

MATT'S MUSICAL COLOURS

A NEW WAY TO SEE CHORDS, HARMONY, AND MOVEMENT



INTRODUCTION

For a long long time, I found myself wanting a simpler, more intuitive way to understand what chords are *doing* in music. It's just the way my mind works. I know it sounds a bit 'woolly' but I find music is a 'feel' thing and for me, and also a visual thing. Thinking in the old fashioned 'sub-median/dominant' language doesn't speak to me! So I've been thinking of chords as something emotional.

Not just what they're called...
...but how they *feel*, and how they *move*.

Over time, I started to visualise chords as colours.

This helped me to *see* harmonic movement in a much clearer way — not as theory on a page, but as something flowing and alive.

Instead of thinking:

“That’s a I chord going to a V chord...”

I started thinking:

“We’re moving from yellow... to red... and back home again.”

And that’s what I’d like to share with you here.

- **I (Yellow)** → Home, resolution, stability
- **IV (Orange)** → Change, movement away from home
- **V (Red)** → Tension, pull, energy
- **vi (Green)** → Melancholy home, softness
- **ii (Purple)** → Movement, preparation
- **iii (Blue)** → Sadness, deeper colour
- **vii (Cool / pale)** → Unstable, jazzy, unresolved

These aren't just random colour choices. They work in a very special way and reflect their 'personality.'

	<i>Personality</i>	<i>3 part type</i>	<i>4 part type</i>	<i>Musical name</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>MAJOR</i>	<i>Maj7</i>	<i>Tonic</i>
<i>ii</i>	<i>Upbeat minor</i>	<i>minor</i>	<i>m7</i>	<i>Supertonic</i> <i>(pre-dominant)</i>
<i>iii</i>	<i>Sad</i>	<i>minor</i>	<i>m7</i>	<i>Mediant</i>
<i>IV</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>MAJOR</i>	<i>Maj7</i>	<i>Subdominant</i>
<i>V</i>	<i>Tension</i>	<i>MAJOR</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Dominant</i>
<i>vi</i>	<i>Melancholy</i>	<i>minor</i>	<i>m7</i>	<i>Submediant</i> <i>(relative minor)</i>
<i>vii</i>	<i>Jazzy</i>	<i>diminished</i>	<i>m7b5</i>	<i>Subtonic</i> <i>(leading)</i>

LIGHT AND SHADE

One simple way to think about harmony is this:

- **Major chords** tend to feel **brighter**
- **Minor chords** tend to feel **darker**

So in our colour system:

- Brighter colours (yellow, orange, red) often reflect **major chords**
- Darker colours (green, blue, purple) reflect **minor chords**