “G” chords and moving the “Am” chord to the beginning in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “Am-C-G-F” displacement.

An example of this displacement is the main chorus progression to Kansas’ 1977 hit *Carry On Wayward Son* shown below.

Am / C /	G / Fsus2 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The third example is the “Am-C-G” variation that omits the “F” chord in the “Am-C-G-F” displacement.

Am	C	G-Gsus4-G	Fadd9	Dsus2	<i>Behind Blue Eyes</i> verse (Who—1971).
A	C/G	G6	Fmaj7		<i>Under The Bridge</i> chorus (Red Hot Chili Peppers—1991)
Am	C	G			<i>You Like Me Too Much</i> verse (Beatles—1965), <i>Ohio</i> verse (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young—1970), <i>Locomotive Breath</i> verse (Jethro Tull—1971), <i>Refugee</i> verse/chorus (Tom Petty—1980), and <i>Cover Me</i> verse (Bruce Springsteen—1984)
Asus2	Csus2	Gsus2	=>	Asus2	<i>What I Am</i> verse (Eddie Brickell & New Bohemians—1989)

F-G-C-Am Displacement

Moving the “F” and “G” chords to the first and second position respectively of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “F-G-C-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main verse/chorus progression to Marc Cohen’s 1991 hit *Walking In Memphis* shown below.

F / G /	C / Am /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. Notice the use of a descending bass line in the *Have You Ever Seen The Rain* example.

F	G	C	Am	<i>If You Wanna Be Happy</i> chorus (Jimmy Soul—1963), <i>Blowin' In The Wind</i> chorus (Peter, Paul & Mary—1963), <i>I Want To Hold Your Hand</i> chorus (Beatles—1964), <i>A Summer Song</i> bridge (Chad & Jeremy—1964), <i>Brown Eyed Girl</i> bridge (Van Morrison—1967), <i>Oh Me Oh My (I'm A Fool For You Baby)</i> chorus (Lulu—1970), <i>City Of New Orleans</i> chorus (Arlo Guthrie—1972), <i>Watching The Wheels</i> chorus (John Lennon—1981), and <i>Wasted On The Way</i> chorus (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1982)
F	G	C-C/B	Am-Am/G	<i>Have You Ever Seen The Rain</i> chorus (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1971)

F-G-Am-C Displacement

Moving the “F” and “G” chords to the first and second position respectively and the “C” chord to the last position of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “F-G-Am-C” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main verse progression to Counting Crows’ 1993 *Round Here* shown below.

F ///	G ///	Am ///	C ///
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F-C-Am-G Displacement

Moving the “F” chord to the beginning of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “F-C-Am-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main verse progression to Tracy Chapman’s 1988 hit *Fast Car* shown below.

Fmaj7 / C /	Am / G /
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Another example of this type of displacement is the “F-C-Am-G” chorus progression to Tom Petty’s 1991 *Learning To Fly*.

F-C-G-Am Displacement

Moving the “F” chord to the beginning and reversing the “Am” and “G” chords of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “F-C-G-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main chorus progression to Bachman-Turner Overdrive’s 1974 hit *Let It Ride* shown below.

F/C / C /	G / Am /
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Other examples of this type of displacement include the “F6-C-G7-Am” verse progression to the Beatles’ 1967 hit *Hello Goodbye*, the “F9-C7-G7-Am” bridge progression to Wing’s 1973 hit *Live And Let Die*, and the “F-C5-G5-A5” chorus progression to Golden Earring’s 1974 hit *Radar Love*.

G-C-F-Am Displacement

Moving the “G” chord to the beginning and reversing the order of the “Am” and “F” chords in the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “G-C-F-Am” displacement.

An example of this displacement is the opening bridge progression to the Beatles’ 1965 *The Night Before* is shown below. In this progression the “G” is replaced by the “Gm” chord (parallel minor/major substitution).

Gm ///	C7 ///	F ///	////
Am ///			

G-Am-F-C Displacement

Moving the “G” chord to the beginning and the “C” chord to the end of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “G-Am-F-C” displacement. An example of this displacement is the chorus progression to Cyndi Lauper’s 1984 hit *Time After Time* shown below.

G ///	Am7 ///	F / Fmaj9 /	C ///
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G-F-C-Am Displacement

Reversing the “F” and “G” chords and moving them to the beginning of the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression creates the “G-F-C-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening chorus progression to Creedence Clearwater Revival’s 1970 hit *Looking Out My Back Door* shown below.

G ///	////	F ///	C ///
C ///	Am ///	G ///	////

Two other examples of this type of displacement are *Flowers Never Bend* chorus (Simon & Garfunkel—1965) and *Yellow Submarine* verse (Beatles—1966).

SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

Let’s take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Below is an example of how I used the doo-wop progression to write a new song.

The eight-bar chorus progression to my *Beyond These Walls* is shown below. In this progression, I take a little used doo-wop displacement and the Buddy Holly chord (“bVI”) to create a familiar, yet different, sounding chorus progression for my pop-rock song. These chords work well with the “Beyond these walls there is a place where, you can go to

called the square, in this town of make believe you call the streets your home, another street-smart runaway rebel on your own.” lyrics. An article in an Orlando newspaper suggested the lyrics. Newspapers and current events can be a good source for new song ideas. Examples of well-known songs based on newspaper articles include the Beatles’ *A Day In The Life*, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young’s *Ohio*, and more recently Bruce Springsteen’s *The Rising*.

G / C /	F / Am /	G / C /	F / Am /
G / C /	F / Am /	G / C /	F / Abmaj7 /

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used doo-wop progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own doo-wop progressions.

(1) Transform the doo-wop progression shown below into an ascending “C-E-F-G” bass line progression using inversions.

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G ///
-------	--------	-------	-------

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	Am/E ///	F ///	G ///
-------	----------	-------	-------

(2) Transform the doo-wop progression shown below into a descending “C-B-A-G” bass line progression using inversions.

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G ///
-------	--------	-------	-------

Here's how I did it.

C ///	Am/B ///	F/A ///	G ///
-------	----------	---------	-------

Now, try substituting a descending bass line doo-wop displacement for the doo-wop displacement in a song such as *Under The Bridge* verse (Red Hot Chili Peppers—1991) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / G /	Am / F /
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Substitute Progression (Descending Bass Line)

C / G/B /	Am / F /
-----------	----------

(3) Transform the doo-wop progression shown below into a tonic pedal point progression. (Hint: All the chords in the progression should have a “C” as its bass note.)

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G ///
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Here's how I did it.

C ///	Am/C ///	F/C ///	G/C ///
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(4) Try substituting the standard progression for the doo-wop progression in a song such as *Do That To Me One More Time* verse (Captain & Tennille—1980) as shown below. Remember that the doo-wop progression can almost always be substituted for the standard progression and vice versa so be sure to explore the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter of this book.

Original Progression

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression (Standard Progression)

Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
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(5) Try substituting the rock and roll progression for the doo-wop progression in a song such as *Stay* verse (Maurice Williams—1960) as shown below. Keep in mind that many complex songs can be simplified to just these three primary chords.

Original Progression

C / Am /	F / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Rock And Roll)

C ///	F / G7 /
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(6) Try substituting the jazz progression for the doo-wop progression in a song such as *This Magic Moment* verse (Drifters—1960) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	////	Am ///	////
F ///	////	G7 ///	////

Substitute Progression (Jazz Progression)

C ///	////	////	////
Dm7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

(7) Try substituting the three progressions shown below for the doo-wop progression in a song such as *Stand By Me* verse (Ben E. King—1961). Notice how much interest is added to the arrangement by adding passing chords. Also, try substituting the “Am/G” for the “G” passing chord.

Original Progression

C ///	////	Am ///	////
F ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Substitute Progression (Passing Chords #1)

C ///	/// [G/B]	Am ///	/// [G]
F ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Substitute Progression (Passing Chord #2)

C ///	////	Am // [G]	Am ///
F ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point #3)

C ///	////	Am/C ///	////
F/C ///	G/C ///	C ///	////

(8) Try substituting the doo-wop progression for the basic progression in a song such as *Sunshine On My Shoulders* verse (John Denver—1974) as shown below. This substitution can dress up the basic progression harmony. It can be great fun re-harmonizing simple chord progressions and possibly discovering a new progression for your next hit song.

Original Progression

C / F /	C / F /
---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop Progression)

C / Am7 /	F / G /
-----------	---------

(9) Try substituting the doo-wop progression for the standard substitution in a song such as *I Get Around* chorus (Beach Boys—1964) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	A7 ///	Dm ///	Bb / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop Progression)

C ///	Am7 ///	F ///	G7 ///
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(10) Try substituting the two doo-wop progressions shown below for the diminished cliché in a song such as *Stormy Weather (Keeps Raining' All The Time)* A section (Standard—1933).

Original Progression

C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
------------	------------

Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop #1)

C / Am7 /	F / G7 /
-----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Embellishment #2)

Cmaj7 / Am7 /	Fmaj7 / G11 /
---------------	---------------

(11) Try building an eight-bar section for a new song by using just a “C-Am” relative minor vamp.

Here is how Kansas did it to create the introduction progression to their 1978 hit *Dust In The Wind*.

C / Cmaj7 /	Cadd9 / C /	Asus2 / Asus4 /	Am / Asus2 /
-------------	-------------	-----------------	--------------

Cadd9 / C /	Cmaj7 / Cadd9 /	Am / Asus2 /	Asus4 / Am /
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(12) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-Am-F-G” doo-wop progression.

Here is how Enrique Iglesias did it to create the verse progression to his 2001 hit *Hero*.

C5 ///	Am7 ///	Fsus2 ///	Gsus4 ///
C5 ///	Am7 ///	Fsus2 ///	Gsus4 ///

Endings

Endings provide a strong sense of finality and can be as short as one chord or longer multi-bar extended tags. A memorable pop song ending is that of the Beatles' 1967 *A Day In The Life* that closes with a bar of dramatic silence followed by the final crashing "III" chord played on piano followed by a long fade. An example of a memorable minor ending is that of Monty Norman's 1962 *The James Bond Theme* that closes on a final "Im6/9" chord.

In this chapter, you will explore a dozen ways the world's best songwriters have created endings for their hit songs. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own endings.

TONIC CHORD

The simplest ending is to just close on a sustained tonic ("I" or "Im") chord that is usually embellished. As you will recall, the tonic is a chord of rest that provides a feeling of arriving, finality, and resolution. The table below shows several "I" or "Im" chord embellishments commonly used as ending chords.

I (Major)	6, maj7, maj9, 7, 9, 6/9, or 13
Im (Minor)	m6, m7, m9, or m6/9

The boxes below show two examples of this type of ending.

C ///	C6/9 (ending chord)
-------	---------------------

G7 ///

Cmaj7(ending chord)

Instead of ending by sustaining the tonic chord, you can also play the ending chord as an arpeggio. An arpeggio is a broken chord where the notes of a chord are played in succession to one another, rather than simultaneously.

NON-TONIC CHORD

Another way to end a song is to close on a sustained chord other than the tonic (“I”) chord. Below are several examples of songs that end on a chord other than the tonic.

Chad and Jeremy’s 1964 hit *A Summer Song* ended on a sustained “VI” chord as shown below. This ending chord works best when preceded by the “V” triad. Try it as an ending chord with the doo-wop (“C-Am-F-G-A”) and standard (“Cmaj7-Am7-Dm7-G7-Amaj7”) progressions.

C / Em /

F / G /

A (ending chord)

Day By Day from the 1972 musical “Godspell” ended on a sustained “III” chord as shown below.

Gmaj7 ///

Cmaj7 ///

Emaj7(ending chord)

The Beatles’ 1964 minor key *And I Love Her* ended with the parallel major of the “Im” chord as shown below.

C6 ///

Dm ///

////

A (ending chord)

CADENCES

A cadence is a strong progression of chords (usually two) that move to a harmonic close that ends a line, phrase or a piece of music. Cadences are music's commas and periods. The box below shows five common cadences. The first column shows the name of the cadence. The second column shows the cadence in Roman numerals and the last column shows an example in the key of C. Keep in mind that the first example, the authentic cadence, is the strongest resolution in Western music and as a result is frequently used for ending a song. The next example, the plagal cadence, is the second strongest resolution.

Authentic	V to I	G to C
Plagal (Amen)	IV to I	F to C
Deceptive	V to any chord but I	G to Am
Half	Any chord to V	Dm7 to G
Phrygian	bII to I	Db to C

The first box below shows an example of the authentic cadence used as a song ending. In this cadence, the dominant immediately precedes the tonic chord creating a delayed resolution. The second box shows the Phrygian cadence used as a song ending. It replaces the “G7” in the authentic cadence with the “Db” chord (tritone substitution). You may recognize this last example as the “Oh Yeah” ending.

G7 ///	C7 (ending chord)
Dbmaj7 ///	C6 (ending chord)

The first box below shows an example of the plagal cadence used as a song ending. It is also referred to as an amen cadence because it is frequently used to end church hymns. In this cadence, the subdominant immediately precedes the tonic chord creating a delayed resolution to the tonic. The second example, a minor plagal cadence, adds a parallel

minor/major substitution. This sequence creates a delicate, heartfelt sound. The last example is referred to as a double plagal cadence that is comprised of back-to-back plagal cadences.

F / / /	C (ending chord)
F / Fm /	C (ending chord)
Bb / F /	C (ending chord)

TURNAROUNDS

An easy way to create a tag ending is to add an embellished tonic “I” or “Im” chord to the end of a turnaround. Tag endings extend a song by delaying the final resolution to the tonic for one or two bars. In this case, you simply put (tag) the turnaround with the added tonic to the end of a song. A more detailed discussion of turnarounds can be found in the separate “Turnarounds” chapter of this book. Below are a dozen examples of common tag endings created in this manner. The number of possible endings that can be created in this manner are just about endless.

Circle Turnaround

Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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Circle Turnaround (Tritone Substitution)

Bb7 / Eb7 /	Ab7 / Dbmaj7 /	C6 (ending chord)
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Coltrane Turnaround

Cmaj7 / Ebmaj7 /	Abmaj7 / Dbmaj7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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Diminished Cliché Turnaround

C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
------------	------------	---------------------

Jazz Turnaround

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7(ending chord)
---------	--------	---------------------

Jazz Turnaround (Tritone Substitution)

Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 ///	C6 (ending chord)
------------	------------	-------------------

Jazz Turnaround (Diminished Seventh Substitution)

Dm7 ///	G#o7 ///	Cmaj7(ending chord)
---------	----------	---------------------

Jazz Turnaround (Minor Key)

Am7 ///	Bm7b5 / E7 /	Am6/9(endingchord)
---------	--------------	--------------------

Ragtime Turnaround

C7 / A7 /	D7 / G7 /	C (ending chord)
-----------	-----------	------------------

Rock Ballad Turnaround

C / Em /	F / G7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
----------	----------	---------------------

Standard Turnaround

Cmaj7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj9(ending chord)
---------------	------------	---------------------

Standard Substitution Turnaround

Cmaj7 / Em7 Ebm7	Dm7 / G7 /	C6/9 (ending chord)
------------------	------------	---------------------

In blues music, the turnaround closes on the “I,” “I7” or “I9” chords instead of a “V” chord to end the song. Several examples are shown below. The first bar is interchangeable with the second to create more endings. More blues turnarounds can be found in the “Blues Progressions” and “Minor Blues Progressions” chapters of this book.

Bar 11	Bar 12
C ///	C / C7 /
C ///	C B7 C7 /
C ///	C Db7 C7 /
C ///	C G7 C7 /
C C7 F Fm	C / C7 /
C C7 F Ab	G7 / C7 /
C C7 F Co7	C B7 C7 /

REPEAT LAST BARS

Another easy way to create a tag ending is to simply repeat the last two bars of a song. The Beatles used this method to create the tag ending to their 1965 hit *Yesterday*. Repeating the last two bars of a song three times is referred to as a triple tag. Similarly, you can repeat the last four bars of the song to create an extended tag ending.

BACKCYCLED

Another method of creating extended tag endings is to backcycle (see “Appendix”) from the target tonic (“I”) ending chord. The example below walks you through the creation of a seven-chord tag ending using this method. Keep in mind that you can create longer endings by adding (backcycling) more consecutive chords from the circle of fifths. Similarly, shorter endings can be built by using fewer consecutive back-cycled chords from the circle of fifths. Again, the number of possible endings that can be created in this manner are virtually endless.

Original Progression

///	///	///	C (target) ///
-----	-----	-----	----------------

Backcycled Progression

F# / B /	E / A /	D / G /	C (target) / / /
----------	---------	---------	------------------

Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Change & Embellishment)

F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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Substitute Progression (Tritone Substitution)

Cmaj7 / Fmaj7 /	Bbmaj7 / Ebmaj7 /	Abmaj7 / Dbmaj7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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CHROMATIC

Applying tritone substitutions to the backcycled progression above can create extended chromatic tag endings as shown below. The resulting progression is referred to as a sharp four ending because it begins at the “#IV” of the key and descends chromatically to the final tonic (“I”). Another common starting place is the “VI” chord. These are referred to as “VI_m” chromatic endings. An example of this type of ending is “Am11-Ab7_{sus}-G7_{sus}-F#m7b5-Fm7-Em7#5-Eb13-D7-Db7-Cmaj9.”

Backcycled Progression (Chord Quality Change & Embellishment)

F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
-------------	------------	------------	---------------------

Chromatic Progression (Tritone Substitutions)

F#m7 / F7 /	Em7 / Eb7 /	Dm7 / Dbmaj7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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OLD FASHIONED

Many standard tunes end with the same stock eight-bar sequence shown below. This formula can be used as a quick extended tag ending.

F ///	Fm ///	C ///	A7 ///
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Below are two examples of this type of ending.

When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (Standard—1912)

F ///	F#o7 ///	C ///	A7 ///
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

All Of Me (Standard—1931)

Dm7 ///	Ebo7 ///	Em7 ///	A9 ///
Dm7b5 ///	G13 ///	C6 / Fm6 /	C ///

QUOTE ANOTHER SONG

Another way to create a memorable extended tag ending is to quote a well-known song that is relevant to the ending such as *Jingle Bells* on *The Christmas Song* (Standard—1946), *Auld Lang Syne* on *Same Old Lang Syne* (Daniel Fogelberg—1981), and *Day Tripper* on *In The City* (Eagles—live version 1994). Eric Clapton used this same idea when he quoted *Blue Moon* in his guitar solo on Cream's 1968 hit *Sunshine Of Your Love*.

FADE OUT

The fade out is a type of song ending usually only available for pre-recorded music. In the fade out, a section of a song or outro is repeated while the volume is decreased until it can no longer be heard. The fade out originated in the 1950s with the advent of continuous airplay to keep the audience from switching radio station channels. Disco clubs

in the 1970s also employed fade outs to keep the music going non-stop.

FALSE ENDING

A false ending is where the listener is led to believe that the song has ended but it starts up again. The Beatles used a false ending on their 1967 hit *Strawberry Fields Forever* that faded out and then faded back in. In the “one more time” false ending the song’s ending is repeated several times before actually ending.

NO ENDING

A variation on the false ending above is to cut a song off abruptly without warning. Again, this type of ending teases the listener.

SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

When I come across an ending that I like, I write it down in my songwriter’s notebook for future reference and use. Below is a sampling of some of my favorite ending chord progressions.

Bar 1				Bar 2			
Eb6	/	D7	/	Dbmaj7	/	Cmaj7	/
C	/	Dm7	/	Db7b5	/	C	/
C6	/	Db6	/	C6	/	/	/
Cmaj9	/	Dbmaj7	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
Dm7	/	Db7	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
Abmaj7	/	Dbmaj7	/	Cmaj9	/	/	/
Abmaj7	/	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	/	/	/

<i>Bar 1</i>				<i>Bar 2</i>			
Ab	/	Bb	/	C	/	/	/
C/E	Eb6	Bb/D	Db6	Cmaj7	/	/	/
C/E	C/Bb	F/A	Ab6	C6/G	/	/	/
C	/	G11	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
C	/	D9	G7#5	C9	/	/	/
C6/9	/	Bb6/9	/	C6/9	/	/	/
Cmaj7	Ebmaj7	Abmaj7	Dbmaj7	Cmaj7	/	/	/
C6	Eb9	Dm7	Db7#5#9	Cmaj7	/	/	/
C	D/C	Cm7	F/C	C	/	/	/

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have created endings for their songs, your assignment is to work through several exercises to get you started building your own endings.

(1) Try building endings by applying substitutions to the chord progressions below.

<i>Bar 1</i>				<i>Bar 2</i>			
C	/	/	/	C	/	/	/
C	/	F	/	C	/	/	/
C	/	Dm	/	C	/	/	/
C	/	G7	/	C	/	/	/
Dm	/	G7	/	C	/	/	/

Bar 1				Bar 2			
C	/	Db7	/	C	/	/	/
Db7	/	/	/	C	/	/	/
C	/	Bb	/	C	/	/	/
Bb7	Eb7	Ab7	Db7	C	/	/	/
Eb	/	D	Db	C	/	/	/
C	/	Bb	B	C	/	/	/

Here's how I did it.

C	/	C6	/	C6/9	/	/	/
C	/	F6	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
C	/	Dm7	/	Cmaj9	/	/	/
C	/	G11	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
Dm7	/	G13	/	Cmaj9	/	/	/
C	/	Dbmaj7	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
Db7b5	/	/	/	Cmaj7	/	/	/
C	/	Bb9#11	/	C6/9	/	/	/
Bbmaj7	Eb7	Abmaj7	Db7	Cmaj7	/	/	/
Eb/C	/	D/C	Db/C	C	/	/	/
Cmaj7	/	Bb6	B6	C6	/	/	/

(2) Try building endings (minor key) by applying chord substitutions to the chord progressions below.

Bar 1				Bar 2			
Am	/	Dm	/	Am	/	/	/
Am	/	E7	/	Am	/	/	/
Am	G	F	E	Am	/	/	/

Here's how I did it.

Am7	/	Dm7	/	Am6/9	/	/	/
Am7	/	E7#9	/	A	/	/	/
Am7	G6/A	Fmaj7/A	E	Am6	/	/	/

(3) Try ending a twelve-bar minor blues song with a parallel major/minor tonic chord as shown below.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
Fmaj7 ///	E7 ///	Am ///	A (ending chord)

(4) Try ending a song with a two-bar standard progression followed by a sustained “VI” chord as shown below. Listen to the difference between the “VI” chord and the expected resolution to the “I” chord.

Cmaj7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Amaj7(ending chord)
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(5) Referring to the separate chapter on “Turnarounds,” find a turnaround and create a three-bar ending with it.

Bar 1	Bar 2	Bar 3
		(ending chord)

Here is how I did it.

Abm7 / Db7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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(6) Try building a backcycled extended tag ending beginning with the “F#m7” chord and ending on the “Cmaj7” (tonic) chord.

Here is how I did it.

F#m7 / B9 /	Em7 / A9 /	Dm7 / G9 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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(7) Try building a sharp four tag ending, ending on the “C” chord.

Here's how I did it.

F#m7b5 / Fm7 /	Em7 / Ebm7 /	Dm7 / Db7b5 /	Cmaj7(ending chord)
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(8) Try building an eight-bar old-fashioned ending as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Here's how I did it using embellishment and tritone substitution.

Fmaj7 ///	Fm7 ///	Em7 ///	Eb7 ///
Dm7 ///	Db7b5 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Cmaj9(ending chord)

Flamenco Progressions

Flamenco is the musical style of the Andalusian Gypsies, or Flamencos, that developed from the fourteenth century onward in southern Spain. A flamenco song, or cante, is typically accompanied by guitar music and dance with performances characterized by forceful often-improvised rhythms. A common chord change in flamenco music is the “Im-bVII-bVI-V” minor progression that descends diatonically in second intervals (one whole step). Studio musicians referred to the flamenco progression as “money chords” because pop songwriters used it to produce many hit songs during the 1960s. The flamenco progression was a refreshing change from blues, rock and roll, doo-wop, and circle-based progressions that were popular at that time.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the flamenco progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, variation, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own flamenco progressions.

KEY

Once again it’s time to grab your keyboard or guitar and play the flamenco progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play each chord for two beats each. This is the main verse progression for songs such as the Ventures’ 1960 hit *Walk Don’t Run*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Also, try playing several of the progressions using the dominant seventh substitution

instead of the major chord quality for the “V” chord. Generally, the use of either chord quality is a matter of personal choice.

Am-G-F-E	Cm-Bb-Ab-G	Ebm-Db-B-Bb	Gbm-E-D-Db
Bbm-Ab-Gb-F	Dbm-B-A-Ab	Em-D-C-B	Gm-F-Eb-D
Bm-A-G-F#	Dm-C-Bb-A	Fm-Eb-Db-C	Abm-Gb-E-Eb

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, practice playing the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression chords for the durations shown below. The majority of the hit songs written with the flamenco progression have been created using the three progression patterns below. As you can see, each chord is typically played for two, four, or eight beats.

Am / G /	F / E /		
Am ///	G ///	F ///	E ///
Am ///	////	G ///	////
F ///	////	E ///	////

You should listen to as many hit songs written using flamenco progressions as possible to truly understand the power of these “money chords.” Examples of the first pattern (two beats per chord) include *Walk, Don’t Run* verse (Ventures—1960) and *Hit The Road Jack* verse (Ray Charles—1961).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats per chord) include *Don’t Let Me Be Misunderstood* verse (Animals—1965), *Wait A Million Years* chorus (Grass Roots—1969), and *Feels Like The First Time* bridge (Foreigner—1977).

Examples of the last pattern (eight beats per chord) include *Happy Together* verse (Turtles—1967), *In The Year 2525* verse (Zager &

Evans—1969), and *Maneater* chorus (Daryl Hall & John Oats—1982).

Other durations include the opening flute solo progression to *Nights In White Satin* (Moody Blues—1972). This song is in 3/4 instead of the more popular 4/4 time.

Am //	///	G //	///
F //	///	E //	///

Another duration is the opening verse progression to *Sultans Of Swing* verse (Dire Straits—1979). This progression shows the power of duration to breath new life into well-known chord changes like the flamenco progression.

Am ///	G / F /	E ///	////
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SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. The box below shows examples of flamenco progression substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any flamenco progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Notice the tritone substitution on *Kid Charlemagne* example below. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions. Listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make.

Am	G	F	E7	<i>Greensleeves/What Child Is This?</i> verse (Folk—1580), <i>Runaway</i> verse (Del Shannon—1961), <i>Three Cool Cats</i> bridge (Beatles—1962), and <i>A Hazy Shade Of Winter</i> chorus (Simon & Garfunkel—1966)
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Am	G	F	Em	<i>A Hazy Shade Of Winter</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1966)
Am	G6	F6	E	<i>Good Vibrations</i> verse (Beach Boys—1966) in the key of A
Am	G6	F-F7	E-E7	<i>How Do You Sleep?</i> verse (John Lennon—1971)
Am	G6	Fmaj7	E	<i>I'll Be Back</i> verse (Beat- les—1964)
Am	G6	Fmaj7	E11-E	<i>Sara Smile</i> verse (Hall & Oates—1976)
Am	G6	F6/9	Bb13	<i>Kid Charlemagne</i> verse (Steely Dan—1976)
Am	G7	F7	E7	<i>Stray Cat Strut</i> verse (Stray Cats—1983)
Am/C	G6	Fmaj7	E7b9-E7	<i>50 Ways To Leave Your Lover</i> verse (Paul Simon—1976)
Am7	G	F	E	<i>Love Child</i> chorus (Diana Ross & The Supremes—1968)
Asus4-A	Gsus4-G	Fsus4-F	E7sus4-E	<i>Pinball Wizard</i> verse (Who—1969) in the key of A

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “Am-G-F-G” substitution. Again, be sure to play each progression example with and without the substitutions.

Am-G-F-G Substitution

Changing the chord quality of the “E” to “Em” and replacing it with the “G” chord (relative major) in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “Am-G-F-G” substitution that both descends and ascends diatonically in second intervals. An example of this substitution

is the chorus progression to Tina Turner's 1984 hit *What's Love Got To Do With It* shown below.

Am / G /	F / G /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. The last two examples are the “Am-G-F-G-E” variations.

Am	G	F	G		<i>All Along The Watch Tower</i> verse (Jimi Hendrix Experience—1968), <i>Come Together</i> chorus (Beatles—1969), <i>Stairway To Heaven</i> final section (Led Zeppelin—1972), <i>Layla</i> chorus (Derek & The Dominos—1972), <i>Dream On</i> chorus (Aerosmith—1976), and <i>My Heart Will Go On</i> chorus (Celine Dion—1997)
Am	G	F	G7		<i>Stop! In The Name Of Love</i> verse (Supremes—1965)
Am	G	F6sus2	G		<i>(Don't Fear) The Reaper</i> verse (Blue Oyster Cult—1976)
Am	G6	Fmaj7	G6		<i>Carry On Wayward Son</i> verse (Kansas—1977)
Am	G	F	G	Am	<i>Turn The Beat Around</i> chorus (Vicki Sue Robinson—1976)
Am	G	F	G7	C	<i>Ruby Tuesday</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1967)
Am	G	F	G	E7sus4-E7	<i>California Dreamin'</i> verse (Mamas & Pappas—1966)
Am	G	Fmaj7	Gsus4	Em7	<i>Papa Don't Preach</i> chorus (Madonna—1986)

VARIATION

Variations occur when you add chords to or subtract chords from a specific progression. In this section, we will look at the “Am-G-F,” “Am-G,” and “Am-F-E” variations of the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression. Again, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how the variation was created before moving on to the next progression.

Am-G-F Variation

Omitting the “E” chord in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “Am-G-F” variation. This variation can also be thought of as a relative minor/major substitution of the first chord in the “C-G-F” rock and roll displacement. An example of this variation is the opening verse progression to Fleetwood Mac’s 1977 hit *You Make Loving Fun* shown below.

Am ///	////	////	////
G ///	////	F ///	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. Note the substitution of the “D” for the “F” chord in the last example.

Am	G	F		<i>Under My Thumb</i> verse (Rolling Stone—1966), <i>Burning Love</i> chorus (Elvis Presley—1972), <i>No More Mr. Nice Guy</i> chorus (Alice Cooper—1973), and <i>Miracles</i> chorus (Jefferson Starship—1975)
Am	G6	Fmaj7		<i>Long Time Gone</i> chorus (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1968) and <i>Hello</i> verse (Lionel Ritchie—1984)
Am	G	Fmaj7	Am/E	<i>Caribbean Queen</i> chorus (Billy Ocean—1984)
Am	Gsus4	F5		<i>Iris</i> chorus (Goo Goo Dolls—1998)

Am	G/F	F	C-[G/B]	<i>The Wind Beneath My Wings</i> chorus (Bette Midler—1989)
A5	G5	F5		<i>Counting Blue Cars</i> verse (Dish- walla—1995)
Am	G	D	Am	<i>Turn The Page</i> verse (Bob Seger—1973)

Am-G Vamp

Omitting the “F” and “E” chords in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “Am-G” vamp. This variation can also be looked at as a relative minor/major substitution of the first chord in the “C-G” folk progression. An example of this type of vamp is the opening chorus progression to the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band’s 1971 hit *Mr. Bojangles* shown below.

Am //	///	G //	///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. The last example is the “G-Am” displacement created by simply reversing the order of the two chords in the “Am-G” vamp.

Am	G	<i>Under The Boardwalk</i> chorus (Drifters—1964), <i>Ballad Of Gilligan’s Isle</i> verse (1964), <i>Happenings Ten Years Time Ago</i> verse (Yardbirds—1966), <i>Girl, You’ll Be A Woman Soon</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1967), <i>I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night</i> verse (Electric Prunes—1967), <i>When I Was Young</i> verse (Animals—1967), <i>Lay Down (Candles In The Rain)</i> verse (Melanie/Edward Hawkins Singers—1970), <i>I (Who Have Nothing)</i> verse (Tom Jones—1970), <i>She’s A Lady</i> verse (Tom Jones—1971), <i>Mother And Child Reunion</i> verse (Paul Simon—1972), <i>Nights In White Satin</i> verse (Moody Blues—1972), <i>Turn The Beat Around</i> verse (Vicki Sue Robinson—1976), <i>Da Ya Think I’m Sexy?</i> verse (Rod Stewart—1978), <i>Beat It</i> verse/chorus (Michael Jackson—1983), <i>Caribbean Queen</i> verse (Billy Ocean—1984), <i>Conga</i> verse (Miami Sound Machine—1986), <i>Danger Zone</i> verse (Kenny Loggins—1986), and <i>Shake Your Love</i> verse (Debbie Gibson—1987)
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Am	G add 9		<i>Magic Man</i> verse (Heart—1976)
Am7	G		<i>Ride Like The Wind</i> verse (Christopher Cross—1980)
Am	G	Am	<i>Sounds Of Silence</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1965), <i>Break On Through</i> verse (Doors—1966), <i>Working Class Hero</i> verse/chorus (John Lennon—1971), and <i>Livin' la Vida Loca</i> chorus (Ricky Martin—1999)
Am7	G	Am	<i>Stayin' Alive</i> verse (Bee Gees—1977)
A5	G5	A5	<i>Smoke On The Water</i> verse (Deep Purple—1973) and <i>Money For Nothing</i> verse (Dire Straits—1985)
A5	G5 [C5- G5]	A5	<i>Paranoid</i> verse (Black Sabbath—1970)
	G	Am	<i>Turn The Page</i> chorus (Bob Seger—1973), and <i>I Wanna Dance With Somebody</i> verse (Whitney Houston—1987)

Am-F-E Variation

Omitting the “G” chord in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “Am-F-E” variation. An example of this variation is the verse progression to the Eurythmics 1983 hit *Sweet Dreams (Are Made Of This)* shown below.

Am / / /	F / Esus4 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. You will frequently see these changes used for bars eight through ten or the turnaround in a twelve-bar minor blues progression.

Am	F	E	<i>We Can Work It Out</i> bridge (Beatles—1965)
Am	F	E7	<i>The Letter</i> verse (Box Tops—1967) and <i>Smooth</i> verse (Santana—1999)

Am	F7	E7	<i>Sixteen Tons</i> verse (Tennessee Ernie Ford—1955)
Am	Fmaj7	E7	<i>I Love You</i> intro (People—1968)
Am-A11	Fmaj7	E7sus4-E7	<i>Don't Explain</i> A section (Billy Holiday—1946) and <i>I Can't Tell You Why</i> chorus (Eagles—1980)

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as “displaced” progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will find a table showing the twenty-four possible combinations of the flamenco progression in the key of Am.

Am	G	F	E	G	F	E	Am
Am	G	E	F	G	F	Am	E
Am	F	G	E	G	E	Am	F
Am	F	E	G	G	E	F	Am
Am	E	G	F	G	Am	F	E
Am	E	F	G	G	Am	E	F
F	E	Am	G	E	Am	G	F
F	E	G	Am	E	Am	F	G
F	Am	G	E	E	G	F	Am
F	Am	E	G	E	G	Am	F
F	G	E	Am	E	F	Am	G
F	G	Am	E	E	F	G	Am

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “Am-F-G-E,” “Am-G-E-F,” “Am-E-F-G,” and “F-G-Am-E” flamenco displacements.

The good news here is that there are nineteen underused displacements, leaving plenty of room to exploit this progression. As you did with the variations, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how the displacement was created before moving on to the next progression. Notice that in several of the examples the “E” chord is replaced by its minor chord quality (parallel minor/major substitution).

Am-F-G-E Displacement

Reversing the order of the “G” and “F” chords in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “Am-F-G-E” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Neil Diamond’s 1980 hit *Love On The Rocks* shown below.

Am ///	F ///	G ///	Em7 ///
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In the third verse of this song, Neil Diamond uses several passing chords (in brackets) as shown below.

Am /// [C/G]	F ///	G /// [G/F]	Em7 ///
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Am-G-E-F Displacement

Reversing the order of the “F” and “E” chords in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “Am-G-E-F” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Vanilla Fudge’s 1968 hit *You Keep Me Hangin’ On* shown below.

Am ///	G ///	Em ///	F ///
--------	-------	--------	-------

Am-E-F-G Displacement

Reversing the order of the “G” and “F” chords and moving the “E” chord to the second position in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression

creates the “Am-E-F-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening chorus progression to America’s 1982 hit *You Can Do Magic* shown below.

Am7 / Em7 /	Fmaj7 / G /
-------------	-------------

F-G-E-Am Displacement

Reversing the order of the “G” and “F” chords and moving the “Am” chord to the last position in the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression creates the “F-G-E-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main chorus progression to Nick Lowe’s 1979 hit *Cruel To Be Kind* shown below.

F / G /	Em / Am /
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Another example of this type of displacement is the main chorus progression to Johnny Mathis/Deniece Williams 1978 hit *Too Much, Too Little, Too Late* shown below.

Fmaj7 ///	G/F ///	Em7 ///	Am7 ///
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SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

Let’s take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Below are two examples of how I used the flamenco progression write a new song.

Break Me Up

The main verse progression to my *Break Me Up* is shown below. I used a flamenco variation to create a moving verse progression to tell my story. The opening lyric goes “She’s been gone for nearly three weeks, feels like I’m lost on some dead end street.”

Am7 ///	F7 / E7 /	Am7 ///	F7 / E7 /
---------	-----------	---------	-----------

Mountain Of Lies

The main verse progression to my *Mountain Of Lies* is shown below. Many years ago, I used another flamenco vamp to create the verse progression to write this brooding self-absorbed ballad. The opening verse lyric goes “Cloudy days filled with confusion, brighter nights filled with illusions.”

Am ///	G ///	Am ///	G ///
--------	-------	--------	-------

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used flamenco progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own flamenco progressions.

(1) Transform the flamenco progression shown below into an ascending “A-B-C-E” bass line progression using inversions.

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E7 ///
--------	-------	-------	--------

Here’s how I did it.

Am ///	G/B ///	F/C ///	E7/D ///
--------	---------	---------	----------

(2) Transform the flamenco progression shown below into a descending “A-G-F-E” bass line progression.

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E ///
--------	-------	-------	-------

This was a trick question. In the flamenco progression, the root of each chord already forms a descending bass line.

(3) Transform the flamenco variation shown below into a tonic pedal point progression. Hint: All the chords in the progression should have an “A” as its bass note.

Am///	G///	F///	////
-------	------	------	------

Here is how Mike & The Mechanics did it to create the chorus progression to their 1986 hit *Silent Running*.

Am///	G/A///	F/A///	////
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(4) Try substituting the two flamenco progressions shown below for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Born To Run* verse (Bruce Springsteen—1975).

Original Progression

C///	////	F///	G///
------	------	------	------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am///	G///	F///	E7///
-------	------	------	-------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Variation)

Am///	////	F///	E7///
-------	------	------	-------

Now, try substituting the flamenco progression for the rock ballad progression in a song such as *Have I Told You Lately* verse (Rod Stewart—1989) as shown below.

