

ii - V - I's Explained

National Standards: 1, 4-6, 10-11

Understanding common chord progressions is a necessary first step to mastering popular music structure. In this lesson, we develop a basic understanding of the specific feeling of many common chord progressions. To master those progressions, we learn how to construct the progression in major and minor keys, see how the progression works inside a piece of music, and learn to recognize the progression even when musicians spice it up by adding or modifying notes of the chords.

Prepare

Have students discuss what they already know about chord progressions. Have them talk about times they've used chord progressions when improvising in music or how they've observed it in other music. How do chord progressions in major and minor keys offer a different mood and feel?

Key points in the article:

- Chord progressions can lead us to very different musical destinations in a song's home key or even lead to other keys entirely but serve as a dependable, memorable basis for a lot of music.
- A ii - V - I is a sequence of three chords derived from the notes of a scale, specifically, the scale's second (ii) degree, the fifth (V) degree, and the first (I) degree, or tonic.
- The ii - V - I is one of many chord progressions that return us to the tonic or root chord of a scale, providing a sense and sound of "coming back home."

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- **ARPEGGIATE**: play a chord as a series of ascending or descending notes.
- **HARMONIC RESOLUTION**: the move of a note or chord from an unstable sound to a more stable or final sound.
- **CHROMATIC**: relating to or using notes that aren't part of the diatonic scale of the key in which a passage is written.
- **PASSING TONES**: a note that doesn't belong to the harmony but interposed to offer a smooth transition from one chord to the next.

Discuss

Read through and discuss chord progressions in the lesson. The first is how to build the chords of a ii - V - I in any major or minor key. The second is the ii - V - I works in music to get the flavor of this progression. The third is identifying the ii - V - I in songs. Have students name examples of these progressions in a range of genres, including jazz, R&B and classical music. The lesson mentions Bach's using ii - V - I's at the end of his chorales, often with the ii chord in the first inversion. Listen to some of Bach's music and have students hear the progressions come to life.

Questions

1. What is a ii - V - I?
2. Which Stevie Wonder song is used as an example of an ii - V - I progression in this lesson?
3. Which classical composer loved to use ii - V - I's at the end of his chorales?
4. What styles of music often employ ii - V - I scales?

Answers

1. It is a sequence of three chords derived from the notes of a scale, specifically, the scale's second (ii) degree, the fifth (V) degree, and the first (I) degree, or tonic.
2. "Knocks Me Off My Feet."
3. Bach.
4. Many styles of music, including jazz, R&B, pop, classical and more.

Expand

In this lesson, Stevie Wonder's "Knocks Me Off My Feet" uses the final variation. Have students listen to the song and how Stevie plays a ii - V - I, playing the V chord as a Dm⁷ on top of the G (the V) bass note. Then, expand and have students find songs in any genre that provide examples of major and minor chord progressions. Have them perform these songs and talk about the feel and vibe of the progressions.

Jack White - Rock's Poster Boy Is Still Earning His Stripes

National Standards: 7-8, 10-11

Jack White has been rocking it for decades, but he's always evolving and achieving new goals. His latest solo album, *Entering Heaven Alive*, topped six Billboard charts- an accomplishment seemingly unheard of for an artist that's been around as long as White. That's not to mention White's work in several other bands, including The Raconteurs, The Dead Weather and, of course, his former band, The White Stripes. It's a career like Jack White's that shows just how versatile you can be as an artist and how often you can reinvent yourself.

Prepare

Have students watch performances of Jack White playing live with his solo band and in other bands throughout the years. Since White has been performing for decades, there are numerous videos of him available. Have students choose their favorite performances from White's early days to today. How has his performance style changed since he was in The White Stripes? How do his solo performances differ from what he does onstage in bands?

Key points in the article:

- White has never given up on that creative instinct. When The White Stripes ended, he immediately started working on other projects and on his solo work. No matter what obstacles were seemingly in his way, White's inner passion and fire kept burning. Why?
- Jack White and his White Stripes bandmate Meg didn't let their personal life, ie. their divorce, get in the way of their career. Following their split, they recorded four more full-length albums including the famed *White Blood Cells*. During that time, they also released their chart-topping hits "Seven Nation Army," "Fell In Love With A Girl," and "Icky Thump." Their passion for music trumped any personal aspects of their breakup.
- Jack White is still at the top of his music game, more than 20 years after his debut with The White Stripes. His latest album, *Entering Heaven Alive*, debuted at #1 on a whopping six *Billboard* charts: Top Alternative Albums, Top Americana/Folk Albums, Top Rock Albums, Top Rock and Alternative Albums, Vinyl albums, Tastemaker albums, as well as #9 on the Top 200 Albums chart.

