

Songwriting Harmony Level 1



Summary

This is a 12 week course with classes occurring once a week for one hour each, taught at the DeMelfi School of Music.

Students taking this course will need one or more of the following:

- Basic instrument skills on a polyphonic instrument
- A knowledge of chord construction
- Cubase 7.5 or higher

The course will cover the basics of chord progression and how it is used in writing most popular genres. Cubase will be used for demonstration and quick listening results of class projects. Jimmy Kachulis's book, *Songwriter's Workshop – Harmony*, will be used as reference material, and can be used as an optional text book for this course.

Course outline

Week 1

Diatonic Chords

Each key has a set of chords that are related to that key. This topic discusses easy ways to determine the chords that are available for any key.

Rhythm motif

In this topic we first review note values that make up various rhythms, then we discuss many different ways to create a rhythm pattern (motif) and turn it into a groove.

Generating a Groove

Using more than one motif, we can generate grooves that are made up of 1, 2, 4 and 8 bars. Here we explore the different methods of using a single motif and developing it into a groove.

Chord colors and lyric stories

Prosody is the technique of having the music support the lyrics. Coloring a word or phrase with a chord is one of many methods. Here we do exercises to color lyric phrases with appropriate chords.

Major key Power progressions

When discussing this topic, you will discover that most of the songs you hear on the radio share the same chord progressions. These are called “Power Progressions”. This topic explores the most-used power progressions and the different ways in which they are used for both variation, and to make them your own. Although commercial music uses simplicity, we discuss ways to take a simple power progression and make it more complex and less commercial. With class participation, a section of music is constructed using a major key progression. If time permits, several sections are constructed using several variations and complexity levels of a major key progression.

Week 2 – Modes and commonly used modal progressions

- Ionian (major)
- Dorian
- Phrygian
- Lydian
- Mixolydian
- Aeolian (minor)
- Locrian

Colors of keys

Minor key progressions

A section of music is constructed using a minor key progression. If time permits, several sections are constructed using different minor key progressions and complexity variations.

Week 3 – Song Form

- A discussion of the various song forms used in the most popular genres of music.
- Students participate in creating a section of music using a Dorian progression and its variations to create an entire song using one or more of the song forms discussed in this class.

Week 4 – Power progressions Part 1

In this class we construct songs using different power progressions in different sections for contrast. For instance, a minor progression in one section, a Major progression in another section, and a Dorian progression in another section.

Week 5 – Power progressions Part 2

This week we construct songs using Mixolydian and Blues progressions.

Week 6 – Variations of progressions

- Rhythm
- Pitch

Week 7 – Contrasting sections and arranging a song form

- Numerous ways to contrast a section are discussed.
 - Grooves
 - Chord progressions
 - Chord progression variations
 - Tempo
 - Time Signature
 - Rhythmic Feel
- 3 contrasting sections from one progression
- Using Cubase and the arranger track, various song forms from music constructed in this class are explored and listened to.

Week 8 – Individual student project

In this class each student gets to write the chord progression and grooves for an entire song. Each song is listened to in Cubase and critiqued by section.

Week 9 – Harmony and Melody

Creating chords to an existing melody

- Coloring a word
- Coloring a phrase
- Coloring a lyric section
- Analyzing hit songs

Week 10 - Collaboration

- Chords and grooves for an entire song are composed through class participation.
- Students partner to write chords and grooves for an entire song.
- How to form productive collaborations
 - Finding compatible personalities
- How to be a productive collaborator
 - Allowing creativity to flow

- Keeping the ego in check

Week 11 – Cadences: Home and away

In this class we learn how to take the listener on a journey. In this journey we leave home, take our trip, then return home.

Analyzing hit songs

In this class we analyze a few hit songs and determine which techniques, covered in this course, were used in creating them.

Week 12 -

Modulation

Different types of modulations are discussed and students create songs using modulations.

Networking and collaboration

The importance of networking and collaboration for a successful musical career is discussed.

- Students collaborate with each other on an entire song.
- Networking for collaborating on songs
- Networking for collaborating on other projects
- Networking your way into the music business.

Tuition

The base rate for this class is \$420 payable at time of registration prior to starting classes. Discounts are available for multiple simultaneous classes, and will be based on the number of classes taken.

Classes must have a minimum of 2 students to be held. If only one student registers for this class, the class will be canceled and the student will be offered the option of on-going private lessons at the current private lesson tuition rate.

Late payments

Tuition must be paid in full before a student can start this class. If tuition is paid late, the student may begin at the time of payment with no discount for time missed. It will be the student's responsibility to get the notes from other students for earlier classes.

Late arrivals

If a student arrives late for a class, it will be the student's responsibility to get notes for the portion of

the class missed from other students.

No-shows

If a student does not show up for a class, it is the student's responsibility to get the notes for classes missed from other students. No make-up lessons or refunds will be available for no-shows.

Cancellations

Registration may be canceled and refunded prior to starting classes. However, if a student attends one class or more, there will be no refund for discontinuing.

Make-up lessons

The only time make-up lessons will be available will be in the event that the instructor has to cancel a class. If all students are available, a make up lesson may be in the same week as another class or as an extra hour extension of a regularly scheduled class. If not everyone is available for this type of make up, the course will be extended by the number of weeks that the instructor missed during the course. If someone is not available for either, the make up will be given on a day that works best for most of the students. Those who cannot make up the lesson may get the notes on that lesson from other students.