Original Progression

C/Em7/	F/G11/
--------	--------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am / G /	F / E7 /
----------	----------

Now, try substituting the flamenco progression for the jazz progression in a song such as *It's Not Unusual* verse (Tom Jones—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	///	Dm7 ///	G ///
-------	-----	---------	-------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E7 ///
--------	-------	-------	--------

Now, try substituting the flamenco progression for the standard progression in a song such as *I Got Rhythm* A section (Standard—1931) as shown below. Then try it again using the “Am-F-E7” flamenco variation.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
-----------	------------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am / G /	F / E7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Variation)

Am ///	F / E7 /
--------	----------

Now, try substituting the flamenco variation for the doo-wop progression in a song such as *Stay* verse (Maurice Williams—1960) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / Am /	F / G7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am / G /	F / E7 /
----------	----------

Now, try substituting the flamenco progression for the folk progression in a song such as *Ruby Tuesday* chorus (Rolling Stones—1967) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / G7 /	C ///
----------	-------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am / G /	F / E7 /
----------	----------

Now, try substituting the flamenco progression for the folk substitution in a song such as *Paint It Black* (Rolling Stones—1966) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am ///	///	E7 ///	///
--------	-----	--------	-----

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E7 ///
--------	-------	-------	--------

Similarly, try substituting the flamenco progression for the “Am6-E7/B” progression in a song such as *Summertime* A section (George Gershwin—1935) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /
--------------	--------------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am / G /	F / E7 /
----------	----------

(5) Try substituting the flamenco progression for the circle progression in a song such as *Wild World* verse (Cat Stevens—1971) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am / D7 /	G / Cmaj7 /	F / Dm /	E ///
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Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E ///
--------	-------	-------	-------

(6) Try substituting the flamenco vamp & minor folk combination progression for the flamenco progression in a song such as *Greensleeves/What Child Is This?* verse (Folk—1580) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am //	///	G //	///
F //	///	E7 //	///

Substitute Progression

Am //	///	G //	///
Am //	///	E7 //	///

(7) Try substituting the flamenco progression for the “C-Em/B-Am-G” descending bass line progression in a song such as *I Think We’re Alone Now* verse (Tommy James & The Shondells—1967) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	Em/B ///	Am ///	G ///
-------	----------	--------	-------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E7 ///
--------	-------	-------	--------

(8) Try substituting the flamenco progression for the “C-Em-Dm-G7” standard progression substitution in a song such as *You’re Going To Lose That Girl* verse (Beatles—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	Em ///	Dm ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	--------	--------

Substitute Progression (Flamenco Progression)

Am ///	G ///	F ///	E7 ///
--------	-------	-------	--------

(9) Try building a sixteen-bar verse or chorus for a new song by using just the “Am-G-F-E” flamenco progression.

Here is how The Turtles did it to create the verse progression to their 1967 hit *Happy Together*. The progression consists of two repeated eight-bar phrases.

Am ///	////	G ///	////
F ///	////	E ///	////
Am ///	////	G ///	////
F ///	////	E ///	////

Here is how Steely Dan did it to create the verse progression to their 1976 hit *Kid Charlemagne* using embellishments and a tritone substitution (“Bb13” for “E7”).

Am ///	////	G6 ///	////
F6/9 ///	////	Bb13 ///	////

Am ///	////	G6 ///	////
F6/9 ///	////	Bb13 ///	////

(10) Try building a twelve-bar verse or chorus for a new song by using just a “Am-G” flamenco vamp.

Here is how Michael Jackson did it to create the chorus progression to his 1984 hit *Beat It*.

Am ///	G ///	Am ///	G ///
Am ///	G ///	Am ///	G ///
Am ///	G ///	Am ///	G ///

Folk Progressions

Folk music originates among the common people of a region or nation and is passed on through the generations in the oral tradition. As a result, many traditional folk songs have no known author. The influence of singer/songwriters such as Woodie Guthrie, Pete Seger, and Bob Dylan expanded the folk music genre to include both traditional and original compositions during the folk boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The most common change in folk music is the “I-V” progression that is comprised of two of the three primary chords. Pete Seeger responded to criticism that folk musicians use only three chords by saying “You have it all wrong. The best of them use only two.”

Many folk songs follow the AAA song form comprised of repeated verses that is well suited to storytelling. This is one of the oldest song forms dating back several hundred years to early court composers and musicians that adapted poems to music for royal functions. Several examples of hit songs written in the AAA song form include *By The Time I Get To Phoenix* (Glen Campbell—1967), *Gentle On My Mind* (Glen Campbell—1968), *Maggie May* (Rod Stewart—1971), and *The Wreck Of The Edmund Fitzgerald* (Gordon Lightfoot—1976). Verses are usually built in four-bar phrases of eight, twelve, sixteen, or twenty-four bars, but can be found in any length to accommodate the specific lyrics of a song. A typical AAA folk song form is shown below.

A			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////

Main Theme

A			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////

Main Theme Repeated

A			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////

Main Theme Repeated

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used the folk progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own folk progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the folk progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play each chord for two beats each. This is the main verse progression for songs such as the Beatles' 1964 *I Should Have Known Better*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Now, play the folk progression replacing the "V" with the "V7" chord quality listening carefully to the difference in sound this change makes. Notice that the "V7" choice makes a stronger resolution to the tonic than the "V" chord. In most

cases, the decision to use the “V” or “V7” chord is a matter of personal choice.

A-E	C-G	Eb-Bb	Gb-Db
Bb-F	Db-Ab	E-B	G-D
B-F#	D-A	F-C	Ab-Eb

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, practice playing the “C-G7” folk progression for the durations shown below. Although you will find many different chord durations, these are three common patterns.

C / G7 /			
C ///	G7 ///		
C ///	////	G7 ///	////

It’s always a good idea to listen to as many hit songs written using folk progressions as possible to truly understand the incredible versatility of these two primary chords. Examples of the first pattern (two beats per chord) include *I Should Have Known Better* verse (Beatles—1964), *Black And White* verse (Three Dog Night—1972), and *Theme From Cheers* verse (from “Cheers”—1982).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats per chord) include *Good Girls Don’t* chorus (Knack—1979), *Hurts So Good* chorus (John Cougar—1982), and *Something To Talk About* chorus (Bonnie Raitt—1991).

Examples of the third pattern (eight beats per chord) include *Tell Me* verse (Rolling Stones—1964) and *Summer Of ’69* verse (Bryan Adams—1985).

Eight-Bar Folk Progression

A typical eight-bar folk progression is shown below. Examples of this type of progression include *Hail! Hail! The Gang's All Here* (Traditional—N/A), *Skip To My Lou* (Traditional—1832), *Camptown Races* verse (Stephen Foster—1851), and *He's Got The Whole World In His Hand* chorus (Laurie London—1958). If you replace the “G” in the fourth bar with a “C” chord, you have the progression for *Mary Had A Little Lamb* (Children's Song—N/A), *London Bridge* (Traditional English—N/A), *Buffalo Gals* chorus (John Hodges—1848), and *If You Wanna Be Happy* verse (Jimmy Soul—1963). Substituting the “G7-C” chords for bar eight and you have the chorus to Dave Clark Five's 1965 hit *I Like It Like That*.

C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	C ///

Sixteen-Bar Folk Progression

A typical sixteen-bar folk progression is shown below. Examples of this type of progression include *Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home?* chorus (Hughie Cannon—1902), *Me And Bobby McGee* verse (Janis Joplin—1971), and *Margaritaville* verse (Jimmy Buffet—1977).

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
G7 ///	////	////	////
G7 ///	////	C ///	////

SUBSTITUTION

One important way songwriters have found to change the sound of a progression is to apply various chord substitutions (see “Appendix”).

The box below shows numerous examples of folk progression substitutions. These substitutions can usually be used for any folk progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Notice that the *Luck Be A Lady* example uses a tritone substitution (“Db7” for “G7”). The last six examples use a parallel minor/major substitution (“G” for “Gm”) creating the “C-Gm” sequence that is similar to the “C-C11” vamp. Keep in mind that the “Bb” and “G” chords can be substituted for each other.

C	G	<i>Lucky Man</i> verse (Emerson, Lake & Palmer—1970)
C	G7	<i>Shortnin’ Bread</i> verse (Traditional—N/A)
C	G7#5	<i>Happy Days Are Here Again</i> verse (Standard—1929), <i>Cabaret</i> verse (Broadway—1966), and <i>And All That Jazz</i> verse (Broadway—1973)
C	G11	<i>Catch A Falling Star</i> chorus (Perry Como—1958), <i>Yesterday’s Gone</i> verse (Chad & Jeremy—1964), <i>I’ll Cry Instead</i> verse (Beatles—1964), <i>Devil With A Blue Dress</i> verse (Mitch Ryder—1966), and <i>Let Your Love Flow</i> verse (Bellamy Brothers—1976)
C	Db7	<i>Luck Be A Lady</i> A section (from “Guys And Dolls”—1950)
Cadd 9	G7 sus	<i>Hello Again</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1981)
C	Bb— G	<i>The Leader Of The Pack</i> verse (Shangri-Las—1964)
C5	G5	<i>Janie’s Got A Gun</i> verse (Aerosmith—1990)
C7	G11	<i>Doctor Robert</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
C7(no 3)	G5	<i>A Change</i> chorus (Sheryl Crow—1996)
C	G	C <i>Ode To Joy</i> (Ludwig van Beethoven—1824)

C	G7	C	<p> <i>Entry Of The Gladiators/Thunder And Blazes</i> (Julius Fucik), <i>Deck The Hall</i> verse (Traditional Wales—N/A), <i>Three Blind Mice</i> verse (Anonymous—N/A), <i>Billy Boy</i> verse (Traditional English—N/A), <i>O Sole Mio</i> verse (Edoardo Di Capua—N/A), <i>Santa Lucia</i> verse (Teodoro Cottrau—N/A), <i>The Yellow Rose Of Texas</i> verse (Traditional—N/A), <i>Here Comes The Bride</i> (Traditional—N/A), <i>Frere Jacques</i> verse (Traditional French—N/A), <i>Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone</i> verse (Traditional English—N/A), <i>Row, Row, Row Your Boat</i> verse (Anonymous—N/A), <i>Pop Goes The Weasel</i> verse (Folk—1853), <i>The Marine's Hymn</i> verse (Traditional—1859), <i>Alouette</i> verse (Traditional French-Canadian—1879), <i>Clementine</i> verse/chorus (Folk—1885), <i>The Band Played On</i> verse (1895), <i>Mexican Hat Dance</i> verse (Traditional Mexican—1919), <i>When The Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin' Along</i> verse (Standard—1926), <i>Day-O</i> verse (Folk—1955), <i>Marianne</i> (Folk—1957), <i>Tom Dooley</i> chorus (Kingston Trio—1958), <i>Lemon Tree</i> verse (Peter, Paul & Mary—1962), <i>Limbo Rock</i> verse (Chubby Checker—1962), <i>Alley Cat</i> verse (Bent Fabric—1962), <i>Detroit City</i> verse (Bobby Bare—1963), <i>Danke Schoen</i> verse (Wayne Newton—1963), <i>When I Grow Up (To Be A Man)</i> verse (Beach Boys—1964), <i>Birds And The Bees</i> verse (Jewel Akens—1965), <i>Over And Over</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1965), <i>Winchester Cathedral</i> verse (New Vaudeville Band—1966), <i>Spanish Eyes</i> verse (Al Martino—1966), <i>Yellow Submarine</i> chorus (Beatles—1966), <i>Nashville Cats</i> chorus (Lovin' Spoonful—1966), <i>Rain On The Roof</i> verse (Lovin' Spoonful—1966), <i>Ruby Tuesday</i> chorus (Rolling Stones—1967), <i>Bottle Of Wine</i> chorus (Fireballs—1968), <i>Quinn The Eskimo</i> chorus (1968), <i>Down On The Corner</i> verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1968), <i>Honky Tonk Woman</i> chorus (Rolling Stones—1969), <i>Give Peace A Chance</i> chorus (Plastic Ono Band—1969), <i>Knock Three Times</i> verse (Tony Orlando & Dawn—1970), <i>Have You Ever Seen The Rain</i> verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1971), <i>The Air That I Breath</i> chorus (Holies—1974), <i>Fernando</i> chorus (Abba—1976), <i>Beautiful Noise</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1976), <i>Blue Bayou</i> verse (Linda Ronstadt—1977), <i>My Toot Toot</i> (Rockin' Sidney—1985), and <i>Achy Breaky Heart</i> verse/chorus (Billy Ray Cyrus—1992) </p>
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C	G— Bb	C	<i>I'm A Believer</i> verse (Monkees—1966)
C	G7 sus4	C	<i>Send In The Clowns</i> A section (Judy Collins—1977)
C- Cma7 -C6-C	G7 sus4- G7	C	<i>Have You Seen Her</i> verse (Chi-Lites—1971)
C-C7	G7	C	<i>Everybody's Talkin'</i> verse (Nilsson—1969)
C	G11	C	<i>Help Me Rhonda</i> verse (Beach Boys—1965)
C	G	Am	<i>Magic Man</i> chorus (Heart—1976)
C6/9	G11- G9	C6/ 9	<i>Singin' In The Rain</i> verse (Standard—1952)
C	Gm		<i>Marrakesh Express</i> verse (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1969), <i>Main Street</i> outro (Bob Seger—1977), and <i>The One That You Love</i> verse (Air Supply—1981)
C	Gm7		<i>Jezebel</i> verse (1950), <i>Good Vibrations</i> chorus (Beach Boys—1966), <i>Pleasant Valley Sunday</i> verse (Monkees—1967), and <i>Hey Bulldog</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
Cmaj 7	Gm9		<i>Love For Sale</i> chorus (Standard—1930)
C7	Gm7		<i>Ode To Billy Joe</i> verse (Bobbie Gentry—1967), <i>Every Night</i> verse (Paul McCartney—1970), and <i>Love Shack</i> verse (B-52's—1989)
C- Cadd 9	Gm/ Bb		<i>If You Could Read My Mind</i> verse (Gordon Lightfoot—1971)
C	Gm7	C	<i>Ferry Cross The Mersey</i> verse (Gerry & The Pacemakers—1964)

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “Am-Em,” and “Am-E” folk progression substitutions. The “Am-G” vamp is discussed in the separate “Flamenco Progressions” chapter of this book.

Am-Em Substitution

Replacing the “Am” for the “C” and the “Em” for the “G” chord (both relative minor/major substitutions) in the “C-G” folk progression in the key of C, creates the “Am-Em” progression in the key of Am. An example of this substitution is the opening chorus progression to the Grass Roots’ 1967 hit *Let’s Live For Today* shown below.

Am ///	Em ///	Am ///	Em ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. The *Take Five* example uses the rare 5/4 time.

Am	Em	<i>Diamond Girl</i> verse (Seals & Crofts—1973) and <i>Losing My Religion</i> verse (R.E.M—1991)
Am	Em7	<i>Take Five</i> verse (Dave Brubeck Quartet—1960) and <i>Things We Said Today</i> verse (Beatles—1964)
Am7	Em	<i>Money</i> verse (Pink Floyd—1973)
Am7	Em7	<i>Ain’t No Woman (Like The One I’ve Got)</i> verse (Four Tops—1973)
Am7-Am6	Em9-Em	<i>Happiness Is A Warm Gun</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
Am9	Em	<i>Hey You</i> verse (Pink Floyd—1979)

Am-E Substitution

If the “E” chord replaces the “Em” chord (parallel major/minor substitution) in the above-mentioned “Am-Em” substitution, the “Am-E” progression is created. An example of this substitution is the opening verse progression to the Rolling Stones’ 1966 hit *Paint It Black* shown below.

Am ///	////	E7 ///	////
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The box below shows other examples of this type of vamp. Notice that the *Havah Nagilah* example reverses the “Im-V” vamp.

Am	E		<i>Happy Together</i> outro (Turtles—1967), <i>The Man Who Sold The World</i> verse (David Bowie—1971), <i>Delilah</i> verse (verse—1968), <i>Vehicle</i> verse (Ides Of March—1970), and <i>Love Story</i> verse (Andy Williams—1971)
Am	E7		<i>You’ve Got A Friend</i> verse (James Taylor—1971)
Am	E	Am	<i>Fur Elise</i> (Ludwig van Beethoven)
Am	E7	Am	<i>We Three Kings Of Orient Are</i> verse (John Hopkins—1857)
Am	E7	Am Am7	<i>Girl</i> verses (Beatles—1965)
Am7	E7	[D-C] Am7	<i>Witchy Woman</i> chorus (Eagles—1972)
	E7	Am-E7	<i>Havah Nagilah</i> (Jewish Traditional—N/A)

Below are three different songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of the “Am-E” sequence. All songwriters should be familiar with these chord progressions.

La Folia

The *La Folia* progression is named after the song of the same name that was first published in 1672. The progression is played in $\frac{3}{4}$ time with two lines of eight bars each as shown below.

Am //	E7 //	Am //	G //
C //	G //	Am //	E7 //
Am //	E7 //	Am //	G //
C //	G //	Am / E7	Am //

Summertime

The A section progression to George Gershwin's 1935 standard *Summertime* is shown below.

Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / //
Dm7 / F /	Dm7/A / Ao7 /	E/G# / B7 /	E7 / Bb9#11 /

Hotel California

The verse progression to the Eagles' 1977 hit *Hotel California* is shown below. You will want to try adding a chromatic descending "A-G#-G-F#-F-E-D-E" bass line to this progression.

Am / //	E7 / //	Gsus2 / //	D9 / //
F / //	C / //	Dm7 / //	E7 / //

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as "displaced" progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will find a table showing the two possible combinations of the folk progression in the key of C.

C-G (Folk Progression)	G-C (Displacement)
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The "G-C" displacement is an example of an authentic cadence. A cadence is a chord progression that moves to a harmonic close, point of rest, or sense of resolution. This "V-I" cadence is the strongest resolution in Western music. Songwriters will sometimes begin a verse, chorus, or bridge with a progression that begins with the "V" chord in order to differentiate and contrast it with a corresponding verse, cho-

rus, or bridge that starts with a “I” chord progression. An example of this type of displacement is the verse progression to Johnny Rivers’ 1964 hit *Memphis* as shown below.

G ///	////	////	////
G ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	////	////
G ///	////	////	C ///

The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. Notice the relative major/minor substitution in the *Don’t You Care* example.

G	C	<i>Too Fat Polka</i> chorus (Polka—N/A), <i>I Walk The Line</i> verse (Johnny Cash—1956), <i>Bye Bye Love</i> verse (Everly Brothers—1957), <i>Wonderful World</i> bridge (Sam Cooke—1960), <i>Never On A Sunday</i> verse (Chordettes—1961), <i>Turn, Turn, Turn</i> verse (Byrds—1965), <i>Help Me Rhonda</i> chorus (Beach Boys—1965), <i>Working In A Coal Mine</i> verse (1966), <i>White Rabbit</i> bridge (Jefferson Airplane—1967), and <i>Whatever Gets You Thru The Night</i> bridge (John Lennon—1974)
G7	C	<i>Honky Cat</i> verse (Elton John—1972)
G7	Cmaj7	<i>Anything You Can Do</i> A section (from “Annie Get Your Gun”—1946)
G7	C7	<i>Dream Baby (How Long Must I Dream)</i> verse (Roy Orbison—1962)
G	C/E-G/D-C	<i>All I Need Is A Miracle</i> chorus (Mike & The Mechanics—1986)
G	C	G <i>Holly Holy</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1969)
Gm9	Cmaj7	<i>Don’t You Care</i> verse (Buckingham’s—1967)

SONGWRITER'S SONGBOOK

Let's take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Below is an example of how I used a folk progression substitution to reharmonize another songwriter's tune.

The eight-bar A section progressions to George Gershwin's 1935 standard *Summertime* from the Broadway musical "Porgy And Bess" and my reharmonization are shown below. Comparing these two progressions, you will notice that I used different embellishments, spread the "Im-V" sequence over two bars, and added a different turnaround for the last two bars.

Original Progression

Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 ///
Dm7 / F /	Dm7/A / Aø7 /	E/G# / B7 /	E7 / Bb9#11 /

Substitute Progression

Am9 ///	E11 ///	Am9 ///	E11 ///
Dm9 ///	G13 ///	Bm11 ///	Bb7b5 ///

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used folk progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own folk progressions.

(1) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for your new song using the "C-G7-C" folk progression in the key of C.

Here's how it was done to create the progression to the traditional English song *London Bridge* and the chorus progression to John Hodges' 1848 *Buffalo Gals*.

C ///	////	G7 ///	C ///
C ///	////	G7 ///	C ///

Here is how Frankie Ford did it to create the verse and chorus progression to his 1959 hit *Sea Cruise*.

C ///	////	////	////
G7 ///	////	C ///	////

(2) Using relative minor substitutions, transform the typical eight-bar folk progression in the key of C shown below into a minor progression in the key of Am.

C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	C ///

Here's how I did it.

Am ///	////	E7 ///	////
Am ///	////	E7 ///	Am ///

Now, try embellishing and adding substitutions to your minor progression.

Here's how I did it using the descending minor cliché, "IIm-V" for "V," and tritone substitutions.

Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /	Bm7 / E7 /	Bm7 / E7 /
Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /	F7 / E7 /	Am ///

Try playing the above substitutions to a song such as *He's Got The Whole World In His Hand* chorus (Laurie London—1958).

(3) Another way to building an eight-bar verse or chorus for your new song is to change the duration of each chord in the typical eight-bar folk progression. Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for your new song in the key of C using this method.

Here is how the Rolling Stones did it to create the chorus progression to their 1969 hit *Honkey Tonk Women*.

C ///	G7 ///	C ///	///
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	///

Now, try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for your new song by cutting the duration of each chord in the typical sixteen-bar folk progression in half.

Here is how Billy Ray Cyrus did it to create the verse and chorus progression to his 1992 hit *Achy Breaky Heart* (aka *Don't Tell My Heart*).

C ///	///	///	G ///
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G ///	///	///	C ///
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(4) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for your new song using the “G-C” folk displacement in the key of C.

Here is how the Rolling Stones did it to create the chorus progression to their 1971 hit *Brown Sugar*. The contrasting verse progression begins with the “C” (“I”) chord.

G ///	///	C ///	///
G ///	///	C ///	///

(5) Try building a sixteen-bar verse or chorus for your new song using the “C-G7-C” folk progression in the key of C.

Here’s how it was done to create the progression to the anonymous *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Notice that this song is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

C //	///	///	///
C //	///	///	///
C //	///	///	///
G7 //	///	C //	///

Here’s how it was done to create the progression to the traditional English song *Oh Where Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?* Notice that

this song repeats the same eight bar sequence to build a sixteen-bar progression.

C //	///	G7 //	///
G7 //	///	C //	///
C //	///	G7 //	///
G7 //	///	C //	///

Here's how I did it using the typical sixteen-bar folk progression.

C ///	///	///	///
C ///	///	G7 ///	///
G7 ///	///	///	///
G7 ///	///	C ///	///

Don't forget that you can change the duration of one or more of the chords in the above example to create many new variations.

(6) Try substituting the doo-wop progression for the "C-G11-C" folk progression in a song such as *Help Me Rhonda* chorus (Beach Boys—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	G11 ///	C ///	///
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Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop Progression)

C / Am /	F / G7 /	C / Am /	F / G7 /
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(7) Try substituting the "C-G11" folk progression for the standard progression in a song such as *Do You Want To Dance* verse (Bette Midler—1973) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7b9 /
-----------	--------------

Substitute Progression (Folk Progression)

C ///	G11 ///
-------	---------

(8) A fun way to practice the craft of chord substitution is to add them to simple folk songs. Below you will find the original eight-bar progression to *Mary Had A Little Lamb* followed by three possible sets of chord substitutions. Notice that the chord progression for line one and two is the same. Be sure to check out Buddy Guy's 1968 blues version of this song. Try substituting the "Ebo7" for the "Am7" chord in the second substitute progression below. These substitutions also work well over similar more recent "C-F-C" folk progressions such as *The Air That I Breath* chorus (Hollies—1974).

Original Progression

C ///	////	G7 ///	C ///
C ///	////	G7 ///	C ///

Substitute Progression (II-V & Tritone Substitutions #1)

C ///	D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///
C ///	Ab7 ///	G7 ///	C ///

Substitute Progression (Chord Stream, Relative Minor, & IIm-V Substitutions #2)

Cmaj7 / Dm7 /	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///
Cmaj7 / Dm7 /	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///

Substitute Progression (Backcycled & Tritone Substitutions #3)

F#m7b5 / Fm6 /	Em7 / A7 /	Ab7b5 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///
F#m7b5 / Fm6 /	Em7 / A7 /	Ab7b5 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///

Here's how Paul McCartney did it to create his 1971 version of *Mary Had A Little Lamb*.

C ///	// C7 /	F / Em7 Dm7	C ///
F / Em /	A7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /	C ///

(9) Try substituting the standard progression for the “C-G7-C” folk progression in a song such as *Alouette* verse (Traditional French-Canadian—1879) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	G7 / C /
-------	----------

Substitute Progression (Standard Progression)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 G7 C /
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(10) Try substituting the “Am-F-G-Am” progression for the “Am-E7-Am” folk substitution in a song such as *We Three Kings Of Orient Are* verse (John Hopkins—1857) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am //	///	E7 //	Am //
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Substitute Progression (Mediant, Parallel Minor, & Relative Major Substitutions)

Am //	F //	G //	Am //
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Introductions

Introductions (or intros) occur at the beginning of a song and are typically four or eight bars in length. Introductions are essentially a preview that establishes the tempo, mood, and key of a song.

In this chapter, you will explore a dozen ways the world's best songwriters have created introductions for their hit songs. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own introductions.

BEGINNING CHORD

The simplest way to create an introduction is to play several bars of the beginning chord of the ensuing verse progression, usually the tonic (“I” or “Im”) chord. On the Beatles’ 1965 hit *Yesterday*, the two-bar “F” (“I”) chord introduction leads to the beginning “F” chord of the opening verse. This created a simple yet instantly recognizable introduction. This technique was also used on Otis Redding’s 1968 hit *(Sittin’ On) The Dock Of The Bay* where the “G” (“I”) chord is played for four bars leading to the beginning “G” (“I”) chord of the opening verse progression as shown below. This example also adds sea sound effects to help establish the mood of the song.

G ///	///	///	/// [to G]
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Del Shannon's 1961 hit *Runaway* is an example of this approach applied to a minor key song as shown below.

Am ///	////	////	//// [to Am]
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RESTATE SONG SECTION

The most common method of creating an introduction is to restate, in whole or part, the chord progression of the verse, chorus, bridge, or turnaround section of a song without the melody. Blues songs, and rock and roll songs based on blues progressions, typically play an entire twelve-bar sequence without vocals as the introduction. One of the most common approaches is to restate the last four bars of the chorus as an introduction. Below are ten examples of introductions created in this manner.

Substitute

Restating the main chorus progression created the introduction to the Who's 1966 hit *Substitute* as shown below.

C / G/C /	F/C / C /	C / G/C /	F/C / C / [to C]
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Michelle

Restating the last part of the bridge progression created the introduction to the Beatles' 1966 hit *Michelle* as shown below.

Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /	Fmaj7 ///	E /// [to A]
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Something

Restating the one-bar turnaround created the introduction to the Beatles' 1969 hit *Something* as shown below.

F / Eb G/D	[to C]
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Let It Be

Restating the first four bars of the verse created the introduction to the Beatles' 1970 hit *Let It Be* shown below.

C / G /	Am [G] F /	C / G /	F C/E G/D C [toC]
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Stairway To Heaven

Restating the four-bar opening verse progression created the introduction to Led Zeppelin's 1972 *Stairway To Heaven* as shown below. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame lists this song as the greatest rock and roll tune of all time.

Am / Am9/G# /	C/G / D/F# /	Fmaj7 ///	G Am // [to Am]
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Let It Ride

Restating the four-bar opening chorus progression created the introduction to Bachman-Turner-Overdrive's 1974 hit *Let It Ride* as shown below.

F/C / C /	G / Am7 /	Dm7 ///	Am7 /// [to F/C]
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Start Me Up

Restating the four-bar verse progression created the introduction to the Rolling Stones' 1981 hit *Start Me Up* as shown below.

G C/G //	G C/G //	F F6 F F6	F F6 F F6 [to G]
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Mr. Jones

Restating the eight-bar verse progression created the introduction to Counting Crows' 1993 *Mr. Jones* as shown below.

Am ///	F ///	Dm ///	G ///
Am ///	F ///	G ///	G /// [to Am]

You Were Meant For Me

Restating the four-bar verse progression created the introduction to Jewel's 1998 hit *You Were Meant For Me* as shown below.

Fsus2 ///	C6/E ///	F ///	Am /// [to Fsus2]
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Blues Introduction

A common way to create an introduction for a twelve-bar blues song is to simply "take it down from the fifth" (the last four bars) which means that you start from the "G" ("V") chord in the ninth bar creating the four-bar introduction shown below.

G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	///
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A variation of the above blues introduction is shown below. Keep in mind that you can always use the "C-Ab7-G7," "C-Gb7-G7" and "C-F7-Gb7-G7" half-step substitutions for the "C-G7" progression.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	/ [F7—Gb7] G7 /
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GUITAR RIFF

Another approach to restating a song section is to create an introduction by opening with the main reoccurring guitar riff. Examples of this approach are numerous in rock music and include the introductions to

Suzie-Q (Dale Hawkins—1957), *You Really Got Me* (Kinks—1964), *Oh, Pretty Woman* (Roy Orbison—1964), *Dance, Dance, Dance* (Beach Boys—1964), *All Day And All Of The Night* (Kinks—1965), *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction* (Rolling Stones—1965), *Ticket To Ride* (Beatles—1965), *Day Tripper* (Beatles—1966), *Sunshine Of Your Love* (Cream—1968), *I Heard It Through The Grape Vine* (Marvin Gaye—1968), *Whole Lotta Love* (Led Zeppelin—1970), *Aqualung* (Jethro Tull—1971), and *Smoke On The Water* (Deep Purple—1973).

VAMPS

Another easy way to create an introduction is to repeat a vamp until it is time to start the song. Below is a list of eight common vamps. The first four are major key while the last four are minor key. The separate “Pedal Point” chapter of this book has numerous vamp examples. Keep in mind that C11 = Bb/C, A11 = G/A, and Bm/A = D6/A.

Relative Minor Vamp

C ///	Am ///	C ///	Am ///
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Suspension Vamp

C ///	Csus4 ///	C ///	Csus4 ///
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Classic Rock Vamp

C ///	Bb ///	C ///	Bb ///
-------	--------	-------	--------

Pedal Point Vamp

C ///	C11 ///	C ///	C11 ///
-------	---------	-------	---------

Minor Rock Vamp

Am ///	D ///	Am ///	D ///
--------	-------	--------	-------

Chordal Shuffle Vamp

Am ///	Bm/A ///	Am ///	Bm/A ///
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Flamenco Vamp

Am ///	G ///	Am ///	G ///
--------	-------	--------	-------

Pedal Point Vamp

Am ///	A11 ///	Am ///	A11 ///
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Below are two examples of songs with vamp introductions.

('Til) I Kissed You

The four-bar relative minor vamp introduction to the Everly Brothers' 1959 hit *('Til) I Kissed You* is shown below.

C ///	Am ///	C ///	Am /// [to C]
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This Masquerade

The four-bar minor rock vamp introduction to George Benson's 1976 hit *This Masquerade* is shown below.

Am7 ///	D7 ///	Am7 ///	D7 /// [to Am]
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TURNAROUNDS

A quick way to create an introduction is to precede the opening tonic ("I") chord that usually begins a song with an appropriate turnaround. The separate "Turnarounds" chapter of this book includes numerous examples of turnarounds that can be used to create introductions. This type of introduction is used primarily in jazz/standards and ballads. Below are a dozen examples of common introductions created in this

manner. The number of possible endings that can be created in this manner is virtually endless. Keep in mind that repeating these examples can create eight bar introductions. Also, you can play each chord for only two beats and repeat the turnaround to create a four bar introduction.

Circle Turnaround

Em7 ///	A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]
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Circle Turnaround (Tritone Substitution)

Bb7 ///	Eb7 ///	Ab7 ///	Db7 /// [to C]
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Coltrane Turnaround

Cmaj7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 /// [to C]
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Diminished Cliché Turnaround

C ///	C#o7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]
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Doo-Wop Turnaround

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G7 /// [to C]
-------	--------	-------	---------------

Jazz Turnaround

C ///	////	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]
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Jazz Turnaround (Tritone Substitution)

Cmaj7 ///	////	Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 /// [to C]
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Jazz Turnaround (Minor Key)

Am7 ///	////	Bm7b5 ///	E7 /// [to Am]
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Ragtime Turnaround

C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 /// [to C]
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Rock Ballad Turnaround

C ///	Em ///	F ///	G7 /// [to C]
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Standard Turnaround

Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]
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Standard Substitution Turnaround

Cmaj7 ///	Em7 / Ebm7 /	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]
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BACKCYCLED

Another method of creating an introduction is to backcycle (see “Appendix”) from the target tonic (“I”) beginning chord of the ensuing song. The example below walks you through the creation of an eight bar introduction using this method. Keep in mind that you can create introductions by adding (backcycling) more consecutive chords from the circle of fifths. Similarly, shorter introductions can be built by using fewer consecutive backcycled chords from the circle of fifths. Again, the number of possible introductions that can be created in this manner is almost endless. Also, you can play each chord for only two beats or repeat the sequence to create a longer introduction.

Original Progression

////	////	////	////
////	////	////	//// [to C]

Backcycled Progression

Ab ///	Db ///	F# ///	B ///
E ///	A ///	D ///	G /// [to C]

Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Change & Embellishment)

Abm7 ///	Db7 ///	F#m7 ///	B7 ///
Em7 ///	A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]

Substitute Progression (Tritone Substitution)

Dmaj7 ///	Gmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Fmaj7 ///
Bbmaj7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 /// [to C]

Substitute Progression #2 (Chord Quality Change & Tritone Substitution)

Abm7 ///	G7 ///	F#m7 ///	F7 ///
Em7 ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 /// [to C]

UNIQUE CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Using unique chord progressions different from other sections of the song can create introductions. An example of this type of progression is the instantly recognizable introduction to Creedence Clearwater Revival's 1969 hit *Proud Mary* shown below.

Bb / G /	Bb / G /	Bb / G F	Eb ///
C ///	///		

Four additional examples of this type of introduction are shown below.

Eight Days A Week

The four-bar pedal point chord progression introduction to the Beatles' 1965 hit *Eight Days A Week* is shown below.

Cadd9 ///	D/C ///	F6/C ///	Cadd9 ///
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In The Midnight Hour

The six-bar chord progression introduction to Wilson Pickett's 1965 hit *In The Midnight Hour* is shown below.

Bb ///	G ///	F ///	Eb ///
C / F /	C / F /		

Morning Has Broken

The seven-bar chord progression introduction to Cat Stevens' 1972 hit *Morning Has Broken* is shown below.

D //	G //	A //	F# //
Bm //	G7 //	C //	F //
C //			

Deacon Blues

The six-bar chord progression introduction to Steely Dan's 1978 hit *Deacon Blues* is shown below.

Cmaj7 / Bm7#5 /	Bbmaj7 / Am7#5 /	Dmaj7 / C#m7#5 /	Cmaj7 / Bm7#5 /
Ebmaj7 //	E7#9 /// [to G6]		

VOCAL INTRODUCTIONS

Separate vocal introductions that are distinctive and different from the other song sections are now clichéd but were popular in the days of early rock and roll. The Beatles, especially in their earlier songs, made effective use of unique vocal intros. The 4 Seasons also employed these vocal intros in many of their early string of hits. An example of this type of vocal introduction is the five-bar chord progression to *Run-around Sue* (Dion—1961) shown below.

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G ///
G ///			

Other examples of this type of introduction include *Shut Down* (Beach Boys—1963), *Leader Of The Pack* (Shangri-Las—1964), *Do You Want To Know A Secret* (Beatles—1964), *If I Fell* (Beatles—1964), *P.S. I Love You* (Beatles—1964), *Dawn (Go Away)* (4 Seasons—1964), *Bad To Me* (Billy J. Kramer—1964), *Let's Hang On* (4 Seasons—1965), *Here, There And Everywhere* (Beatles—1966), *Song Sung Blue* (Neil Diamond—1972), and *American Pie* (Don McLean—1972).

A variation of the unique vocal introduction is the recitation that is similar to the above examples except that the lyrics are spoken as opposed to sung. An example of this type of introduction is the six-bar chord progression to the Contours 1962 hit *Do You Love Me?* shown below.

C ///	F ///	G7 ///	Am ///
G7 ///	////		

Other examples of this type of spoken introduction include *Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport* (Rolf Harris—1963), *Laugh At Me* (Sonny Bono—1965), and *Polk Salad Annie* (Tony Joe White—1969).

GUITAR SOLOS

Many rock and roll introductions consist of unique guitar solos. Chuck Berry, the guy that invented rock and roll guitar, created the guitar solo introduction in such songs as his *Maybellene* (1955), *Roll Over Beethoven* (1956), *Carol* (1958), *Johnny B. Good* (1958), *Back In The U.S.A.* (1959), and *The Promised Land* (covered by Elvis Presley—1974). The Beach Boys also employed the guitar solo intro on their *Surfin' U.S.A.* (1963) and *Fun, Fun, Fun* (1964). The Beatles used guitar solo intros on their *Revolution* (1968) and *Drive My Car* (1966). Steely Dan used them on their *Reelin' In The Years* (1973) and *Rikki Don't Lose That Number* (1974). More recently, Guns N' Roses opened their *Sweet Child O' Mine* (1987) with a guitar solo intro. For variations of the guitar solo approach, check out the trumpet/brass intro to *Got To Get You Into My Life* (Beatles—1976) and the solo clarinet intro to *When I'm Sixty Four* (Beatles—1967).

DRAMATIC OPENING CHORD

Some rock and roll introductions consist of a dramatic opening chord such as the crashing “D7sus4” (“V7sus4”) that begins *A Hard Day's Night* (Beatles—1964) or the “D+” (“V+”) triplets that start *School Day* (Chuck Berry—1957) and *No Particular Place To Go* (Chuck Berry—1964). Other examples of this technique include the “E7” (“V7”) triplet in *Rock And Roll Music* (Chuck Berry—1957), the opening “B9” (“V9”) chord of *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag* (James Brown—1965), the “E+7” (“V+7”) to kickoff *Oh! Darling* (Beatles—1969), the “C” (“I”) chord in *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window* (Beatles—1967), The staccato “D7#9” (“V7#9”) chord in *Spinning Wheel* (Blood, Sweat & Tears), and the “C7#9” chord (key of Am) in *Kid Charlemagne* (Steely Dan—1976). Another take on this approach is the bent and slightly distorted opening note on *Wild Thing*

(Troggs—1966) and the pioneering use of feedback opening *I Feel Fine* (Beatles—1964).

STOP-TIME

Stop-time is a musical device where the forward flow of the music stops while a singer or instrumentalist continues with the forward flow of the meter and tempo. This device is often repeated, creating the illusion of stopping and starting a song. Check out the use of stop-time on Scott Joplin's *The Ragtime Dance* and Jelly Roll Morton's *King Porter Stomp*. A well-known example of a stop-time introduction is that of *Rock Around The Clock* (Bill Haley—1955) that started the whole rock and roll frenzy. Other examples include *Blue Suede Shoes* (Carl Perkins—1956) and *Jailhouse Rock* (Elvis Presley—1957).

