

The whole point of this post is to get you to go to the Introduction- the Language of Harmony in the lessons. So just go there . . . anytime . . . are you still here? If you insist on reading - fine, but it's a ploy to get you to go to the Introduction.

I couldn't keep the word *diatonic* straight in my head. It was one of the words I couldn't get a handle on. It made sense after an explanation but then I thought, 'what is the significance of the diatonic scale vs. a non-diatonic scale?' (misspellings kind of intentional) Hey I'm willing to play anything that sounds good. I don't care if it is diatonic or not.

Diatonic means any note or chord that is within the scale. But passing tones are many times not diatonic and we play them, and sometimes we pass through non-diatonic chords to get to the next diatonic chord. And guess what? It actually adds color to an otherwise ordinary piece. It's just a term of reference.

But apparently *diatonic* does matter. So that's why in the Introduction- Language of Harmony I introduce the diatonic scale in the key of C- where I've got three major chords the I and IV, V; three minor chords the ii, iii, and vi, and one diminished chord- vii dim.



Secret: #1- Build the melody and harmony from the seven tones of the scale.

I've always liked maps. I want order out of this chaos of notes. When I first started composing, I would sit down at the piano and play something, listen, and I keep what sounded good and discard what didn't. Having learned enough to analyze, I can now figure out what I did. I was working backwards at the time. (By the way, I'm trying not to work backwards) I just knew what worked-kind of. And if I broke a rule or two, I did it because it worked. I was writing progressions and eventually getting back to the tonic or I chord. And what I thought was unruliness was actually not at all.



What I call the chord map helped me to know what I was doing. It organized for me the idea of a progression of chords, not just random chords strung together. The Art of Composing really defines the basic idea, the contrasting idea, and a continuation of fragmented ideas and a cadence. It's not chaos.

All the Introduction under Lessons in Harmony does for me is help make awareness of the materials that are absolutes in the selection or choices of chords to choose from as I begin my Opus Extraordinaire. The highly degree'd person is probably cringing at my description here. I can appreciate that because my wife, though highly trained, proficient, and knowledgeable is in the same boat as I, when it comes to composition- you don't start automatically writing concertos. You have to dig in and humiliate yourself with mediocre stuff, cross your fingers and hope that with more understanding and composing time you may come up with something you are not ashamed of.

So go to Introduction on Lessons In Harmony. It will take a whole lot less time than reading this blog post. If you've gotten this far in this blog . . . I'm amazed. Stop wasting your time and go to the Introduction. You are supposed to be laughing - my wife didn't laugh either.

map borrowed from A Geometry of Music, Dimitri Tymoczko