

# Super Mario World Overworld Analysis

## Takeaways and Challenges

### 1. Tritone substitution

- a. **What is it?** A tritone is a note that's three whole steps away from any particular note. When you count three whole steps away from the typical V note, you land on the flat-II note. When you build a dominant chord (1, 3, 5, flat-7) with that flat-II note as the root, you're "subbing" out the V chord for a more jazzy, slightly dissonant alternative that works just as well for going back to the I chord
- b. **When should I use it?** Use tritone substitutions where you'd normally have a V - I (perfect) cadence. Sometimes they'll complement the piece, other times they feel out-of-place. Use your ears!

### 2. Chromaticism

- a. **What is it?** Chromaticism is the idea of using neighboring tones as "stepping stones" to get to other notes in the scale. It's very popular in ragtime and jazz and can help your piece seem more lighthearted
- b. **When should I use it?** Sometimes our compositions can feel like they're trying to be too epic or take themselves too seriously. Chromaticism is a good way to combat that. Use it sparingly unless you're going for a full-on ragtime vibe!

### 3. I to V descending bassline

- a. **What is it?** A popular way to end songs or transition from one section to another is to hang on the I chord while the bassline chromatically descends to the V. The pattern Koji Kondo uses in the Super Mario Overworld Theme is — I - I/bvii - I/vi - I/bvi - V7
- b. **When should I use it?** Whenever you want to add a little country flavor or end a piece in ragtime-inspired way.