NO INTRODUCTION

Many songs do not have introductions. These songs simply jump immediately into the verse or, in some cases, the chorus. Several examples of the many songs without introductions that start right into the verse include *We Can Work It Out* (Beatles—1965), *Help Me Rhonda* (Beach Boys—1965), *Hey Jude* (Beatles—1968), *Penny Lane* (Beatles—1967), and *The Long And Winding Road* (Beatles—1970). A song beginning with the chorus is *Can't Buy Me Love* (Beatles—1964). Another twist on the no intro approach is to include a count in such as in *Yer Blues* (Beatles—1968) where Ringo is heard counting “two, three” leading directly into the verse. Classic examples of this type of intro include the *Good Lovin'* (Young Rascals—1966) “one, two, three,” and the *Wooly Bully* (Sam The Sham & The Pharaohs—1965) bilingual “uno, dos, one, two, tres, quarto” count off. A count in lets the musicians know when to start a song and how fast to play. Even Lawrence Welk, that champagne music bandleader from the 1950s,

was known for his count ins. Yet another approach to no intro is to begin with just a drumbeat. Several well-known examples of this type of drum intro include *Wipe Out* (Surfaris—1963), *Do It Again* (Steely Dan—1973), and *We Will Rock You* (Queen—1978).

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Below is an example of how I created an introduction for one of my songs.

The vamp introduction to my *Everyday* is shown below. This vamp is created by replacing the “Eb13” for the “Am” chord (chord quality change and tritone substitution) in the “Cmaj7-Am7” relative minor vamp. Another interesting substitution for the relative minor vamp is the “Cmaj7-Bm7#5” vamp that is based on a common tone substitution.

Cmaj7 ///	Eb13 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Eb13 ///
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A review of the more recent songs I've recorded shows that I have a strong preference towards restating a portion of the verse to create my introductions.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have created introductions for their songs, your assignment is to work through several exercises to get you started building your own introductions.

(1) Try building an introduction by restating the last four bars of the chorus progression to one of your favorite songs.

[to__]

Here's how I did it using the last four bars of the chorus to the Beach Boys' 1964 *Fun, Fun, Fun* that is comprised of a rock ballad and a rock ballad displacement progression. The Beach Boys' introduction was a guitar solo played over a twelve-bar blues progression.

C / Em /	F / G /	C / F /	Em / G / [to C]
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(2) Try building a four bar introduction for a song that opens on the "C" chord using a vamp.

[to C]			
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Here's how I did it.

C ///	Bb/G ///	C ///	Bb/G /// [to C]
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(3) Try building a four bar introduction for a song that opens on the "Am7" chord using a vamp.

[to Am7]			
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Here's how I did it.

Am7 ///	A11 ///	Am7 ///	A11 /// [to Am7]
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(4) Try building a four bar introduction for a song that opens on the "Am" chord using a descending minor cliché (see the separate "Pedal Point" chapter).

[to Am]			
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Here's how I did it.

Am ///	Am(M7) ///	Am7 ///	Am6 /// [to Am]
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(5) Referring to the separate chapter on "Turnarounds," find a turnaround and create a four-bar introduction with it. Keep in mind that

you can play each of the four turnaround chords for four beats or you can play each of the four turnaround chords for two beats and repeat it to create a four-bar introduction.

[to C]			
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Here's one that I did.

Cmaj7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 ///[to C]
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(6) Try building a backcycled introduction beginning with the “F#m7” chord leading to the opening “Dm7” chord.

[to Dm7]			
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Here's how I did it.

F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /[toDm7]
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(7) Try building a backcycled introduction beginning with the “Am7” chord leading to the opening “F” chord.

[to F]			
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Here's how I did it.

Am7 ///	D7 ///	Gm7 ///	C7 ///[to F]
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(8) Try building a backcycled introduction beginning with the “Abm7” chord leading to the opening “C” chord.

[to C]			
--------	--	--	--

Here is how I did it.

Abm7 / Db7b9 /	F#m7 / B7b9 /	Em7 / A7b9 /	Dm7 / G7b9 /[to C]
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Jazz Progressions

Jazz is a musical style that developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century from ragtime and blues that is sometimes referred to as America's classical music. It is characterized by solo and ensemble improvisation on basic tunes and chord progressions and, more recently has become a highly sophisticated harmonic idiom. The most common chord change in jazz music is the "IIm-V-I" progression. This progression is a three-chord cadence that follows circle of fifths movement. In the "IIm-V-I" cadence, the "IIm" and "V" chords create harmonic tension that is released by the "I" chord. Notice that the "IIm" and "V7" chords share two notes in common and can readily be substituted for each other. The jazz progression is similar to the "IIm-V-I-VIm" standard progression displacement, except that the "VIm" chord is omitted. Many performers will automatically add the "missing" VIm chord when playing the jazz progression. In jazz, the seventh is routinely added to any chord. The minor version of the jazz progression is the "Bm7b5-E7-Am" (in the key of Am) and is frequently used as a minor progression turnaround.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used the jazz progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, variation, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own jazz progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the jazz progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play the first two chords for four beats each and last chord for eight beats. This is the main verse progression for songs such as Albert Hammond's 1972 hit *It Never Rains In Southern California*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Also, try playing several of the progressions the way jazz musicians would by adding the seventh to each chord (i.e., Dm7-G7-Cmaj7). Generally, the use of either chord quality is a matter of personal taste.

Bm-E-A	Dm-G-C	Fm-Bb-Eb	Abm-Db-Gb
Cm-F-Bb	Ebm-Ab-Db	F#m-B-E	Am-D-G
Dbm-Gb-B	Em-A-D	Gm-C-F	Bbm-Eb-Ab

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, practice playing the “Dm7-G7-C” jazz progression chords for the durations shown below. The majority of the hit songs written with this progression have been created using just the two simple progression patterns below. As you can see, each chord is typically played for two, four, or eight beats.

Dm7 / G7 /	C ///		
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

You should listen to as many hit songs written using jazz progressions as possible to truly understand the potential of these chord changes. An example of the first pattern (two beats each for the first two chords and four beats for the last chord) is *I'd Really Love To See You Tonight* verse (England Dan & JohnFord Coley—1976).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats each for the first two chords and eight beats for the last chord) include *For Me And My Gal* verse (Standard—1917), *Night And Day* A section (Cole Porter—1932), *What A Difference A Day Makes* A section (Standard—1934), *Devil In Her Heart* verse (Beatles—1962), *Kind Of A Drag* verse (Buchinghams—1967), *Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon* chorus (Neil Diamond—1967), *Yester-me, Yester-you, Yesterday* verse (Stevie Wonder—1969), *Rose Garden* chorus (Lynn Anderson—1971), *It Never Rains In Southern California* verse/chorus (Albert Hammond—1972), *The Night Chicago Died* verse (Paper Lace—1974), and *Torn Between Two Lovers* verse (Mary MacGregor—1977).

Some jazz tunes are written using only “IIm-V-I” sequences such as the progression to Miles Davis’s 1953 *Tune Up* shown below. In this progression, the tonic chord of one “IIm-V-I” sequence becomes the “IIm” chord for the subsequent “IIm-V-I” progression descending by whole steps, using parallel major/minor substitutions that eventually return the song to the original key.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	///
Cm7 ///	F7 ///	Bbmaj7 ///	///
Bbm7 ///	Eb7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	///
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	///

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. The box below shows examples of jazz progression substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any jazz progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Remember that “Bb-G7” may substitute for the “G7” chord as in the *Help* example below. Now, play

each progression example with and without the substitutions listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make.

Dm	G7	C-Cmaj7-C6	<i>We Need A Little Christmas</i> B section (from “Mame”—1966)
Dm	G7	Cmaj7	<i>Cheek To Cheek</i> B section (Standard—1935)
Dm-Dm7	G7	C-C6-Cmaj7-C6	<i>For The Good Times</i> verse (Ray Price—1971)
Dm	Bb-G7	C7-C	<i>Help</i> chorus (Beatles—1965)
Dm7	G7	C6	<i>Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White</i> A section (Perez “Prez” Prado—1955)
Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	<i>I Get A Kick Out Of You</i> A section (Standard—1934) and <i>Angie Baby</i> chorus (Helen Reddy—1974)
Dm7	G7	C-Cmaj7-C7	<i>Everybody’s Talkin’</i> chorus (Nilsson—1969)
Dm7	G7b9	Cmaj7	<i>A Man And A Woman</i> A section (Standard—1966)
Dm7	G11	C-[F/C]-C	<i>Don’t Let Me Down</i> chorus (Beatles—1969)
Dm7	G11-G9	Cmaj7	<i>Welcome Back</i> verse (John Sebastian—1976)

VARIATION

Variations occur when you add chords to or subtract chords from a specific progression. In this section, we will look at the “Dm-C” and “Dm-G” variations of the jazz progression. Play through each progres-

sion example and thoroughly understand how the variation was created before moving on to the next progression.

Dm-C Variation

Omitting the “G” chord in the “Dm-G-C” jazz progression creates the “Dm-C” variation. An example of this type of variation is the verse progression to Glenn Campbell’s 1967 hit *By The Time I Get To Phoenix* shown in the first box below. The second box shows a possible chord substitution transforming the “Dm-C” to the “Dm-G-C” jazz progression. The last box shows another possible chord substitution transforming the “Dm-C” to the “Dm-G-C-Am” standard displacement. You will also want to try transforming the jazz progression and standard displacement into the “Dm-C” variation to give these progressions a new sound.

Original Progression

Dm ///	///	Cmaj7 ///	///
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Substitute Progression (Jazz Progression)

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	///
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Substitute Progression (Standard Displacement)

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation.

Dm	C	<i>Gimme Little Sign</i> chorus (Brenton Wood—1967), <i>Girl You’ll Be A Woman Soon</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1967), <i>Pushin’ Too Hard</i> verse (Seeds—1967), and <i>Time After Time</i> verse (Cyndi Lauper—1984)
Dm	C-Cmaj7	<i>These Eyes</i> verse (Guess Who—1969)
Dm	C(6/9)/E	<i>Horse With No Name</i> verse (America—1972)

Dm7	Cmaj7	<i>You've Made Me So Very Happy</i> verse (Blood, Sweat & Tears—1967), <i>Hello Its Me</i> verse (Todd Run-gren—1973), <i>I Just Want To Be Your Everything</i> verse (Andy Gibb—1977), and <i>Emotion</i> bridge (Samantha Sang—1978)
Dm9	Cmaj7	<i>Stormy</i> verse (Classics IV—1968)

Dm-G Variation

Omitting the “C” chord in the “Dm-G-C” jazz progression creates the “Dm-G” variation. This variation is an example of an imperfect cadence where the final “C” (“I”) chord is left off leaving the progression incomplete. The cadence is usually completed (resolved) in a later sequence. The “Dm-G” variation, that is also comprised of the last two chords of the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression, is one of the most frequently used progressions in all types of popular music.

Below are two examples of this variation. The first is from the world of rock and roll is the second from the world of jazz. The example from the world of rock and roll is the opening verse progression to the Beach Boy's 1964 hit *I Get Around* shown below.

Dm7 / G7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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The example from the world of jazz is the A section progression to the 1956 Duke Ellington standard *Satin Doll* shown below.

Dm7 / G7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Em7 / A7 /
Am7 / D7 /	Abm7 / Db7 /	Cmaj7 ///	A7 ///

The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. Notice the use of pedal point on the *I Thank You* example below. Try substituting the harder edged “D7-G7” for the “Dm-G7” variation (parallel major/minor substitution).

Dm	G7	<i>Tea For Two</i> A section (Standard—1924), <i>Fascinating Rhythm</i> A section (Standard—1924), <i>As Time Goes By</i> A section (Standard—1931), <i>Little Saint Nick</i> verse (Beach Boys—1963), <i>I'm A Loser</i> chorus (Beatles—1964), <i>Shoop Shoop (It's In His Kiss)</i> verse (Betty Everett—1964), <i>It's My Life</i> verse (Animals—1965), <i>Society's Child</i> verse (Janis Ian—1967), <i>Little Green Apples</i> chorus (O.C. Smith—1968), <i>Reach Out In The Darkness</i> chorus (Friend & Lover—1968), <i>My Sweet Lord</i> verse (George Harrison—1970), <i>Family Affair</i> verse (Sly & The Family Stone—1971), <i>The Story In Your Eyes</i> verse (Moody Blues—1971), <i>Shower The People</i> chorus (James Taylor—1976), <i>Her Town Too</i> verse (James Taylor & J.D. Souther—1981), and <i>Morning Train (Nine To Five)</i> verse (Shenna Easton—1981)
Dm7	G	<i>Down By The River</i> verse (Neil Young—1969)
Dm7	G7-Dm7	<i>I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide</i> verse (ZZ Top—1979)
Dm7	G9	<i>See You In September</i> verse (Tempos—1959)
Dm7	G/D	<i>I Thank You</i> verse (ZZ Top—1980)
Dm9	G	<i>Turn Your Love Around</i> verse (George Benson—1981)
Dm9	G13	<i>Speak Low</i> A/B sections (Standard—1943)
Dm-Dm(M7)- Dm7	G7	<i>Something I Dreamed Last Night</i> A section (Standard—1940) and <i>That Ole Devil Called Love</i> A section (Standard—1944)

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as “displaced” progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will

find a table showing the six possible combinations of the jazz progression in the key of C.

Dm-G-C	G-C-Dm	C-Dm-G
Dm-C-G	G-Dm-C	C-G-Dm

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “C-Dm-G,” “Dm-C-G,” and “C-G-Dm” jazz progression displacements. As you did with the variations, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how the displacement was created before moving on to the next progression.

C-Dm-G Displacement

Moving the “C” chord to the first position in the “Dm-G-C” jazz progression creates the “C-Dm-G” displacement. This progression has been around for a long time. For example, the “C-Dm-G-C” sequence was used by J.S. Bach (1685-1750) to create his first prelude to *The Well Tempered Clavier*.

A more recent example of this type of displacement is the verse progression to the Beatles’ 1965 hit *Ticket To Ride* shown below.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	Dm ///	G ///

This progression uses duration to breath new life into this well-used chord sequence. Cleverly, the Beatles created a “C-Csus4” suspension through a repeated guitar riff played during the six bars of the “C” chord. Try substituting the “C-Csus4” vamp for each bar of “C” in the above progression. Listen to how it adds a feeling of movement in an otherwise monotonous progression.

The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. Folk and traditional country songs frequently use the “D” parallel major/minor substitution instead of the “Dm” as a walkup to the “G”

chord as shown in the last three examples. Several songs such as *I Got Rhythm* and *Try To Remember* had A sections that were originally written with the “I-IIIm-V” jazz progression, however, most performers now add the “missing” VIIm chord when playing these songs. You will want to try adding the “missing” chord when you encounter this displacement.

C	Dm	G	<i>Put A Little Love In Your Heart</i> chorus (Jackie DeShannon—1969)
C	Dm	G7	<i>Be My Baby</i> verse (Ronettes—1963)
C	Dm7	G7	<i>We're In The Money</i> Asection (from “The Gold Diggers”—1933), <i>Not Unusual</i> verse (Tom Jones—1965), <i>It's Kiss Him Goodbye</i> verse (Steam—1969), <i>Friends In Low Places</i> chorus (Garth Brooks—1990)
C	Dm7	G11	<i>Groovin'</i> verse (Young Rascals—1967)
C	Dm7	G11-G7	<i>To All The Girls I've Loved Before</i> verse (Julio Iglesias & Willie Nelson—1984)
C	Dm7	Bb—G	<i>Rocky Mountain High</i> verse (John Denver—1973)
C6	Dm7	G11-G7	<i>Babe</i> verse (Styx—1979)

Cmaj7	Dm7	G7		<i>I'm In The Mood For Love</i> A section (Standard—1935), <i>It Might As Well Be Spring</i> A section (Standard—1945), <i>I Love Lucy</i> A section (from the TV series—1953), <i>Get Me To The Church On Time</i> A section (from "My Fair Lady"—1956), and <i>More Today Than Yesterday</i> verse (Spiral Staircase—1969)
Cmaj7	Dm9	G13		<i>Tell Her No</i> verse (Zombies—1965)
C-C6-Cmaj7-C	Dm7	G9		<i>Somethin' Stupid</i> verse (Nancy & Frank Sinatra—1967)
C-C6-Cmaj7-C6	Dm7	G7		<i>It Must Be Him</i> verse (Vikki Carr—1967)
C-Cmaj7	Dm7	G7		<i>Summer Wind</i> A section (Standard—1965) and <i>Lazy Day</i> chorus (Spanky And Our Gang—1967)
C	Dm	G	C	<i>Drag City</i> verse (Jan & Dean—1963) and <i>The Unicorn Song</i> chorus (Irish Rovers—1968)
C	Dm	G7	C	<i>Beautiful Dreamer</i> verse (Folk—1864), <i>Oh, Dem Golden Slippers</i> verse (Folk—1879), <i>The Band Played On</i> verse (Folk—1895), <i>El Paso</i> verse (Marty Robbins—1960), <i>Elusive Butterfly</i> verse (Bob Lind—1966), <i>I Believe In Music</i> verse (Gallery—1972), and <i>I'm Sorry</i> verse (John Denver—1975)

C- Cmaj7- C6- Cmaj7	Dm- Dm(M7)- Dm7	G7	C	<i>Gentle On My Mind</i> verse (Glen Campbell—1968)
C	Dm	G7sus4	C	<i>Suspicion</i> verse (Terry Stafford—1964)
C	Dm7	G7	C	<i>Happy Holidays</i> verse (1941), <i>The Great Pretender</i> verse (Platters—1955), <i>It's Now Or Never</i> verse (Elvis Pres- ley—1960), <i>You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling</i> chorus (Righ- teous Brothers—1964) and <i>Theme From New York, New York</i> verse (Frank Sinatra—1980)
C	Dm7	G11	C	<i>Never Be The Same</i> chorus (Christopher Cross—1980)
C6	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	<i>The Christmas Song</i> verse (Standard—1944)
Cmaj7	Dm7	G11	Cmaj7	<i>WKRP In Cincinnati</i> verse (from the TV series—1978)
Cmaj7	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	<i>People</i> A section (Barbara Strei- sand—1964)
C-C+- C6-C7	Dm	G-G+	C	<i>Because</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1964)
C6	Dm7	G9	C6	<i>Mack The Knife</i> A section (Stan- dard—1928)
Cadd9- C- Cmaj7- C6-C	Dm7sus4 -Dm7-A/ D-Dm7	G7/B	Cadd9- C- Cmaj7- C6-C	<i>At Seventeen</i> verse (Janis Ian—1975)
C	D7	G7		<i>Oh, Susanna</i> verse (Folk—1849) and <i>All You Need Is Love</i> chorus (Beatles—1967)

C	D	G	C	<i>Salty Dog Blues</i> verse (Flatt & Scruggs—1950) and <i>Mr. Tambourine Man</i> verse (Byrds—1965)
C	D	G7	[F/C]-C	<i>Words</i> verse (Bee Gees—1968)
C	D7	G7	C	<i>(I'm A) Yankee Doodle Dandy</i> chorus (Standard—1904), <i>By The Light On The Silvery Moon</i> verse (Standard—1909), <i>Second Hand Rose</i> verse (Standard—1921), <i>Ma (He's Makin' Eyes At Me)</i> verse (Standard—1921), <i>Toot, Toot, Tootsie (Good-Bye)</i> A section (Standard—1922), <i>Yes, We Have No Bananas</i> verse (Standard—1923), <i>I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover</i> verse (Standard—1927), <i>Hey, Good Lookin'</i> A section (Hank Williams—1951), <i>Love Me Tender [Aura Lee]</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1956), and <i>Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days Of Summer</i> verse (Nat King Cole—1963)

Below are two different songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of this type of jazz progression displacement. Both examples feature a parallel major/minor substitution for the “Dm” chord.

Take The ‘A’ Train

The A section to Duke Ellington’s 1941 *Take The ‘A’ Train* is shown below.

Cmaj7 ///	////	D7#11 ///	////
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

The Girl From Ipanema

Another example of this displacement is the A section to Stan Getz & Astrud Gilberto's 1964 hit *The Girl From Ipanema* shown below. Notice the use of the tritone substitution for "G" chord in bar eight creating a more interesting turnaround.

C6/9 ///	///	D9 ///	///
Dm9 ///	Db7b5 ///	C6/9 ///	Db7b5 ///

Dm-C-G Displacements

Reversing the order of the "C" and "G" chords in the "Dm-G-C" jazz progression creates the "Dm-C-G" displacement. An example this displacement is the main verse progression to the Four Tops' 1966 hit *Reach Out, I'll Be There* shown below.

Dm / C / E /	G ///	Dm / C / E /	G ///
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Another example of this type of displacement is the "Dm7-Cmaj7-G11" bridge progression to Samantha Sang's 1978 hit *Emotion*.

C-G-Dm Displacements

Reversing the order of the chords in the "Dm-G-C" jazz progression creates the "Dm-C-G" displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Bob Dylan's 1973 hit *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* shown below.

C / G /	Dm7 ///	C / G /	F ///
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Another example of this type of displacement is the "Cadd9-G6-Dm7" verse progression to the Pretenders' 1983 hit *Back On The Chain Gang*.

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Below is an example of how I used the jazz progression write a new song.

The eight-bar bridge to my *Say The Words* is shown below. Here I fashioned a bridge using "IIm-V" cycles. The lyrics are as follows: "And when I reach the last brick in the road, I still want to be here with you."

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Em7 ///	A7 ///
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	G7 ///

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used jazz progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own jazz progressions.

(1) Transform the jazz progression shown below into an ascending "A-B-C" bass line progression using inversions.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////
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Here's how I did it.

Dm7/A ///	G7/B ///	Cmaj7 ///	////
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(2) Transform the jazz progression shown below into a descending "A-G-E" bass line progression using inversions.

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////
---------	--------	-----------	------

Here's how I did it.

Dm7/A ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7/E ///	////
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(3) Transform the jazz progression shown below into a tonic pedal point progression. (Hint: All the chords in the progression should have the “C” as their bass note.)

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	////
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Here's how I did it.

Dm7/C ///	G7/C ///	Cmaj7 ///	////
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(4) Try substituting the eight progressions shown below for the jazz progression in a song such as *Night And Day* A section (Cole Porter—1932). The “Ab7” for the “D7” chord substitution is called a tritone substitution that occurs when a dominant seventh chord is substituted by a dominant seventh chord that is a flatted fifth (three whole steps) away. The tritone substitution is often used to change the bass line movement from a cyclical to a descending chromatic bass line.

Original Progression

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////
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Substitute Progression (Parallel Major/Minor Substitution #1)

D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////
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Substitute Progression (Tritone Substitution #2)

Ab7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	////
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Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Change & Embellishment #3)

Abmaj7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
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Substitute Progression (Relative Minor Substitution #4)

Fm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
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Substitute Progression (Tritone and IIm-V Substitutions #5)

Abmaj7 ///	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
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Substitute Progression (Common Tone Substitution & Inversion #6)

Ebo7 ///	G7/D ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
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Substitute Progression (Tritone Substitution #7)

Dm7 ///	Db7b5 ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
---------	-----------	-----------	--------

Substitute Progression (Diminished Substitution #8)

Dm7 ///	G#o7/D ///	Cmaj7 ///	C6 ///
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(5) Try substituting the five progressions shown below for the jazz progression in a song such as the *It Never Rains In Southern California* (Albert Hammond—1972). Notice how well the melody fits in these more complex progressions. Remember that the more complex progressions can also be simplified in the same manner.

Original Progression

Dm ///	G ///	C ///	////
--------	-------	-------	------

Substitute Progression (Rock And Roll Displacement #1)

F ///	G ///	C ///	////
-------	-------	-------	------

Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop Displacement #2)

F ///	G ///	C ///	Am ///
-------	-------	-------	--------

Substitute Progression (Standard Progression Displacement #3)

Dm7 ///	G ///	C ///	Am7 ///
---------	-------	-------	---------

Substitute Progression (Diminished Cliché Displacement #4)

Dm7 ///	G ///	C ///	C#o7 ///
---------	-------	-------	----------

Substitute Progression (Folk Displacement #5)

G7 ///	////	C ///	////
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(6) Try substituting the descending minor cliché for the “Dm-G7” sequence in the jazz progression such as in *Everybody’s Talkin’* chorus (Nilsson—1969) as shown below.

Original Progression

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	C / Cmaj7 /	C7 ///
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Substitute Progression (Descending Minor Cliché)

Dm / Dm(M7) /	Dm7 / Dm6 /	C / Cmaj7 /	C7 ///
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Now try substituting the suspension vamp for the “G7” chord in the jazz progression as shown below.

Substitute Progression (Suspension Vamp)

Dm7 ///	G7sus4 / G7 /	C / Cmaj7 /	C7 ///
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(7) The eight-bar verse progression to *Ticket To Ride* (Beatles—1965) is shown below with one possible substitution. This jazz substitution also works with *My Romance* A section (Standard—1935) and *Pennies From Heaven* A section (Standard—1936). The Beatles used this jazz progression substitution to write the verse to *If I Fell* (1964).

Original Progression

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	Dm ///	G ///

Substitute Progression

Cmaj7 / Dm7 /	Em7 / Ebo7 /	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
Cmaj7 / Dm7 /	Em7 / Ebo7 /	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

(8) Try playing the three reharmonizations to the eight-bar verse section to Stephen Foster's 1849 *Oh Susanna*. The first two reharmonizations are examples of ragtime and standard progression substitutions. The last reharmonization is similar to the approach taken on James Taylor's 1970 cover of this tune. The reharmonization of simple folk songs is a great deal of fun and a good way to practice the art of chord substitution while creating new progressions.

Original Progression

C ///	////	D7 ///	G7 ///
C ///	////	D7 / G7 /	C ///

Substitute Progression (Ragtime Progression Substitution #1)

C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C ///

Substitute Progression (Standard Progression Substitution #2)

C ///	Am7 ///	D7/F# ///	G7 ///
C ///	Am7 ///	D7/F# / G7 /	C ///

Substitute Progression (Scalewise Substitution #3)

Cmaj7 / Dm7 /	Em7 / Fmaj7 /	Am7 / D7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Cmaj7 / Dm7 /	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 ///

(9) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “Dm-G-C” jazz progression.

Here is how the Beatles did it to create the chorus progression to their 1969 *Don't Let Me Down*.

Dm7 ///	// G11 /	C / [F/C] /	C ///
Dm7 ///	// G11 /	C / [F/C] /	C ///

Here is how Ray Price did it to create the first eight bars of the verse progression to his 1971 hit *For The Good Times*.

Dm / Dm7 /	G7 ///	C / C6 /	Cmaj7 / C6 /
Dm / Dm7 /	G7 ///	C / C6 /	// C7 //

(10) Try building a sixteen-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “Dm-C” jazz progression variation.

Here is how America did it to create the verse progression to their 1972 hit *Horse With No Name*. Notice the unique “C” embellishment.

Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///	Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///
Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///	Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///
Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///	Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///
Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///	Dm ///	C(6/9)/E ///

Minor Blues Progressions

Minor blues progressions are constructed in the same manner as major blues progressions (see separate “Blues Progressions” chapter of this book) except that the chords are in the minor as opposed to the major or dominant quality. The minor chord quality gives the progression a darker, more melancholy sound. Chicago’s 1950s West side guitar-based blues players like Otis Rush, Magic Sam, and Buddy Guy helped popularize minor blues progressions. You will find that these progressions translate well into pop and rock.

The first box below shows the natural minor scale notes. The second box shows the harmonized natural minor scale. As you can see, the qualities of the three blues progression chords in a harmonized natural minor scale are minor (“Im,” “IVm,” and “Vm”).

1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Im	Ilo	bIII	IVm	Vm	bVI	bVII
Am	Bo	C	Dm	Em	F	G

There are two other types of minor blues progressions. The first is the harmonic minor blues progression that is based on the harmonized harmonic minor scale where the “V” is a dominant quality and the other two blues progression chords are minor. The second is the melodic minor blues progression that is based on the harmonized melodic minor scale where only the “I” is a minor quality and the other two blues progression chords are dominant. Below is a table showing the chord quality differences between the three minor blues progression types.

Natural Minor	I = minor	IV = minor	V = minor
Harmonic Minor	I = minor	IV = minor	V = dominant
Melodic Minor	I = minor	IV = dominant	V = dominant

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used minor blues progressions to create hit songs. You will learn about the standard twelve-bar minor blues form and how chord substitutions can be used to vary the sound of this progression. You will also take a look at a number of songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of twelve-bar minor blues progressions. You will explore other minor blues forms including eight and sixteen bar progressions. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own minor blues progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the standard twelve-bar natural minor blues progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play each chord for four beats each. This is the main progression to several blues tunes including Otis Rush's 1958 *All Your Love (I Miss Loving)*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Now try playing this progression through a few favorite guitar blues keys such as Em and Am. This time, try playing the progression with all the chords as minor sevenths. Notice how the minor seventh embellishment gives the progression a mellower, jazzy sound.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Am	Am	Am	Am	Dm	Dm	Am	Am	Em	Dm	Am	Am
Bbm	Bbm	Bbm	Bbm	Ebm	Ebm	Bbm	Bbm	Fm	Ebm	Bbm	Bbm
Bm	Bm	Bm	Bm	Em	Em	Bm	Bm	F#m	Em	Bm	Bm

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cm	Cm	Cm	Cm	Fm	Fm	Cm	Cm	Gm	Fm	Cm	Cm
Dbm	Dbm	Dbm	Dbm	Gbm	Gbm	Dbm	Dbm	Abm	Gbm	Dbm	Dbm
Dm	Dm	Dm	Dm	Gm	Gm	Dm	Dm	Am	Gm	Dm	Dm
Ebm	Ebm	Ebm	Ebm	Abm	Abm	Ebm	Ebm	Bbm	Abm	Ebm	Ebm
Em	Em	Em	Em	Am	Am	Em	Em	Bm	Am	Em	Em
Fm	Fm	Fm	Fm	Bbm	Bbm	Fm	Fm	Cm	Bbm	Fm	Fm
Gbm	Gbm	Gbm	Gbm	Bm	Bm	Gbm	Gbm	Dbm	Bm	Gbm	Gbm
Gm	Gm	Gm	Gm	Cm	Cm	Gm	Gm	Dm	Cm	Gm	Gm
Abm	Abm	Abm	Abm	Dbm	Dbm	Abm	Abm	Ebm	Dbm	Abm	Abm

DURATION

Like its major key counterpart, by far the most common minor blues chord duration is twelve-bars. The chord duration for a standard twelve-bar natural minor blues progression is shown below.

Am ///	////	////	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
Em ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////

Several examples of the standard twelve-bar natural minor blues include *All Your Love (I Miss Loving)* verse (Otis Rush—1958), *I Lost Sight Of The World* (Bobby “Blue” Bland—1959), *Who’s Been Talkin’* (Howlin’Wolf—1960), *Killing Floor* verse (Jimi Hendrix—1967), and *Somehow Somewhere Someway* verse (Kenny Wayne Sheperd—1997).

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques dis-

cussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. Like major blues progressions, many chord substitutions are possible within the minor blues form. Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of minor blues substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can usually be used for any twelve-bar minor blues progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make. Notice that like major blues progressions, minor blues progressions can also have the quick change to the “IV” chord in the second bar. The first example shows the standard natural minor blues chord progression. Chords are divided equally within each bar while those in parentheses are played for one beat each.

Bar 1	Bar 2
Am	Am
Am	Dm
Am	D7
Am	Am—C
Am—E7	Am—E7
Am—Bm/A	Am—Bm/A
Am—Bm/A	C/A—Bm/A
Am—Am(M7)	Am7—Am6
Am7	Am7
Am7—Am6	Am7—Am6
Am7	Dm7
Am7	Bm7b5—E7
Am7	Am7—D/A
Am7—D6	Am7—D6
Am7—D9	Am7—D9

Bar 3	Bar 4
Am	Am
Am	A7
Am	Am—C
Am	Dbo7
Am—E7	Am—A7
Am—Bm/A	Am—Bm/A
Am—Bm/A	C/A—Bm/A
Am—Am(M7)	Am7—Am6
Am7	Am7
Am7	Am6
Am7—Am6	Am7—Am6
Am7	A7
Am7	Em7b5—A7
Am7—F7/A	Am6—F7/A
Am7	Am7—D/A
Am7—D6	Am7—D6
Am7—D9	Am7—D9
Bar 5	Bar 6
Dm	Dm
D7	D7
Dm—Em/D	Dm—Em/D
Dm—Em/D	Dm7—Em/D
Dm7	Dm7
Dm7—Dm6	Dm7—Dm6
Dm7—G6	Dm7—G6
Dm7—G9	Dm7—G9

Bar 5	Bar 6
Dm7—Em7	Dm7—F
Dm7—[F7 E7]	Dm7—E7
Dm7	E7
Dm7	Bm7b5—E7
Bar 7	Bar 8
Am	Am
Am	B7
Am—Bm/A	Am—Bm/A
Am—Bm/A	C/A—Bm/A
Am—Am(M7)	Am7—Am6
Am7	Am7
Am7—Am6	Am7—Am6
Am7—D6	Am7—D6
Am7—D9	Am7—D9
Am7	C7
Bar 9	Bar 10
Em	Dm
Em	Em
Em	D7
E7	E7
E7	Dm
E7	D7
Bm7	E7
Bm7b5	E7
B7	E7
B7—F7	E7—Bb7

Bar 9	Bar 10
F7	E7
Cm7—F7	Bm7b5—E7
Fmaj7	E7
F7	Am—E7
F7	B7—E7
Cmaj7	E7
G	F
Bar 11	Bar 12
Am	Am
Am	E7
Am	F7—E7
Am—Dm	Am—E7
Am—Dm	F—E7
Am7—D7/Gb	F7—E7
Am7—D7	Bm7b5—E7
Am7	Am7
Am7	E7#9
Am7	Bm7b5—E7
Am7—Gbm7b5	Bm7b5—E7
Am7—Ab7	Dm7—E7

The favored substitution for bars nine and ten is the “F7-E7” sequence that is created as shown in the box below.

Em-Em → E7-E7 (chord quality change) → Bm7b5-E7 (IIIm-V substitution) → B7-E7
(chord quality change) → F7-E7 (tritone substitution)

Now here's where it becomes really interesting. You can build your own minor blues progressions by mixing and matching the chord sequences from each box above. After that, you can add chord embellishments ("7," "9," "11," and "13"), altered (b5th, #5th, b9th, & #9th), and other substitutions to construct yet more minor blues progression variations. The possibilities are almost limitless.

SONGS BASED ON TWELVE-BAR MINOR BLUES PROGRESSIONS

Below are a number of different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the twelve-bar minor blues progression to create new songs. The musical genre of each performer is indicated after their name.

Highway 51 Blues

The chord progression to Curtis Jones' (blues) 1938 *Highway 51 Blues* is shown below. This is a melodic minor blues progression that features a quick change in bar two and chord quality changes in bars four and eight.

Am ///	D7 ///	Am ///	A7 ///
D7 ///	////	Am ///	A7 ///
D7 ///	////	Am ///	E7 ///

Why Don't You Do Right

The chord progression to Peggy Lee's (swing) 1941 *Why Don't You Do Right* is shown below. This song adds the "F7-E7-Am7" minor jazz progression substitution to the twelve-bar minor blues progression.

Am7 ///	F7 / E7 /	Am7 ///	F7 / E7 /
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Dm7 ///	F7 / E7 /	Am7 ///	F7 / E7 /
Dm7 / E7 /	Dm7 / E7 /	Am7 ///	F7 / E7 /

All Your Love

The verse progression to Magic Sam's (blues) 1957 *All Your Love* verse is shown below. This is another example of a melodic minor blues progression.

Am ///	////	////	////
D7 ///	////	Am ///	////
E9 ///	D9 ///	Am ///	/ F7 E7 /

All Your Love (I Miss Loving)

The chord progression to Otis Rush's (blues) 1958 *All Your Love (I Miss Loving)* is shown below. This is an example of a natural minor blues progression. If you change the chord quality of the "Em" to "E7" you create a harmonic minor blues progression.

Am ///	////	////	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
Em ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////

I Lost Sight Of The World

The chord progression to Bobby "Blue" Bland's (blues) 1959 *I Lost Sight Of The World* is shown below. This song uses inversions to add interest to this natural minor blues progression.

Am / Am/C /	Dm / Dm/F /	Am / Am/C /	Am / Am/C /
Dm / Dm/F /	Dm / Dm/F /	Am / Am/C /	Am / Am/C /
Em / Em/G /	Dm / Dm/F /	Am / Am/C /	Bb ///

Help Me

The chord progression to Sonny Boy Williamson's (blues) 1964 *Help Me* is shown below. This progression adapts the axe fall (see the separate "Blues Progressions" chapter) to a twelve-bar minor blues format.

Am / C D	Am / C D	Am / C D	Am / C D
Dm / F G	Dm / F G	Am / C D	Am / C D
E7 / G A	Dm / F G	Am / C D	Am / C D

Double Trouble

The chord progression to Otis Rush's 1958 *Double Trouble* is shown below. This is an example of a harmonic minor blues progression.

Am ///	////	////	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
E7 ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////

Mr. P.C.

The chord progression to John Coltrane's (jazz) 1960 *Mr. P.C.* is shown below. This is an example of a minor jazz blues tune. This song adds the "Am7-G" flamenco vamp substitution to the twelve-bar minor blues progression. Also, notice the "B7" substitution in bar eight that prepares for the change to the "E7" chord.

Am7 ///	////	Am7 / G /	Am7 ///
Dm7 ///	////	Am7 / G /	Am7 / B7 /
E7 ///	////	Am7 / G /	Am7 ///

Unit 7

The A section progression to Sam Jones' (jazz) 1962 *Unit 7* is shown below. This is a minor jazz blues song with a bridge. The A section is comprised of a twelve-bar minor blues progression while the B section (bridge) is a different eight bar sequence. This progression is essentially a series of "IIm-V-I" jazz progression substitutions ("Em7-A7-Dmaj7," "Dm7-G7-Cmaj7," "Cm7-F7-Bbmaj7," and "Bm7-E7-Am(M7)").

Am(M7) ///	////	Em7 ///	A7 ///
Dmaj7 ///	////	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
Cmaj7 ///	Cm7 / F7 /	Bbmaj7 ///	Bm7 / E7 /

Footprints

The chord progression to Wayne Shorter's (jazz) 1963 *Footprints* is shown below. This progression features several unique embellishments.

Am11 ///	////	////	////
Dm11 ///	////	Am11 ///	////
D7#11 / Db7(#9) /	B7(alt.) / E7(#5) /	Am11 ///	////

Black Magic Woman

The chord progression to Santana's (rock) 1970 hit cover of Peter Green's *Black Magic Woman* is shown below. This is an example of a minor blues progression displacement (rearranged chord orders). Like Otis Rush's 1958 *All Your Love (I Miss Loving)*, this song is also played in a rumba style.