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- CONJOINED: to combine.
- INCLINATION: a propensity or disposition.
- HIATUS: a pause or gap in a process or project.
- COMPULSION: to urge to do something or act a certain way.
- LONGEVITY: long existence.

Discuss

Have students choose their favorite Jack White songs from all his projects and have them explain why they are drawn to those particular tracks. Does White take on a different sound for each project, or is it all part of the same musical quilt? How does White's music stand out among the other rock music out there today? What makes White different and unique?

Questions

1. How many solo albums has Jack White released?
2. Name the three Jack White bands mentioned in the article.
3. At what age did Jack White start playing drums?
4. When did The White Stripes announced they were splitting up?
5. What was the name of Jack White's first solo album?

Answers

1. Five.
2. The White Stripes, The Raconteurs, The Dead Weather.
3. Age five.
4. February 2011
5. *Blunderbuss*.

Expand

Have students sing or perform one of Jack White's songs with any of his projects. While most of White's songs are plugged in, their raw nature also works well in an acoustic setting, so have students perform the songs both in an electric setting and unplugged. You may also have students find cover versions of Jack White's songs and discuss how others have put their spin on White's unique creations.

Extra Credit

White is also a prolific visual artist. Have students investigate his art site, comment on his style and discuss whether or not there is a connection between his music and visual art.

In Tune's 'Best Music Schools' – Picking A Program With A Path

National Standards: 7-8, 10-11

Choosing a college and college program is one of the most important decisions a young adult will ever make and it's impossible to know how much they'll enjoy that program before arriving on campus. However, if they do enough research ahead of time, they can at least know they're entering a school that has the kind of programs and activities that will serve their needs and lead to a satisfying career that can sustain them as a productive adult.

This article looks at those career paths and discusses how a candidate can evaluate schools based on their interests. Alternately, it seeks to serve those students who haven't yet identified an actionable interest, holding out the notion that they may end up changing direction while at college.

Prepare

Have students research the various career paths mentioned in the article. What makes each one unique? Which career paths interest them the most? Why? Have students choose one or two of their top career paths and find subsequent school programs that fit those desires. Which schools specialize in those career paths? Do certain schools offer programs in these areas while others do not? Also, have students talk about non-music aspects of school and how they might impact a potential career path.

Key points in the articles:

- College programs and faculty are available to advance the studies of students who have chosen a path and can help with making connections to the music world.
- Schools understand that many students arrive as Freshmen without a clear path. For example, some schools even have whole programs devoted to “finding your career path.”
- There is power in a good internship. As a candidate for admission, consider how the program you choose treats internships. An internship describes a student's work for an organization to gain experience or to satisfy requirements for a qualification like licensure or college graduation.

Begin

Review vocabulary words from the article:

- **INTERNSHIP:** Broadly speaking, an internship describes a student's work for an organization to gain experience or to satisfy requirements for a qualification like licensure or college graduation. From the standpoint of students and educational institutions, an internship provides a student's education with a practical element. Typically, the experience is related to the student's field of study and helps prepare them for entering the workforce after graduation.
- **PROVERBIAL:** well known, especially so as to be stereotypical.
- **CONSERVATORY:** a special college for the study of classical music or another form of arts.

- **DIGITAL DISINTERMEDIATION:** The elimination of intermediaries in the supply chain. In other words, “cutting out the middlemen.”
- **PRACTICUM:** an on-campus opportunity that often emulates off-campus work experience to some extent. They can stand alone or serve as mini pre-internships for students to begin demonstrating their professional viability.

Discuss

Have students focus on the internship section of the feature. Why do they think having an internship is important? What are some benefits of an internship that you wouldn't necessarily expect, such as finding a lifelong mentor in your music career? What kind of internship would students be interested in? What are some alternative internship experiences that interest students and why?

Questions

1. What are a few of the well-defined career paths that exist in the classical world mentioned in the feature?
2. Which type of music has more defined career paths, according to the article: classical music or popular music?
3. Does music engineering and require professionals to be musicians?
4. What are some of the music business jobs mentioned in the article?
5. Describe what music therapy is, as mentioned in the article.

