



Music Musings No.5: 1950s Chords

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The 1950s song chord pattern: 1 - 6 - 4 - 5 (or C, A minor, F and G)

In Music Musings No. 4 we played songs using 3 chords: C, F and G (you can also think of these as the 1, 4 and 5 chords in the key of C). Now we're going to add one more chord to give you a classic 1950s progression -- the A minor chord, which is built on the 6th tone of the C scale.

To use this progression, you would play each chord for 2 beats in this order: C, Am, F, G

C Chord (1 chord)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

A minor Chord (6 chord)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

F Chord (4 chord)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

G Chord (5 chord)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Let's try this pattern in a typical 1950s ballad:

(Unchained Melody)

C Am F G C Am F G

Oh, my love, my darling, I've hungered for your touch a long, lonely time . . .

(Blue Moon)

C Am F G C Am F G C Am etc.

Blue Moon, you saw me standing alone, without a dream in my heart . . .

Now try the same chord progression on the songs below :

- 1) Teenager in Love (make it a bit zippier!)
- 2) Santa Catalina (26 miles across the sea, Santa Catalina is waiting for me . . .)
- 3) Heart and Soul 6) Stand By Me (8 beats per chord)
- 4) Paul and Paula
- 5) Earth Angel

BONUS: Can you think of other songs that use the C Am F G progression?