

Four-Chord Schemas

Keyboard style voice-leading realizations

1. Doo Wop

Doo Wop Variant

via chord substitution (sub. ii for IV)*

C Am F G C Am Dm G

C: I vi IV V I vi ii V

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the Doo Wop Variant. It consists of two systems of four chords each. The first system contains C, Am, F, and G. The second system contains C, Am, Dm, and G. The bass line consists of single notes: C, A, F, G, C, A, D, G. The treble line consists of triads: C, Am, F, G, C, Am, Dm, G. Roman numerals are provided below the notes: C: I, vi, IV, V, I, vi, ii, V.

2. Axis, or Singer-Songwriter

Four variants via chord rotation*

On vi

Am F C G F G C Am

C: vi IV I V IV V I vi

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the 'On vi' variant. It consists of two systems of four chords each. The first system contains Am, F, C, and G. The second system contains F, G, C, and Am. The bass line consists of single notes: A, F, C, G, F, G, C, A. The treble line consists of triads: Am, F, C, G, F, G, C, Am. Roman numerals are provided below the notes: C: vi, IV, I, V, IV, V, I, vi.

On IV

On I

C G Am F G Am F C

C: I V vi IV V vi IV I

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the 'On I' variant. It consists of two systems of four chords each. The first system contains C, G, Am, and F. The second system contains G, Am, F, and C. The bass line consists of single notes: C, G, Am, F, G, Am, F, C. The treble line consists of triads: C, G, Am, F, G, Am, F, C. Roman numerals are provided below the notes: C: I, V, vi, IV, V, vi, IV, I.

On V

3. Hopscotch

F G Am C

C: IV V vi I

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the Hopscotch schema. It consists of a single system of four chords: F, G, Am, and C. The bass line consists of single notes: F, G, Am, C. The treble line consists of triads: F, G, Am, C. Roman numerals are provided below the notes: C: IV, V, vi, I.

* - Schema variants may be created by chord substitution or chord rotation

Reference

Lavengood, Megan and Bryn Hughes. 2023. "Four-Chord Schemas." In Mark Gotham, et al., *Open Music Theory*, v2. Available online at: <<https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/chapter/4-chord-schemas/>>