

## LINKING CHORDS IN A PROGRESSION

The idea behind this lesson is to take a fairly straightforward chord progression and then make it sound more sophisticated by using 'passing' chords to link it all together. This is particularly useful if each of your chords has to be played for a long time before progressing.

In our first example we're going to use the following progression:

|       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Am    | Dm    | G     | Am    |
| A C E | D F A | G B D | A C E |

Now imagine you have to strum each chord for two bars each; unless the tempo is quite high, this could sound very dull in no time at all. We are therefore going to insert a different chord in the second bar in order to liven things up:

|       |        |       |           |       |        |       |
|-------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
| Am    | A      | Dm    | F#dim     | G     | E      | Am    |
| A C E | A C# E | D F A | F# A C D# | G B D | E G# B | A C E |

Here's why it works:

- Am to Dm via A: the 'C' in Am goes up to 'D' in Dm via the 'C#' in A
- Dm to G via F#dim: the 'F' in Dm goes up to the 'G' in G via the 'F#' in F#dim
- G to Am via E: the 'G' in G goes up to the 'A' in Am via the 'G#' in E

As you can see, it is about picking a 'stepping stone' note that connects one part of the current chord to one part of the next. As chords are built using the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> notes of the parent scale, when you are looking to create a passing chord out of your 'stepping stone' note, you can create possible chords by placing that note in one of those scale places.

To illustrate, if we take the Dm to G progression from the above example, we connect them via an 'F#' note, which creates the following possible chords:

- using our passing note as the 1<sup>st</sup> in the chord, we get F#dim (F# A C D#)
- as the 3<sup>rd</sup>, we get D (D F# A)
- as the flattened 5<sup>th</sup>, we get Cdim (C D# F# A – the same as F#dim)
- as the 5<sup>th</sup>, we get B (B D# F#)
- as the sharpened 5<sup>th</sup>, we get A#aug (A# D F#)
- as the 7<sup>th</sup>, we get G#7 (G# C D# F#)

The emotional effect you want to achieve will help you decide which of these sounds to use; remember, there is no 'right' answer, merely personal opinion!

Try this example:

|       |  |       |  |        |  |        |
|-------|--|-------|--|--------|--|--------|
| Em    |  | G     |  | D      |  | A      |
| E G B |  | G B D |  | D F# A |  | A C# E |