

UNIT 14: BORROWED CHORDS

The similarities and differences in scale steps of the major scale and its parallel minor has provided composers other chromatic chords which can add color to the harmony without causing modulation. When comparing the four scales (see Example 14.1), it is clear that scale steps 1, 2, 4, and 5 are the same and are instrumental in reinforcing D as the tonal center. The other pitches vary according to the scale, determining the mode.

Example 14.1

Major

Pure Minor

Harmonic Minor

Melodic Minor

Because of the tonal stability between the scales, composers are able to "borrow" chords from one mode for use in the other. Building chords on each degree of all four scales it is possible to form a total of sixteen different triads and nineteen seventh chords.

While the number of possibilities is extensive, composers have used in common practice only about six different chords. Example 14.2 shows the five chords which are frequently borrowed from the minor for use in the major key.

Example 14.2

5 chords diatonic to D Major

ii ii⁷ IV vi vii^{#7}

continued . . .

Same chords borrowed from the parallel minor

ii° ii°7 iv bVI vii°7

Example 14.3 gives excerpts from Schubert and J.S. Bach which employ three of the borrowed chords listed above.

Example 14.3 Schubert - Das Wirtshaus, D. 911, No. 21

All- heur will ich ein-keh-ren, hab ich bei mir ge-dacht

F Major iv ii°6

J.S. Bach - Vater unser im Himmelreich

F Major bVI

The practice of borrowing chords from the parallel major key for use in a composition in a minor key is less frequent. The only chord borrowed with any frequency is the major tonic triad which, when placed at the end of a piece in a minor key, is called a PICARDY THIRD.

Example 14.4 J.S. Bach - Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten



A minor Picardy Third

Numerous examples of borrowed chords can be found in the literature from the Baroque period to the Post-Romantic and Impressionistic era. The approach and departure from the altered tone is treated more freely in the later periods as tonality becomes more fluid.

Drill 14.1

Write the borrowed chords for F Major and F minor.

Drill 14.2

Analyze the excerpts from music literature for borrowed chords.

Schubert - Sonata in A minor, Op. 42 (Scherzo)



Mendelssohn - Song without Words, Op. 102, No. 2



UNIT 15: THE NEAPOLITAN SIXTH CHORD

The Neapolitan Sixth is a major triad based on the lowered second degree of the major or minor scale.

Example 15.1

A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of chords. The first measure contains a C major triad (C4, E4, G4). The second measure contains a Neapolitan Sixth chord (Bb3, D4, F4). The third measure contains a Neapolitan Sixth chord in first inversion (D4, F4, Ab5). The fourth measure contains an A minor triad (A3, C4, E4). The fifth measure contains a Neapolitan Sixth chord in first inversion (C4, Eb5, Gb6). The sixth measure contains a Neapolitan Sixth chord in first inversion (Eb5, Gb6, Ab6). The seventh measure contains a Neapolitan Sixth chord in first inversion (Gb6, Ab6, Bb7).

C Major ii N N6 A minor ii° N N6

The chord is generally found in first inversion, thus the name "Neapolitan Sixth", but the term is also applied when the chord is in root position.

Example 15.2 Chopin - Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 1

A piano score for Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 1. The right hand plays a melodic line with grace notes and ornaments. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. The key signature is F minor (three flats). The time signature is 3/4. The piece is in common time.

F minor N6

Schubert - Der Doppelgänger, D. 957, No. 13

A piano score for Schubert's Der Doppelgänger, D. 957, No. 13. The right hand plays a series of chords. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. The key signature is B minor (two sharps). The time signature is 3/4. The piece is in common time.

B minor: N

The Neapolitan Sixth generally resolves to a dominant chord, but there are numerous examples where other chords are interpolated between the N6 and the V. In regard to approach, any chord which normally precedes the diatonic ii may precede the N6.

Example 15.3

D minor: i N6 V i i N6 $i\frac{6}{4}$ V i i N6 $vii^{\circ 7}$ V i
of V

Since the Neapolitan tends to "embellish" the dominant, it is frequently used at cadence points in the music of the Baroque and Classic periods. Like most chromatic chords, its use become more liberal in the Romantic and generally fades away during the Post-Romantic and Impressionistic eras.

Drill 15.1

Practice writing the Neapolitan Sixth using the following procedure.

1. Write the N6 in the following keys: C# minor, D minor, E Major, G minor, A Major.
2. Doubling the third of the chord (the unaltered tone), arrange the pitches in four part harmony.
3. Resolve the chord in the various ways discussed in this unit.

Drill 15.2

Analyze the excerpt with Roman numerals and identify the Neapolitan Sixth with the symbol N6.

Vivaldi-Bach - Concerto in D minor for Organ (2nd Mvt.)

continued . . .

Handwritten musical score for piano, consisting of three staves. The top two staves are grouped by a brace on the left. The music is in a key with one flat and a common time signature. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines.