

## chapter

# 29

## Modal Mixture

Modal mixture arises when notes, chords, or passages from the parallel minor are used within a major key, or vice versa.

### Parallel Minor in a Major Key

Borrowed chords resulting from modal mixture

Common borrowed chords

Embellishing tones and  $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$

### Parallel Major in a Minor Key

## PARALLEL MINOR IN A MAJOR KEY

**Modal mixture** in a major key results from the appearance of notes, chords, or entire passages drawn from the parallel minor. A shift to the parallel minor can have a powerful expressive effect. It is *not* a modulation, however, because a modulation must involve a change of tonic.

29.1 Schubert, “Thränenregen” (Rain of Tears) ➞



*Modal mixture:* A passage in A minor appears within an A-major piece (notice the use of C $\flat$  and F $\flat$  instead of C $\sharp$  and F $\sharp$  in the last two measures).

A musical score in 6/8 time, key of A major. The first four measures are in A major, with a piano (*pp*) marking. The last two measures show a modal mixture into A minor, indicated by a red arrow and the text 'A minor'. The notes C $\flat$  and F $\flat$  are used in the final measures instead of the diatonic C $\sharp$  and F $\sharp$ .

Since the tonic remains A, no modulation has occurred.

## BORROWED CHORDS RESULTING FROM MODAL MIXTURE

In a major-key passage, modal mixture may involve only one chord or perhaps just a few harmonies from the parallel minor. In such a case the minor-key harmonies, known as **borrowed chords**, typically use the minor form of either  $\hat{3}$  or  $\hat{6}$  as one of their chord tones. In each case, the function of the borrowed chord is similar to the diatonic version of the harmony. For instance, within a major key, iv functions like IV, ii<sup>o6</sup> functions like ii<sup>6</sup>, and so on.

29.2



In major keys, IV is a major triad.

A musical score in G major (one sharp) showing the IV chord (B-D-F) as a major triad. The notes G-B-D are indicated above the staff. Below the staff, the chord is labeled 'D: I IV V I' and 'T S D T'.

In minor keys, iv is minor.

A musical score in G minor (two flats) showing the iv chord (G-B $\flat$ -D) as a minor triad. The notes G-B $\flat$ -D are indicated above the staff. Below the staff, the chord is labeled 'D min.: i iv V i' and 'T S D T'.

In a major key, iv is a *borrowed chord*, since it uses a note from the parallel minor (B $\flat$ , the minor form of  $\hat{6}$ ).

A musical score in G major (one sharp) showing the iv chord (G-B $\flat$ -D) as a borrowed chord. The notes G-B $\flat$ -D are indicated above the staff. Below the staff, the chord is labeled 'D: I iv V I' and 'T S D T'.

IV and iv are both Subdominant chords; they function similarly.

29.3 Dvorak, Waltz, op. 54, no. 4 ➡





D $\flat$ : I iv V<sup>7</sup> I

Simplified harmonic model

D $\flat$ : I iv V<sup>7</sup> I

Borrowed chord in D $\flat$  major: iv instead of IV, with B $\flat\flat$  (minor form of  $\hat{6}$ ) instead of B $\flat$ .

29.4 R. Schumann, "Ich grolle nicht" (I Bear No Grudge) ➔



*mf*

Ich grõ - le nicht, und wenn das Herz auch bricht.

*mf*

C: I IV<sup>6</sup> IV ii<sup>ø7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I

Simplified harmonic model

C: I IV<sup>6</sup> IV ii<sup>ø7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I

Borrowed chord in C major: ii<sup>ø7</sup> instead of ii<sup>7</sup>, with A<sup>b</sup> (minor form of  $\hat{6}$ ) instead of A.

Translation: I bear no grudge, although my heart is breaking.

## 29.5 Schubert, "Der Neugierige" (The Curious One) ➡

Bäch - lein meiner Lie - be, wie bist du heut so stumm!

*pp*

B: I V<sup>7</sup> I i i<sup>6</sup> V (V V<sup>6</sup><sub>2</sub>/V V)

(above pedal point: I)

Borrowed chords in B major: i and i<sup>6</sup> instead of I and I<sup>6</sup>, with D<sup>4</sup> (minor form of  $\hat{3}$ ) instead of D<sup>#</sup>.

Translation: My dear brook, why are you so silent today?

Borrowed chords use the same voice leading in major keys as they would in their original minor-key context.

## 29.6





**Good** Voice-leading from iv is the same in a minor or major key.

min. form of  $\hat{6}$

D min.: iv V i D: iv V I



**Poor** Whether in a minor key or in a borrowed chord, the minor form of  $\hat{6}$  ( $B\flat$ ) should resolve down to avoid a melodic augmented 2nd.

A2

D min.: iv V i D: iv V I

## COMMON BORROWED CHORDS

The most common borrowed chords in major use either the minor form of  $\hat{3}$  (such as the i triad), the minor form of  $\hat{6}$  (such as iv,  $ii^{\circ 6}$ , or  $ii^{\circ 7}$ ), or both (such as  $\flat VI$ —that is, a major triad whose root is the minor form of  $\hat{6}$ ).

