

Playing Common Chord Progressions

By Jason Kokoszka

There is no doubt that understanding how chords relate to one another and knowing some common chord progressions can help you memorize and even compose music much more efficiently. In this issue, we'll look at a I-IV-ii-V progression in D.

To learn about other progressions, check out the Theory Corner for an excerpt from Tracy Walton's book, *Musicianship for the Contemporary Bassist*, available through Alfred Publishing.

There are complementary parts for guitar, keyboard, bass and drums below.

Please note that the chords above each part reflect the overall harmony when all four instruments are taken into account. Try playing this with your friends at your next jam session, and have fun!

Guitar

This part alternates between a two-bar chordal riff and two bars of licks. Notice that there is some syncopation throughout the example. Count carefully and you'll have this down in no time. Rock on!

Chord progression: D G Emin7 A D G

Chord progression: Emin7 A D G Emin7 A

7 D G Emin7 A D

7 2 1 1 3 1 1 3 1 3 1 4 1 1 4 2 4 2 4 1 2

TAB 11 10 10-12-10-10 (10) 12-10 12-10 12-9 (9) 9 (9) 12 10-12-10-12 9 10 (10)

Keyboard

We're going to play some licks while the guitar plays chords and comp for the guitar when it solos. Play the tied notes carefully and watch the triplets in the right hand in measures 5 and 6. Try inserting some of these licks into other songs with this chord progression.

D G Emin7 A D G

5 4 5 3 1 3 5 5 4 3 4 4 2 5 2 5 1 3 5 4 2 5 1 1 4 5 3 1 4 5 2 5 1 1 4 5 3 1 1 3 2 3 3 2 3 3 3 5 4 5 1 2 3 4 1

Emin7 A D G Emin7 A

7 D G Emin7 A D

Bass

This bassline provides a simple yet effective foundation for the guitar and keyboard parts. At the end of each two-measure progression, the bass imitates the end of the guitar riff. Be on the lookout for syncopated notes in bars 2, 4, 6 and 8.

D G Emin7 A D G Emin7 A

1 3 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3

5 5 7 7 5 7 5 (5) 7 5 7 5 5 7 7 5 7 5 (5) 7 5 7

5 D G Emin7 A D G Emin7 A D

5 1 4 1 2 1 1 1 3 1 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 3 1 3 1

5 5 2-3-3-3-2 0-0-3-5 (5) 7 5-7 5-5 5-3-3-3-2 0-0-3-5 (5) 7 5-7 5 (5)

Drums

This part focuses on the snare, toms and the bass drum and plays accents at the same time as the syncopated chords in the guitar part. Read this part slowly at first; there are quite a few rests throughout, and starting slow is the best way to keep from getting confused.

The musical score for drums is written in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a quarter note on the snare line, followed by eighth notes and quarter notes with rests. The second staff starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with rests. The third staff continues the rhythmic pattern, ending with a final chord and a fermata.

Conclusion

For more information on common chord progressions, be sure to check out the Theory Corner for an excerpt from Tracy Walton's book, *Musicianship for the Contemporary Bassist*, available at www.alfred.com. In addition, be sure to check out his rock bass lessons on www.WorkshopLive.com today!

To learn more about chord progressions, guitarists, keyboardists and bassists will want to check out any lesson where the focus is chords. WorkshopLive has an endless number of lessons on chords, so dig in and have fun!

Have fun experimenting with new chord progressions—see you soon!