

Root Progression System

There is another system of writing which is remarkably easy. You will be able to write progressions in minutes and effortlessly. The astonishing thing is you will not be breaking any of the cadence rules you have learned thus far. However, this does not always work in reverse. Occasionally, when using just the Cadence method, you could very easily break a Root Progression rule.

Composers have always been concerned about the root movement of their music. Whether the medium is classical or pop, the feeling of motion in the bass is of utmost concern and should be considered very carefully. “Classical” musicians have had a tendency to hide the chords root tone by using inversions. “Pop” musicians traditionally have kept their root tones in the bass. Regardless of the method, root motion should be carefully planned.

Strong Root Progressions

1. Up a Step (↑2)
2. Down a Step (↓2)
3. Down a Third (↓3)
4. Up a Fourth (↑4)

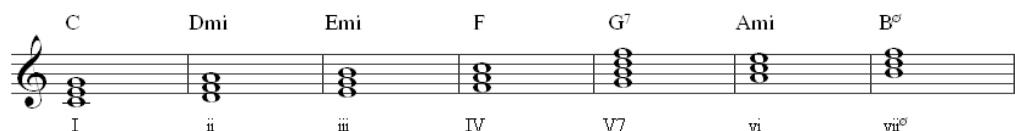
Weak Root Progressions

1. Up a Third (↑3)
2. Up a Fifth (↑5)

When figuring out these intervallic movements, you must include all of the letter names involved. For example, if I moved down a Third from “F”, I would end up on a “D”. (i.e.: F-E-**D**)

If I were moving up a Fourth starting on the letter “E”, I would end up on the letter “A” (i.e.: E-F-G-**A**)

When using our **Major Diatonic Chords** the principles of movement will still apply. For example:



Down a Third from “Bdim” chord would be “G7” (i.e.: Bdim-Ami-**G7**)

Up a Fourth from “Dmi7” chord would be “G7” (i.e.: Dmi7-Emi7-FMaj7-**G7**)

General Rules – Root Progression System of Composing

1. Start and End on the “I” chord
2. **Anything** can follow the “I” chord
3. You can use any Strong Progression as many times in a row as you would like.
4. Avoid repetition too soon.
5. Try to end with either Up a Fourth (↑4), or Up a Step (↑2).

I, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, V7, I