Am7 ///	////	Em7 ///	////
Am7 ///	////	Dm7 ///	////
Am7 ///	Em7 ///	Am7 ///	////

The Thrill Is Gone

The chord progression to B.B. King's (blues) 1970 hit *The Thrill Is Gone* is shown below. This is the definitive minor blues song featuring the "Fmaj7-E7" substitution for bars nine and tenth. You will also want to try substituting the "F9-E9" or "F9-E7#9" embellishments for the "Fmaj7-E7" chords in bars nine and ten. This progression was used earlier to write John Coltrane's *Equinox* (1961).

Am ///	////	////	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
Fmaj7 ///	E7 ///	Am ///	////

Chains & Things

The chord progression to B.B. King's 1970 *Chains & Things* is shown below. This is an example of a melodic minor blues progression that adds the "Am-D/A" minor rock vamp substitution to the twelve-bar minor blues progression.

Am // D/A	Am // D/A	Am // D/A	Am // D/A
D7 ///	////	Am // D/A	Am // D/A
E7#9 ///	D7 ///	Am // D/A	Am D/A Am D/E

Hesitation Blues

The progression to Hot Tuna's (rock) 1970 cover of Rev. Gary Davis' 1957 *Hesitation Blues* is shown below. This progression combines both minor and major blues forms by modulating to the relative major in the fifth bar.

Am / E7 /	Am / E7 /	Am / E7 /	Am / C7 /
F ///	////	C ///	C ///
G7 ///	////	C C7 F Fm	C G7 //

Since I've Been Loving You

The chord progression to Led Zeppelin's (rock) 1970 *Since I've Been Loving You* is shown below. This song features a quick change in the second bar, a relative major to minor substitution in bar ten, and a jazz turnaround.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
Em ///	F / Dm /	Am/C E7/B AmC7	B7 / Bbmaj7 /

Ghetto Woman

The chord progression to B.B. King's 1971 *Ghetto Woman* is shown below. This is another example of a melodic minor blues progression

Am7 ///	////	////	////
D7 ///	////	Am7 ///	////
E7#9 ///	D7 ///	Am7 ///	////

Riders On The Storm

The verse progression to the Doors' (rock) 1971 hit *Riders On The Storm* is shown below. This song features two-bar vamp and a minor to relative major substitution for bars nine and ten. Try playing this song using the chord progression to *All Your Love (I Miss Loving)* presented above. Listen carefully to hear the difference the vamp substitution makes. You can also try substituting the "Am-Bm/A-C/A-Bm/A" for the "Am-D/A-Am7-D/A" vamp.

Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /	Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /
Dm / G/D /	Dm7 / G/D /	Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /
G ///	F ///	Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /

Long Train Runnin'

The verse progression to the Doobie Brothers' (rock) 1973 *Long Train Runnin'* is shown below. This song is basically *The Thrill Is Gone* progression with several clever chord substitutions added including that instantly recognizable "A11-Am7-A11" one-bar guitar riff in place of the "Am7" chord. For a new twist, try substituting the "Am-Bm/A-C/A-Bm/A" chordal shuffle for two bars of the original guitar riff.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
Dm7 ///	Dm6 ///	Am7 ///	////
F7 ///	Am7/E / E7 /	Am7 ///	////

A Fool For Your Stockings

The verse progression to ZZ Top's (rock) 1979 *A Fool For Your Stockings* is shown below. This progression features a unique two-bar pedal point riff and chord substitution for bars nine and ten.

Am7 / F/A /	Am7 / F/A /	Am7 / F/A /	Am7 / F/A /
Dm7 / C/D /	Dm7 / C/D /	Am7 / F/A /	Am7 / F/A /
C ///	Bm11/E / E11 /	Am7 / F/A /	Am7 / F/A /

Billie Jean

The chorus progression to Michael Jackson's (rock) 1983 hit *Billie Jean* is shown below. *Billie Jean* was from "Thriller," the best selling album of all time. This song features a two-bar chordal shuffle in place of the "Am" chords and omits the usual change to the "Em" chord in bar nine.

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
Dm7 ///	////	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
Dm7 ///	////	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /

As The Years Go Passing By

The verse progression to Gary Moore's 1990 *As The Years Go Passing By* is shown below. This song features a quick change in bar two and the "F-E7" half-step substitution in bar ten.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
E7 ///	F / E7 /	Am ///	////

Chitlins Con Carne

The chord progression to Stevie Ray Vaughan's (rock) 1991 cover of Kenny Burrell's 1963 *Chitlins Con Carne* is shown below. This progression features a dominant chord quality for the "Dm" chord while the other chords remain in a minor chord quality.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
D7 ///	////	Am7 ///	////
Em7 ///	D7 ///	Am7 ///	////

Country Man

The chord progression to Buddy Guy's (blues) 1993 *Country Man* is shown below. Eric Clapton calls Buddy Guy his favorite blues axe man. This is another example of a harmonic minor blues progression.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
Dm7 ///	////	Am7 ///	////
E7#9 ///	Dm7 ///	Am7 ///	////

Born With A Broken Heart

The chord progression to Kenny Wayne Sheperd's 1995 *Born With A Broken Heart* is shown below. This is another example of a melodic minor blues progression.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
D9 ///	////	Am7 ///	////
E7 ///	////	Am7 ///	////

EIGHT-BAR BLUES

The eight-bar minor blues progression is constructed in the same manner as the eight-bar major blues progressions (see separate “Blues Progressions” chapter) except that the chords are in the minor as opposed to the major or dominant quality. The turnaround continues to be comprised of the last two bars of the progression with many possible substitutions available. Due to its length, the eight-bar blues is another way to create an A section for a new AABA form song. Although there are a number of variations, the standard eight-bar minor blues progression is shown below.

Am ///	////	Dm ///	////
Am ///	Em ///	Am ///	////

Songs Based On Eight-Bar Minor Blues Progressions

Below are a number of different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the eight-bar minor blues progression to create new songs.

St. James Infirmary

The unique chord progression to the traditional *St. James Infirmary* is shown below. This is an example of an early eight-bar minor blues progression.

Am / E7 /	Am ///	Am / Dm /	E7 ///
Am / E7 /	Am / F7 /	Am / E7 /	Am ///

(What Did I Do To Be So) Black And Blue

The A section to Fats Waller and Harry Brook's 1929 *(What Did I Do To Be So) Black And Blue* is shown below. In this progression, bars two and three are reversed and the song modulates from minor to major.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	D7 ///
C / D \flat 7 /	G7 / A \flat 7 G7	C / F7 /	C ///

The House Of The Rising Sun

The unique chord progression to the Animals' (rock) 1964 hit *The House Of The Rising Sun* is shown below. This was a cover of Georgia Turner's 1937 *Rising Sun Blues*. This slow minor blues arrangement is essentially a repeated "Am-Dm-Am-E" progression dressed up with two relative major/minor substitutions ("C" for "Am" and "F" for "Dm") and a chord quality change ("D" for "Dm").

Am / C /	D / F /	Am / C /	E ///
Am / C /	D / F /	Am / E /	Am ///

Ain't No Sunshine

The verse progression to Bill Withers' (rock) 1971 hit *Ain't No Sunshine* is shown below. Here Bill Withers takes the standard twelve-bar har-

monic minor blues progression and omits bars five through eight, and adds the “Am-Em7-G” vamp to keep things moving.

Am7 / Em7 G	Am7 ///	Am7 / Em7 G	Am7 ///
E7#9 ///	Dm7 ///	Am7 / Em7 G	Am7 ///

Still Got The Blues

The verse progression to Gary Moore’s (rock) 1990 *Still Got The Blues* is shown below. This song is an example of a slow minor blues that follows circle of fifths movement (see the separate “Circle Progressions” chapter).

Dm7 / G11 /	Cmaj7 / Fmaj7 /	Bm7b5 / E7 /	Am Am/B Am/C /
Dm7 / G11 /	Cmaj7 / Fmaj7 /	Bm7b5 ///	E5 ///

Trouble Blues

The chord progression to Buddy Guy’s (blues) 1994 *Trouble Blues* is shown below. This is another example of a slow minor blues that substitutes the “D9” for the “Dm” chord in bar three (chord quality change and embellishment). Also, the “Dm” in bar four is replaced with the “F7” chord (relative major/minor substitutions).

Am ///	////	D9 ///	F7 ///
Am ///	E7 ///	F7 / E7 /	Am / E7 /

SIXTEEN-BAR BLUES

Blues progressions longer than twelve bars are referred to as extended-form blues. The sixteen-bar minor blues progression is similar to the twelve-bar minor blues progression except the first four bars of the “Am” (“Im”) chord are doubled in length to eight bars. Keep in mind that a repeated sixteen-bar minor blues progression creates a 32-bar

sequence readymade for your new song. Another way a sixteen-bar minor blues progression can be created is by doubling the standard eight-bar minor blues progression. The standard sixteen-bar minor blues progression is shown below.

Am ///	////	////	////
Am ///	////	////	////
Dm ///	////	Am ///	////
Em ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////

Songs Based On Sixteen-Bar Minor Blues Progressions

Below are a number of different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the sixteen-bar minor blues progression to create new songs.

St. Louis Blues

The unique third verse progression to W.C. Handy's (blues) 1914 *St. Louis Blues* is shown below. This is an example of an early sixteen-bar minor blues progression.

Am ///	Dm ///	E7 ///	////
E7 ///	////	Am ///	E7 ///
Am ///	Dm ///	E7 ///	////
E7 ///	////	Am / B7 /	E7 ///

Fever

The chord progression to Peggy Lee's (traditional pop) 1958 hit *Fever* is shown below. Although this song does not strictly follow the standard sixteen-bar minor blues form, it is generally considered to be a minor blues tune.

Am ///	////	////	////
Am ///	////	E7 ///	Am ///
Am ///	////	F6 ///	Am ///
Am ///	////	Am / E7 /	Am ///

Secret Agent Man

The verse progression to Johnny Rivers' (rock) 1966 hit *Secret Agent Man* is shown below. This is an example of a sixteen-bar minor blues progression displacement. Notice the similarity of this progression to the *Fever* progression above.

Am ///	////	////	////
Am ///	////	E7 ///	////
Am ///	////	Dm ///	////
Am ///	Dm ///	Am ///	////

Oh Pretty Woman

The verse progression to Gary Moore's 1990 cover of Albert King's (blues) *Oh Pretty Woman* is shown below. The Albert King version was a standard sixteen-bar natural minor blues as opposed to the harmonic natural minor blues progression used here. Moore's version also features a walk up in bar 14.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
Am7 ///	////	////	////
Dm7 ///	////	Am7 ///	////
E7#9 ///	// G7 G#7	Am7 ///	E7#9 ///

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Below are two examples of how I used minor blues progressions to write a new song and reharmonize an old one.

The Best Times

The twelve-bar minor blues progression to my *The Best Times* is shown below. This progression features the use of chordal shuffles. Bars nine and ten use a substitution similar to that found in *The Thrill Is Gone*. The lyrics to the first verse are in a typical AAB format as shown below.

I've seen a lot of bad, bad things had my share of good times too,
 I've seen a lot of bad, bad things had my share of good times too,
 But the best times baby were the times I spent with you.

Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /	Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /
Dm / G/D /	Dm7 / G/D /	Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /
Fmaj7 ///	E11 ///	Am / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /

The House Of The Rising Sun

My chord progression to my arrangement of *The House Of The Rising Sun* is shown below. Comparing this progression to the Animals' version presented earlier you will see that I changed the time from 12/8 to 4/4 and replaced the "C" with the "Am7" chord and the "D" with the "Bm7" chord (both relative minor/major substitutions).

Am7 ///	////	Bm7/A ///	Fmaj7/A ///
Am7 ///	E11 ///	Am7 ///	E11 ///
Am7 ///	////	Bm7/A ///	Fmaj7/A ///
Am7 ///	E11 ///	Am7 ///	E11 ///

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used minor blues progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own minor blues progressions. If most blues songs are major blues, then your next blues based hit should be a minor blues tune.

(1) Try building your own twelve-bar minor blues progression in the key of Am by mixing and matching chords from each of the substitution boxes presented earlier in this chapter.

Here's how I did it.

Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	Am7 ///	A7 ///
Dm7 ///	// E7 /	Am7 ///	// C7 //
Bm7 ///	E7 ///	Am7 / D7/Gb /	F7 / E7 /

(2) Try building a twelve-bar minor blues progression in the key of Am by adding "Bm7b5-E7-Am7" minor-key jazz progression substitutions.

Here's how I did it.

Am7 ///	Bm7b5 / E7 /	Am7 ///	Em7b5 / A7 /
Dm7 ///	Bm7b5 / E7 /	Am7 ///	Gm7 / C7b9 /
F7 ///	E7 ///	Am7 / Gbm7b5 /	Bm7b5 / E7 /

(3) Try building a twelve-bar minor blues progression in the key of Am by substituting the “Am-Am(M7)-Am7-Am6” descending minor cliché for two bars of the “Am” chord.

Here's how I did it. You may want to also try substituting the “Am-G-F-E7” flamenco progression in place of the descending minor cliché.

Am ///	Dm ///	Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /
Dm / Em /	Dm / F /	Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /
F7 ///	E7 ///	Am7 / Ab7 /	Dm7 / E7 /

(4) Try applying half-step substitutions to the standard twelve-bar minor blues progression in the key of Am. If you are not sure what a half-step substitution is, check the quick tutorial in the “Appendix” of this book.

Here's how I did it. In the blues, it's a common practice to precede the original chords with chords that are a half step higher. Be sure not to overuse it. This technique is best used sparingly.

Am7 ///	////	Am7 ///	///[D#m7]
Dm7 ///	///[Bbm7]	Am7 ///	///[Fm7]
Em7 ///	Dm7 ///	Am7 ///	////

(5) Try substituting the following vamps for two bars of the “Am” chord in a standard twelve-bar minor blues progression in a song such as *The Thrill Is Gone* (B.B. King—1970).

Am7 / Am6 /	Am7 / Am6 /
Am7 / D/A /	Am7 / D/A /
Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /
Am6 / Bm6 /	Am6 / Bm6 /
Am7 / D7 /	D11 / D7 /

Similarly, try substituting the “Dm7-Dm6” vamp for bars five and six in a minor blues progression with a quick change.

(6) Try playing the following substitutions over a twelve-bar major blues song such as *(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66* (Nat King Cole—1946).

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /
Dm / Em/D /	Dm7 / Em/D /	Am / Am(M7) /	Am7 / Am6 /
Fmaj7 ///	E7 ///	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /

(7) Try playing a minor blues song such as *The Thrill Is Gone* (B.B. King—1970) over a major blues progression as shown below.

C7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	////
--------	--------	--------	------

F7 ///	///	C7 ///	///
G7 ///	F7 ///	C7 ///	G7 ///

(8) Try building your own eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the standard eight-bar minor blues progression in the key of Am.

Here's how I did it. Try playing this progression over a standard eight-bar major blues song such as *How Long, How Long Blues* (Leroy Carr—1929).

Am7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	Dm7 ///
Am7 ///	Bm7 / E7 /	Am7 ///	E7 ///

(9) Try reharmonizing the chord progression to Fever (Peggy Lee—1958) that was discussed earlier by using chord substitutions.

Here is how I did it using chordal shuffles to keep things moving. You may also want to try using the descending minor cliché.

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	F7 / E7 /	Am / Bm/A /
Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	F7 / E7 /	Am / Bm/A /
Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	F7 / E7 /	Am / Bm/A /

(10) Try building your own twenty-four bar verse or chorus for a new song using the standard twenty-four bar blues progression in the

key of Am. (Hint: Replace the major chords in the standard twenty-four bar blues progression in the key of C with their respective relative minor chord substitutions.)

Here’s how I did it by using both chordal shuffles and IIm-V substitutions.

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
Dm / Em/D /	F/D / Em/D /	Dm / Em/D /	F/D / Em/D /
Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
Bm7 ///	E7 ///	Am7 ///	D7 ///
Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /	Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /

Try playing my substitutions over a twenty-four major blues song such as *She’s A Woman* verse (Beatles—1965) and *Smuggler’s Blues* (GlennFrey—1985).

One-Chord Progressions

One-chord progressions, as the name implies, use just one chord for an entire verse and/or chorus of a song. There are two types of one-chord progressions. Major one-chord progressions created with the “I” chord and minor one-chord progressions built from the “Im” chord. Although one-chord progressions are not common in mainstream music, you will find them in sixteenth note funk grooves. You will also find them in Bo Diddley and John Lee Hooker’s first hit songs that featured spoken lyrics over hypnotic grooves or boogie riffs. The lack of melody in these songs was a precursor to today’s rap styles. Pop/rock songwriters often add unique bass lines, guitar riffs, and driving rhythms to overcome the inevitable boredom of a single chord verse or chorus. Although these types of progressions will likely be of limited use in creating hit songs, knowledge of one-chord progressions will expand your understanding of the ultimate in harmonic minimalism.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the one-chord progression to write hit songs. You will learn how major and minor chords have been used to create this type of progression. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own one-chord progressions.

MAJOR PROGRESSIONS

Major one-chord progressions use just the “I” (tonic) chord for an entire verse and/or chorus section of a song. Grab your guitar or keyboard and play the sixteen-bar verse progression to Sonny and Cher’s

1967 hit *The Beat Goes On* shown below. This song relied on a repeated “C-Bb-G-Bb” bass line and hard driving rhythm to keep things moving. Now try playing the same sixteen bars but this time substitute a “C7-C11” progression (two beats each) for each bar of the “C7” chord. You quickly appreciate the value of even a small harmonic change to add interest to a verse or chorus progression.

C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////
C7 ///	////	////	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of one-chord progression.

C	<i>The Dirty Dozen</i> verse (Speckled Red—1929), <i>Baby Please Don't Go</i> verse (Big Joe Williams—1935), <i>Air Mail Special</i> A section (Charlie Christian—1941), <i>Seven Come Eleven</i> A section (Charlie Christian—1941), <i>Bo Diddley</i> verse (Bo Diddley—1955), <i>Maybellene</i> verse (Chuck Berry—1955), <i>Raunchy</i> verse (Bill Justis—1957), <i>California Sun</i> verse (Rivieras—1964), <i>Who Do You Love</i> verse (Sapphires—1964), <i>It's All Over Now</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1964), <i>Land Of A Thousand Dances</i> verse (Wilson Pickett—1966), <i>Working In The Coal Mine</i> chorus (Lee Dorsey—1966), <i>It Takes Two</i> verse (Marvin Gaye & Kim Weston—1967), <i>You Got To Me</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1967), <i>Fire</i> verse (Jimi Hendrix—1967), <i>Jumpin' Jack Flash</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1968), <i>Proud Mary</i> verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969), <i>Whole Lotta Love</i> verse (Led Zeppelin—1969), <i>Give Peace A Chance</i> verse (Plastic Ono Band—1969), <i>New Mother Nature</i> verse (Guess Who—1969), <i>Midnight Rider</i> verse (Gregg Allman—1974), <i>Black Dog</i> verse (Led Zeppelin—1972), <i>Black Friday</i> verse (Steely Dan—1975), <i>Walk This Way</i> verse (Aerosmith—1977), <i>Hot Legs</i> chorus (Rod Stewart—1978), <i>Don't Bring Me Down</i> verse (Electric Light Orchestra—1979), <i>Wild, Wild West</i> verse (Escape Club—1988), and <i>I'm The Only One</i> verse (Melissa Etheridge—1993)
C6	<i>Disco Lady</i> verse (Johnnie Taylor—1976)

C7	<i>Shake Your Hips</i> verse (Slim Harpo), <i>Little Sister</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1961), <i>I'm Talking About You</i> verse (Chuck Berry—1961), <i>Spoonful</i> verse (Howlin' Wolf—1962), <i>Wang Dang Doodle</i> verse (Howlin' Wolf—1962), <i>I Wanna Be Your Man</i> verse (Beatles—1964), <i>Dancing In The Street</i> verse (Martha & The Vandellas—1964), <i>Shotgun</i> verse (Jr. Walker & The All Stars—1965), <i>Stop, Stop, Stop</i> verse (Hollies—1966), <i>Over, Under, Sideways, Down</i> verse (Yardbirds—1966), <i>Foxy Lady</i> verse (Jimi Hendrix—1967), <i>I Just Want To Make Love To You</i> verse (Muddy Waters—1968), <i>Born On The Bayou</i> verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1968), <i>Mama Told Me Not To Come</i> verse (Three Dog Night—1970), <i>Rock On</i> verse (David Essex—1974), <i>Car Wash</i> verse (Rose Royce—1974), <i>Low Rider</i> verse (War—1975), and <i>Crossfire</i> verse/chorus (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1989)
C7#9	<i>Shining Star</i> verse (Earth, Wind & Fire—1975) and <i>Come On (Part III)</i> verse (Stevie Ray Vaughan—1985)
C9	<i>Cut The Cake</i> verse (Average White Band—1975)

MINOR PROGRESSIONS

Minor one-chord progressions use just the “Im” (tonic) chord for an entire verse and/or chorus section of a song. With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, play the sixteen-bar verse progression to Steely Dan's 1972 hit *Do It Again* shown below. This song relied on a hard driving Latin rhythm to avoid the monotony.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
Am7 ///	////	////	////
Am7 ///	////	////	////
Am7 ///	////	////	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of one-chord progression. Again, inversions are sometimes employed to add additional interest. In the *That's The Way (I Like It)* example below, the contrasting section moves to a “Dm7” one-chord progression.

Am	<i>Play With Fire</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1965), <i>Treat Her Like A Lady</i> verse (Cornelius Brothers & Sister Rose—1971), <i>School's Out</i> verse (Alice Cooper—1972), <i>Superstition</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1973), <i>Born In Mississippi Raised Up In Tennessee</i> verse (John Lee Hooker—1973), <i>Let It Ride</i> verse (Bachman-Turner Overdrive—1974), <i>Gotta Serve Somebody</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1979), and <i>I Shiver</i> verse (Robert Cray—1993)
Am(no3)	<i>Double Vision</i> verse (Foreigner—1978)
Am7	<i>I'm A Man</i> verse (Spencer Davis Group—1967), <i>In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida</i> verse (Iron Butterfly—1968), <i>Chain Of Fools</i> verse (Aretha Franklin—1968), <i>Respect Yourself</i> verse (The Staple Singers—1971), <i>Show Biz Kids</i> verse (Steely Dan—1973), <i>Saturday Night Special</i> verse (Lynyrd Skynyrd—1975), <i>That's The Way (I Like It)</i> chorus (KC & The Sunshine Band—1975), and <i>1040 Blues</i> verse (Robert Cray—1993)

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter's notebook. Below is an example of how I used the one-chord progression to write a new song.

The verse progression to my *Funky Love* is shown below. This is a guitar riff driven rock song written in the early 1970s. The song was more about groove than the "Here comes your funky love..." hook.

C7#9 ///	////	////	////
C7#9 ///	////	////	////

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used one-chord progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own one-chord progressions.

(1) Try substituting the minor chordal shuffle for the minor one-chord progression such as *Do It Again* verse (Steely Dan—1972) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am7 ///	////
---------	------

Substitute Progression (Minor Chordal Shuffle)

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
-------------	--------------

(2) Try substituting the suspension vamp for the major one-chord progression in a song such as *Proud Mary* verse (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	////
-------	------

Substitute Progression (Suspension Vamps)

C / Csus4 /	C / Csus4 /
-------------	-------------

(3) Try substituting the pedal point vamp for the major one-chord progression in a song such as *Land Of A Thousand Dances* verse (Wilson Pickett—1966) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	////
-------	------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point Vamp)

C / C11 /	C / C11 /
-----------	-----------

(4) Try substituting the folk progression for the major one-chord progression in a song such as *I Wanna Be Your Man* verse (Beatles—1964) as shown below.

Original Progression

C7 ///	////
--------	------

Substitute Progression (Folk Progression)

C7 / Gm7 /	C7 / Gm7 /
------------	------------

(5) Try substituting the minor rock vamp for the minor one-chord progression in a song such as *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* verse (Iron Butterfly—1968) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am7 ///	////
---------	------

Substitute Progression (Minor Rock Vamp)

Am7 / D7 /	D11 / D7 /
------------	------------

(6) Try substituting the pedal point vamp for the minor one-chord progression in a song such as *Let It Ride* verse (Bachman-Turner Overdrive—1974) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am ///	////
--------	------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point Vamp)

Am ///	A11 ///
--------	---------

(7) Try substituting the minor one-chord progression for the minor rock vamp in a song such as *Evil Ways* verse (Santana—1970) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am / D /	Am / D /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Minor One-Chord)

Am7 ///	////
---------	------

(8) Try substituting the relative minor chord for the major one-chord progression in a song such as *Mama Told Me Not To Come* verse (Three Dog Night—1970) as shown below.

Original Progression

C7 ///	////
--------	------

Substitute Progression (Minor One-Chord)

Am7 ///	////
---------	------

(9) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song by using just the one “C” chord.

Here is how Creedence Clearwater Revival did it to create the verse progression to their 1969 hit *Proud Mary*.

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	////	////

(10) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song by using just the one “Am7” chord.

Here is how the Spencer Davis Group did it to create the verse progression to their 1967 hit *I'm A Man*.

Am7 ///	////	////	////
Am7 ///	////	////	////

The difficulty of writing one-chord verse or chorus songs is not creating the progression, but on what other things you can do to overcome inevitable harmonic boredom.

Pedal Points

A pedal point (also referred to as pedal tone or organ pedal) is a note, usually in the bass, that is sustained through a series of chord changes. Pedal points, named for the low notes sustained by organ pedals, create tension as other chords are played over them. If the pedal point is the root note of the “I” chord it is called a tonic pedal point (in the key of C, the C note). Tonic pedal point progressions are created by making the root note of the “I” chord the bass note of each chord in a progression by using various chord substitutions including inversions, embellishments, and chord quality changes (see “Appendix”).

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used pedal points to write hit songs. You will learn how chord substitutions have been used to create major and minor tonic pedal point progressions. Then you will be shown several other types of pedal points. You will also take a quick look at a couple of ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own pedal points.

MAJOR PEDAL POINTS

In this section you will look at nine major key pedal point progressions. Play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression. Although these examples are presented in the key of C, they should be transposed (see “Appendix”), played, and studied in other keys.

C-F/C Progression

Replacing the “F” with the “F/C” (second inversion) in the “C-F” basic progression (see the separate “Basic Progressions” chapter) creates the “C-F/C” tonic pedal point progression. An example of this type of pedal point is the opening chorus progression to the Eagles’ 1975 hit *Lyin’ Eyes* shown below.

C ///	F/C ///	C ///	///
-------	---------	-------	-----

The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point. Notice that the “IVm” chord quality change can sound sentimental or emotional as in the *All By Myself* example below. This song was based on music by Russian pianist-composer Sergei Rachmaninoff (1883-1943) who was part of the Romanticism movement that was characterized by intense emotional expression. The last two examples are reverse displacements.

C	F/C	<i>The Way You Do The Things You Do</i> verse (Temptations—1964), <i>Gimme Some Lovin’</i> verse (Spencer Davis Group—1967), <i>I’ve Got A Feeling</i> verse (Beatles—1970), <i>Tiny Dancer</i> verse (Elton John—1971), and <i>Listen To The Music</i> verse (Doobie Brothers—1972)
Cmaj7	F/C	<i>I’ll Play For You</i> verse (Seals & Crofts—1975)
C-C11	F/C	<i>Boogie Fever</i> verse (Sylvers—1976)
C	Fm/C	<i>Even The Nights Are Better</i> verse (Air Supply—1982)

C	F/C	C	<i>I Am A Rock</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1966), <i>Both Sides Now</i> verse (Judy Collins—1968), <i>Cry Like A Baby</i> verse (Box Tops—1968), <i>Mother Nature's Son</i> verse (Beatles—1968), <i>In The Ghetto</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1969), <i>Bridge Over Troubled Water</i> verse (Simon & Garfunkel—1970), <i>Operator (That's Not The Way I Feel)</i> chorus (Jim Croce—1972), <i>Longfellow Serenade</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1974), <i>Jet</i> verse (Paul McCartney—1974), and <i>Sweet Emotion</i> chorus (Aerosmith—1975)
C	F/C	Cmaj7-C6	<i>Memories</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1969)
C	F/C	C7	<i>Baby You're A Rich Man</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
C	F/C-Fm/C	C	<i>It Was Almost Like A Song</i> verse (Ronnie Milsap—1977)
C	F(6/9)/C	C	<i>She Talks To Angels</i> verse (Black Crowes—1991)
C-C11	F/C	C	<i>Country Roads</i> verse (James Taylor—1971)
C-Cmaj7-C11	F/C-[Ab-Bb]	C	<i>Love On The Rocks</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1980)

C	Fm/C	C	<i>You Make Me Feel Brand New</i> verse (Stylists—1974) and <i>All By Myself</i> verse (Celine Dion—1996)
C-Csus4	F-Fsus4		<i>Lonely Ol' Night</i> verse (John Cougar Mellencamp—1985)
Cmaj7-C11	F6/C	C	<i>Diary</i> verse (Bread—1972)
C	F/C	C7-F/C	<i>Boy From New York City</i> verse (Ad Libs—1965) and <i>Mercy, Mercy, Mercy</i> chorus (Buckingham—1967)
C	F/C	Cadd9-F/C	<i>Come Sail Away</i> chorus (Styx—1978)
C	F/C	C7(no3)-F/C	<i>Change The World</i> verse (Eric Clapton—1996)
C	F/C	Cm7-F/C	<i>Lonesome Loser</i> verse (Little River Band—1979)
	F/C	C	<i>River</i> verse (Joni Mitchell—1971), <i>Running On Empty</i> verse/chorus (Jackson Browne—1978), and <i>Boulevard</i> verse (Jackson Browne—1980)
	F6/C	C	<i>Blue On Blue</i> chorus (Bobby Vinton—1963)

C-Dm/C Progression

Replacing the “Dm” with the “Dm/C” (“Dm7” embellishment/third inversion) in the “C-Dm” progression (see the separate “Basic Progressions” chapter) creates the “C-Dm/C” tonic pedal point progression.

An example of this type of pedal point is the opening verse progression to the Beatles' 1968 hit *Fool On The Hill* shown below.

C6 ///	Dm/C ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point. Generally, these pedal points can be substituted for “C-F/C” basic progressions discussed earlier. Notice that the “Dm” is replaced by the “D” chord (parallel major/minor substitution) in the last three examples.

C	Dm/C		<i>The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine (Anymore)</i> verse (Walker Bros.—1966), <i>Oh How Happy</i> verse (Shades of Blue—1966), and <i>Baby, I'm-A Want You</i> verse (Bread—1971)
Cmaj7	Dm/C		<i>Day By Day</i> verse (Godspell—1971) and <i>Beginnings</i> verse (Chicago—1971)
Cmaj7	Dm11/C		<i>Make It With You</i> verse (Bread—1970)
C	Dm/C	C11-Dm/C	<i>Precious And Few</i> verse (Climax—1972)
C	Dm11/C	Cmaj7-Dm11/C	<i>Melissa</i> verse (Allman Brothers Band—1968)
C-C11	Dm/C	C	<i>Lightnin' Strikes</i> verse (Lou Christie—1966) and <i>Feels Like The First Time</i> verse (Foreigner—1977)
C	D/C-Dm/C	C	<i>Only Woman Bleed</i> verse (Alice Cooper—1975) and <i>Love Theme from "A Star Is Born"</i> (Evergreen) verse (Barbara Streisand—1976)

C	D7/C	<i>Temptation Eyes</i> chorus (Grass Roots—1971)
Cadd9	D9/C	<i>Tonight</i> verse (Broadway—1957)

C-G/C Progression

Replacing the “G” with the “G/C” (“GaddC” embellishment/C bass) in the “C-G” folk progression (see the separate “Folk Progressions” chapter) creates the “C-G/C” tonic pedal point progression. An example of this type of pedal point is the opening verse progression to Daydream Academy’s 1985 hit *Life In A Northern Town* shown below.

C / G/C /	C / G/C /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point. The *Taxi* example below uses a parallel minor/major substitution. The last example is a reverse displacement.

C	G/C		<i>Jack And Diane</i> intro (John Cougar—1982)
Cadd9	G/C		<i>On My Own</i> verse (Patti LaBelle & Michael McDonald—1986)
C	Gm/C		<i>Taxi</i> verse (Harry Chapin—1972)
	G/C	C	<i>Never Be The Same</i> verse (Christopher Cross—1980) and <i>My Hometown</i> verse (Bruce Springsteen—1986)

C-Csus4 Vamp

Inserting the “Csus4” chord (common tone substitution) in the “C” one-chord progression (see the separate “One-Chord Progressions” chapter) creates the “C-Csus4” suspension vamp. An example of this type of vamp is the opening verse progression to the Mamas & The

Papas' 1966 hit *Monday, Monday* shown below. Notice how the suspended chord is used to delay the expected resolution to the tonic.

C / Csus4 /	C / Csus4 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of vamp. Notice the similarity of this progression to the “C-F/C” pedal point basic progression. The last example is a reverse displacement.

C	Csus4		<i>Western Union</i> verse (Five Americans—1967), <i>Play Me</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1972), and <i>Chevy Van</i> verse (Sammy Johns—1973)
C	Csus4/2		<i>No Sugar Tonight</i> verse (Guess Who—1970)
C	Csus4	C	<i>We Can Work It Out</i> verse (Beatles—1965), <i>Woman From Tokyo</i> chorus (Deep Purple—1973), and <i>Hot Blooded</i> verse (Foreigner—1978)
C	Csus4	Csus2	<i>Eve Of Destruction</i> intro (Barry McGuire—1965)
C	Csus2	Csus4-C	<i>Happy Xmas (War Is Over)</i> verse (John Lennon—1971) and <i>Brass In Pocket (I'm Special)</i> verse (Pretenders—1980)
C	Csus2	C-Csus4-C-Csus2-C	<i>Needles And Pins</i> verse (Searchers—1964)
	Csus4	C	<i>Pinball Wizard</i> verse (Who—1969), <i>Hold Your Head Up</i> verse (Argent—1972), and <i>She Believes In Me</i> chorus (Kenny Rogers—1979)

C-C11 Vamp

Inserting the “C11” chord (chord quality change & embellishment) in the “C” one-chord progression creates the “C-C11” pedal point vamp. An example of this type of vamp is the opening verse progression to the Drifter’s 1963 hit *On Broadway* shown below. Notice that the “C11” chord can also be written as “C-Bb/C” or “Gm7/C.”

C / C11 /	C / C11 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point vamp. The last example is a reversed displacement. Try substituting “Cm7” and “Cm9” for the “C11” chord.

C	C11	<i>Tangled Up In Blue</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1974), <i>Got To Get You Into My Life</i> verse (Beatles—1976), and <i>The Way You Make Me Feel</i> verse (Michael Jackson—1988)	
C	Gm7/C	<i>It's Going To Take Some Time</i> verse (Carpenters—1972)	
C	C11	C	<i>If I Needed Someone</i> verse (Beatles—1965) and <i>Tomorrow Never Knows</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
Cmaj7	C11	<i>Never Can Say Goodbye</i> verse (Jackson 5—1971)	
	C11	C	<i>You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling</i> verse (Righteous Brothers—1964), <i>Suite: Judy Blue Eyes</i> verses 5-7 (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1969), <i>Rocky Mountain Way</i> chorus (Joe Walsh—1973), <i>Get Down Tonight</i> verse (KC & The Sunshine Band—1975), <i>How Long</i> verse (Ace—1975), and <i>(I've Had) The Time Of My Life</i> verse (Bill Medley & Jennifer Warnes—1987)

C-Eb/C-F/C Progression

Replacing the “Eb” with the “Eb/C” chord (“Eb6” embellishment/C bass) and the “F” with the “F/C” chord (second inversion) in the “C-Eb-F” classic rock progression (see the separate “Classic Rock Progressions” chapter) creates the “C-Eb/C-F/C-C” tonic pedal point progression. An example of this type of pedal point is the verse progression to the Who’s 1967 hit *I Can See For Miles* shown below. Note that the “Eb/C” chord can also be written as “Cm7.”

C ///	Eb/C / F/C /	C ///	Eb/C / F/C /
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The Who’s Pete Townshend frequently used pedal point progressions in his music and is a good place to study the usage of these progressions in rock music. Two other examples of this type of pedal point are the “C-Ebmaj7/C-F/C-C” chorus progression to *No Time* (Guess Who—1970) and the “C-Eb/C-F/C-Eb/C” chorus progression to *(I Know) I’m Losing You* (Temptations—1966)

Other examples of pedal point classic rock progressions include the “C5-F/C-Bb/C-C5” verse progression to Bob Seger’s 1978 hit *Hollywood Nights* and the “C-F/C-Bb/C-F/C” intro progression to John Cougar Mellencamp’s 1986 hit *R.O.C.K. In The U.S.A.*

C-F/C-G/C Progression

Replacing the “F” with the “F/C” chord (second inversion) and the “G” with the “G/C” chord (“GaddC” embellishment/C bass) in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression (see the separate “Rock And Roll Progressions” chapter) creates the “C-F/C-G/C” tonic pedal point progression. An example of this type of pedal point is the opening verse progression to Anne Murray’s 1978 hit *You Needed Me* shown below.

C ///	F/C ///	G7/C ///	C ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point. Notice that the second and third examples are “C-F/C-G/C-F/C” variations (added “F/C” chord), the fourth through sixth examples are “C-G/C-F/C-C” rock and roll displacements (reversed order of “F/C” and “G/C” chords), and the last example is a “G/C-“F/C” variation (omitted “C” chord).

C	F/C	G/C	C	<i>Downtown</i> verse (Petula Clark—1965), <i>Goodbye To Love</i> verse (Carpenters—1972), <i>Get Closer</i> chorus (Seals & Crofts—1976), <i>Sometimes When We Touch</i> verse (Dan Hill—1978), and <i>We Are The World</i> verse (USA for Africa—1985)
C	F/C	G/C	F/C	<i>Your Song</i> intro (Elton John—1970)
C	F/C	G/C	F/C-Fm/C	<i>Up Where We Belong</i> verse (Joe Cocker & Jennifer Warnes—1982)
C	=>	G/C	F/C-C	<i>Substitute</i> chorus (Who—1966), <i>I Honestly Love You</i> refrain (Olivia Newton-John—1974), and <i>You Don't Bring Me Flowers</i> verse (Barbara Streisand & Neil Diamond—1978)
Cmaj7-C6 (2x)	=>	G7/C	F/C-Cmaj7-C6	<i>Let 'Em In</i> verse (Wings—1976)

C	=>	G/C	F/C-G/C	<i>Can't Get It Out Of My Head</i> chorus (Electric Light Orchestra—1975), <i>We've Got Tonight</i> verse (Bob Seger—1978), and <i>The One That You Love</i> chorus (Air Supply—1981)
		G/C	F/C	<i>Everybody Wants To Rule The World</i> verse (Tears For Fears—1985)

C-C+-C6-C7 Progression

Inserting the “C+” (common tone substitution), the “C6” (embellishment), and the “C7” (chord quality change) in the “C” one-chord progression creates the “C-C+-C6-C7” ascending augmented progression. This progression has an ascending chromatic “G-Ab-A-Bb” line in the middle voice of the chords while the bass note remains unchanged. An example of this type of pedal point is the opening verse progression to Whitney Houston’s 1986 hit *The Greatest Love Of All* shown below.

