

Modulation

Modulation: *The process of moving from one key center to another.*

- Requires a change of key center
 - change of mode (i.e. C Major to c minor) is not considered a modulation (tonic remains the same)
- More clearly established than a secondary key area
 - complete predominant – dominant – tonic progression
 - preferably confirmed by means of an authentic cadence
 - often remaining in the new key after the initial modulating cadence

Closely Related Keys: *Those keys that share the same key signature or differ only by one accidental.*

- Modulation to the relative major or minor mode (i.e. C Major/a minor)
- Modulation to the dominant or subdominant (or their relative major/minor)
- Closely related keys are those whose tonic triad is one of the diatonic major or minor triads in the original key
 - in C major – d minor, e minor, F Major, G Major, a minor
 - in g minor – B-flat Major, c minor, d minor, E-flat Major, F Major
- Any modulation that changes the key signature by more than one accidental is considered a modulation to a distantly related key

Diatonic Pivot Chord: *A chord that has a diatonic function in both keys for which it acts as a connection*

- Modulation by diatonic pivot chord is also referred to as a common-chord modulation
- This type of modulation contains the following three parts:
 - The first key is established harmonically (progression including V – I, preferably in an authentic cadence)
 - A diatonic pivot chord connects the old key with the new key
 - must exist diatonically in both keys
 - more than one pivot chord is common (best pivot chord functions as predominant in the new key)
 - pivot chord is labeled with both diatonic harmonic functions (old key over new key)
 - The new key is established harmonically (progression including V – I, preferably in an authentic cadence)

Finding a Common-Chord Modulation

- Find the first chord which clearly indicates movement to a new key
 - typically the dominant of the new key
 - typically identified by the use of an accidental
 - Find the first chord which clearly indicates movement to a new key
- Analyze the chord(s) immediately preceding this chord
 - chords that may be functionally analyzed in both keys may serve as pivot chords
 - if more than one chord functions diatonically in both keys, it may be interpreted as a pivot group
- Since pivot chords join two key areas, working the analysis towards the middle and finding the common element between the two keys will most effectively allow you to identify a pivot

Modulation to V (to the dominant)

- This is the most common modulation from a major key
- Chords in original key **I** **ii** **iii** **IV** **V** **vi** **vii^o**
- Chords in dominant **IV** **V** **vi** **vii^o** **I** **ii** **iii**
 - Most common pivot chord is I/IV
 - Other preferred pivot chords are iii/vi and vi/ii
 - The dominant in the original key does not function well as a pivot chord (should resolve to original tonic)
- Modulation back to the original key: addition of m7 to I creates a V⁷ in the original key
- In minor keys, modulations to the dominant are typically to the minor v (not V)

Modulation to the Relative Major or Minor

- This is the most common modulation from a minor key and is also a common modulation from major
- Chords in the major key **I** **ii** **iii** **IV** **V** **vi** **vii^o**
- Chords in the minor key **III** **iv** **V** **VI** **vii^o** **i** **ii^o**
 - the only chords that don't qualify as diatonic pivots are those that used the raised ⁷ (V & vii^o)
 - common pivot chords are ii/iv and IV/VI
- Modulation back to the original key may use the same or a different pivot chord

Modulation to ii, iii, or VII

- Considered modulations to a closely related key, but far less common than those previously discussed
- Chords in original key **I** **ii** **iii** **IV** **V** **vi** **vii^o**
- Chords in supertonic **vii^o** **i** **ii^o** **III** **iv** **V** **VI**
 - only two possible pivot chords – ii/i and IV/III
- Chords in original key **I** **ii** **iii** **IV** **V** **vi** **vii^o**
- Chords in mediant **VI** **vii^o** **i** **ii^o** **III** **iv** **V**
 - several possible pivot chords, but still very uncommon modulation
- Chords in original key **i** **ii^o** **III** **iv** **V** **VI** **VII**
- Chords in subtonic **ii** **iii** **IV** **V** **vi** **vii^o** **I**
 - similar relationship as major tonic to supertonic

Chromatic Modulation

- Chromatic modulation is most often seen in a modulation to ii or iii (may also be used in other cases)
- Chromatic modulation makes use of a chromatic pivot chord
 - A chromatic pivot chord is one that can be analyzed chromatically (or diatonically) in both keys
 - secondary dominants
 - secondary leading-tone chords
- In a chromatic modulation one or both of two conditions are true:
 - The primary modulation device is an ascending linear chromatic motion introducing the leading-tone
 - The pivot chord is not diatonic in both keys, but rather a secondary function chord in the old key and diatonic in the new key (typically the new dominant or leading-tone chord)

Sequence Modulation

- Use of a harmonic or melodic sequence to change tonal center
 - Stating each step of a sequence in a new key
 - Circle of fifths harmonic motion (often accompanied by descending step melodic sequence)

Common Tone Modulation

- Modulation that hinges on a single common tone; often isolated and emphasized
- Often involves a chromatic mediant relationship
 - chord roots a m3 or M3 apart (could be spelled as +2 or °4)
 - triad qualities are typically identical (i.e. both major or both minor triads)
 - G Major and B-flat Major (common tone – D)
 - g minor and e minor (common tone – G)

Phrase/Direct Modulation

- Modulation by means of a new phrase in a new key without a pivot chord or transitional material
 - Typically involves parallel or similar phrases and closely related keys
 - May involve a chord that could function as a pivot chord, but more accurately analyzed by how it sounds
- Abrupt modulation is a type of phrase or direct modulation involving distantly related keys and often utilizing contrasting phrases