Answers

1. One of the most sought-after is a position performing as a regular member of a symphony, opera orchestra, or similar group. In addition, some classical artists also establish themselves as solo performers, playing recitals in concert halls, appearing as guests with symphonies, or playing solo roles in opera productions. Another career opportunity is finding faculty positions at conservatories and other institutions of higher education. Also, many classical musicians rely on private teaching as at least a partial source of income.
2. While only a few well-defined career paths exist in classical music, or music performance in general, they are almost endless in popular music.
3. Music engineering and production is a popular career path that does not require professionals to be musicians (although it can help). For example, Bill Szymczyk, well-known for his work with the Eagles, was originally a sonar operator for the U.S. Navy. The latter took audio production classes as part of his Navy training.
4. Engineering, production, artist manager, music publicist, communications specialist, entertainment lawyer, A&R (artists and repertoire), manufacturing (making both physical and digital finished product), marketing and promotion, artist management, legal, finance and company management.

5. Music therapy, according to the American Music Therapy Association, is an allied health profession “in the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.”

Expand

Have students focus on the "music business" section of the article. This is an area many students entering college don't think of at first, because they are more interested in performance. Have students pick one music business position, research that position and share what they learned. Would they ever consider that job as a "fallback" if they decide not to pursue performing musical professionally?

Learning to Play Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time"

National Standards: 1-9

Some music transcends the generations. In this lesson, students learn to play Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time," a pop song that has truly stood the test of time. The song is in the key of C Major with a tempo of 130BPM.

Prepare

Have students listen to other pop songs from the era of "Time After Time," the early-to-mid '80s. What was the style of pop music back then? How does it differ from the pop music of today? Which songs do they like the most, and why?

Key points in the article:

- "Time After Time" is a simple arrangement. The form of the song includes an introduction, verse, pre-chorus, verse, pre-chorus, chorus, and then a second introduction, verse, pre-chorus, chorus, and guitar solo over chorus chords.
- While all its instrumentalists play a crucial role in the song, the guitarist has an especially important job: to provide the motion. On the recording, played by the Hooter's Eric Bazilian, the guitar supplies a clean, ringing sound throughout the song, leading the band through the musical journey.
- The real key to making this song work is to note that the lead vocal is full of yearning and regret. And you can't express those emotions if you have to yell instead of sing.

Begin

- Have students listen to the original record. Listen to "Time After Time" here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1mqrCTFoz4>
- Next, assign students different parts of the songs. Have each student study their instrument or vocal in the original song and decide what is similar to the original and different. Do students want to be as true as possible to the original or go in an entirely different direction? Either way, the writer points out that when it comes to singing, it's really storytelling, "and if you can make the audience feel the emotion in your story and care about what you have to say, then you've succeeded."

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- PERCOLATING: filter slowly through a porous surface or substance.
- ARPEGGIOS: the notes of a chord played in succession, either ascending or descending.
- INHABIT: live in or occupy.
- REPETITIVE: doing or saying the same thing several times.

Discuss

How is "Time After Time" an example of classic pop music that has stood the test of time? Where does it sit in Cyndi Lauper's discography? Have students listen to other songs by Cyndi Lauper, such as "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "All Through the Night." Ask them how they might musically interpret the songs. Would they change them, and if so, in what way?

Q&A

1. What's the name of Cyndi Lauper's debut album?
2. What was the first single off Cyndi Lauper's debut album?
3. What band was Cyndi Lauper in before she broke as a solo artist?
4. Who plays guitar on the original recording of "Time After Time?"
5. Who did Cyndi Lauper collaborate with to write "Time After Time?"
6. What four top ten hits did Cyndi Lauper achieve off her *She's So Unusual* album?

Answers

1. *She's So Unusual*.
2. "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun."
3. Blue Angel.
4. Hooter's Eric Bazilian.
5. Rob Hyman, keyboardist and one of the founders of the Philadelphia band The Hooters.
6. "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun," "She Bop," "All Through the Night," and "Time After Time."

Expand:

Have students study more of Cyndi Lauper's music and pick their favorite song to try covering. Does Lauper's music all sound similar, or does she change her style musically from song to song? What kind of diversity do they hear in her discography?