C / C+ /	C6 / C7 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point. Notice that the “C-C+-C6-C+” pedal point has a middle voice line that moves both up and down. The “C-C+-C6” and “C-C+” examples are further variations (omitted chords) of this type of pedal point.

C	C+	C6	C7	<i>(You've Got To) Accentuate The Positive</i> chorus (Standard—1944), <i>Because</i> verse (Dave Clark Five—1964), <i>Laughing</i> verse (Guess Who—1969), and <i>Stand Tall</i> verse (Burton Cummings—1976)
C	C+	C6	C9	<i>Maybe This Time</i> verse (from “Cabaret”—1966) and <i>Losing My Mind</i> verse (from “Follies”—1971)

C	C+	C6	C+	<i>Louise</i> A section (from “Innocents Of Paris” 1929), <i>Match Maker</i> A section (Standard—1964), and (<i>Just Like</i>) <i>Starting Over</i> verse (John Len- non—1980)
C	C+	C6		<i>For Once In My Life</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1968)
C	C+			<i>Baby Hold On To Me</i> verse (Eddie Money—1978)

C-Cmaj7-C6-C Progression

Inserting the “Cmaj7” and “C6” (both embellishments) in the “C” one-chord progression creates the “C-Cmaj7-C6-C” pedal point progression. This combination of substitutions creates an interesting descending diatonic “C-B-A-G” line in the middle voice of the chords while the bass note remains unchanged. An example of this type of pedal point is the opening verse progression to Engelbert Humperdinck’s 1977 hit *After The Lovin’* shown below.

C / Cmaj7 /	C6 / C /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point and one that replaces the “C6” with the “C7” chord (chord quality change). The combination of substitutions in the “C-Cmaj7-C7” pedal point progression creates an interesting descending chromatic “C-B-Bb” line in the middle voice. Similarly, the “C-Cmaj7-C7-F” progression below creates an extended descending chromatic “C-B-Bb-A” line in the middle voice of the chords. As you can see, many different pedal point progressions can be built by mixing and matching the “C,” “Cmaj7,” “C6,” and “C7” chords. To me, these moving middle voice lines are the hallmark of great songwriting. The last four examples are reverse displacements.

C	Cmaj7	C6-C	<i>Everybody Loves A Clown</i> verse (Gary Lewis & The Playboys—1965)
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C	Cmaj7	C6-Cmaj7	<i>Jingle Bell Rock</i> verse (Bobby Helms—1957), <i>Gentle On My Mind</i> verse (Glen Campbell—1968), and <i>Mandy</i> verse (Barry Manilow—1975)
C	Cmaj7	C6	<i>Carolina In The Morning</i> verse (Standard—1922)
C	Cmaj7	C7-F	<i>Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head</i> verse (B.J. Thomas—1969), <i>Something</i> verse (Beatles—1969), <i>Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song</i> chorus (B.J. Thomas—1975), and <i>Maybe I'm Amazed</i> chorus (Wings—1977)
C	Cmaj7	C7-F-Fm	<i>Hooked Of A Feeling</i> verse (B.J. Thomas—1969)
C	Cmaj7	C7-F-Fm6	<i>I Love The Nightlife</i> chorus (Alicia Bridges—1978)
C	Cmaj7	C7-C7#9-F	<i>Kodachrome</i> verse (Paul Simon—1973)
C	Cmaj7	C9	<i>Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You</i> verse (Frankie Valli—1967)
C	C6	Cmaj7	<i>Mame</i> verse (Herb Alpert—1966)
C	C6	Cmaj7-C6	<i>To Each His Own</i> A section (from “To Each His Own”—1946), <i>Sure Gonna Miss Her</i> verse (Gary Lewis & The Playboys—1966), and <i>It Must Be Him</i> verse (Vikki Carr—1967)
C5	C6	C7	<i>Born To Be Wild</i> verse (Steppenwolf—1968)
C	Cmaj7		<i>These Eyes</i> chorus (Guess Who—1969)
Cm7	Cmaj7		<i>Goin' Out Of My Head</i> verse (Little Anthony & The Imperials—1964)
C	C6		<i>I Can Help</i> verse (Billy Swan—1974) and <i>Dancing In The Dark</i> verse (Bruce Springsteen—1984)
	Cmaj7	C	<i>Still The Same</i> verse (Bob Seger—1978)
	Cmaj7	C6	<i>Honey</i> verse (Bobby Goldsboro—1968) and <i>Emotion</i> verse (Samantha Sang—1978)
	Cmaj9	C	<i>The Best Of My Love</i> verse (Eagles—1974)
	Cmaj9	C6	<i>So Far Away</i> verse (Carol King—1971)

MINOR PEDAL POINTS

In this section you will look at six minor key pedal point progressions. As you did with the major pedal points, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression.

Am-D/A Vamp

Replacing the “D” with the “D/A” chord (second inversion) in the “Am-D” minor rock vamp (see the separate “Basic Progressions” chapter) creates the “Am-D/A” tonic pedal vamp. An example of this type of pedal point vamp is the verse progression to the Doors’ 1971 hit *Riders On The Storm* shown below.

Am / D/A /	Am / D/A /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point vamp. Notice that the “Am-D/A” sequence is similar to “Am-Bm/A” chordal shuffle. You will want to try substituting the “Am-Bm/A” chordal shuffle and “Am7-Am6” progression for the “Am-D/A” vamp.

Am-Am7	D/A	Am	<i>This Diamond Ring</i> verse (Gary Lewis & The Play- boys—1965)
Am	Dm/A	A11-Am	<i>Lady</i> verse (Kenny Rog- ers—1980)
Am7	D/A-Dm/A	Am	<i>Wait</i> verse (Beatles—1965)
Am7-A11	D/A	A	<i>Take The Long Way Home</i> verse (Supertramp—1979)
Am7	D/A	F/A-Am7	<i>Fly Like An Eagle</i> chorus (Steve Miller—1977)

Am-A11 Vamp

Inserting the “A11” chord (chord quality change & embellishment) in the “Am” one-chord progression creates the “Am-A11” pedal point vamp. An example of this type of pedal point is the main verse progression to Tina Turner’s 1984 hit *What’s Love Got To Do With It* shown below. Notice that this vamp could also be written as “Am-G/A.”

Am7 ///	////	A11 ///	////
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point vamp. The last example is a reversed displacement. Note that the “Em/A” and “A9(no 3rd)” chords contain the same notes.

Am	A11	<i>We Are The Champions</i> verse (Queen—1978), <i>Waiting For A Girl Like You</i> verse (Foreigner—1981), and <i>Relax</i> verse (Frankie Goes To Hollywood—1985)
Am	Em/A	<i>That’s All</i> verse (Genesis—1984)
Am7	A11	<i>Real Man</i> verse (Todd Rundgren)
	A11 Am7-A11	<i>Long Train Runnin’</i> verse (Doobie Brothers—1973)

Am-G/A-F/A Progression

Replacing the “G” with the “G/A” chord (“Gadd9” embellishment/A bass) and the “F” with the “F/A” chord (first inversion) in the “Am-G-F” flamenco variation (see the separate “Flamenco Progressions” chapter) creates the “Am-G/A-F/A” tonic pedal point progression. An example of this type of pedal point is the verse progression to Mike & The Mechanics’ 1986 hit *Silent Running* shown below.

Am ///	G/A ///	F/A ///	////
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The box below shows other examples of this type of pedal point. The fourth and fifth examples are “Am-G/A-F/A-G/A” further variations (added “G/A” chord) while the next to last example is an “Am-F/A-G/A-Am” displacement (reversed order of “G/A” and “F/A” chords). The last example omits the “F/A” chord. Note that the “A11” chord can also be written as “Em7/A” or “G/A.”

Am	G/A	Fmaj7/A			<i>Sussudio</i> verse (Phil Collins—1985)
Am	A11-G/A	F/A			<i>Don't Lose My Number</i> verse (Phil Collins—1985)
Am	G/A	F/A	G/A		<i>Strange Way</i> chorus (Firefall—1978)
Am	G/A	Fmaj7/A	G/A		<i>Papa Don't Preach</i> verse (Madonna—1986)
Am	=>	F/A	G/A	Am	<i>Eye Of The Tiger</i> verse (Survivor—1982)
Am7	G/A				<i>Dare Me</i> verse (Pointer Sisters—1985)

Am-Bm/A-C/A-Bm/A Progression

Replacing the “Bm” with the “Bm/A” chord (“Bm7” embellishment/third inversion) and the “C” with the “C/A” chord (“C6” embellishment/A bass) in the “Am-Bm-C-Bm” progression creates the “Am-Bm/A-C/A-Bm/A” chordal shuffle. An example of this type of chordal shuffle is the opening verse progression to Michael Jackson’s 1983 hit *Billie Jean* shown below.

Am / Bm/A /	C/A / Bm/A /
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The box below shows other examples of the chordal shuffle. The last example is a reverse displacement that omits the “Am” and last “Bm/A” chords. Notice that the “C/A” chord can also be written as “Am7.”

Am	Bm/A	C/A	Bm/A	<i>Along Comes Mary</i> verse (Association—1966), <i>Long Time Gone</i> verse (Crosby, Stills & Nash—1968), <i>Moon-dance</i> verse (Van Morrison—1970), and <i>Ridin' The Storm Out</i> verse (REO Speedwagon—1973)
A	Bm/A	C/A	Bm/A	<i>Whipping Post</i> verse (Allman Brothers—1971) [key of A]
Am	Bm/A	C/A		<i>Eight Miles High</i> verse (Byrds—1966)
	Bm/A	Am7		<i>Pretzel Logic</i> verse (Steely Dan—1974)

Am-Am(M7)-Am7-Am6 Progression

Inserting the “Am(M7),” “Am7,” and “Am6” (all embellishments) in the “Am” one-chord progression creates the “Am-Am(M7)-Am7-Am6” descending minor cliché. This combination of substitutions creates a descending chromatic “A-Ab-G-Gb” line in the middle voice of the chords while the bass note remains unchanged. The definitive example of the descending minor cliché is the opening A section progression to Lorenz Hart & Richard Rodgers’ 1937 standard *My Funny Valentine* shown below.

Am ///	Am(M7) ///	Am7 ///	Am6 ///
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The box below shows other examples of the descending minor cliché. Several of these progressions move to the “F” and “E” chords continuing the chromatic line (see the *Michelle* example below). Notice that the “Am(M7)” is sometimes written as “C+” and the “Am6” chord is frequently replaced by the “D9” chord.

Am	Am(M7)	Am7	Am6	<i>In A Sentimental Mood</i> A section (Standard—1935), <i>More</i> bridge (Kai Winding—1963), <i>Music To Watch Girls By</i> verse (Bob Crewe Generation—1967), <i>Summer Rain</i> verse (Johnny Rivers—1968), <i>Cry Baby Cry</i> verse (Beatles—1968), <i>Feelings</i> verse (Morris Albert—1975), and <i>Into The Great Wide Open</i> verse (Tom Petty—1991)
Am	Am(M7)	Am7	D6	<i>Taste Of Honey</i> verse (Standard—1960)
Am	Am(M7)	Am7	D7	<i>Ballad Of A Thin Man</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1965)
Am	Am(M7)	Am7	D9	<i>This Masquerade</i> verse (George Benson—1976)
A	Am(M7)	Am7	Am6	<i>Fixin' A Hole</i> verse (Beatles—1967) [key of A]
Am	C+	Am7	Am6-Fmaj7-E	<i>Michelle</i> bridge (Beatles—1966)
Am	C+	Am7	D	<i>Chim Chim Cheree</i> verse (Disney—1963)

Am-Am#5-Am6-Am#5 Vamp

Inserting the “Am#5” and “Am6” (both embellishments) in the “Am” one-chord progression creates the “Am-Am#5-Am6-Am#5” spy movie vamp. This combination of substitutions creates an up and down “E-F-F#-F” line in the middle voice of the chords while the bass note remains unchanged. The most famous example of the spy movie vamp is the menacing A section progression to the 1962 *James Bond Theme* shown below. Notice that the Am(#5) chord can also be written as “Fmaj7/A.”

Am / Am(#5) /	Am6 / Am(#5) /
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The box below shows other examples of the spy movie vamp. The combination of substitutions in the *Eleanor Rigby* example below creates a great descending chromatic “G-Gb-F-E” line in the middle voice of the chords while the bass note remains unchanged. The last three examples are variations of the spy movie vamp.

Am	Am(#5)	Am6	Am(#5)	<i>I'm Thru With Love</i> B section (Standard—1931), <i>Goldfinger</i> D section (1964), <i>Secret Agent Man</i> intro (Johnny Rivers—1966), and <i>Undun</i> bridge (Guess Who—1969)
Am	Am(#5)	Am6	Am7	<i>Cry Me A River</i> A section (Standard—1953)
Am7- Am6	F/A	Am		<i>Eleanor Rigby</i> chorus (Beatles—1966)
Am- A11	F/A	A11		<i>In The Air Tonight</i> chorus (Phil Collins—1981)

OTHER PEDAL POINTS

In this section, you will learn about other types of pedal points such as dominant, middle voice, soprano, and double pedal points.

Dominant Pedal Points

When the pedal point is the fifth scale note of the “I” chord, it is referred to as a dominant pedal point. Replacing the “Dm7” with the “Dm7/G” (embellishment/G bass) in the “Dm7-G7” jazz progression (see the separate “Jazz Progressions” chapter) creates the “Dm7/G-G7” dominant pedal point progression as shown below.

Original Progression

Dm7 ///	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression

Dm7/G ///	G7 ///
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A dominant pedal point occurs in the first movement of Mozart's *Jupiter Symphony*. Though not found as frequently as tonic pedal points in popular music, the box below shows other examples of the dominant pedal point. Note that the "Dm7/G" chord can also be written as "G11" or "F/G."

G	C/G		<i>Start Me Up</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1981)
G11	C/G	G	<i>Celebration</i> verse (Kool & The Gang—1981)
G11	=>	G	<i>She's Gone</i> verse (Hall & Oates—1976)
Dm7/G	Cadd9/G		<i>On My Own</i> chorus (Patti LaBelle & Michael McDonald—1986)
Dm7/G	=>	G	<i>Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey</i> verse (Paul & Linda McCartney—1971)

Lastly, the Who used the dominant pedal point to create the intro progression to their 1969 hit *Pinball Wizard* as shown below.

Am/E ///	Am(add4)/E ///	E7sus4 ///	E7 ///
Em7 ///	Dm/E ///	F ///	E ///

Middle Voice Pedal Points

Although pedal tones usually occur in the bass, there are examples of pedal points that occur in the middle voices or the soprano. For example, in the Beatles' 1968 *Blackbird* Paul McCartney plays the entire song pedaling on the tonic in the middle voice. Tracy Chapman used this same concept on her 1988 hit *Fast Car*. Both of these songs were played on standard tuned guitars and the chords pedaled on the open-G string.

Soprano Pedal Points

The Beatles created several chord progressions where the pedal was in the soprano. Examples include the verse progressions to *Love Me Do* (1962) and *You've Got To Hide Your Love Away* (1965). Both chord progressions pedal on the first position G note played on the high E-string of a standard tuned guitar.

Double Pedal Points

If one pedal point is good, then two must be better. The Beatles used chord progressions with double pedal points in the soprano. The opening “G-Cadd9-G” verse progression to *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) uses double pedals on the first position D note (dominant) played on the B-string and first position G note (tonic) on the high E-string of a standard tuned guitar. Pink Floyd used this same approach on the “Em7-G” intro progression to their *Wish You Were Here* (1975) and Oasis used a similar approach on the verse progression to their *Wonderwall* (1996).

If you're a guitar player, alternate tunings provide a unique opportunity to explore the potential of pedal points in your songwriting. Almost all songs written in alternate tunings rely, to some extent, on various pedal points. The Joni Mitchell song portfolio is a good place to learn about alternate tuning.

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at a couple ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Looking over my notebook, I was surprised to see how often I used various pedal points in my songwriting. Below are two examples of how I used pedal points to write a new song.

The Square

The eight-bar verse progression to my *The Square* is shown below in the key of E. In this progression, I used chords with double pedal points in the soprano. I play each chord on a standard tuned guitar pedaling on the open B-string (dominant) and the open high E-string (tonic). The lyric goes “Angel where you going with such a heavy load, did you think this life of yours was a too long road. Angel where you headed on this hot and lonesome night, did you think that leaving would somehow make it right.” An Orlando newspaper article inspired this song.

C#m / A /	B / C#m /	// A /	B / E /
C#m / A /	B / C#m /	// A /	B / Cmaj7 /

Comes A Time

The main progression to my *Comes A Time* is shown below. The classic rock pedal point seemed to work well with the “Comes a time when a man’s just got to try, spread his wings and fly into the sky” lyric.

C / Eb/C /	F/C / C /	C / Eb/C /	F/C / C /
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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used pedal points to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own pedal points. Coloring outside of the lines on pedal points means taking a look at pedal points constructed from notes other than the tonic. For example, Tom Petty used a subdominant pedal point to create the unique “F-G/F” verse vamp for his 1975 *Here Comes My Girl*.

(1) Transform the four original chord progressions below into tonic bass pedal point progressions using inversions.

Original Progression	Pedal Point Progression
C-Em-F-G7 (Rock Ballad)	
C-Am-F-G7 (Doo-Wop)	
C-Am-Dm-G7 (Standard)	
C-Dm-Em-F (Ascending Bass Line)	

Here's how I did it.

C-Em-F-G7 (Rock Ballad)	C-Em/C-F/C-G7/C
C-Am-F-G7 (Doo-Wop)	C-Am/C-F/C-G7/C
C-Am-Dm-G7 (Standard)	C-Am/C-Dm/C-G7/C
C-Dm-Em-F (Ascending Bass Line)	C-Dm/C-Em/C-F/C

(2) Now, transform the same four original chord progressions, this time in the key of E, into tonic bass pedal point progressions using inversions.

Original Progression	Pedal Point Progression
E-G#m-A-B (Rock Ballad)	
E-C#m-A-B (Doo-Wop)	
E-C#m-F#m-B (Standard)	
E-F#m-G#m-A (Ascending Bass Line)	

Here's how I did it.

E-G#m-A-B (Rock Ballad)	E-G#m/E-A/E-B/E
E-C#m-A-B (Doo-Wop)	E-C#m/E-A/E-B/E

E-C#m-F#m-B (Standard)	E-C#m/E-F#m/E-B/E
E-F#m-G#m-A (Ascending Bass Line)	E-F#m/E-G#m/E-A/E

(3) Try building two tonic pedal point progressions using chord quality changes and embellishments for four bars of the “C”.

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	Cmaj9 ///	C ///	Cmaj9 ///
Cm9 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Cm9 ///	Cmaj7 ///

(4) Try building two tonic pedal point progressions using chord quality changes and embellishments for four bars of the “Am”.

Here’s how I did it.

Am7 ///	Am6 ///	Am7 ///	Am6 ///
Am(add9) ///	Am9(M7) ///	Am9 ///	Am6/9 ///

(5) Try substituting the two pedal point progressions over the basic progression in a song such as *You Can’t Always Get What You Want* chorus (Rolling Stones—1969) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	F ///	C ///	F ///
-------	-------	-------	-------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point Basic Progression #1)

C ///	F/C ///	C ///	F/C ///
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Substitute Progression (Pedal Point Basic Progression #2)

C ///	F/C ///	C7 ///	F/C ///
-------	---------	--------	---------

(6) Try substituting the spy movie vamp for the descending minor cliché in a song such as *Feelings* verse (Albert Morris—1975) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am ///	Am(M7) ///	Am7 ///	Am6 ///
--------	------------	---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Spy Movie Vamp)

Am ///	Am(#5) ///	Am6 ///	Am(#5) ///
--------	------------	---------	------------

(7) Try substituting the four chordal shuffles for the descending minor cliché in a song such as *My Funny Valentine* verse (Standard—1937) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am ///	Am(M7) ///	Am7 ///	Am6 ///
--------	------------	---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Chordal Shuffle #1)

Am ///	Bm/A ///	Am ///	Bm/A ///
--------	----------	--------	----------

Substitute Progression (Chordal Shuffle #2)

#2

Am ///	Bm/A /	C/A ///	Bm/A ///
--------	--------	---------	----------

Substitute Progression (Chordal Shuffle #3)

Am ///	Bm/A ///	C/A ///	D/A ///
--------	----------	---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Chordal Shuffle #4)

Am ///	Bm11/A ///	C/A ///	Dadd9/A ///
--------	------------	---------	-------------

Keep in mind that these chordal shuffles can usually be substituted for each other. For example, try substituting chord shuffle #2 for chordal shuffle #1 in a song such as *Monterey* verse (Animals—1968). Similarly, try substituting the “Am-A11” vamp for the “Am-Bm/A-C/A-Bm/A” chordal shuffle.

(8) Try substituting the same chordal shuffles above for the “Am6-E7/B-Am6-E7/B” progression in a song such as *Summertime* A section (George Gershwin—1935) as shown below.

Original Progression

Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /	Am6 / E7/B /
--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

(9) Try substituting the descending diatonic progression for the pedal point progression in a song such as *After The Lovin’* verse (Engelbert Humperdinck—1977) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / Cmaj7 /	C6 / C /
-------------	----------

Substitute Progression (Descending Bass Line)

C / C/B /	C/A / C/G /
-----------	-------------

(10) Try building a tonic pedal point progression from the “Am7-B-Bb-Am” progression using inversions.

Here is how Chicago did it to create the main chorus progression to their 1974 hit *Wishing You Were Here*. This sequence creates a double chromatic descending “[G-C]—[Gb-B]—[F-Bb]—[E-A]” line in the middle voice of the chords while the bass note remains unchanged.

Am7 ///	B/A ///	Bb/A ///	Am ///
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(11) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-F/C” basic pedal point displacement.

Here is how the Blues Brothers did it to create the verse progression to their 1980 hit *Gimme Some Lovin’*.

C / F/C /	C / F/C /	C / F/C /	C / F/C /
C / F/C /	C / F/C /	C / F/C /	C / F/C /

(12) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the “C-G/C-F/C-C” rock and roll pedal point displacement.

Here is how the Who did it to create the chorus progression to their 1966 *Substitute*.

C / G/C /	F/C / C /	C / G/C /	F/C / C /
C / G/C /	F/C / C /	C / G/C /	F/C / C /

Rhythm Changes

The term rhythm changes originated in the late 1940s by bebop musicians, such as saxophonist Charlie Parker and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, to refer to the chord progression or changes that were based on George Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm* from the 1930 musical comedy "Girl Crazy." As legend has it jazz musicians of the time were encouraged by their recording companies to write new songs using popular chord progressions to avoid paying royalties to the original songwriters. The most popular chord progressions used were the blues (see the separate "Blues Progressions" chapter of his book) and the rhythm changes.

The rhythm changes consist of a 32-bar chord progression following the AABA song form with each section consisting of eight bars. The AABA song form, favored by Tin Pan Alley songwriters during the first half of the twentieth century, is sometimes referred to as the American popular song form. This is one of the most commonly used forms in both jazz and popular music. The B section is also known as the bridge, middle eight, or release while the complete 32-bar AABA form is referred to as the chorus. Other examples of the AABA form are the standards *Blue Moon* (1934), *Heart And Soul* (1938), *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* (1938), *Satin Doll* (1953), *Misty* (1954), and *Yesterday* (1965). As with blues progressions, not all AABA songs are found in the typical 32-bar length and some songs have added or reordered sections such as in the ABAC (i.e., *Here's That Rainy Day*), ABCD (i.e., *My Funny Valentine*), an ABAB (i.e., *Fly Me To The Moon*) forms. The

typical AABA song form that has been described as elegant is shown below.

A1			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Main Theme			
A2			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Main Theme Repeated			
B			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Change of Theme (Contrasting)			
A3			
////	////	////	////
////	////	////	////
Return to Main Theme			

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world's most creative songwriters have used the rhythm changes to write hit songs. You will learn about the standard rhythm changes and how chord substitutions can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a look at several songs that are noteworthy because of their innovative approach to the use of the rhythm changes. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own rhythm changes.

STANDARD RHYTHM CHANGES

The changes are usually played in the key of Bb (sometimes F and C) at a fast tempo exceeding 200 beats per minute. The standard streamlined rhythm changes that evolved from the original *I Got Rhythm* progression are shown below in the key of C. Notice that the first four-bar phrase of the A section (bar four) typically ends on the “V” chord while the second four-bar phrase (bar eight) ends on the “I” chord. Also, the “Am7” is frequently replaced with the “A7” chord (parallel major/minor substitution). If you take the standard sixteen-bar ragtime progression (see the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter) and cut the duration of each chord in half, you will see an amazing similarity to the rhythm changes A section.

A1			
C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C / G7 /	C ///
A2			
C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C / G7 /	C ///
B			
E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////
A3			
C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C / G7 /	C ///

You should try to listen to as many different recordings based on the rhythm changes as possible. A partial listing of some of the many jazz and popular songs based on the rhythm changes include *Ah-leu-cha*

(Charlie Parker), *Anthropology* (Charlie Parker), *Cottontail* (Duke Ellington), *Eternal Triangle* (Sonny Stitt), *Fingers* (Thad Jones), (*Meet The*) *Flintstones* (Hanna/Barbera/Curtain), *Funji Mama* (Sonny Stitt), *Kim* (Charlie Parker), *Lester Leaps In* (Lester Young), *Moose The Mooch* (Charlie Parker), *Oleo* (Sonny Rollins), *Ow* (Dizzy Gillespie), *Perdido* (Duke Ellington), *Rhythm-a-Ning* (Thelonious Monk), *Room 608* (Horace Silver), *Serpent's Tooth* (Miles Davis), *Shaw Nuff* (Dizzy Gillespie), *Susnone* (Michael Brecker), *The Theme* (Miles Davis), *Turnpike* (J.J. Johnson), *United Notions* (Toshiko Akiyoshi), and *Webb City* (Bud Powell).

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. Like the blues progression, many chord substitutions are possible within the rhythm changes. Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of rhythm changes substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any rhythm changes song permitting many harmonic possibilities. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions. Listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make. The first example shows the original *I Got Rhythm* chord progression.

Bar 1	Bar 2
C6	Dm7—G7
C7—C7/Bb	Ab7—G7
C7—Am7	Dm7—G7
C7—Am7	Ab7—G7
C7—A7	Dm7—G7
C7/G—A7/G	Dm7/G—G7

Bar 1	Bar 2
C7—A7	D7—G7
C7—A7	Ab7 G7
C7—Dbo7	Dm7—Ebo7
C7—Db7	D7—Eb7
C7—Eb7	D7—G7
Em7—A7	Dm7—G7
Abm7—Db7	Gbm7—B7
Ab7—Db7	Gb7—B7
Bar 3	Bar 4
C6	Dm7—G7
C7—Am7	Dm7—G7
C7—A7	Dm7—G7
C7—A7	D7—G7
C7—Ebo7	Dm7—G7
C7—Eb7	D7—Db7
Em7-A7	Dm7-G7
Em7/G—A7/G	Dm7/G-G7
E7—A7	D7—G7
E7—A7	Ab7—G7
E7—Eb7	D7—Db7
E7—F7	Gb7—G7
Bar 5	Bar 6
C6	Dm7—[G7-Fm6]
C—C7	F—Gbo7
C7	Fmaj7
C7	Fmaj7—Fm7

Bar 5	Bar 6
C7	Fmaj7—F7
C7	Fmaj7—Gbo7
C7—C7/E	Fmaj7—Gbo7
C7—C7/Bb	Fmaj7/A—Fm7/Ab
Gm7—C7	Fmaj7
Gm7—C7	Fmaj7—Fm7
Gm7—C7	Fmaj7—Gbo7
Gm7—Gb7	Fmaj7—Gbo7
Bar 7	Bar 8
C/G—G7	C
C7/G—G7	C7—G7
C7/G—A7	Dm7—G7
C7—G7	C7
Em7—A7	Dm7—G7

While all three of the A sections are essentially the same, bar eight of the turnaround in the A2 and A3 sections are usually a sustained “C” chord in order to lead into the bridge or end the song. Another possible substitution for bars five through eight of the A2 section is shown below. This is a unique backcycled substitution from the target “E7” opening chord of the B section.

F#7 ///	////	B7 ///	////
---------	------	--------	------

Bars seven and eight are referred to as the turnaround. Although these examples only show several turnaround sequences, the separate “Turnarounds” chapter offers numerous additional possibilities.

B section

Common chord substitutions for the eight-bar B section of the rhythm changes are shown below. The B section progression consists of a cycle of dominant seventh chords (“V7/VI-V7/II-V7/V-V7”) that descend in fifths to the “G7” chord and is generally played with little embellishment. Again, the first example shows the original *I Got Rhythm* progression with all the passing chords that give it a decidedly 1930s Broadway musical feel.

Bar 17	Bar 18	Bar 19	Bar 20	Bar 21	Bar 22	Bar 23	Bar 24
E7- Bm7	Gm6- E7	A-E+5	Em-A7	D7- Am7	Fm6- D9	D7b5	G7-[D7- G7]
E7	E7	A7	A7	D7	D7	G7	G7
E7	E7	A7	A7	D7	D7	Ab7	G7
E7	E7	A7	A7	D7	D7	Dm7	G7
E7	E7	A7	A7	Am7	D7	Dm7	G7
Bm7	E7	Em7	A7	Am7	D7	Dm7	G7
Bb7	Bb7	A7	A7	D7	D7	Db7	Db7
Bb7	Bb7	A7	A7	Ab7	Ab7	G7	G7
Fm7	Bb7	Em7	A7	Ebm7	Ab7	Dm7	G7
Cm7- F7	Bm7- E7	Fm7- Bb7	Em7- A7	Bbm7- Eb7	Am7- D7	Ebm7- Ab7	Dm7-G7

Now here's where it becomes really interesting. You can build your own rhythm changes by mixing and matching the chord sequences from each box above. After that, you can start adding chord embellishments and other substitutions to construct even more rhythm changes variations. The possibilities are almost limitless.

SONGS BASED ON RHYTHM CHANGES

Below are six different songs that are noteworthy because of their historical significance and/or innovative approach to the use of the rhythm changes to create new songs. The musical genre of each performer is indicated after each performer's name.

Anthropology

Charlie Parker's (jazz) *Anthropology* is shown below. This is a classic bebop rhythm changes tune.

A1			
C6 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F7 / Bb7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
A2			
C6 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F7 / Bb7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C6 ///
B			
E7 ///	///	A7 ///	///
D7 ///	///	G7 ///	///
A3			
C6 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F7 / Bb7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C6 ///

Oleo

Sonny Rollins' (jazz) *Oleo* is shown below. This is another example of a standard jazz rhythm changes tune.

A1			
Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	Fmaj7 / Fm6 /	Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
A2			
Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	Fmaj7 / Fm6 /	Cmaj7 / A7 /	Cmaj7 ///
B			
E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////
A3			
Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	Fmaj7 / Fm6 /	Cmaj7 / A7 /	Cmaj7 ///

Turnpike

J.J. Johnson's (jazz) *Turnpike* is shown below. This song is in an AABA form with the chord changes for all three A sections being the same. Notice that the last two bars of the A section are only drums.

A			
C / C/Bb /	Ab7 / G7 /	F7 / Bb7 /	Eb7 / Ab7 /
Gm7 / F7 /	Eb7 Dm7 G7 C7	-Drums-	
B			
Bm7 ///	E7 ///	Em7 ///	A7 ///
Am7 ///	D7 ///	Abm7 ///	Db7 ///

(Meet) The Flintstones

(Meet) The Flintstones (from “The Flintstones”—1960) is shown below. Yes, this is the popular cartoon theme song written by William Hanna, Joseph Barbera, and Hoyt Curtin. Try singing the lyrics to *I Got Rhythm* over these changes. This progression is a great departure from the usual chord substitutions.

A1			
Cmaj7 ///	F7 ///	Em7 ///	A7b9 ///
Dm7 ///	G11 / G7b9 /	E7b13 / A9 /	D7b13 / G9 /
A2			
Cmaj7 ///	F7 ///	Em7 ///	A7b9 ///
Dm7 ///	G11 / G7b9 /	C / F7 /	C ///
B			
E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////
A3			
Cmaj7 ///	Dm7 ///	Em7 ///	Fm7 / Bb7 /
Em7 / Eb13 /	Dm7 / Db7b9 /	C6 / A7b9 /	Dm7 / G7b9 /

I Got Rhythm

The Happenings’ (rock) 1967 hit version of *I Got Rhythm* is shown below. This version added an extra measure of “G7” tagged on to the last bar of the A sections and includes unique basic and rock and roll progression substitutions.

A1			
C ///	Fadd9 ///	C ///	Fadd9 ///

C ///	Fadd9 ///	C / D7 /	G7sus4 ///
G7 ///			
A2			
C ///	F / G /	C ///	F / G /
C ///	F / G /	C / D7 /	G7sus4 ///
G7 ///			
B			
E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////
A3			
C ///	F / G /	C ///	F / G /
C ///	F / G /	C / D7 /	G7sus4 ///
G7 ///			

Ah-leu-cha

Charlie Parker's *Ah-leu-cha* is shown below. In this tune, Charlie Parker takes a unique minor key approach to the changes.

A			
Am7 ///	////	////	////
Am7 ///	////	// G7 /	C ///
B			
Bm7 ///	E7 ///	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have used rhythm changes to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own rhythm changes. To better understand song form, you should go through a fake book identifying various song forms such as blues, AABA, or verse/chorus, etc.

(1) I have simplified the rhythm changes A section progression to just the primary chords as shown below. Play through the simplified changes and listen to the difference this makes to the progression. Now, using chord substitutions, try creating new changes.

Simplified Changes

C ///	G7 ///	C ///	G7 ///
C ///	F ///	C / G7 /	C ///

New Changes

Here's how I did it with just "maj7" and "13" embellishments. Notice how useful this process can be for creating new eight-bar verse progressions.

Cmaj7 ///	G13 ///	Cmaj7 ///	G13 ///
Cmaj7 ///	Fmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 / G13 /	Cmaj7 ///

(2) I have simplified the rhythm changes B section progression as shown below. Play through the simplified changes and listen to the difference this makes to the progression. Now, using chord substitutions, try creating new changes.

Simplified Changes

E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

New Changes

Here's how I did it with just "IIm-V" substitutions.

Bm7 ///	E7 ///	Em7 ///	A7 ///
Am7 ///	D7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

(3) Transpose and play the standard changes in the key of Bb. If you don't know how to transpose, review the material on transposing in the "Appendix" of this book.

A				
Key of C	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Key of Bb				
Key of C	C / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C / G7 /	C ///
Key of Bb				
B				
Key of C	E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
Key of Bb				
Key of C	D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////
Key of Bb				

(4) Try substituting the following six turnarounds for the first four bars of the rhythm changes. There are many more turnaround examples in the separate “Turnarounds” chapter in this book.

C ///	Ab7 / G7	C ///	Ab7 / G7
C / Ab7 /	Dm7 / G7	C / Ab7 /	Dm7 / G7
C / Eb7 /	Ab7 / G7 /	C / Eb7 /	Ab7 / G7 /
C / Am /	F / G7 /	C / Am /	F / G7 /
C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /	C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /
Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

(5) Try backcycling from the target “F” chord in bar 6 to the beginning of the A section of the rhythm changes.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / C7 /	F / F#o7 /		

Here’s how I did it. Play and listen carefully to the sound of my two substitute progressions.

Backcycled Chords

C / Ab /	Db / Gb /	B / E /	A / D /
G / C /	F / F#o7 /		

Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Changes #1)

C / Ab7 /	Dbm7 / Gb7 /	Bm7 / E7 /	Am7 / D7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F / F#o7 /		

Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Changes #2)

C / Ab7 /	Db7 / Gb7 /	B7 / E7 /	A7 / D7 /
G7 / C7 /	F7 / F#o7 /		

(6) Try building your own 32-bar progression for a new song using the rhythm changes in the key of C. Feel free to mix and match from the substitution boxes shown earlier in this chapter.

A1

A2

B

A3

Here is how I did it this time using backcycling (target “G7” in bar four) and tritone substitutions.

A1

C / C#m7 /	F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C/G / G7 /	C / / /

A2

C / C#m7 /	F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C/G / G7 /	C ///

B

Fm7 ///	Bb7 ///	Em7 ///	A7 ///
Ebm7 ///	Ab7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

A3

C / C#m7 /	F#m7 / B7 /	Em7 / A7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
Gm7 / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C/G / G7 /	C ///

Rock and Roll Progressions

Rock and roll is an American popular music style that developed from a variety of sources including blues, rhythm and blues, country, gospel, traditional pop, jazz, and folk in the mid 1950s. In the beginning, rock and roll was characterized by three-chord progressions, a strong insistent backbeat, catchy melodies, and simple lyrics based on young love or teen angst. Early pioneers included Bill Haley, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, and Elvis Presley. Commenting on rock and roll, U2's Bono said, "All I need is a guitar, three chords and the truth." You will have to buy your own guitar and find your own truth but the three chords he was talking about were the "I-IV-V" of the rock and roll progression. The twelve-bar blues and later the "I-IV-V" rock and roll progressions were the two most common chord changes in early rock and roll music. Both progressions are built with the same three chords. The "I-IV-V" progression (also referred to as the three-chord trick) consists of the three primary (tonic, subdominant, and dominant) chords that convey the raw sound that helped define rock and roll. Notice how complete and versatile this progression is as it contains all the notes of the major scale. The "C" chord is comprised of C-E-G, the "F" chord F-A-C, and the "G" chord G-B-D while the "C" Major Scale contains the C-D-E-F-G-A-B notes. The "V" chord at the end of the rock and roll progression leads you back to the "I" chord and the beginning of this often-repeated chord sequence. If you substitute the harder sounding relative major "IV" for the softer sounding relative minor "IIm" chord in the "I-IIm-V" jazz progression, you create the "I-IV-V" rock and roll progression. Similarly, if you omitted the softer sounding "VIIm" chord of the "I-VIIm-IV-V" doo-wop progression you have the harder rock and roll sound that became the meat and potatoes

of 1960s and 1970s rock. Surprisingly, the “I-IV-V” pattern that defined early rock and roll was actually written 2,500 years ago by the Greek thinker Pythagoras of Alexandria who defined the mathematical relationship between the principal tones of the first (tonic), fourth (subdominant), and fifth (dominant) notes in the 12-tone scale that is the basis of Western music.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the rock and roll progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, variation, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at several ideas from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own rock and roll progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the rock and roll progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play the first two chords for two beats and the last chord for four beats. This is the main chorus progression for songs such as Bob Dylan’s 1965 hit *Like A Rolling Stone*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Now, play the rock and roll progression replacing the “V” with the “V7” chord listening carefully to the difference in sound this subtle substitution makes. Notice that the “V7” choice makes a stronger resolution to the tonic than the “V” chord. In most cases, the decision to use the “V” or “V7” is a matter of personal choice.

A-D-E	C-F-G	E♭-A♭-B♭	G♭-B-Db
B♭-E♭-F	D♭-G♭-A♭	E-A-B	G-C-D
B-E-F#	D-G-A	F-B♭-C	A♭-D♭-E♭

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, play the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression chords for the durations shown below. The majority of hit songs written with the rock and roll progression have been created using just these four simple progression patterns. As you can see, each chord is typically played for two, four, or eight beats.

