

CHORD CADENCES

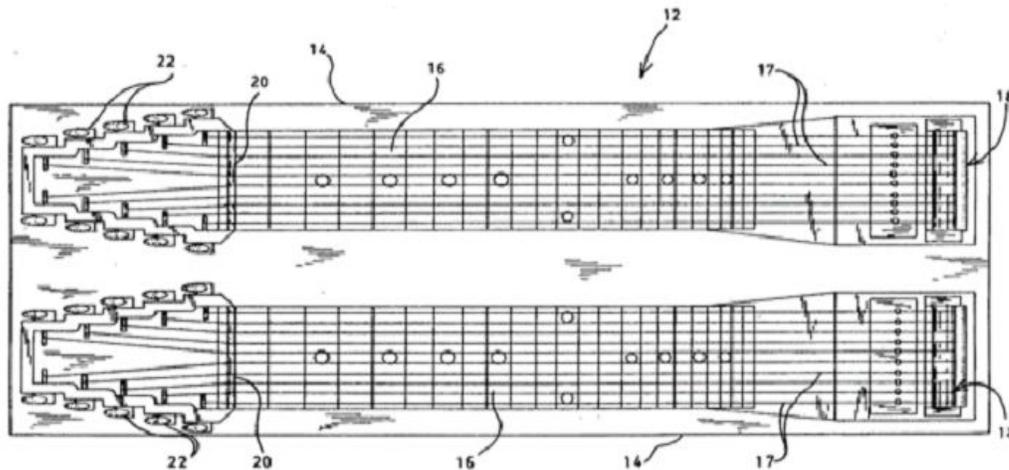


FIG. 1

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Sheet 1 of 3
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Learning where all of your chords are on the neck is an essential skill for all musicians on any stringed instrument. Applying that knowledge by practicing real world examples of how chords are often used helps solidify it in your memory.

We can build up a chord vocabulary and then start combining them to make chord phrases called cadences. Any chord progression in a song can be analyzed as combinations of cadences. Without getting too deep into the Theory behind all of this, try out these examples.

THE HARMONIZED MAJOR SCALE

The most common chord application is a 5 to 1 resolution. In C Major, that would be a G7 resolving to C. Let's find a "5 to 1" move for every chord in the Harmonized C Major scale.

C Harmonized Major Scale in triads: Cmaj Dmin Emin Fmaj Gmaj Amin
Bdim

C Harmonized Major Scale in 4-note chords: Cmaj7 Dmin7 Emin7 Fmaj7
Gdom7 Am7 Bm7b5

We can number the chords: 1 = Cmaj7, 2 = Dmin7, 3 = Emin7, 4 = Fmaj7, 5 = Gdom7, 6 = Am7, 7 = Bm7b5

ADDING A 5 CHORD

By thinking of every chord as a "1", we can put a Dominant 7th "5 chord" in front of each chord:

The 5 of Cmaj7 is G7

The 5 of Dmin7 is A7

The 5 of Emin7 is B7

The 5 of Fmaj7 is C7

The 5 of G7 is D7

The 5 of Amin7 is E7

The G7 chord wants to resolve, so it is not a stable "1" chord. The Bmin7b5 is not a very stable "1" chord either as it sounds like it still wants to resolve, so we'll ignore it for this exercise (though you could try an F#7 in front of it).

You can see that many of these "5" chords are not themselves a part of the C Harmonized Major Scale because we are treating each chord in the scale as it's own "1", regardless of its *function* in relation to C Major.

So now we have every chord in the Harmonized Major Scale with a 5 to 1 relationship. You will find this cadence constantly in all forms of music and it is a great idea to practice these resolutions all over the neck, in all keys.

ADDING A 2 CHORD TO THE 5 – 1 CADENCE

To expand this concept, make a three-chord cadence by adding the 2 chord. The 2-5-1 cadence is a staple of popular music. For our purposes, the 2 chord of a major chord is a minor 7, the 2 chord of a minor chord is a minor7b5:

Dmin7 → G7 → Cmaj7
Emin7b5 → A7 → Dmin7
F#min7b5 → B7 → Emin7
Gmin7 → C7 → Fmaj7
Bmin7b5 → E7 → Amin7

Try practicing these moves with the 1 chord as major, then the same letter name as a 1 minor:

Dmin7 → G7 → Cmaj7
Dmin7b5 → G7 → Cmin7

ALTERATIONS

You can add any altered tones (b5, #5, b9, #9) to any functioning 5 chord for more color, based on your personal preference.

This can sound especially nice on Minor 2-5-1 progressions (Dmin7b5 → G7#5b9 → Cmin7).

EXPANSIONS

You can keep adding “5” chords to the cadences.

The 5 of Dmin7 is A7, so now we have an A7 → Dmin7 → G7 → Cmaj7 (6-2-5-1 in the key of C). Try playing that as a 1-6-2-5 progression.

The 5 of A7 is E7, making it a 3-6-2-5-1 which, without the resolution to the 1, is often used as a turn-around or bridge in a song as a 3-6-2-5 cadence.

ROLL THE DICE

One of the Paul Franklin Method members rolls dice to randomize his practice routine. Pick a key you want to work in, let's say "G" and use a pair of dice. Roll the dice and treat each of the resulting two numbers (between 1 and 6, perfect for our needs here) as chords in the key of G.

If you roll a 3 and a 6, those are Bmin7 and Emin7 in the key of G. Find the 5 chord that goes in front of each (F#dom7 → Bmin7, Adom7 → Emin7).

Then play the 2-5-1 cadence of those (C#min7b5 → F#dom7 → Bmin7, F#min7b5 → Adom7 → Emin7). Be sure to pick many keys, even the ones you don't often play in to make sure you are comfortable all over the neck.

Spend some time working through these examples in all keys in as many positions as you can find. Learning different ways to connect chords to each other is great ear training and helps you learn songs off records or live on the bandstand.