

# Chord Substitutions . . . developing a richer sound

An interesting chord progression enhances even the simplest of songs. The first step in developing a thicker, richer sound in your arrangement is as follows.....

## **I and IV chords**

Instead of continually using a plain basic triad, try adding a 6<sup>th</sup> (ie..C6...CEG+A) or Major 7<sup>th</sup> (Cmaj7... CEG+B) creating a more lyrical or lush sound. Try playing them both in one direction or the other (Camj7 to C6 or C6 to Cmaj7) to create a sense of movement when there are enough beats in the measure(s) to accommodate the changes. C6 then Cmaj7 creates an upward movement or Cmaj7 to C6 creates a downward sense of movement.

## **V chords**

The “dominant” chord, of any key, is almost always used as a 7<sup>th</sup> chord. Don't confuse this chord with the Major 7<sup>th</sup> (Cmaj7), which uses the actual 7<sup>th</sup> of the scale. This **V7** is a chord which adds the (b7) to the basic triad...ie G7 GBD+F... This type of 7<sup>th</sup> is referred to as a “dominant 7<sup>th</sup>”

## **ii, iii, vi chords**

The minor chord sound much better when a 7<sup>th</sup> is added creating Dm7, Em7, and Am7. Again, this is the (b7) type and should not use the (maj7) which utilizes the actual seventh of the scale ..ie...Dm7 is DFA+C Em7 is EGB+D Am7 is ACE+G

## **vii<sup>o</sup> chord**

This diminished chord works well when a “diminished 7<sup>th</sup>” is added. A diminished 7<sup>th</sup> is the equivalent of a “6<sup>th</sup>” note as the seventh (b7 type) is lowered again by another half step. Cdim7 or C<sup>o</sup>7 would be spelled as C Eb Gb + A. Note that the A note is actually the 6<sup>th</sup> of the normal major scale.

A more extensive discussion of the use of diminished chords will follow. Although a diminished chord does not sound stable on its own, they are extremely useful and enriching in a chromatic chord progression. They announce movement in a very strong way.