C / F /		G7 ///	
C ///		F / G7 /	
C ///	F ///	G7 ///	///
C ///	///	F ///	G7 ///

You should listen to as many hit songs written using rock and roll progression as possible to truly appreciate the potential of the three-chord trick. Examples of the first pattern (two beats each for the first two chords and four beats for the last chord) include *La Bamba* verse (Ritchie Valens—1959), *Twist And Shout* verse (Beatles—1964), *Like A Rolling Stone* chorus (Bob Dylan—1965), *Carrie-Anne* chorus (Hollies—1967), *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds* chorus (Beatles—1967), *Dizzy* chorus (Tommy Roe—1969), *Guitar Man* verse (Bread—1972), *Two Tickets To Paradise* chorus (Eddie Money—1978), and *Emotion In Motion* verse (Ric Ocasck—1986).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats for the first chord and two beats each for the last two chords) include *Everyday* verse (Buddy Holly—1957), *Do You Love Me* verse (Contours—1962), *Dance, Dance, Dance* verse (Beach Boys—1964), *You Were On My Mind* verse (We Five—1965), *Mellow Yellow* chorus (Donovan—1966), *(You're My) Soul And Inspiration* chorus (Righteous Brothers—1966), *I'll Take You There* verse/chorus (Staple Singers—1972), *Stir It Up* chorus (Johnny Nash—1973), *The Tide Is High* verse/chorus

(Blondie—1980), and *Make Me Lose Control* chorus (Eric Carmen—1988).

Examples of the third pattern (four beats each for the first two chords and eight beats for the last chord) include *Mr. Jones* chorus (Counting Crows—1993) and *I'll Be There For You* chorus (Rembrandts—1995).

Examples of the last pattern (eight beats for the first chord and four beats each for the last two chords) include *Come And Get It* verse (Badfinger—1970), *Born To Run* verse (Bruce Springsteen—1975), *Rock And Roll All Nite* chorus (Kiss—1976), and *The River Of Dreams* verse (Billy Joel—1993).

Other durations include the main chorus progression to *Time Is On My Side* (Rolling Stones—1964) as shown below. The songwriters used a 3/4 for this song instead of the more popular 4/4 time.

C //	///	///	///
F //	///	G //	///

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. The box below shows examples of rock and roll progression substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any rock and roll progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Notice the “Ao” common tone substitution for the “F” chord in the last example. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions. Listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make.

C	F	G	<i>Comedy Tonight</i> verse (from “A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum”—1962)
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C	F	G6	<i>Mr. Big Stuff</i> chorus (Jean Knight—1971)
C	F	Gsus4- G- Gsus2-G	<i>You've Got To Hide Your Love Away</i> chorus (Silkie—1965)
C	F	G7- G7sus4- G7	<i>Here Comes The Sun</i> verse (Beatles—1971)
C	F	G7b9	<i>Hey Nineteen</i> verse (Steely Dan—1980)
C	F	G7-[F/A- G7/B]	<i>Sweet Caroline</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1969)
C	F-F/E- F/D- F/C	G7	<i>Rescue Me</i> chorus (Fontella Bass—1965)
C	F6	G	<i>Kiss Him Goodbye</i> verse (Steam—1969)
C	F6	G6	<i>What's New Pussy Cat?</i> chorus (Tom Jones—1965)
C	Fmaj7	G	<i>Lady In Red</i> verse (Chris DeBurgh—1987) and <i>I Will Remember You</i> verse (Sarah McLachlan—1995)
C5	F5	G5	<i>I Love Rock 'N' Roll</i> chorus (Joan Jett—1982)
Cadd9	Fadd9	G7sus4	<i>Missing You</i> verse (John Waite—1984)
C-C7	F	G7	<i>Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport</i> verse/chorus (Rolf Harris—1963) and <i>California Girls</i> verse (Beach Boys—1965)
C-C/E	F/A	G/B	<i>Don't Know Much</i> verse (Linda Ronstadt & Aaron Neville—1989)
C- Csus4- C	F/A	Gsus4	<i>Born To Run</i> intro (Bruce Springsteen—1975)

C	F	G	C	<i>Faith Of Our Fathers</i> verse (Church—1849), <i>Jingle Bells</i> verse (James Pierpont—1857), <i>Little Brown Jug</i> verse (Folk—1869), <i>Wabash Cannonball</i> verse (Country—1938), <i>No Beer In Heaven</i> chorus (Polka—N/A), <i>Words of Love</i> verse (Diamonds—1957), <i>Summertime Blues</i> verse (Eddie Cochran—1958), <i>Da Doo Ron Ron</i> verse (Crystals—1963), <i>Don't Let The Rain Come Down (Crooked Little Man)</i> chorus (Serendipity Singers—1964), <i>Dang Me</i> verse/chorus (Roger Miller—1964), <i>King Of The Road</i> verse (Roger Miller—1965), <i>Just Like A Woman</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1966), <i>I Got The Feelin' (Oh No No)</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1966), <i>Little Bit O'Soul</i> verse (Music Explosion—1967), <i>Sweet Baby James</i> chorus (James Taylor—1970), <i>Cracklin' Rosie</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1970), <i>I Am I Said</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1971), <i>Me And Julio Down By The Schoolyard</i> verse (Paul Simon—1972), <i>Back Home Again</i> verse (John Denver—1974), <i>The Promised Land</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1974), <i>Come Monday</i> verse (Jimmy Buffet—1974), <i>Got To Get You Into My Life</i> chorus (Beatles—1976), <i>Only The Good Die Young</i> chorus (Billy Joel—1978), <i>Lay Down Sally</i> chorus (Eric Clapton—1978), and <i>Take It On The Run</i> verse (REO Speedwagon—1981)
C	F6-F	G7	C	<i>Good Time Charlie's Got The Blues</i> verse (Danny O'Keefe—1972)
C	F7	G7	C	<i>That's All Right, Mama</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1954), <i>Heartbreak Hotel</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1956), and <i>All Shook Up</i> verse (Elvi Presley—1957)
C5	F5	Gsus-G	C5	<i>American Storm</i> verse (Bob Seger—1986)

C-C7	F	G7	C	<i>Your Cheatin' Heart</i> verse (1953) and <i>If You Wanna Be Happy</i> chorus (Jimmy Soul—1963)
C7	F7	G7	C7	<i>Old Time Rock and Roll</i> verse (Bob Seger—1979)
C	Ao7	G7/B	C	<i>Rainy Day Women #12 & 35</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1966)

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “Am-F-G,” “Am-Dm-G,” and “Am-Dm-E” substitutions built by replacing various chords in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression with their relative minor triads. Again, be sure to play each progression example with and without the substitutions.

Am-F-G Substitution

Replacing the “C” of the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression with its relative minor chord creates the “Am-F-G” substitution. An example of this substitution is the verse progression to Alice Cooper’s 1971 hit *I’m Eighteen* shown below.

Am///	F / G /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice that the fourth example is the “Am-F-G-F” variation (added “F” chord) and the last two examples are the “F-G-Am” displacement (“Am” chord last).

Am	F	G	<i>Crazy On You</i> chorus (Heart—1976) and <i>Go Your Own Way</i> chorus (Fleetwood Mac—1977)
Am(no3rd)	F(no3rd)	G(no3rd)	<i>Rock ‘N’ Roll Fantasy</i> verse (Bad Company—1979)

Am	F	G	Am	<i>Wishing Well</i> verse (Free—1973), <i>Because The Night</i> verse (Patti Smith Group—1978), <i>I'm So Excited</i> chorus (Pointer Sis- ters—1982), <i>You Give Love A Bad Name</i> chorus (Bon Jovi—1986), <i>Rhythm Is Gonna Get You</i> chorus (Gloria Estefan—1986), and <i>Layla</i> [Unplugged Version] chorus (Eric Clapton—1992)
Am	F	G	F	<i>Boys Of Summer</i> verse (Don Hen- ley—1984)
	F	G	Am	<i>Wishing Well</i> chorus (Free—1973), <i>Ridin' The Storm Out</i> chorus (REO Speedwagon—1973), <i>Annie's Song</i> verse (John Denver—1974), <i>(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty</i> chorus (K.C. & The Sunshine Band—1976), <i>Never</i> chorus (Heart—1985), and <i>Forever Man</i> verse/chorus (Eric Clapton—1985)
	F	G7	Am7	<i>I Can't Stand It</i> chorus (Eric Clap- ton—1981)

Am-Dm-G Substitution

Replacing both the “C” and “F” of the “C-F-G” rock and roll progres-
sion with their respective relative minor chords creates the “Am-Dm-
G” substitution. An example of this substitution is the opening verse to
the Easybeats’ 1967 hit *Friday On My Mind* shown below.

Am ///	Am ///	Dm ///	G ///
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Other examples include the “Am-Dm-G” chorus progression to
Cutting Crew’s 1987 hit *(I Just) Died In Your Arms* and Toni Braxton’s
1996 hit *Un-Break My Heart*.

Am-Dm-E Substitution

Replacing all of the chords in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression with their respective relative minor triads creates the “Am-Dm-E” substitution. The “V” chord is usually played in its dominant seventh quality. The Beatles used this substitution to write the opening chorus progression to their 1964 *I’m Happy Just To Dance With You* shown below.

Am ///	Dm / E7 /	Am ///	Dm / E7 /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice that the last example is the “Dm-Em-Am displacement (“Am” chord last).

Am	Dm	E7		<i>I’m Just A Singer</i> verse (Moody Blues—1973)
Am	Dm	E7#9	Am	<i>Abracadabra</i> verse (Steve Miller Band—1982)
Am7	Dm9	E7	Am7-[F-E7]	<i>Elenore</i> verse (Turtles—1968)
Am	D7(no3rd)	E	Am	<i>People Are Strange</i> verse (Doors—1967)
	Dm7	Em7	Am7	<i>Heat Wave</i> verse (Martha & The Vandellas—1963)

A further displacement is the “Am-Em7-Dm7-Em7” chorus progression to Electric Light Orchestra’s 1976 hit *Evil Woman*.

VARIATION

Variations occur when you add chords to or subtract chords from a specific progression. In this section, you will look at the “C-F-G-F” and “F-G” variations of the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression. Play

through each progression example and thoroughly understand how the variation was created before moving on to the next progression.

C-F-G-F Variation

The “C-F-G-F” variation is made by adding the “F” chord to the end of the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creating an up and down movement. This progression launched at least a thousand bands in the 1960s. An example of this variation is the verse progression to the Troggs’ 1966 hit *Wild Thing* shown below.

C / F /	G / F /
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. Notice that the *Louie, Louie* example replaces the “Gm” for the “G” chord (parallel minor/major substitution). Also, there are examples of two further variations (“C-F-G-F-C” and “C-F-G-F-G”).

C	F	G	F	
<i>Get Off Of My Cloud</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1965), <i>Hang On Sloopy</i> verse (McCoys—1965), <i>Game Of Love</i> verse (Wayne Fontana & The Mindbenders—1965), <i>Good Lovin’</i> verse (Young Rascals—1966), <i>You Baby</i> verse (Turtles—1966), <i>(You’re My) Soul And Inspiration</i> bridge (Righteous Brothers—1966), <i>Say I Am (What I Am)</i> verse (Tommy James And The Shondells—1966), <i>Angel Of The Morning</i> verse (Merrilee Rush—1968), <i>Piece Of My Heart</i> verse (Janis Joplin—1968), <i>Dizzy</i> verse (Tommy Roe—1969), <i>The Joker</i> verse (Steve Miller Band—1974), and <i>Summer Nights</i> verse (from “Grease”—1978)				
C	F	G	F	C
<i>Down In The Boondocks</i> chorus (Billy Joe Royal—1965) and <i>Suspicious Minds</i> verse (Elvis Presley—1969)				

C	F7	G7	F7	C	<i>Great Balls Of Fire</i> verse (Jerry Lee Lewis—1958)
C5	F	G	F-F7	C	<i>Truckin'</i> chorus (Greatful Dead—1971)
C	F	G	F	G	<i>You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'</i> bridge (1965), <i>Angel Of The Morning</i> chorus (Merrilee Rush—1968), <i>Still The One</i> verse (Orleans—1976), and <i>Lido Shuffle</i> verse (Boz Scaggs—1977).
C	F	Gm	F		<i>Louie Louie</i> verse (Kingsmen—1963)

F-G Variation

Omitting the “C” chord in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creates the “F-G” variation. An example of this variation is the chorus progression to Elvis Presley’s 1962 hit *Return To Sender* shown below.

F ///	G ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. Notice that the last example is the “G-F” displacement created by reversing the chords in the “F-G” variation.

F	G	<i>Don't Be Cruel</i> bridge (Elvis Presley—1956), <i>Ticket To Ride</i> bridge (Beatles—1965), <i>Let Me Be</i> verse (Turtles—1965), <i>So You Want To Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star</i> verse (Byrds—1967), <i>Good Morning Starshine</i> verse (Oliver—1969), <i>Ballad Of John And Yoko</i> bridge (Beatles—1969), <i>Rebel Rebel</i> verse/ chorus (David Bowie—1974), <i>Sentimental Lady</i> verse (Bob Welch—1977), and <i>Magnet And Steel</i> verse (Walter Egan—1978)	
F	G	F/A-G/B	<i>Play Me</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1972)

F	G6		<i>Rock The Boat</i> chorus (Hues Corpora- tion—1974)
F5	G5		<i>Mississippi Queen</i> verse (Moun- tain—1970)
Fmaj7	G		<i>Dreams</i> verse (Fleetwood Mac—1977) and <i>Emotion In Motion</i> chorus (Ric Ocasek—1986)
F-Fmaj7/A	G7	F	<i>Escape (The Pina Colada Song)</i> verse (Rupert Holmes—1984)
	G	F	<i>Sea Of Love</i> chorus (Phil Phillips With The Twilights—1959), <i>A Little Bit Me, A Little Bit You</i> verse (Monkees—1967), <i>Respect</i> verse (Aretha Franklin—1967), and <i>Love Train</i> verse (O' Jays—1973).
	G	Fmaj7	<i>With Your Love</i> chorus (Jefferson Star- ship—1976)
	G6	F6	<i>Walking On Sunshine</i> chorus (Katrina & The Waves—1985)

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as “displaced” progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will find a table showing the six possible combinations of the rock and roll progression in the key of C.

C-F-G	F-G-C	G-C-F
C-G-F	F-C-G	G-F-C

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “C-G-F,” “F-G-C,” “F-C-G,” “G-C-F,” and “G-F-C” rock and roll displacements. As you did with the variations, play through each progression example and

thoroughly understand how the displacement was created before moving on to the next progression.

C-G-F Displacements

Reversing the order of the “F” and “G” chords in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creates the “C-G-F” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to the Eagles’ 1972 hit *Take It Easy* shown below.

C ///	C ///	G ///	F ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The examples eight through twelve are the “C-G-F-G” variation (added “G”). Notice the use of the parallel minor/major substitution (“Gm” for “G”) in the last four examples and the use of the relative minor/major substitution (“Dm” for “F”) in the fifth to last example. The “Am-G-F” relative minor/major substitution is discussed in the separate “Flamenco Progression” chapter of this book.

C	G	F	<i>The Weight</i> chorus (The Band—1968), <i>Crimson And Clover</i> verse (Tommy James And The Shondells—1968), <i>Wild World</i> chorus (Cat Stevens—1971), <i>If Not For You</i> verse (Olivia Newton-John—1971), <i>My Maria</i> verse (B.W. Stevenson—1973), and <i>Already Gone</i> chorus (Eagles—1974), and <i>Boys Of Summer</i> chorus (Don Henley—1984)
C	G	Fadd9	<i>Heart Of The Matter</i> verse (Don Henley—1990)
C5	Gsus4	Fadd2	<i>Hero</i> chorus (Enrique Iglesias—2001)

C	G	F	C	<i>The First Noel</i> verse (Christmas—1833), <i>Can't You Hear My Heartbeat</i> verse (Herman's Hermits—1965), <i>Nowhere Man</i> verse (Beatles—1966), <i>To Love Somebody</i> chorus (Bee Gees—1967), <i>I Think We're Alone Now</i> chorus (Tommy James & The Shondells—1967), <i>Come On Down To My Boat Baby</i> chorus (Every Mother's Son—1967), <i>Green Tambourine</i> verse (Lemon Pipers—1968), <i>Fortunate Son</i> chorus (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969), <i>And It Stoned Me</i> verse (Van Morrison—1970), <i>If You Wanna Get To Heaven</i> verse (Ozark Mountain Daredevils—1974), <i>Shelter From The Storm</i> verse (Bob Dylan—1974), and <i>Go Your Own Way</i> verse (Fleetwood Mac—1977)
C	G7	F	C	<i>Kiss An Angel Good Mornin'</i> chorus (Charlie Pride—1972)
C	G/D	Fadd9	C	<i>Wedding Song (There Is Love)</i> verse (Paul Stookey—1971)
C	G	F	C-G	<i>The Letter</i> chorus (Box Tops—1967)
C	G	F	G	<i>Wishin' And Hopin'</i> chorus (Dusty Springfield—1964), <i>Baby's In Black</i> chorus (Beatles—1964), <i>Crimson And Clover</i> outro (Tommy James & The Shondells—1969), <i>Games People Play</i> verse (Joe South—1969), <i>What Is Life</i> chorus (George Harrison—1971), <i>Nights Are Forever Without You</i> chorus (England Dan & John Ford Coley—1976), <i>It's So Easy</i> chorus (Linda Ronstadt—1977), <i>First Cut Is The Deepest</i> chorus (Rod Stewart—1977), <i>Jack & Diane</i> verse (John Cougar—1982), <i>Small Town</i> verse (John Mellencamp—1985), <i>Anymore</i> verse (Travis Tritt—1991), <i>He Thinks He'll Keep Her</i> chorus (Mary Chapin Carpenter—1992), and <i>My Heart Will Go On</i> verse (Celine Dion—1999)

C	G7	F	G-C	<i>The Rose</i> verse (Bette Midler—1980)
C	G7	Fsus2	G7-C	<i>New Kid In Town</i> verse (Eagles—1976)
C-C6	G	F	G7	<i>Sweet Caroline</i> pre chorus (Neil Diamond—1969)
C	G	Dm	G-C	<i>Stand By Your Man</i> verse (Tammy Wynette—1969), <i>Put Your Hand In The Hand</i> verse (Ocean—1971), and <i>Tequila Sunrise</i> verse (Eagles—1973)
C	Gm	F	C	<i>Thick As A Brick</i> verse (Jethro Tull—1972)
C	Gm7	F	C	<i>Fire And Rain</i> verse (James Taylor—1970)
C	Gm7	F9	C	<i>We Are Family</i> verse (Sister Sledge—1979)
C-Cmaj7	Gm7	F-Fm	C	<i>Kokomo</i> verse (Beach Boys—1988)

The opening chorus progression to Foreigner's 1985 hit *I Want To Know What Love Is* is shown below. Try playing this progression with and without the passing chords shown in brackets.

C // [Am]	G ///	Dm // [Am]	G ///
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You will want to take a look at other examples of non-diminished passing chords such as James Taylor's cover of *Handy Man* (1977) that used the "G" and Bob Seger's *Night Moves* (1977) that used the "Bb" chord.

F-G-C Displacements

Moving the "C" chord to the last position in the "C-F-G" rock and roll progression creates the "F-G-C" displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening chorus progression to Jimmy Buffett's 1977 hit *Cheeseburger In Paradise* shown below.

F/G/	C ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement.

F	G	C	<i>Please Please Me</i> bridge (Beatles—1964), <i>No Reply</i> verse (Beatles—1964), <i>It Takes Two</i> chorus (Marvin Gaye & Kim Weston—1967), <i>Get Together</i> chorus (Young Bloods—1969), <i>Mother And Child Reunion</i> verse (Paul Simon—1972), <i>You Wear It Well</i> verse (Rod Stewart—1972), <i>Bungle In The Jungle</i> chorus (Jethro Tull—1974), <i>Back Home Again</i> chorus (John Denver—1974), and <i>I'm Sorry</i> chorus (John Denver—1975)
F	G	C-C/E	<i>We Are The World</i> chorus (USA For Africa—1985)
F	G	C-Csus4-C	<i>Light My Fire</i> chorus (Doors—1967)
F	G	C-Csus4-C7	<i>Margaritaville</i> chorus (Jimmy Buffett—1977)
F	G	Csus4-C	<i>Me And You And A Dog Named Boo</i> chorus (Lobo—1971)
F	G11	C	<i>How Sweet It Is</i> chorus (Marvin Gaye—1965)
F6	G7	C	<i>Guantanamera</i> verse/chorus (Sandpipers—1966)
F7	G7	C7	<i>Season Of The Witch</i> chorus (Donovan—1966)
Fmaj7	G7	Cmaj7	<i>I Just Want To Be Your Everything</i> chorus (Andy Gibb—1977)
Fmaj7	G11	Cmaj7	<i>How Much I Feel</i> chorus (Ambrosia—1978)
Fmaj7/D	G11	Cmaj7	<i>Till I Loved You</i> verse (Barbara Streisand & Don Johnson—1988)

Fmaj7-F6	G	C	<i>Two Hearts</i> chorus (Phil Collins—1989)
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F-C-G Displacements

Reversing the order of the “C” and “F” chords in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creates the “F-C-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening chorus progression to Stephen Foster’s 1849 *Oh Susanna* shown below.

F ///	F ///	C ///	G ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The last example uses a parallel minor/major substitution (“Gm” for “G”).

F	C	G		<i>On Top Of Old Smoky</i> (Folk—1841), <i>Down By The River</i> chorus (Neil Young—1969), and <i>Up Around The Bend</i> chorus (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1970)
F	C	G	C	<i>This Land Is Your Land</i> verse/chorus (Woody Guthrie—1940), <i>All I Really Want To Do</i> verse (Cher—1965), <i>People Got To Be Free</i> chorus (Rascals—1968), <i>Down On The Corner</i> chorus (Creedence Clearwater Revival—1969), <i>Candida</i> chorus (Dawn—1970), <i>Knock Three Times</i> chorus (Dawn—1970), <i>Me And Bobby McGee</i> chorus (Janis Joplin—1971), and <i>Changes In Latitudes, Changes In Attitudes</i> verse (Jimmy Buffett—1977)
F	C	G7	C- Cmaj7- C6-C7	<i>Blueberry Hill</i> verse (Glenn Miller—1940)

Fmaj7	Cmaj7	G7sus	Cmaj7	<i>Heart Light</i> chorus (Neil Diamond—1982)
F	C	Gm	C	<i>No Time</i> verse (Guess Who—1970)

G-C-F Displacements

Moving the “G” chord to the first position in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creates the “G-C-F” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening chorus progression to Elton John’s 1997 *Candle In The Wind* shown below. This song is the best selling recording of all time.

G ///	G ///	C ///	F ///
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Notice the similarity of this displacement to the classic rock displacement as shown below. These two progressions are easily confused.

V-I-IV-I (Rock and Roll Displacement)	G-C-F-C (key of C)
I-IV-bVII-IV (Classic Rock Displacement)	G-C-F-C (key of G)

The box below shows other examples of this type of variation. Neil Diamond wrote many of his early hits using the “G-C-F-C” displacement. The last example uses a parallel minor/major substitution (“Gm7” for “G”).

G	C/G	F		<i>Start Me Up</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1981)
G	C	F	C	<i>Cherry, Cherry</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1966), <i>I Got The Feelin’</i> (<i>Oh No No</i>) verse (Neil Diamond—1966), <i>Thank The Lord For The Night Time</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1967), and <i>What I Like About You</i> verse/chorus (Romantics—1979)
Gm7	C7b9	Fmaj7		<i>This Masquerade</i> bridge (George Benson—1972)

G-F-C Displacements

Simply reversing the order of all the chords in the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression creates the “G-F-C” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Rod Stewart’s 1971 hit *Maggie Mae* shown below.

G ///	F ///	C ///	C ///
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Notice the similarity of this displacement to the classic rock displacement as shown below. These two progressions are also easily confused.

V-IV-I (Rock And Roll Displacement)	G-F-C (key of C)
I-bVII-IV (Classic Rock Displacement)	G-F-C (key of G)

The box below shows other examples of this type of displacement. The last two examples are “G-F-C-G” and “G-F-C-F-G” variations. Notice that the *Wicked Games* example uses a parallel minor/major substitution.

G	F	C	<i>Ring Of Fire</i> chorus (Johnny Cash—1962), <i>Love Me Do</i> bridge (Beatles—1964), <i>I’ve Just Seen A Face</i> chorus (Beatles—1965), <i>The Wind Cries Mary</i> verse (Jimi Hendrix—1967), <i>Magic Carpet Ride</i> verse (Steppenwolf—1969), <i>Rock Me</i> verse (Steppenwolf—1969), <i>Midnight Rambler</i> verse (Rolling Stones—1969), <i>Celebrate</i> chorus (Three Dog Night—1970), <i>You Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet</i> verse (Bachman-Turner Overdrive—1974), <i>Sweet Home Alabama</i> verse (Lynyrd Skynyrd—1974), <i>Ghostbusters</i> verse (Ray Parker, Jr.—1984), <i>I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For</i> chorus (U2—1987), and <i>She Talks To Angels</i> chorus (Black Crows—1991)
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G/B	F/A	C		<i>God Bless The U.S.A.</i> chorus (Lee Greenwood—1984)
G-G7	F/C	C		<i>Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me</i> verse (Elton John—1974)
Gm7	F	C		<i>Wicked Games</i> verse (Chris Isaak—1991)
G	F	C	G	<i>Gloria</i> verse (Shadows Of Knight—1966), <i>Ramblin' Gamblin' Man</i> verse (Bob Seger—1969), <i>No Sugar Tonight</i> chorus (Guess Who—1970), <i>Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting)</i> verse (Elton John—1973), and <i>Takin' Care Of Business</i> verse (Bachman-Turner Overdrive—1976)
G	F	C	F-G	<i>Look Through Any Window</i> verse (Holmes—1966)

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Let's take a quick look at several ideas from my songwriter's notebook. Below are several examples of how I use the rock and roll progression to write a new song or reharmonize an old one.

Too Much Too Young

The eight-bar chorus progression to my *Too Much Too Young* is shown below. This progression is created with the “Am-F-G-Am” rock and roll substitution. The lyrics go as follows:

Too much too young, caught in the lie,
Too much too young, another dies.

Am ///	F ///	G ///	Am ///
Am ///	F ///	G ///	Am ///

It Must Be Love

The eight-bar verse progression to my *It Must Be Love* is shown below. This is a hard rock song written when I was considerably younger. The unembellished three-chord trick worked fine over the simple “Got a message send it to you, gonna tell you my point of view, got a feeling you know it’s true, you know I can’t get enough of you” lyrics.

C ///	///	///	///
F ///	///	G ///	///

Me And You

The eight-bar verse progression to my *Me And You* is shown below. I capitalized on a tonic pedal point that seemed to work well with the “When it all comes down to me and you, and there’s nothing else to say or do, I want to take you in my arms and say I love you.” lyrics.

C / G/C /	F/C / G/C /	C / G/C /	F/C / G/C /
C / G/C /	F/C / G/C /	C / G/C /	F/C / G/C /

Forever

The chorus progression to my *Forever* is shown below. I created the chorus progression using a “D-E-Am” displacement of the “Am-Dm-E” rock and roll substitution. The lyric goes “Ain’t that what we promised forever, ain’t that what we promised forever.”

D/F# ///	E7 ///	Am ///	Am ///
D/F# ///	E7 ///	Am ///	Am ///

Jingle Bells

Applying substitutions to the *Jingle Bells* (James Pierpont—1857) verse chords, I created a new sixteen-bar progression (a repeated eight-bar

phrase) that I can use as a jazzed-up arrangement to this Christmas classic or use it as the basis of a verse or chorus for a new song. Below is the original *Jingle Bells* verse progression followed by my substitutions. This arrangement features the use of a “C-Bb” classic rock vamp. Reharmonizing public domain songs such as *Jingle Bells* is yet another way to come up with familiar yet fresh progressions for new songs.

Original Progression

C ///	///	///	F ///
F ///	G ///	///	C ///
C ///	///	///	F ///
F ///	G ///	///	C ///

Substitute Progression

Cmaj7 / Bb9 /	Cmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 / Bb9 /	Am7 ///
Dm7 ///	G9 ///	Dm7 / G9 /	Cmaj7 / C6 /
Cmaj7 / Bb9 /	Cmaj7 ///	Cmaj7 / Bb9 /	Am7 ///
Dm7 ///	G9 ///	Dm7 / G9 /	Cmaj7 / C6 /

Dancing On The Edge

The last four-bars of the chorus progression to my *Dancing On The Edge* is shown below. I created it by using a variation of the “F-G-C” displacement. The lyric goes “So you’re back up on the ledge there’s no escape.”

F/C ///	G ///	C ///	G6/B ///
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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used rock and roll progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will

be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own rock and roll progressions.

(1) Transform the rock and roll progression shown below into an ascending “C-E-F-G” bass line progression using inversions and substitutions.

C ///	C ///	F ///	G ///
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Here is how Wings did it to create the main verse progression to their 1978 hit *With A Little Luck*.

C ///	C/E ///	F ///	G11 ///
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Now, try substituting the above ascending bass line rock and roll progression for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Everyday* verse (Buddy Holly—1957) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	F / G /
-------	---------

Substitute Progression

C / C/E /	F / G /
-----------	---------

Lastly, try substituting the basic progression for the more complex ascending rock and roll progression of *Somewhere Out There* verse (Linda Ronstadt & James Ingram—1987) as shown below. You don’t always need to create complex harmonies. Sometimes the best progression for a particular set of lyrics is the simplest.

Original Progression

Cadd9 / Cmaj7/E /	Fmaj7 / G11 /
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Substitute Progression (Basic Progression)

Cmaj7 ///	Fmaj7 ///
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(2) Transform the rock and roll variation shown below into a descending diatonic “C-B-A-G” bass line progression using inversions.

C ///	G ///	F ///	G ///
-------	-------	-------	-------

Here is how Eric Clapton did it to create the main verse progression to his 1978 hit *Wonderful Tonight*.

C ///	G/B ///	F/A ///	G ///
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(3) Transform the rock and roll variation shown below into a tonic pedal point progression using substitutions and inversions.

C ///	G ///	F ///	G ///
-------	-------	-------	-------

Here is how Bob Seger did it to create the opening verse progression to his 1978 hit *We've Got Tonight*.

C ///	G/C ///	F/C ///	G/C ///
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Now, try substituting the rock and roll pedal point progression for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Two Tickets To Paradise* chorus (Eddie Money—1978) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / F /	G ///
---------	-------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point)

C / F / C /	G/C ///
-------------	---------

Lastly, try substituting the rock and roll variation and pedal point progressions for a basic progression in a song such as *Midnight Hour* verse (Wilson Pickett—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / F /	C / F /
---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point)

C / F/C /	G/C / F/C /
-----------	-------------

(4) Try substituting the rock and roll progression for the standard progression in a song such as *I Got Rhythm* A section (Standard—1931) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Rock And Roll)

C ///	F / G7 /
-------	----------

Now, try substituting the standard progression for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Words Of Love* verse (Buddy Holly—1957) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	F / G /
-------	---------

Substitute Progression (Standard Progression)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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(5) Try substituting the three progressions shown below for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Twist And Shout* verse (Beatles—1964). Notice the subtle difference that the change from the “G”

to the “G7” chord makes. Again, the decision between using the “V” or “V7” is largely a matter of personal choice.

Original Progression

C / F /	G ///
---------	-------

Substitute Progression #1

Am / F /	G ///
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Substitute Progression #2

C / F /	G / G7 /
---------	----------

Substitute Progression #3

C / F /	G / F /
---------	---------

(6) Try substituting the four progressions shown below for the rock and roll progression in a song such as *Do You Love Me* verse (Contours—1962). Keep in mind that these progressions can generally be substituted for each other subject to individual melodies.

Original Progression

C ///	F / G /
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Substitute Progression (Jazz Progression)

C ///	Dm7 / G7 /
-------	------------

Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop Progression)

C / Am /	F / G7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Standard Progression)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Ragtime Progression)

C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /
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(7) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus progression for a new song using just the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression.

Here is how Hank Williams did it to create the verse progression to his 1953 country hit *Your Cheatin’ Heart*. Notice that many of these eight-bar rock and roll progressions are similar to the standard eight-bar blues progression discussed in the separate “Blues Progressions” chapter of this book.

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	///
G7 ///	///	C ///	///

Here is how Elvis Presley did it to create the verse progression to his 1956 hit *Heartbreak Hotel*.

C ///	///	///	///
F7 ///	///	G7 ///	C7 ///

Here is how the Beatles did it to create the verse and chorus progression to their 1964 hit *Twist And Shout*.

C / F /	G7 ///	C / F /	G7 ///
C / F /	G7 ///	C / F /	G7 ///

Here is how Elvis Presley did it to create the progression to his 1974 hit cover of Chuck Berry’s 1964 *The Promised Land*. This progression

was repeated three times to construct the twenty-four bar verse progression to this song.

C ///	////	////	F ///
G ///	////	////	C ///

Here is how Bob Seger did it to create the verse and chorus progression to his 1979 hit *Old Time Rock And Roll*.

C7 ///	////	F7 ///	////
G7 ///	////	C7 ///	G7 ///

Now, try building a twelve-bar verse or chorus progression using just the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression.

Here is how Elvis Presley did it to create the verse progression to his 1957 hit *All Shook Up*.

This progression features a vamp created by inserting a chord a half step below the “C” chord that keeps the eight bars of “C” moving. Keep in mind that the half step substitution lets you insert a chord a half step above or below another chord.

C // [B]	C // [B]	C // [B]	C // [B]
C // [B]	C // [B]	C ///	C ///
F ///	G7 // [B]	C // [B]	/// [B]

Now, try building a sixteen-bar verse or chorus progression using just the “C-F-G” rock and roll progression.

Here is how the Counting Crows did it on their 1993 hit *Mr. Jones* chorus.

C ///	F ///	G ///	////
C ///	F ///	G ///	////
C ///	F ///	G ///	////
C ///	F ///	G ///	////

(8) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus progression using just the “F-G” rock and roll variation.

Here is how the Byrds did it for the verse progression to their 1967 hit *So You Want To Be A Rock ‘N’ Roll Star*.

F / G /	F / G /	F / G /	F / G /
F / G /	F / G /	F / G /	F / G /

Standard Progressions

The “I-VIm-IIIm-V” standard progression (changes or turnaround) begins with the “I” chord and then descends in perfect fifths. This progression was used to create the A section of the rhythm changes (see the separate “Rhythm Changes” chapter of this book) and was the first four chords of countless standards written in the 1930s and 1940s. Due to the pervasiveness of this progression in twentieth century popular music, songwriters and performers alike have often employed techniques of chord substitution in order to disguise or dress up this musical staple. The “I-VIm-IV-V” doo-wop progression (see the separate “Doo-Wop Progressions”), which originated in the 1950s, is similar to the earlier standard progression, except the harder sounding “IV” chord replaced the softer sounding “IIIm” chord (relative major/minor substitution). Generally, the two progressions are interchangeable subject to any melody conflicts. More information on the standard progression is included in the separate “Turnarounds” chapter.

In this chapter, you will explore some of the many ways the world’s most creative songwriters have used the standard progression to write hit songs. You will learn how key, duration, substitution, and displacement can be used to vary the sound of the progression. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own standard progressions.

KEY

Grab your keyboard or guitar and play the standard progression in the twelve possible keys shown below. Play each chord for two beats each.

This is the A section progression for standards such as Hoagy Carmichael's 1938 *Heart And Soul*. Listen to hear how the changing of key affects the sound of the progression. Also, try playing several of the progressions the way jazz musicians would by adding the seventh to each chord (i.e., Cmaj7-Am7-Dm7-G7). Generally, the use of either chord quality is a matter of personal taste.

A-F#m-Bm-E	C-Am-Dm-G	Eb-Cm-Fm-Bb	Gb-Ebm-Abm-Db
Bb-Gm-Cm-F	Db-Bbm-Ebm-Ab	E-C#m-F#m-B	G-Em-Am-D
B-G#m-C#m-F#	D-Bm-Em-A	F-Dm-Gm-C	Ab-Fm-Bbm-Eb

DURATION

With your guitar or keyboard still in hand, practice playing the “Cmaj7-Am7-Dm7-G7” standard progression for the durations shown below. The majority of the hit songs written with this progression have been created using just the two progression patterns below. As you can see, each chord is typically played for two or four beats.

Cmaj7 / Am7 /		Dm7 / G7 /	
Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///

You should listen to as many hit songs written using standard progression as possible to truly understand the importance of the standard progression. Examples of the first pattern (two beats per chord) include the A sections of songs based on the rhythm changes as well as *I Got Rhythm* A section (from “Funny Girl”—1930), *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea* B section (from “Rhythmmania”—1931), *Blue Moon* A/C section (Standard—1934), *I Can't Get Started With You* A section (Standard—1935), *These Foolish Things (Remind Me Of You)* A section (Standard—1935), *Let's Call The Whole Thing Off* A section (Standard—1936), *Heart And Soul* A section (Hoagy Carmichael—1938), *Polka Dots And Moonbeams* A section (Standard—1940), *Have Yourself*

A Merry Little Christmas verse (Judy Garland—1944), *Long Ago (And Far Away)* A section (Standard—1944), *Beyond The Sea* A section (Charles Trenet—1945), *(I Love You) For Sentimental Reasons* A section (Nat King Cole—1945), *Sleigh Ride* A section (Standard—1948), *Hey There* A section A (Standard—1954), *Sh-Boom (Life Could Be A Dream)* verse (Crew Cuts—1954), *Earth Angel* verse (1955), *Why Do Fools Fall In Love* verse (Frankie Lymon & The Teenagers—1956), *I Want You, I Need You, I Love You* verse (Elvis Presley—1956), *You Send Me* verse (Sam Cooke—1957), *All I Have To Do Is Dream* verse (Everly Brothers—1958), *Lollipop* chorus (Chordettes—1958), *Put Your Head On My Shoulder* verse (Paul Anka—1959), *Devil Or Angel* verse (Bobby Vee—1960), *Sixteen Reasons* verse (Connie Stevens—1960), *There's A Moon Out Tonight* verse (Capris—1961), *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do* verse (Neil Sedaka—1962), *Sherry* chorus (4 Seasons—1962), *This Boy* verse (Beatles—1963), *How Do You Do It?* verse (Gerry & The Pacemakers—1964), *I'm Happy Just To Dance With You* verse (Beatles—1964), *Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me* A section (Mel Carter—1965), *You Don't Have To Say You Love Me* chorus (Dusty Springfield—1966), *Penny Lane* verse (Beatles—1967), *I Will* verse (Beatles—1968), *Smile A Little Smile For Me* verse (Flying Machine—1969), *This Will Be (An Everlasting Love)* verse (Natalie Cole—1975), and *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue* verse (Crystal Gayle—1977).

Examples of the second pattern (four beats per chord) include *Diana* verse (Paul Anka—1957), *Book Of Love* verse (Monotones—1958), *Lipstick On Your Collar* verse (Connie Francis—1959), *Take Good Care Of My Baby* verse (Bobby Vee—1961), *Return To Sender* verse (Elvis Presley—1962), *Telstar* verse (Tornadoes—1962), *Two Faces Have I* chorus (Lou Christie—1963), *Tell Me Why* verse (Beatles—1964), *You're Going To Lose That Girl* refrain (Beatles—1965), *Come Home* verse (Dave Clark Five—1965), *Double Shot (Of My Baby's Love)* verse (Swingin' Medallions—1966), *Ain't Gonna Lie* verse (Keith—1966), *The Wonder Of You* verse (Elvis Pres-

ley—1970), *Without You* chorus (Nilsson—1972), *Happy Days* intro (Pratt & McClain—1976), and *Everytime You Go Away* chorus (Paul Young—1980).

Other durations include three beats per chord as shown below. Examples include *I'll Take Romance* A section (Standard—1937), *Let There Be Peace On Earth* verse (Christmas—1955), *Try To Remember* A section (Standard—1960), *Today* verse (New Christy Minstrels—1964), and *Reach Out And Touch (Somebody's Hand)* chorus (Diana Ross—1970).

Cmaj7 //	Am7 //	Dm7 //	G7 //
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Another duration is the main chorus progression to *Some Guys Have All The Luck* (Rod Stewart—1984) that has eight beats per chord as shown below.

C ///	////	Am7 ///	////
Dm ///	////	G7 ///	////

SUBSTITUTION

One important way in which songwriters change the sound of a progression is to apply any of the dozen chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book. The box below shows examples of standard progression substitutions based on these techniques. These substitutions can generally be used for any standard progression permitting many harmonic possibilities. Keep in mind that any of these progressions can generally be substituted for by the doo-wop progression. Now, play each progression example with and without the substitutions. Listening carefully to the difference in sound the substitutions make. The *On And On* example below uses a “C-Am7-Am7/G” vamp three times before completing the standard sequence.

C	Am	Dm	G7	<i>Theme From "A Summer Place</i> A section (Percy Faith—1960), <i>Johnny Angel</i> verse (Shelley Fabares—1962), <i>Go Away Little</i> <i>Girl</i> verse (Steve Lawrence—1963), <i>Try A Little</i> <i>Tenderness</i> verse (Otis Red- ding—1967), <i>Silence Is Golden</i> chorus (Tremeloes—1967), <i>Fernando</i> verse (Abba—1976), <i>Feels So Good</i> verse (Chuck Mangione—1978), and <i>I Pledge</i> <i>My Love</i> chorus (Peaches & Herb—1980)
C	Am	Dm	G9	<i>Love Is A Simple Thing</i> A sec- tion (Standard—1952)
C	Am	Dm	G11-G	<i>Be True To Your School</i> verse (Beach Boys—1963)
C	Am	Dm7	G11	<i>Who Loves You</i> chorus (4 Sea- sons—1975) and <i>Can't Smile</i> <i>Without You</i> verse (Barry Manilow—1978)
C	Am7	Dm7	G7sus4	<i>Short People</i> verse (Randy Newman—1978) and <i>Hungry</i> <i>Heart</i> verse/chorus (Bruce Springsteen—1980)
C	Am7	Dm7	G7b9	<i>Do You Want To Dance</i> verse (Bobby Freeman—1958) and <i>Goodnight Tonight</i> verse (Wings—1979)

C	Am7	Dm7	G11	<i>We Gotta Get You A Woman</i> chorus (Runt/ Todd Rundgren—1970), <i>Breezin'</i> verse (George Benson—1971), <i>You Make Me Feel Like Dancing</i> chorus (Leo Sayer—1977), and <i>I Believe I Can Fly</i> chorus (R. Kelly—1996)
C	Am7	Dm7	G13	<i>Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man</i> A section (Standard—1927) and <i>I Only Have Eyes For You</i> verse (Standard—1934)
C	Am7	Dm9	G9	<i>Little Girl Blue</i> verse (Standard—1935)
C	Am7- Am7/G	Dm7	G11	<i>On And On</i> verse (Stephen Bishop—1977)
C6	Am7	Dm7	G7	<i>Mountain Greenery</i> A section (Standard—1926), <i>I'm In The Mood For Love</i> A section (Standard—1935), <i>The Blue Room</i> A section (Standard—1941), and <i>Little Darlin'</i> verse (Diamonds—1957)
C6	Am7	Dm7	G9	<i>At Long Last Love</i> A section (Standard—1938)
C6	Am7	Dm9	G7	<i>Moonlight In Vermont</i> A section (Standard—1944)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G7b9-[Db7#9]	<i>Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye</i> verse (Casinos—1967)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G7(#5/#9)	<i>Since I Fell For You</i> A section (Lenny Welch—1963)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G9-G7b9	<i>More</i> verse (Kai Winding—1963)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G11-G9	<i>Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)</i> verse (Marvin Gaye—1971)

Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G11-G13	<i>What's Going On</i> verse (Marvin Gaye—1971)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G13	<i>I Could Write A Book</i> A section (Standard—1940) and <i>Ebb Tide</i> A section (Standard—1953)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G13b9	<i>But Not For Me</i> A section (Standard—1930)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7b5	G7b9	<i>Prelude To A Kiss</i> B section (Standard—1938)
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm9	G11	<i>Saving All My Love For You</i> verse (Whitney Houston—1985)
Cmaj9	Am7	Dm7	G6	<i>Woman</i> chorus (John Lennon—1981)

In the remainder of this section, you will look at the “C-A7-D7-G7,” “C-A7-Dm-G7,” “C-Am-D7-G7,” “C-F-Dm-G7,” and “C-Em-Dm-G7” standard progression substitutions. Again, be sure to play each progression example with and without the substitutions.

C-A7-D7-G7 Substitution

Replacing the “Am” and “Dm” of the “C-Am-Dm-G7” standard progression with the “A7” and “D7” chords respectively (chord quality changes) creates the “C-A7-D7-G7” ragtime progression. This harder, bouncier sounding progression was frequently used in ragtime music (1899–1917) and likely later evolved into the standard progression. An example of one of the early ragtime hits using this progression is the chorus to Howard & Emerson’s 1899 *Hello! Ma Baby* shown below.

C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	///
G7 ///	///	C/E / Ebo7 /	G7/D /

Ragtime is a style of written piano music characterized by a pronounced syncopated beat that sounds like the rhythm is somewhat

ragged. It originated on the black minstrel stage during the last decades of the nineteenth century incorporating elements of honky-tonk piano, banjo styles, and the cakewalk.

The standard sixteen-bar ragtime progression is shown below. Examples of this progression include *Keep On Truckin' Moma* verse (Traditional—N/A), *They're Red Hot* (Robert Johnson—1936), and *Alice's Restaurant* verse (Arlo Guthrie—1967). The “Ab” chord in the twelfth bar is sometimes replaced with the “D7” (tritone substitution) or “F#o7” chord (diminished seventh substitution).

C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C ///
C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Ab ///
C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C ///

The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice that the last two examples use tritone substitutions (“Eb7” for “A7,” “Abmaj7” for “D7,” and “Dbmaj7” for “G7”).

C	A7	D7	G7	<i>She's Funny That Way</i> verse (Rev. Gary Davis), <i>After You're Gone</i> verse bars 3–6 (Creamer/ Layton—1918), <i>It Had To Be You</i> verse (Standard—1924), <i>Hey Baby</i> verse (Bruce Channel—1962), and <i>Baby I'm Yours</i> verse (Barbara Lewis—1965)
C-[F]	A7	D7	G7	<i>While Strolling Through The Park</i> verse (Standard—1884)
C-[B7]	A7	D7	G7	<i>They're Red Hot</i> verse (Robert Johnson—1936)

C7	A7	D7	G7		<i>I Call Your Name</i> verse (Beatles—1963) and <i>I Wanna Be Your Man</i> chorus (Beatles—1964)
C	A7	D7	G7	C	<i>Salty Dog Blues</i> verse (Flatt & Scruggs—1950), <i>San Francisco Bay</i> last 6 bars of verse (Jesse Fuller—1958), <i>Walk Right In</i> verse (Rooftop Singers—1963), and <i>Good Day Sunshine</i> verse (Beatles—1966)
C	A7	D7-Dm7	G7	C	<i>Indiana</i> A section (James Hanley—1917) and <i>Donna Lee</i> A section (Charlie Parker—1947)
C-C/B	A7	D7	G7	C	<i>Your Mother Should Know</i> verse bars 6–10 (Beatles—1967)
C-[Ab7]	A7	D7	G7	C	<i>Honey Pie</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
C6	A7	D7	G	C	<i>Pickpocket Blues</i> (Bessie Smith—1926)
C	Eb7	Abmaj7	G7sus		<i>Where Is The Love</i> verse (Roberta Flack & Donny Hathaway—1972)
Cmaj7	Eb7	Abmaj7	Dbmaj7		<i>Here's That Rainy Day</i> A section (from "Carnival In Flanders"—1953)

C-A7-Dm-G7 Substitution

Replacing the “Am” of the “C-Am-Dm-G7” standard progression with the “A7” chord (chord quality change) creates the “C-A7-Dm-G7” substitution. An example of this substitution is the opening verse pro-

gression to the opening verse progression to the Lovin' Spoonful's 1966 hit *Daydream* shown below.

C ///	A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice the “bVII-V” for “V” substitution on the *I Get Around* example below and the tritone substitutions (“Eb7” for “A7”) in the last two examples.

C	A7	Dm	G7	<i>Are You Lonesome Tonight</i> chorus (Elvis Presley 1960), <i>Crazy</i> verse (Patsy Cline—1961), <i>Sunday Will Never Be The Same</i> verse (Spanky & Our Gang—1967), <i>Tip-Toe Thru' The Tulips With Me</i> verse (Tiny Tim—1968), and <i>Maxwell's Silver Hammer</i> verse (Beatles—1969)
C	A7	Dm	Bb-G7	<i>I Get Around</i> chorus (Beach Boys—1964)
C	A7	Dm7	G7	<i>Big Girls Don't Cry</i> verse (4 Seasons—1962)
C	A7	Dm7	G9	<i>Bye Bye Blackbird</i> verse (Standard—1926)
Cmaj7	A7	Dm7	G7	<i>When I Fall In Love</i> A section (Doris Day—1952)
Cmaj7	A7(#5/b9)	Dm7	G7	<i>With A Song In My Heart</i> A section (Standard—1929)
Cmaj7	A7(#5/b9)	Dm7(4)	G7	<i>Bidin' My Time</i> A section (Standard—1930)
C	Eb7	Dm	G7	<i>Our Day Will Come</i> verse (Ruby And The Romantics—1963)
Cmaj7	Eb7	Dm7	G7	<i>The Lady Is A Tramp</i> A section (Standard—1937)

C-Am-D7-G7 Substitution

Replacing the “Dm” of the “C-Am-Dm-G7” standard progression with the “D7” chord (chord quality change) creates the “C-Am-D7-G7” substitution. An example of this substitution is the opening verse progression to the Statler Brothers’ 1966 hit *Flowers On The Wall* shown below.

C ///	////	Am ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. Notice the tritone substitutions (“Ab7” for “D7”) in the last two examples.

C	Am	D	G	<i>Ma Belle Amie</i> (Tee Set—1970)
C	Am	D7	G7	<i>Mickey Mouse March</i> chorus (1955), <i>Santa Baby</i> refrain (Eartha Kit—1953), and <i>Lil’ Red Riding Hood</i> chorus (Sam The Sham & The Pharaohs—1966)
C-C/B	Am7	D7sus4-D7	G7	<i>Rocky Raccoon</i> verse (Beatles—1968)
C	Am	Ab7	G7	<i>Sir Duke</i> verse (Stevie Wonder—1977)
C	Am7	Abmaj7	G7	<i>Free As A Bird</i> verse (Beatles—1995)

C-F-Dm-G7 Substitution

Replacing the “Am” of the “C-Am-Dm-G7” standard progression with the “F” chord (mediant substitution) creates the “C-F-Dm-G7” substitution. An example of this substitution is the main verse progression to

the Eagles' 1975 hit *Lyn' Eyes* shown below. This progression could also be looked at as a "C-F-G" rock and roll progression substitution where the "Dm" (relative minor substitution) has been inserted between the "F" and "G" chords.

C ///	Cmaj7 ///	F ///	////
Dm ///	////	G ///	////

Changing the chord quality of the "Dm" chord creates the further "C-F-D7-G7" substitution. Tin Pan Alley songwriters routinely relied on this chord sequence, known as the commercial bridge, to quickly create an eight-bar B section complete their songs. The eight-bar commercial bridge is shown below.

C7 ///	////	F ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

Songwriters should be familiar with the 1953 commercial bridge progression to Duke Ellington's *Satin Doll* shown below. Notice the replacement of the "Gm7-C7" for the "C7" chord and the replacement of the "Am7-D7" for the "D7" chord ("IIm-V" substitutions).

Gm7 / C7 /	Gm7 / C7 /	Fmaj7 ///	F6 ///
Am7 / D7 /	Am7 / D7 /	G7 ///	////

The box below shows other examples of this type of substitution. The last box shows additional examples of the commercial bridge. Notice the "C/E" chord used as a passing chord between the "F" and "D7" chords in the *Something* example below. The last seven examples replace the "D7" for the "Dm" chord (parallel major/minor substitution & chord quality change). The last example further replaces the "D7" with its tritone substitution ("Ab7" for the "D7").

C	F	Dm	G	<i>Run-Around</i> verse (Blues Travelers—1994)
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C	F	Dm7	G	<i>Yes It Is</i> verse (Beatles—1965) and <i>Cracklin' Rosie</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1970)
C	F-F/E	Dm	G7	<i>Wouldn't It Be Nice</i> verse (Beach Boys—1966)
C-Cmaj7	F	Dm7	G7sus4	<i>You've Got A Friend</i> chorus (James Taylor—1971)
C-Cmaj7	Fmaj7-F6	Dm7	G7-C	<i>Look Around</i> verse (from "The Will Rogers Follies"—1991)
C-Cmaj7-C7	F	Dm7	G7-C	<i>We'll Sing In The Sunshine</i> chorus (Gale Garnett—1964)
C-Cmaj7-C7-C7#9	F	Dm	G7-C	<i>Kodachrome</i> verse (Paul Simon—1973)
C-C11	Fadd9	Dm7	G11	<i>I Won't Last A Day Without You</i> chorus (Carpenters—1974)
C-C7/E	F-[C/E]	Dm7	G7	<i>She Believes In Me</i> verse (Kenny Rogers—1979)
Cmaj7	Fmaj7	Dm7	G11	<i>I Love You Porgy</i> A section (from "Porgy And Bess"—1935)
Cmaj7-Cmaj7/E	Fmaj7	Dm7	G11	<i>Every Woman In The World</i> chorus (Air Supply—1981)
Cmaj9-C6 (2x)	Fmaj7-F6	Dm7	G11	<i>So Far Away</i> verse (Carole King—1971)
C7	F-F/E	Dm-Dm/C	G7/B-G7-C	<i>Hey Jude</i> chorus (Beatles—1968)
C	F	D7	G7	<i>We Wish You A Merry Christmas</i> verse (Christmas—N/A), <i>Heigh-Ho</i> verse (Disney—1937), and <i>I'll Never Find Another You</i> verse (Seekers—1965)
C	F7	D7	G7	<i>Hold Me Tight</i> verse (Beatles—1963)

C	Fadd9	D7sus4	G-Gsus2-G	<i>Come To My Window</i> chorus (Melissa Etheridge—1993)
C-Cmaj7-C7	F-[C/E]	D7	G-[Am7-G7/B]	<i>Something</i> verse (Beatles—1969)
C7	F	D7	G9-Em/G-G7	<i>Look Around</i> A section (from “Will Rogers Follies”—1991)
C7	F	D7	G7	<i>If You Knew Susie</i> (<i>Like I Know Susie</i>) bridge (Standard—N/A), <i>Are You Lonesome Tonight?</i> bridge (Elvis Presley—1960), and <i>Winchester Cathedral</i> bridge (New Vaudeville Band—1966)
C-C7/Bb	F/A	Ab7	G7	<i>Flying Home</i> A section (Charlie Christian—1940)

Because the “Dm-G-C-F” displacement of the above substitution contains four consecutive circle of fifths chords, it is discussed in the separate “Circle Progressions” chapter of this book.

C-Em-Dm-G7 Substitution

Replacing the “Am” of the “C-Am7-Dm7-G7” standard progression with the “Em” chord (common tone substitution: “Em” for “Am7”) creates the “C-Em-Dm-G7” substitution. This progression moves from the “C” (“I”) to the “Em” (“III_m”) mediant chord that was a favorite Beatles’ songwriting formula. The “C-Em-F-G7” rock ballad progression (see the separate “Ascending Bass Lines” chapter) is similar to this substitution except that the harder sounding “IV” chord has been replaced by the softer sounding “II_m” chord (relative major substitution). Generally, the two progressions can be substituted for the other subject to any melody conflicts. An example of this substitution is the

main verse progression to Jim Croce's 1974 hit *I'll Have To Say I Love You In A Song* shown below.

Cmaj7 ///	Em ///	Dm ///	G ///
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The box below shows other examples of this type of substitutions. Notice the use of the diminished “Ebo7” passing chord between the “Em7” and “Dm7” chords in the last four examples. Also, the *On The Road Again* example replaces the “Em” with the “E7” chord (chord quality change).

C	Em	Dm	G7	<i>Blue Velvet</i> verse (Bobby Vinton—1963), <i>Mrs. Brown</i> verse (Herman's Hermits—1965), <i>You're Going To Lose That Girl</i> verse (Beatles—1965), <i>Let's Hang On</i> verse (4 Seasons—1965), <i>Girl</i> chorus (Beatles—1965), <i>Ferry Cross The Mersey</i> chorus (Gerry & The Pacemakers—1965), <i>Silence Is Golden</i> chorus (Tremeloes—1967), <i>Snow Bird</i> verse (Anne Murray—1970), <i>Across The Universe</i> verse (Beatles—1970), <i>Pieces Of April</i> verse (Three Dog Night—1973), and <i>Today's The Day</i> chorus (America—1976)
C	Em	Dm	G-[F]-G	<i>Save It For Me</i> chorus (4 Season—1964)
C	Em	Dm	G7sus4	<i>Don't Cry Out Loud</i> verse (Melissa Manchester—1979)
C	Em	Dm7	G-[F-Em]-G7	<i>Tracy</i> verse (Cuff Links—1969)
C	Em7	Dm7	G11	<i>Easy</i> verse/chorus (Commodores—1977)
Cmaj7	Em7	Dm7	G11	<i>Grazin' In The Grass</i> verse (Hugh Masekela—1968)
Cmaj9	Em7	Dm7	G11	<i>Heart Light</i> verse (Neil Diamond—1982)
C	E7	Dm7-F	G7-C	<i>On The Road Again</i> verse (Willie Nelson—1980)

C	Em7- [Ebm7]	Dm7	G7	<i>Blue Velvet</i> verse (Bobby Vinton—1963) and <i>Do You Want To Know A Secret</i> verse (Beat- les—1964)
C	Em7- [Ebo7]	Dm7	G7	<i>Rock-A-Bye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody</i> A section (Standard—1918), <i>You're The</i> <i>Cream In My Coffee</i> verse (Stan- dard—1928), <i>Smoke Gets In Your Eyes</i> A section (Platters—1959), and <i>I Left My Heart</i> <i>In San Francisco</i> verse (Tony Ben- nett—1962)
Cmaj7	Em7- [Ebo7]	Dm7	G7	<i>I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire</i> A section (Standard—1941)
Cmaj7 -C6	Em7- [Ebo7]	Dm7	G7	<i>Come Fly With Me</i> A section (Stan- dard—1958)
Cmaj7 -C6	Em7- [Ebo7]	Dm7	G11- Cmaj7	<i>Emotion</i> verse (Samantha Sang—1978)

DISPLACEMENT

Looking at all the possible combinations of the individual chords in a given progression is another way to create new progressions. The resulting chord sequences are referred to as “displaced” progressions as the original sequence of chords is changed or displaced. Below you will find a table showing the twenty-four possible combinations of the standard progression in the key of C. The “Am-Dm-G-C” displacement is discussed in the separate “Circle Progressions” chapter of this book as it contains four consecutive circle of fifths chords.

C	Am	Dm	G	Am	Dm	G	C
C	Am	G	Dm	Am	Dm	C	G
C	Dm	G	Am	Am	G	C	Dm
C	Dm	Am	G	Am	G	Dm	C

C	G	Am	Dm	Am	C	Dm	G
C	G	Dm	Am	Am	C	G	Dm
Dm	G	C	Am	G	C	Am	Dm
Dm	G	Am	C	G	C	Dm	Am
Dm	C	Am	G	G	Am	Dm	C
Dm	C	G	Am	G	Am	C	Dm
Dm	Am	G	C	G	Dm	C	Am
Dm	Am	C	G	G	Dm	Am	C

In the remainder of this section, you will look at seven standard progression displacements. The good news here is that there are many underused displacements, leaving plenty of room to exploit this progression. As you did with the substitutions, play through each progression example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next progression.

Dm-G-C-Am Displacement

Moving the “C” and “Am” chord to the third and fourth positions respectively in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “Dm-G-C-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Roberta Flack’s 1972 hit *First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* shown below.

Dm ///	G ///	C ///	Am ///
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The box below shows other examples this type of displacement. Notice that “Am7” and “C6” chords share the same notes and are, as such, the same chords. Also, see the use of the “Bb7” as a passing chord (in brackets) in the last example.

Dm	G	C	Am	<i>Fools Rush In</i> verse (Rick Nelson—1963), <i>I Want To Hold Your Hand</i> bridge (Beatles—1963), <i>All My Loving</i> verse (Beatles—1963), <i>Shoop Shoop Song (It's In His Kiss)</i> verse (Betty Everett—1964), <i>Lady Madonna</i> bridge (Beatles—1968), <i>The Night The Lights Went Out In Georgia</i> chorus (Vicki Lawrence—1973), <i>You Light Up My Life</i> verse (Debbie Boone—1977), and <i>Stumblin' In</i> verse (Suzi Quatro & Chris Norman—1979)
Dm	G7	C	C6	<i>For The Good Times</i> verse (Ray Price—1971)
Dm7	G	C-C/B	Am	<i>Dancing In The Moonlight</i> verse/chorus (King Harvest—1973)
Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	Am7	<i>Strangers In Paradise</i> A section (from "Kismet"—1953)
Dm7	G7	C6	Am7	<i>Fool On The Hill</i> verse (Beatles—1967)
Dm7	G13	Cmaj7	C6	<i>If Ever I Would Leave You</i> A section (Standard—1960)
Dm	G7	Cmaj7-C6	A7	<i>Tell It Like It Is</i> verse (Aaron Neville—1967)
Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	A7	<i>I've Got You Under My Skin</i> verse (Standard—1936), <i>Fly Me To The Moon (In Other Words)</i> B section (Standard—1954), <i>See You In September</i> chorus (The Tempos—1959), <i>The Man With All The Toys</i> verse (Beach Boys—1964), <i>New York's A Lonely Town</i> chorus (Trade Winds—1965), and <i>Knight In Rusty Armour</i> chorus (Peter & Gordon—1967)

Dm9	G13sus	Cmaj7-[Bb7]	A7	<i>Feel Like Makin' Love</i> verse (Roberta Flack—1974)
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C-Dm-G-Am Displacement

Moving the “Am” chord to the fourth position in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “C-Dm-G-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Anne Murray’s 1979 hit *Shadows In The Moonlight* shown below.

C ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Am7 ///
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C-Dm-Am-G Displacement

Reversing the order of the “Am” and “Dm” chords in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “C-Dm-Am-G” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to the Scorpions’ 1991 hit *Wind Of Change* shown below.

C ///	Dm ///	C ///	Dm / Am7 /	G /
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C-G-Am-Dm Displacement

Moving the “G” chord to the second position in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “C-G-Am-Dm” displacement. An example of this displacement is the main chorus progression to Melissa Manchester’s 1979 hit *Don’t Cry Out Loud* shown below.

C / G/B /	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G11 / G7 /
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Changing the chord quality of the “Dm” chord creates the “C-G-Am-D” displacement substitution. An example of this substitution is

the opening chorus progression to the Jefferson Airplane's 1967 hit *Somebody To Love* shown below.

C / G /	Am / D /	C / G /	Am / D /
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G-Dm-C-Am Displacement

Reversing the order of the “Dm” and “G” chords and moving them to the first and second positions respectively in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “G-Dm-C-Am” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Steely Dan's 1976 *Haitian Divorce* shown below.

G7 / Dm7 /	Cmaj7 / Am7 /
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Am-G-C-D Displacement

Replacing the “Dm” with the “D” chord (parallel minor/major substitution) and moving the “C” and “D” chords to the third and fourth positions respectively in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “Am-G-C-D” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Paul Simon's 1971 *Duncan* shown below.

Am ///	G ///	C / D /	G ///
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A-C-G-D Displacement

Moving the “Am” to the first position and the “Dm” chord to the last position and changing their chord qualities to major in the “C-Am-Dm-G” standard progression creates the “A-C-G-D” displacement. An example of this displacement is the opening verse progression to Seals & Crofts' 1972 hit *Summer Breeze* shown below.

A / C /	G / D /	[A / Dm7 /]
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Two examples of further substitutions of this type of displacement are the “Am-C-G-D” chorus progression to Brian Adams’ 1985 hit *Run To You* and the “Am7-C-Gsus4-D7sus4” verse progression to Oasis’ 1985 hit *Wonderwall*.

Other Displacements

Two other examples of standard progression displacements include the “Dm-C-G-Am” verse progression to *Half A World Away* (R.E.M.—1991) and the “Am-C-Dm-G” verse progression to *Swan H.* (R.E.M.—1998).

SONGWRITER’S NOTEBOOK

Let’s take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Below is an example of how I used the standard progression to create a new song.

The main verse progression to my *This One Time* is shown below. In this progression, I take a little used standard progression displacement to create a familiar, yet different, sounding chorus progression for my ballad. The lyric goes “Don’t you know that it’s the right time, the fire’s burning brightly...”

C / G/B /	Am ///	Dm / F/C /	G/B ///
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YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world’s best songwriters have used standard progressions to write hit songs, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own standard progressions.

(1) Transform the standard progression into a four bar ascending “C-E-F-G” bass line progression in the key of C using inversions.

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	Am/E ///	Dm/F ///	G ///
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(2) Transform the standard progression into a four bar chromatic descending “C-Eb-D-Db” bass line progression in the key of C using chord quality changes, embellishments, and tritone substitutions.

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	Db7 ///
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(3) Transform the standard progression into a four bar tonic pedal point progression in the key of C using embellishment and/or inversions. (Hint: All the chords in the progression should have a “C” as its bass note.)

Here’s how I did it.

C ///	Am/C ///	Dm/C ///	G/C ///
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(4) Review the information of half-step substitutions in the “Appendix” of this book. Then try adding half-step substitutions to the standard progression to create a four bar sequence in the key of C. Now, use your progression to play a song such as *The Wonder Of You* verse (Elvis Presley—1970).

Here's how I did it. The half-step passing chords (in brackets) create a walking bass lines.

Cmaj7 // [Bb7]	Am7 // [Eb7]	Dm7 // [Ab7]	G7 // [Db7]
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(5) Try playing the three substitute progressions shown below for the standard progression in a song such as *Heart And Soul* A section (Standard—1938).

Original Progression

C / Am /	Dm / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Tritone #1)

Cmaj7 / Am7 /	Abmaj7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Tritone #2)

Cmaj7 / Eb7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Tritone #3)

Cmaj7 / Ebmaj7 /	Abmaj7 / G7 /
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(6) Try substituting the three progressions shown below for the standard progression in a song such as *I Got Rhythm* A section (Standard—1931).

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Doo-Wop #1)

C / Am /	F / G7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Rock And Roll #2)

C ///	F / G7 /
-------	----------

Substitute Progression (Jazz Progression #3)

C ///	Dm7 / G7 /
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(7) Transform the “C-Em-Dm-G7” substitute progression into a two bar diatonic “C-B-A-G” descending bass line progression in the key of C using inversions.

Here’s how Gladys Knight & The Pips did it to create the opening verse progression to their 1973 hit *Midnight Train To Georgia*.

C / Em/B /	Dm/A / G11 /
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(8) Try substituting the standard progression substitution for the jazz progression in a song such as *Not Unusual* verse (Tom Jones—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression (Standard Substitution)

C ///	Em7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
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(9) Try replacing the standard progression substitution for the standard progression in a song such as *Blue Moon* A section (Standard—1934) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Standard Substitution)

C / Em [Ebm]	Dm / G7 /
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(10) Try substituting the two progressions shown below in cases where there are back-to-back standard progressions (i.e., C-Am7-Dm7-G7-C-Am7-Dm7-G7) in a song such as *I Got Rhythm* A section (Standard—1930). The separate “Rhythm Changes” chapter of this book includes other chord substitutions for back-to-back standard progressions.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Mediant Substitution #1)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Mediant Substitution With “G/F” Inversion #2)

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 G/F	Em7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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(11) Try substituting the ragtime progression for the standard progression in a song such as *Heart And Soul* A section (Standard—1938) as shown below.

Original Progression

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
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Substitute Progression (Ragtime Progression)

C / A7 /	D7 / G7 /
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(12) Try playing the ascending one-bar turnaround to “C” in bars four and sixteen of *Alice’s Restaurant* (Arlo Guthrie—1967) as shown

below. This turnaround can also be used in other standard sixteen-bar ragtime progressions.

Original Progression

Bar 1/13	Bar 2/14	Bar 3/15	Bar 4/16
C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C ///

Substitute Progression

C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C G Am7 G/B
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(13) Try playing each of the four substitutions for bar 12 of the standard sixteen-bar ragtime progression as shown below. Generally speaking, these are all possible substitutions for bar twelve of the standard sixteen-bar ragtime progression.

Original Progression

Bar 9	Bar 10	Bar 11	Bar 12
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	F ///

Substitute Progression (Diminished Seventh Substitution #1)

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	F#o7 ///
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Substitute Progression (Parallel Minor/Major Substitution #2)

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Fm ///
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Substitute Progression (Relative Major/Minor Substitution #3)

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Ab ///
-------	--------	-------	--------

Substitute Progression (Tritone Substitution #4)

C ///	C7 ///	F ///	D7 ///
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(14) Try playing the three tritone substitutions for the “Cmaj7-Eb7-Dm7-G7” standard progression substitution in a song such as *The Lady Is A Tramp* A section (Standard—1937) as shown below. You will also want to try replacing the “Eb7” with the “Cm” chord (relative minor substitution).

Original Progression

Cmaj7 ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-----------	---------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Tritone #1)

Cmaj7 ///	Eb7 ///	Ab7 ///	Db7 ///
-----------	---------	---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Embellishment #2)

Cmaj7 ///	Ebmaj7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 ///
-----------	------------	------------	------------

Substitute Progression (IIm-V #3)

Cmaj7 ///	Bbm7 / Eb7 /	Abmaj7 ///	Abm7 / Db7 /
-----------	--------------	------------	--------------

(15) Try building an eight-bar commercial bridge for a new song.

Here’s how the New Vaudeville Band did it to create the bridge progression to their 1966 hit *Winchester Cathedral*.

C7 ///	////	F ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

(16) Try building an eight-bar verse or chorus for a new song using the standard progression in the key of C.

Here is the A section of the standard rhythm changes that evolved from the A section of the 1930 *I Got Rhythm* from “Funny Girl.”

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / C7 /	F / F#o7 /	C/G / G7 /	C ///

Here’s how Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane did it to create the A section their 1944 *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas* from “Meet Me In St. Louis.” Here the songwriters repeat the standard progression three times before arriving at the circle turnaround.

C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /	E7 / A7 /	D7 / G7 /

Here is how Jimmy Van Heusen did it to create the A section to his 1953 *Here’s That Rainy Day* from “Carnival In Flanders.” Notice the use of tritone substitutions.

Cmaj7 ///	Eb7 ///	Abmaj7 ///	Dbmaj7 ///
Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	Gm7 / C7 /

Here is how the Beach Boys did it to create the chorus progression to their 1964 hit *I Get Around*. Again, notice the “bVII-V7” for “V” substitution in bar seven.

C ///	///	A7 ///	///
Dm7 ///	///	Bb ///	G7 ///

Here is how Nilsson did it to create the chorus progression to his 1972 hit *Without You*. He repeated the standard progression twice to cover the available eight bars.

C ///	Am ///	Dm ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	--------	--------

C ///	Am ///	Dm ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	--------	--------

Here is how John Lennon did it to create the chorus progression to his 1981 hit *Woman*.

Cmaj9 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G6 ///
Cmaj9 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G6 ///

Here is how Cy Coleman did it to create the A section to his 1991 *Look Around* from “The Will Rogers Follies.”

C / Cmaj7 /	Fmaj7 / F6 /	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
C ///	Am / Am7 /	Dm7 ///	G6 ///

(17) Compare the two sixteen-bar progressions shown below. The first is the *When The Saints Go Marching In* progression and the second is the standard ragtime progression. Notice that the second example is essentially the first progression with ragtime progression substitutions added.

When The Saints Go Marching In Progression

C ///	////	////	////
C ///	////	G7 ///	////
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	////
C ///	G7 ///	C ///	////

Standard Ragtime Progression

C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C ///
C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
C ///	C7 ///	F ///	Ab ///
C ///	A7 ///	D7 / G7 /	C ///

(18) Try substituting the “C7-B7-Bb7” descending sequence for the first two beats of the second bar in the *Walk Right In* verse (Rooftop Singers—1963) shown below. If you play only the root note of each chord, you will be playing what is referred to as a walk down.

Original Progression

C ///	// A7 /	D7 / G7 /	C ///
-------	---------	-----------	-------

Substitute Progression (Walk Down)

C ///	C7 B7 Bb7 A7 /	D7 / G7 /	C ///
-------	----------------	-----------	-------

(19) Try replacing the “C-A7-Dm7-G7” standard substitution for the ragtime progression in a song such as *Baby I’m Yours* verse (Barbara Lewis—1965) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	--------	--------

Substitute Progression

C ///	A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	---------	--------

(20) Try substituting the ragtime progression for the “C-D7-G7-C” sequence in a song such as *Hey Good Looking*’ chorus (Hank Williams—1951) as shown below.

Original Progression

C ///	////	////	////
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	C / G7 /

Substitute Progression

C ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	G7 ///	C ///	C / G7 /

Turnarounds

A turnaround is a series of chords that provide harmonic interest while leading back to a repeated section of a song. Turnarounds (also referred to as turnbacks) occur in the last two bars of the A sections of the AABA song form and the last two bars of the twelve-bar blues progression. These versatile progressions can also double as introductions or as endings by adding a final “I” or “Im” chord (see the separate “Introductions” and “Endings” chapters of this book).

In this chapter, you will explore some of the ways the world’s best songwriters have created turnarounds that lead back to the “I,” “IIm,” and “IV” chords. You will also take a quick look at an idea from my songwriter’s notebook. Lastly, your assignment will be to work through several exercises to get you started building your own turnarounds. More information on blues turnarounds is included in the separate “Blues Progressions,” and “Minor Blues Progressions” chapters of this book

TURNAROUNDS TO THE “I” CHORD

In this section, you will look at turnarounds to the “I” chord created from circle, diminished cliché, folk, jazz, standard, minor, and other progressions. Notice that these progressions all end on the “V” chord (or its tritone substitution). By mixing and matching the two bar sequences presented below, you can create many different turnarounds. Adding chord embellishments (“7,” “9,” ’11,” and “13”), altered (b5th, #5th, b9th, and #9th), and other substitutions can create an almost endless number of harmonic possibilities. Be sure to play through each example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving

on to the next. Although the examples here are shown in the key of C to permit easier analysis, they can and should be transposed and learned in all keys.

Circle Progression

The “E7-A7-D7-G7” circle progression (see the separate “Circle Progressions” chapter) can be used to create a two-bar turnaround to the tonic as shown below.

E7 / A7 /	D7 / G7 /
-----------	-----------

Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of circle turnaround substitutions based on the chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book.

Bar 1			
E7	/	A7	/
E7	/	Am7	/
E7	/	Eb7	/
E7	/	Ebm7	/
Em7	/	A7	/
Em7	/	Am7	/
Em7	/	Eb7	/
Em7	/	Ebm7	/
Em7	/	Ebm7	Ab7
Em7	A7	Ebm7	Ab7
Bb7	/	A7	/
Bb7	/	Am7	/
Bb7	/	Eb7	/
Bb7	/	Ebm7	/

Bar 1

Bbm7	/	A7	/
Bbm7	/	Am7	/
Bbm7	Eb7	Am7	D7
Bbm7	/	Eb7	/
Bbm7	/	Ebm7	/

Bar 2

D7	/	G7	/
D7	/	Db7	/
D7	/	Dm7	G7
D7	/	Dm7	Db7
D7	/	Dm6	Db7
D7	Ab7	G7	/
D7	Ab7	G7	Db7
Dm7	/	G7	/
Dm7	/	Db7	/
Dm7	/	Dm7	G7
Dm7	/	Dm7	Db7
Dm7	/	Dm6	Db7
Ab7	/	G7	/
Ab7	/	Db7	/
Ab7	/	Dm7	G7
Ab7	/	Dm7	Db7
Ab7	/	Dm6	Db7
Abm7	/	G7	/
Abm7	/	Db7	/
Abm7	/	Dm7	G7

Bar 2			
Abm7	/	Dm7	Db7
Abm7	/	Dm6	Db7
Abm7	Db7	G7	/
Abm7	Db7	Dm7	G7

Diminished Cliché

The “C-C#o7 (or Ebo7)-Dm7-G7” diminished cliché (see the separate “Ascending Bass Lines” chapter) can be used to create a two-bar turnaround to the tonic as shown below.

C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
C / Ebo7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of diminished cliché turnaround substitutions based on the chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book.

Bar 1			
C	/	C#o7	/
C	/	Ebo7	/
C/E	/	Ebo7	/
C	/	D13b9/Eb	/
Bar 2			
Dm7	/	G7	/
Dm7	/	G7/Db	/
Dm7	Dm6	G7	/
Dm7	/	Db7	/
Dm7	Dm6	Db7	/

Bar 2			
Dm7	/	Dm6	/
Dm7	/	Dm6	Db7
D7	/	G7	/
D7	/	G7/D	/
D7	/	Db7	/
D7	Dm6	G7	/
D7	/	Db7	/
D7	Dm6	Db7	/
D7	/	Dm6	/
D7	/	Dm6	Db7

Folk Progression

The “C-G7” folk progression (see the separate “Folk Progressions” chapter) can be used to create a two-bar turnaround to the tonic as shown below.

C ///	G7 ///
-------	--------

Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of folk turnaround substitutions based on the chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book.

Bar 1			
C	/	/	/
C/E	/	/	/
C	/	F#m7b5	/
Bar 2			
G7	/	/	/

Bar 2			
C	/	G7	/
G7	/	Db7	/
Db7	/	/	/
C	/	Db7	/
G/F	/	/	/

Jazz Progression

The “C-Dm7-G7” jazz progression (see the separate “Jazz Progressions” chapter) can be used to create a two-bar turnaround to the tonic as shown below.

C ///	Dm7 / G7 /
-------	------------

Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of jazz turnaround substitutions based on the chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book.

Bar 1			
C	/	/	/
C	/	Ab7	/
C	/	D7	/
C	/	Dm7	/
Bar 2			
Dm7	/	G7	/
Dm7	/	Db7	/
D7	/	G7	/
D7	/	Dm7	G7
D7	/	Db7	/

Bar 2			
Ab7	/	G7	/
Ab7	/	Dm7	G7
Ab7	/	Db7	/
Abm7	/	G7	/
Abm7	/	Dm7	G7
Abm7	/	Db7	/
Db7	/	G7	/
Db7	/	Dm7	G7
Db7	/	/	/

Standard Progression

The “Cmaj7-Am7-Dm7-G7” standard progression (see the separate “Standard Progressions” chapter) can be used to create a two-bar turn-around to the tonic as shown below.

Cmaj7 / Am7 /	Dm7 / G7 /
---------------	------------

Below you will find common bar-by-bar examples of standard turn-around substitutions based on the chord substitution techniques discussed in the “Appendix” section of this book.

Bar 1			
Cmaj7	/	Am7	/
Cmaj7	/	Fmaj7	/
Cmaj7	/	Em7	/
C	/	A7	/
C	/	Em7	A7
C	/	Am7	/
C	/	Eb7	/

Bar 1			
C	/	Bbm7	Eb7
C/E	/	Eb7	/
C	/	Ebm7	/
C	/	Bbm6	/
Bar 2			
Dm7	/	G7	/
Dm7	/	Db7	/
Dm7	/	Dm6	/
Dm7	/	Dm6	Db7
D7	/	G7	/
D7	/	Dm7	G7
Am7	D7	Dm7	G7
D7	/	Db7	/
D7	Ab7	G7	Db7
Ab7	/	G7	/
Ab7	/	Dm7	G7
Ab7	/	Db7	/
Abm7	/	G7	/
Abm7	/	Dm7	G7
Abm7	/	Db7	/

Minor Turnarounds

Two-bar minor turnarounds to the tonic (“Im”) can be created by mixing and matching the two bar sequences in the boxes below.

Bar 1			
Am	/	/	/

Bar 1

Am	/	Dm	/
Am	/	D7	/
Am	/	F#m7b5	/
Am	/	Ab7	/
Am	/	G	/

Bar 2

Am	/	/	/
Am	/	E7	/
E7	/	/	/
Bb7	/	E7	/
Bm7b5	/	E7	/
F7	/	E7	/
Dm	/	E7	/

Other Turnarounds

Here are several additional two-bar turnarounds created using the rock and roll, classic rock, combination, ascending bass line, doo-wop, and rock ballad progressions.

Bar 1**Bar 2**

C	/	/	/	F	/	G7	/
C	/	Bb	/	F	/	G7	/
C	/	F	/	C	/	G7	/
C	/	Dm	/	F	/	G7	/
C	/	Am	/	F	/	G7	/
C	/	Em		F	/	G7	/

TURNAROUNDS TO THE “IIm” CHORD

In this section, you will look at turnarounds to the “IIm” chord. As in the prior section, be sure to play through each example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next. The boxes below show examples of some of the many possible sequences for each bar of this type of turnaround. Again, by mixing and matching the two bar sequences, you can create many different turnarounds of this type. Adding chord embellishments and other substitutions can create an almost endless number of harmonic possibilities.

Bar 1			
C	/	/	/
C	/	F	/
C	/	B7	/
Bar 2			
A7	/	/	/
Eb7	/	/	/
Em7	/	A7	/
Em7	/	Ebm7	/
E7	/	Eb7	/
C#o7	/	/	/
Bb7	/	A7	/

TURNAROUNDS TO THE “IV” CHORD

In this section, you will look at turnarounds to the “IV” chord. As in prior sections, be sure to play through each example and thoroughly understand how it was created before moving on to the next. The boxes below show examples of some of the many possible sequences for each

bar of this type of turnaround. Again, by mixing and matching the two bar sequences, you can create many different turnarounds of this type. Adding chord embellishments and other substitutions can create an almost endless number of harmonic possibilities.

Bar 1			
C	/	/	/
Gm7	/	C7	/
C	/	Am7	/
C	/	Am7	Abm7
C	/	Dm7	/
C	/	G7	/
C	/	Db7	/
C	Db7	C	/
Am7	/	D7	/
Am7	/	Dm7	/
Am7	/	Ab7	/
Am7	/	Abm7	/
Am7	/	D7	Ab7
Em7	/	Dm7	/
Bar 2			
C7	/	/	/
C7	/	Gb7	/
C7	/	Dbm7	Gb7
Gb7	/	/	/
Dbm7	/	Gb7	/
Gm7	/	C7	/
Gm7	/	Gb7	/

Bar 2			
Gm7	/	C7	Gb7
Ebo7	/	C7/E	/

SONGWRITER'S NOTEBOOK

When I come across a turnaround that I like, I write it down in my songwriter's notebook for future reference and use. Below are fifteen of my favorite jazz/standard turnarounds to the tonic. The fourth example is referred to as the Coltrane turnaround.

Bar 1				Bar 2			
C7	/	A7(#5/#9)	/	Dm7	/	G13	/
C7	/	A9	/	C7	/	G7#9	/
C7	Bb7	A7	Eb7	D7	Ab7	G7	Db7
Cmaj7	/	Ebmaj7	/	Abmaj7	/	Dbmaj7	/
Cmaj7	/	Ebmaj7	/	Dmaj7	/	Dbmaj7	/
Cmaj7	/	Eb13	/	D13	/	Db13	/
Cmaj7	/	Eb13	/	Dm7	/	Db7b5	/
Cmaj7	/	Eb13	/	Abmaj7	/	G13	/
Cmaj7	/	D13b9/Eb	/	Dm7	/	Dm6	/
Cmaj7	/	Bbm6	/	Dm9/A	/	G13	/
C6	/	A9	/	Dm7	/	G7b9	/
C6	/	C#o7	/	Dm7	/	G7b9	/
Em7	/	Am7	/	Dm7	/	G7	/
E7#9	/	A13	/	D7#9	/	G13	/
Ebmaj7	/	Abmaj7	/	Dbmaj7	/	Dm7	G7

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have seen how some of the world's best songwriters have created turnarounds for their songs, your assignment is to work through several exercises to get you started building your own turnarounds.

(1) Try building three of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the circle progression shown below.

Em	/	A7	/	Dm	/	G7	/

Here's how I did it.

Em7	/	A9	/	Dm7	/	G9	/
Em9	/	Eb9	/	Dm9	/	Db9	/
Bbm7	Eb7	Am7	D7	Abm7	Db7	Dm7	G7

(2) Try building three of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the diminished cliché shown below.

C	/	C#o	/	Dm	/	G	/

Here's how I did it.

Cmaj7	/	C#o7	/	Dm7	/	G7	/
Cmaj7	/	C#o7	/	Dm7	/	G7b9	/
Cmaj7	/	C#o7	/	Dm7	/	Db7b5	/

(3) Try building two of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the doo-wop progression shown below.

C	/	Am	/	F	/	G	/
---	---	----	---	---	---	---	---

Here's how I did it. The second example uses a tonic pedal point.

Cmaj7	/	Am7	/	Fm9	/	G13	/
C	/	Am/C	/	F/C	/	G7/C	/

(4) Try building three two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the jazz progression shown below.

C	/	/	/	Dm	/	G	/

Here's how I did it.

Cmaj7	/	/	/	Dm9	/	G13	/
Cmaj7	/	C6	/	Dm7	/	G11	G9
Cmaj7	/	/	/	Abmaj7	/	Dm7	G7

(5) Try building three of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the ragtime progression shown below.

C	/	A7	/	D7	/	G7	/

Here's how I did it. The last example has a walking bass line created by the use of half-step substitutions

C9	/	Eb9	/	D9	/	Db9	/
Cmaj7/E	/	Eb13	/	Dm7	/	Db13	/
C7	Bb7	A7	Eb7	D7	Ab7	G7	Db7

(6) Try building two of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the rock and roll progression shown below.

C	/	/	/	F	/	G	/

Here's how I did it. Remember that one of the goals of chord substitution is to create a more interesting bass line. In the first example, I created an ascending bass line and in the second, I created a pedal point.

C	/	Cmaj7/E	/	Fmaj7	/	G7b9	/
C	/	/	/	F/C	/	G7/C	/

(7) Try building three of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the standard progression shown below.

C	/	Am7	/	Dm7	/	G7	/

Here's how I did it.

Cmaj7	/	Am7	/	Dm7	/	G11	G9
Cmaj7	/	Am7	/	Dm7	/	G7b9	Db7#9
Cmaj9	/	Am7	/	Dm7	/	Dm6	G7

(8) Try building three of your own two-bar turnarounds by applying chord substitutions to the minor folk progression shown below.

Am	/	/	/	E	/	/	/

Here's how I did it.

Am7	/	/	/	E7(#5/#9)	/	/	/
Am7	/	F#m7b5	/	Bm7b5	/	E7b9	/
Am7	/	/	/	Bb13	/	E7b9/B	/

(9) Try substituting a “Am-G-F-E7” flamenco progression for the “Am-F7-E7” turnaround as shown below.

Original Progression

Am	/	/	/	F7	/	E7	/
----	---	---	---	----	---	----	---

Substitute Progression

Am	/	G	/	F7	/	E7	/
----	---	---	---	----	---	----	---

(10) Try replacing the first two bars of the twelve-bar blues progression with the turnarounds shown below. Now, try using any of the other turnarounds discussed in this chapter.

Turnarounds

C ///	F / G7 /
C / Am /	F / G7 /
C / C#o7 /	Dm7 / G7 /

Twelve-Bar Blues Progression

(Bar 1)	(Bar 2)	C ///	Gm7 / C7 /
F ///	F#o7 ///	C ///	////
G7 ///	F7 ///	C ///	G7 ///

Appendix

Chord Glossary

In this section you will look at the C major scale, harmonized C major scale, harmonized C major scale in sevenths, chord sounds, and chord formulas.

C MAJOR SCALE

1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	6/13	7
C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Do	Re	Mi	Fa	So	La	Ti

HARMONIZED C MAJOR SCALE

I	II ^m	III ^m	IV	V	VI ^m	VII ^o
C	D ^m	E ^m	F	G	A ^m	B ^o

HARMONIZED C MAJOR SCALE IN SEVENTHS

I ^{maj7}	II ^{m7}	III ^{m7}	IV ^{maj7}	V ⁷	VI ^{m7}	VII ^{m7b5}
C ^{maj7}	D ^{m7}	E ^{m7}	F ^{maj7}	G ⁷	A ^{m7}	B ^{m7b5}

CHORD SOUNDS

Different chords create different sounds. Below is a list describing the sound associated with various chord qualities.

<i>Chord Quality</i>	<i>Sound</i>
Major	Stable, Positive, Upbeat, or Happy
Minor	Soft, Sad, Melancholic, Dark, or Unhappy
Dominant Seventh	Slightly dissonant, Harder Edged, Bluesy, or Funky
Major Seventh	Fuller, Bright, Jazzy, or Romantic
Minor Seventh	Mellow, Jazzy, or Somewhat Sad
Power	Hard Rock/Heavy Metal Music

CHORD FORMULAS

Chords are constructed with notes from the major scale. The notes in all major scales follow a “W-W-H-W-W-W-H” pattern where “W” represents a whole step and “H” a half step as shown in the C major scale shown below.

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	

Any chord can be constructed from its corresponding major scale by applying the appropriate chord formula (middle column) shown in the box below. Examples presented in the key of C. The notes shown in brackets are optional.

<i>Chord Symbol</i>	<i>Chord Formula</i>	<i>Notes</i>
C (CM)	1 3 5	C E G
C5 (C power chord; C no 3 rd)	1 5	C G

Chord Symbol	Chord Formula	Notes
C(b5)	1 3 b5	C E Gb
C6	1 3 5 6	C E G A
C6/9 (C6add9)	1 3 [5] 6 9	C E G A D
Cmaj7 (CM7)	1 3 5 7	C E G B
Cmaj7b5 (CM7-5)	1 3 b5 7	C E Gb B
Cmaj7#5 (CM7+5)	1 3 #5 7	C E G# B
Cmaj9 (CM9; CM7add9)	1 3 [5] 7 9	C E G B D
Cmaj11 (CM11; CMadd11)	1 [3] 5 7 [9] 11	C E G B D F
Cmaj13 (CM13; CM7add13)	1 3 [5] 7 [9] [11] 13	C E G B D F A
Cm	1 b3 5	C Eb G
Cm6 (C-6)	1 b3 5 6	C Eb G A
Cm6/9	1 b3 [5] 6 9	C Eb G A D
CmM7 (Cmaj7b3)	1 b3 5 7	C Eb G B
CmM9 (Cm+9)	1 b3 [5] 7 9	C Eb G B D
Cm7 (C-7)	1 b3 5 b7	C Eb G Bb
Cm7#5	1 b3 #5 b7	C Eb G# Bb
Cmadd9 (C-add9)	1 b3 [5] 9	C Eb G D
Cm9 (C-9)	1 b3 [5] b7 9	C Eb G Bb D
Cm11 (C-11)	1 b3 [5] b7 [9] 11	C Eb G Bb D F
Cm13 (C-13)	1 b3 [5] b7 [9] [11] 13	C Eb G Bb D F A
C7 (C dom)	1 3 5 b7	C E G Bb
Cadd9	1 3 5 9	C E G D
C7/6 (C7add6; C7/13)	1 3 [5] 6 b7	C E G A Bb
C7b5 (C7-5)	1 3 b5 b7	C E Gb Bb
C7#5 (C7+5)	1 3 #5 b7	C E G# Bb
C7b9 (C7-9)	1 3 [5] b7 b9	C E G Bb Db
C7#9 (C9+; C7+9; Caug9)	1 3 [5] b7 #9	C E G Bb D#

Chord Symbol	Chord Formula	Notes
C7b5b9 (C7-5-9)	1 [3] b5 b7 b9	C E Gb Bb Db
C7#5b9 (C7+5-9)	1 [3] #5 b7 b9	C E G# Bb Db
C7b5#9 (C7-5+9)	1 [3] b5 b7 #9	C E Gb Bb D#
C7#5#9 (C7+5+9)	1 [3] #5 b7 #9	C E G# Bb D#
C7#11 (C11+; C9+11)	1 3 [5] b7 9 #11	C E G Bb D F#
C7b9#11 (C-9+11)	1 [3] [5] b7 b9 #11	C E G Bb Db F#
C9 (C7add9)	1 3 [5] b7 9	C E G Bb D
C9b5 (C9-5)	1 [3] b5 b7 9	C E Gb Bb D
C9#5 (C9+5)	1 [3] #5 b7 9	C E G# Bb D
C11 (C7add 11)	1 [3] 5 b7 [9] 11	C E G Bb D F
C11b9 (C11-9)	1 [3] [5] b7 b9 11	C E G Bb Db F
C13 (C7add13; C9/6)	1 [3] 5 b7 [9] [11] 13	C E G Bb D F A
C13b9 (C13-9)	1 [3] [5] b7 9 [11] 13	C E G Bb Db F A
C13b5b9 (C13-5-9)	[1] [3] b5 b7 b9 [11] 13	C E Gb Bb Db F A
C13+11	1 [3] [5] b7 9 #11 13	C E G Bb D F# A
C13b9#11 (C13-9+11)	[1] [3] [5] b7 b9 #11 13	C E G Bb Db F# A
C+ (Caug; C+5; C#5)	1 3 #5	C E G#
Co (Cdim; Cmb5; Cm-5)	1 b3 b5	C Eb Gb
Cm7b5 (half diminished)	1 b3 b5 b7	C Eb Gb Bb
Co7 (Cdim7)	1 b3 b5 bb7	C Eb Gb A
Csus2	1 2 5	C D G
Csus4 (Csus)	1 4 5	C F G
C7sus4 (C7sus; C7sus11)	1 4 5 b7	C F G Bb

Chord Substitution

Chord substitution refers to the art of changing and/or adding chords to a progression in order to create harmony that is different and more interesting. “The general chord substitution rule holds that chords that share two or more notes in common can be readily substituted for each other” (*Money Chords—A Songwriter’s Sourcebook Of Popular Chord Progressions*). Substitutions that share two or more notes in common are referred to as a common tone substitution. Any chord substitution must sound good and your ear is always the final arbiter of acceptability. The box below shows several examples of frequently used common tone substitutions.

<i>Original Chord</i>	<i>Substitute Chords</i>	<i>Original Chord</i>	<i>Substitute Chords</i>
I	VIIm; IIIIm	C	Am; Em
IV	IIIm; VIIm	F	Dm; Am
V7	VIIo; IIIIm; bII7	G7	Bo; Em; Db7

BASS LINE MOVEMENT

One of the main goals of chord substitution is to create more interesting bass line movement to compliment a song’s melody. An understanding of logical bass line movement can help you make better chord substitution choices. Below are examples of five types of bass line movements that have been repeatedly used to create hits songs.

Chromatic

Chromatic bass lines ascend or descend in half steps. The first example is the opening A section progression to *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Standard—1937) shown below that is an example of an ascending chromatic bass line. The second example is the opening verse progression to *Walk Away Renee* (Left Banke—1966) shown below that an example of a descending chromatic bass line.

Ascending

Cmaj7 / C#o7 /	Dm7 / D#o7 /	C/E / E7#5 /	F6 / Fm6 /
----------------	--------------	--------------	------------

Descending

C ///	G/B ///	Bb ///	F/A ///
Ab o7 ///	C/G ///		

Cyclical

Cyclical bass lines follow circle of fifth movement descending by fifths (three and a half whole steps) or by fourths (two and a half whole steps). The first example shown below is the bridge to *I Got Rhythm* (Standard—1937) that moves counterclockwise around the circle in descending fifths. The second example is the chord progression to *Hey Joe* (Leaves—1966) that moves clockwise around the circle in descending fourths.

Descending Fifths

E7 ///	////	A7 ///	////
D7 ///	////	G7 ///	////

Descending Fourths

Ab / Eb /	Bb / F /	C ///	////
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Diatonic

Diatonic bass lines ascend or descend in scale steps. The first example is the main verse progression to *Like A Rolling Stone* (Bob Dylan—1965) shown below that is an example of an ascending diatonic bass line. The second example is the opening verse progression to *Mr. Bojangles* (Nitty Gritty Dirt Band—1971) shown below that is an example of a descending diatonic bass line.

Ascending

C / Dm /	Em / F /	G ///	///
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Descending

C //	C/B //	Am //	C/G //
------	--------	-------	--------

Pedal Points

Pedal points sustain the same bass note through a series of chord changes. The main verse progression to *Billie Jean* (Michael Jackson—1983) shown below is an example of a tonic pedal point.

Am / Bm / A /	C/A / Bm/A /
---------------	--------------

Tritone

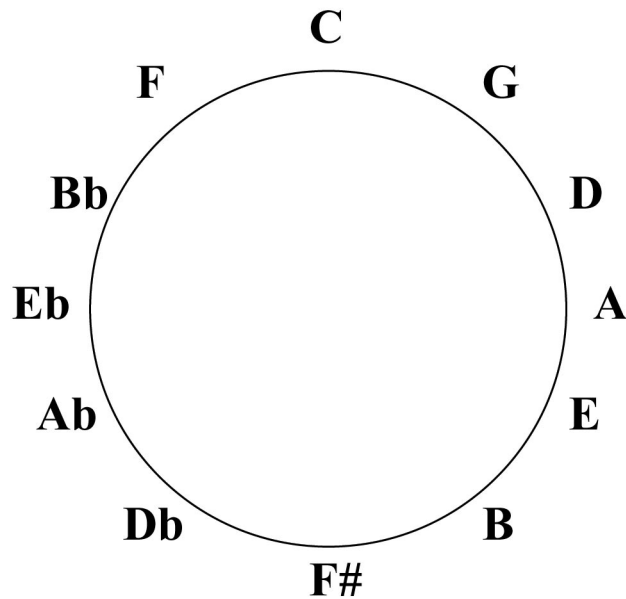
Tritone bass lines move up three whole steps then resolve down a half step. Bars nine to twelve of the A Section to *Here's That Rainy Day* (Standard—1949) shown below includes two examples of bass lines that move by three whole steps, then have a downward half step resolution.

Fm7 ///	Fm7 / B9 Bb9	Ebmaj7 / A9 /	Abmaj7 ///
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In the remainder of this section, you will look at a dozen must-know chord substitution techniques for any songwriter, performer, or arranger.

BACKCYCLING

Backcycling is a technique used to create movement in a chord progression that has little chord change by utilizing the circle of fifths shown below.



Backcycling essentially works backwards from a place you want to get to. For example if you want to get to a “G7” chord (the target) as in the simple four bar folk progression shown below, you work backwards from the “G7” to the “C” chord by inserting as many consecutive chords as you want from the circle of fifths creating the backcycled pro-

gression below. Then, through the use of chord quality changes and embellishments, the standard progression is created.

Original Progression

C ///	C ///	G7 ///	G7 (target) ///
-------	-------	--------	-----------------

Backcycled Progression

C ///	A ///	D ///	G7 (target) ///
-------	-------	-------	-----------------

Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Change & Embellishment)

Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 (target) ///
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Next, we will backcycle the first five bars of the twelve-bar blues progression. The first example below shows bars one through five of the twelve-bar blues progression. The second example inserts backcycled chords leading to the targeted “F” chord. The last example completes the substitution with chord quality changes and embellishments to create a cycle of “IIm-V” chords.

Original Progression

C ///	///	///	///	F (target) ///
-------	-----	-----	-----	----------------

Backcycled Progression

C ///	B/E/	A/D/	G/C/	F (target) ///
-------	------	------	------	----------------

Substitute Progression (Chord Quality Change & Embellishment)

C ///	Bm7b5/E7/	Am7/D7/	Gm7/C7/	Fmaj7 ///
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CHORD QUALITY CHANGE

The quality of any chord (e.g., major, minor, or dominant) can be changed to another quality as long as the root remains the same as shown in the box below.

<i>Original Chord Quality</i>	<i>Chord Quality Substitutions</i>
Major	Minor or Dominant
Minor	Major or Dominant
Dominant	Major or Minor

Chord quality changes were used to create the two examples shown below. The replacement of a major chord by its minor quality, or vice versa, is referred to as a parallel major/minor substitution. Two examples of this type of substitution are shown below. The first example changes the quality of the “F” chord to “Fm” transforming the doo-wop progression into the main verse progression to *Sleep Walk* (Santo & Johnny—1959). The second example changes the quality of the “G” chord to “Gm” transforming the rock and roll progression into the *Louie Louie* (Kingsmen—1963) progression.

(1) Original Progression

C / Am /	F / G7 /
----------	----------

Substitute Progression (Parallel Minor/Major)

C / Am /	Fm / G7 /
----------	-----------

(2) Original Progression

C / F /	G / F /
---------	---------

Substitute Progression (Parallel Minor/Major)

C / F /	Gm / F /
---------	----------

DIMINISHED SEVENTH

Replacing a dominant seventh chord with a diminished seventh chord whose root is a half step higher is referred to as a diminished seventh substitution. For example, a “C” can be substituted by a “C#o7” chord. Keep in mind that there are only three different diminished seventh chords (C#o7, Do7, and D#o7) with each having four possible names and roots (C#o7=Eo7=Go7=A#o7, Do7=Fo7=G#o7=Bo7, and D#o7=F#o7=Ao7=Co7). Another way to look at this type of substitution is that the “VIIo” substitutes for the “V” chord. Two examples of this type of substitution are shown below.

Original Progression

Dm ///	G7 ///	C ///	////
--------	--------	-------	------

Substitute Progression (Half step Substitution #1)

Dm ///	G#o7 ///	C ///	////
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Substitute Progression (VIIo for V Substitution #2)

Dm ///	Bo7 ///	C ///	////
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DOMINANT SEVENTH

A dominant seventh chord can be replaced by another dominant seventh chord whose root is a note contained in a diminished seventh chord based on the root of the original dominant seventh chord. For example, the “C7” (C-E-G-Bb) shares two notes in common with the “Eb7” (Eb-G-Bb-Db), “Gb7” (Gb-Bb-Db-E), and “A7” (A-C#-E-G) chords. Notice that the root of each of these chords is contained in the “Co7” (C-Eb-Gb-A) chord. Three examples of this type of substitution are shown below.

Original Progression

C7 ///	////	///	///
--------	------	-----	-----

Substitute Progression (Dominant Seventh #1)

C7 ///	////	Eb7 ///	///
--------	------	---------	-----

Substitute Progression (Dominant Seventh/Tritone #2)

C7 ///	///	Gb7 ///	///
--------	-----	---------	-----

Substitute Progression (Dominant Seventh #3)

C7 ///	///	A7 ///	///
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EMBELLISHMENT

Adding extended (7, 9, 11 or 13), altered (b5, #5, b9, #9, or #11), and/or other tones to a chord is referred to as embellishment. Below is a table showing commonly used embellishments by chord qualities that are used to add color and interest to chord progressions. Keep in mind that the “m7b5” chord can replace diminished chords.

Major (“I”) Chords

6, 6/9, add9, maj7, maj7b5, maj9, maj9#11, maj11, and maj13

Minor (“IIIm”) Chords

m6, m6/9, m7, m7b5, m7#5, m7b9, m9, m9(M7), m11, and m(M7)
--

Dominant Seventh (“V”) Chords

7b5, 7(b5/b9), 7#5, 7(#5/b9), 7b9, 7(b9/#11), 7#9, 7(#9/#11), 9, 9b5, 9#5, 9#11, 11, 13, 13(b5/b9), 13b9, 7sus4, and 7+

The example below shows an example of how the standard progression can be dressed up by using embellishments.

Original Progression

C ///	Am ///	Dm ///	G7 ///
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Substitute Progression

Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm9 ///	G13 ///
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HALF-STEP

Inserting a chord a half step above or below another chord is referred to as a half-step substitution. A diminished seventh chord is frequently used as a passing chord between two other chords creating chromatic ascending or descending bass line progressions such as the first example below. The second and third examples create interesting walking bass lines by approaching each chord of the progression from a half step above. The last example approaches each chord from a half step below.

(1) Original Progression

C ///	////	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-------	------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Ascending Chromatic Bass Line)

C ///	C#o7 ///	Dm7 ///	D#o7 ///
-------	----------	---------	----------

(2) Original Progression

Cmaj7 ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-----------	---------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Half Step From Above)

Cmaj7 // Bbm7	Am7 // Ebm7	Dm7 // Ab7	G7 // Db7
---------------	-------------	------------	-----------

(3) Original Progression

C7 ///	A7 ///	D7 ///	G7 ///
--------	--------	--------	--------

Substitute Progression (Half Step from Above)

C7 // Bb7	A7 // Eb7	D7 // Ab7	G7 // Db7
-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

(4) Original Progression

Cmaj7 ///	A7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-----------	--------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Half Step from Below)

Cmaj7 // Ab7	A7 // Db7	Dm7 // Gb7	G7 // B7
--------------	-----------	------------	----------

IIIm-V

Replacing a dominant seventh chord by the “IIIm-V” progression is referred to as a “IIIm-V” substitution. In jazz, there seems to be an unwritten rule that says that all dominant seventh chords must be replaced in this manner. The first example below shows a folk progression transformed into a jazz progression using this type of substitution.

Original Progression

C ///	////	G7 ///	////
-------	------	--------	------

Substitute Progression (IIIm-V for V)

C ///	////	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-------	------	---------	--------

The “IIIm-V” progression can also be inserted a half step above or below another “IIIm-V” progression as shown in the examples below creating a chromatic “IIIm-V” embellishment. This can also be looked at as a half step substitution with the additional “IIIm-V” substitutions.

Original Progression

Dm7 ///	///	G7 ///	///
---------	-----	--------	-----

Substitute Progression (Half Step from Above #1)

Ebm7 ///	Ab7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
----------	---------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Half Step from Below #2)

Dbm7 ///	Gb7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
----------	---------	---------	--------

Similarly, replacing a dominant seventh chord by a “bVII-V” progression in this manner is common in country music.

INVERSIONS

The term inversion refers to the lowest sounding note (bass note) in a chord whether it is the root or not. If the root is the lowest note, the chord is said to be in the root position. When the third is the lowest note, the chord is said to be in the first inversion. Likewise, if the lowest note is the fifth or seventh note, the chord is said to be in the second or third inversion, respectively. Inversions are particularly useful in creating ascending, descending, and pedal point bass line movement as shown in the three examples below.

(1) Original Progression

C ///	C ///	F ///	G7 ///
-------	-------	-------	--------

Substitute Progression (Ascending Bass Line)

C ///	C/E ///	F ///	G7 ///
-------	---------	-------	--------

(2) Original Progression

C ///	G ///	F ///	G ///
-------	-------	-------	-------

Substitute Progression (Descending Bass Line)

C ///	G/B ///	F/A ///	G ///
-------	---------	---------	-------

(3) Original Progression

Am7 ///	D ///	F ///	Am7 ///
---------	-------	-------	---------

Substitute Progression (Pedal Point)

Am7 ///	D/A ///	F/A ///	Am7 ///
---------	---------	---------	---------

MEDIANT

Replacing the “IIIm” for the “I” chord, or vice versa, is referred to as a mediant substitution. For example, the “C” (C-E-G) can be replaced with the “Em” (E-G-D) chord. Conversely, the “Em” can be substituted for the “C” chord. The example below shows how a rock and roll progression can be transformed into a rock ballad progression by applying this type of substitution.

Original Progression

C ///	///	F ///	G7 ///
-------	-----	-------	--------

Substitute Progression (Mediant)

C ///	Em ///	F ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	-------	--------

RELATIVE MAJOR/MINOR

Replacing a major chord by its relative minor, or vice versa, is referred to as a relative major/minor (or submediant) substitution. For example, the “C” (C-E-G) can be replaced the “Am” (A-C-E) chord. Conversely, the “Am” (“VIIm”) can be substituted for the “C” (“I”) chord. The

example below shows how a doo-wop progression can be transformed into a standard progression by applying this type of substitution.

Original Progression

C ///	Am ///	F ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	-------	--------

Substitute Progression (Relative Minor/Major)

C ///	Am ///	Dm ///	G7 ///
-------	--------	--------	--------

SCALEWISE

Replacing two or more bars of the “I” chord with fill-in chords taken consecutively from the harmonized scale is referred to as scalewise substitution. An example of this type of substitution is shown below.

Original Progression

Cmaj7 ///	////	////	////
-----------	------	------	------

Substitute Progression (Scalewise)

Cmaj7 ///	Dm7 ///	Em7 ///	Dm7 ///
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TRITONE

Replacing a dominant seventh (or a minor seventh) chord by a dominant seventh chord whose root is a tritone away is referred to as a tritone (or flatted fifth) substitution. A tritone is an interval of an augmented fourth or diminished (flatted) fifth (three whole steps). The box below shows a listing of tritone substitutions.

<i>Original Chord</i>	<i>Tritone Substitution</i>
A7	Eb7
Bb7	E7

<i>Original Chord</i>	<i>Tritone Substitution</i>
B7	F7
C7	Gb7
Db7	G7
D7	Ab7
Eb7	A7
E7	Bb7
F7	B7
Gb7	C7
G7	Db7
Ab7	D7

Another way to look at this type of substitution is that the “V” can be substituted for the “bII7” chord. The first example below shows how a tritone substitution can be used to create a chromatic descending bass line in the jazz progression. The jazz progression bass line movement is changed from cyclical to chromatic. The second example shows how a tritone substitution was used to turn a standard progression into the opening verse progression to *Our Day Will Come* (Ruby & The Romantics—1963). Then, using an inversion and another tritone substitution, the progression is further transformed into a chromatic descending bass line progression.

(1) Original Progression

Dm7 ///	G7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	///
Substitute Progression (Descending Bass Line)			
Dm7 ///	Db7 ///	Cmaj7 ///	///

(2) Original Progression

C ///	Am7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-------	---------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (*Our Day Will Come*)

C ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	G7 ///
-------	---------	---------	--------

Substitute Progression (Descending Bass Line)

C/E ///	Eb7 ///	Dm7 ///	Db7 ///
---------	---------	---------	---------

Modulation

Shifting from one key to another within a particular song, referred to as modulation, is a technique used to contrast different song sections and create interest and energy in an arrangement. This technique has been around since the late 1400s and is a staple of symphonic and jazz music. Modulations are frequently used to give the feeling of change between the intro, verse, chorus, bridge, solo, or outro.

One way to modulate is to use pivot chords to make the key change subtle and smooth. Pivot chords are usually common to both keys. The easiest keys to modulate to are the near-related keys. The scales of near-related keys contain all but one of the same notes meaning that such keys share several chords in common that can be used as pivot chords. For example, the near-related keys to the key of C are F and G. The first example below shows the modulation from the key of C to F using the “V” of the new key as a pivot chord. The second example shows the use of the “II_m-V” of the new key as pivot chords.

C ///	C7 ///	F ///
C ///	G _m 7 / C7 /	F ///

Another way to change keys is direct (or abrupt) modulation that is made without the use of pivot chords. Direct modulations are dramatic and decisive. They typically move upward a minor second (one half step) or major second (whole step). The example below illustrates the modulation from the key of C to C#. This is a half-step modulation that is sometimes referred to as truck driver’s modulation because the

song seems to change gears. It has been a pop music cliché since the 1950s.

C ///	////	C# ///
-------	------	--------

There are twenty-four keys (major and minor) available for modulation. Below is a table showing some common modulations. The column on the left shows the key change in Roman numerals with the middle column giving an example of the modulation in the key of C. The last column shows song examples of the modulation. Favorite modulations of the Beatles include the “I to bIII,” “I to IV,” and “I to #I.” These modulations are well worth considering for your next song.

Roman Numerals	Key of C	Song Examples
I to Im (Parallel Major/Minor)	C to Cm	<i>Norwegian Wood</i> (1965) <i>Fool On The Hill</i> (1967)
Im to I (Parallel Minor/Major)	Cm to C	<i>Things We Said Today</i> (1964) <i>While My Guitar Gently Weeps</i> (1968)
I to #I (Half-Step Up)	C to C#	<i>And I Love Her</i> (1964) <i>Woman</i> (1981)
I to bI (Half-Step Down)	C to B	<i>Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds</i> (1967)
I to II (Full Step)	C to D	<i>A Day In The Life</i> (1967) <i>My Sweet Lord</i> (1970)
I to bIII	C to Eb	<i>Another Girl</i> (1965) <i>Here, There And Everywhere</i> (1966) <i>Lady Madonna</i> (1968) <i>Free As A Bird</i> (1995)
I to III	C to E	N/A
I to IV	C to F	<i>I Want To Hold Your Hand</i> (1963) <i>From Me To You</i> (1963) <i>Mull Of Kintyre</i> (1977)
Im to IV	Cm to F	<i>Badge</i> (1969)

<i>Roman Numerals</i>	<i>Key of C</i>	<i>Song Examples</i>
I to V	C to G	N/A
I to bVI	C to Ab	N/A
I to VI	C to A	<i>Something</i> (1969)
I to VI ^m (Relative Major/Minor)	C to A ^m	<i>I Should Have Known Better</i> (1964) <i>When I'm Sixty Four</i> (1967)
I to bVII	C to B ^b	<i>Penny Lane</i> (1967) <i>Band On The Run</i> (1974) <i>(Just Like) Starting Over</i> (1980)

Roman Numerals

Roman numerals are an easy way to notate chord progressions without being key specific. Roman numerals indicate the relationship of chords to one another and to the underlying key. They identify the root, quality, and inversion of a chord with respect to a given key. In the key of “A”, the Roman numeral “I” represents the “A” major chord, the “Bb” major chord in the key of “Bb,” the “B” major chord in the key of “B,” and so forth. Conventional chord symbols following a Roman numeral designate chord quality. The table below shows the Roman numerals used to represent different major chords in all twelve keys. For example, the “C-F-G7” rock and roll progression would be written as “I-IV-V7.” The “I-IV-V7” would indicate the same relationship in all other keys such as “G-C-D7” in the key of G. Similarly, the “C-Am-F-G7” doo-wop progression would be notated as “I-VIm-IV-V7.”

Key	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>VI</i>	<i>VII</i>
A	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#
Bb/A#	Bb/A#	C	D	Eb/D#	F	G	A
B	B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#
C	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Db/C#	Db/C#	Eb/D#	F	Gb/F#	Ab/G#	Bb/A#	C
D	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#
Eb/D#	Eb/D#	F	G	Ab/G#	Bb/A#	C	D
E	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#
F	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E
Gb/F#	Gb/F#	Ab/G#	Bb/A#	B	Db/C#	Eb/D#	F

Key	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>VI</i>	<i>VII</i>
G	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#
Ab/G#	Ab/G#	Bb/A#	C	Db/C#	Eb/D#	F	G

Inversions, which are chords with bass notes other than the root, are indicated using a diagonal slash mark [/] after the Roman numeral followed by the scale position of the desired bass note. For example, the “C-G/B-Am7-G” descending bass line progression would be indicated as “I-V/3rd-VI^m7-V.”

Transposing

In order to play a particular song in a different key, it is necessary to transpose the individual chords in a progression or notes in a melody from the key they are written in to the new key. An easy way to change chords from one key to another is to use a transposing chart.

The first step in transposing is to determine the key of the song you want to change. To determine the key a song was written in, you need to look at the beginning of the sheet music to find the number of sharps (#) or flats (b) that are shown. The chart below tells you the key the song was written in by the number of sharps or flats shown in the sheet music. If there are no sharps or flats, the song is in the key of C or Am. If the written music shows two flats, the song is in the key of Bb or Gm. Keep in mind that the vast majority of songs begin with the tonic (“I”) chord that is the same as the underlying key. For example, progressions in the key of C typically start with the “C” chord.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Minor</i>
0#	C	Am	0b	C	Am
1#	G	Em	1b	F	Dm
2#	D	Bm	2b	Bb	Gm
3#	A	F#m	3b	Eb	Cm
4#	E	C#m	4b	Ab	Fm
5#	B	G#m	5b	Db	Bbm
6#	F#	D#m	6b	Gb	Ebm
7#	C#	A#m	7b	Cb	Abm

Let's transpose the "C-Am-Dm-G7" standard progression in the key of C to the key of E. First, you need to find the C in the far left hand column of the table in the previous "Roman Numerals" section. This row lists all the chords in the key of C. Now, find the E in the same far left hand column. This row has all the corresponding chords in the key of E. Next, find the C chord in the key of C row and the corresponding chord in the same column in the key of E row. So, the "C" chord in the key of C is transposed to the "E" chord in the key of E. After that, find the A in the key of C column and the corresponding chord in the key of E that is a C#. So the "Am" chord in the key of C transposes to the "C#m" chord in the key of E. Continuing this process, you will find that the "C-Am-Dm-G7" progression in the key of C transposes to the "E-C#m-F#m-B7" progression in the key of E. Keep in mind that the following are the same chords: Bb=A#, Db=C#, Eb=D#, Gb=F#, and Ab=G#.

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