29.7



Comparison of diatonic chords and common borrowed chords

C: I (diatonic) i (borrowed) IV (diatonic)  $ii^6$  (diatonic)  $ii^6$  (borrowed) iv (borrowed)  $ii^{\circ 6}$  (borrowed)  $ii^{\circ 7}$  (borrowed) vi (diatonic)  $\flat VI$  (borrowed)

$\hat{3}$  is lowered.

$\hat{6}$  is lowered.

$\hat{3}$  and  $\hat{6}$  are lowered (two accidentals are needed).

Since  $\hat{7}$  is usually raised to form a leading tone in minor keys, borrowed chords that use the subtonic  $\hat{7}$  are relatively rare. In the few instances where they do appear, they most often function as passing chords, as parts of sequences, or within lengthy sections in the parallel minor.

29.8



Comparison of diatonic chords and borrowed chords that are relatively uncommon

C: iii (diatonic)  $\flat III$  (borrowed)  $vii^{\circ 6}$  (diatonic)  $V^6$  (diatonic)  $\flat VII$  (borrowed)  $v^6$  (borrowed)

$\flat III$  (i.e., a borrowed chord whose root is the minor form of  $\hat{3}$ ) requires two accidentals; it is usually found only in extended passages in the minor key.

Unless appearing as passing chords or in sequences,  $\flat VII$  (i.e., a chord whose root is the subtonic) and minor v are rare.

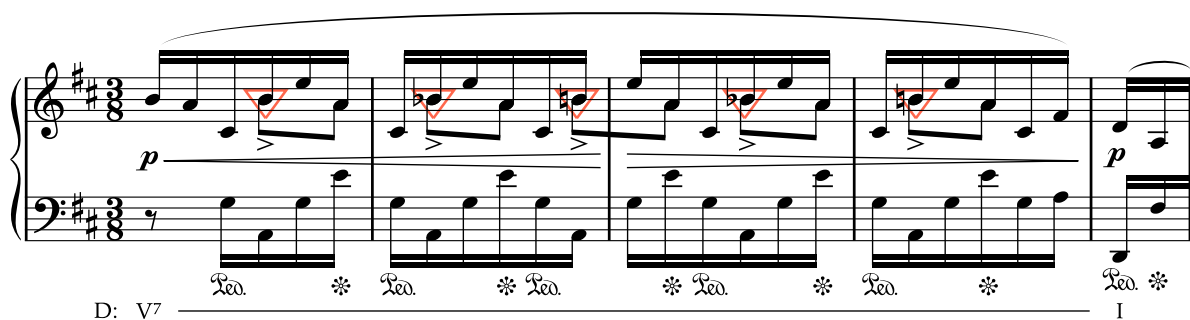
## EMBELLISHING TONES AND $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$

Modal mixture may also involve embellishing tones. For example, the minor form of  $\hat{6}$  may serve as a neighbor tone within a major-key passage.

### 29.9 Chopin, Prelude, op. 28, no. 5



Neighbor tones alternate between major and minor forms (B and B $\flat$ ) of  $\hat{6}$ .



D: V7     $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*  $\text{Led.}$  \*

As discussed in Chapter 17, the minor form of  $\hat{6}$  may also appear within a major key as part of  $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ .

### 29.10 Grieg, "Arietta," from *Lyric Pieces*, op. 12, no. 1



Simplified harmonic model

E $\flat$ : I  
(over pedal point: I)

vii $^{\circ 7}$   
▲

I)

vii $^{\circ 7}$  uses C $\flat$ , the minor form of  $\hat{6}$ .

## PARALLEL MAJOR IN A MINOR KEY

Modal mixture can also occur when a minor-key composition includes a passage in the parallel major.

### 29.11 Beethoven, “Urians Reise” (Urian’s Journey), op. 52, no. 1 ➡



A passage in A major appears in an A-minor piece.

The musical score for Beethoven's "Urians Reise" is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment in 3/4 time. The key signature changes from one flat (A minor) to two sharps (A major) after the first measure. The lyrics are: "und thät das Rei - sen wäh - len. Da hat er gar nicht ü - bel". The second system continues the piece in A major, with lyrics: "d'ran ge - than, ver - zähl' er doch wei - ter, Herr U - ri - an!". The piano accompaniment features chords and arpeggios that support the vocal melody.

Translation: And so I chose to travel. You have not done badly, so keep on telling your stories, Mister Urian!

Unlike major keys, however, minor keys only rarely use borrowed chords in isolation. After all,  $\hat{6}$  and  $\hat{7}$  are often raised in minor keys anyway (as in the ascending melodic minor scale), and thus chords that use these raised scale degrees—such as IV or V—are considered to be part of the key rather than borrowed chords.

### 29.12 J. S. Bach, Chorale 184 ➡



The musical score for J.S. Bach's Chorale 184 is presented in two systems. The key signature is one flat (A minor). The chords are labeled as follows: A min.: IV<sup>6</sup>, V<sup>6</sup>, i, V, i. The score shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment in 4/4 time.

Since  $\hat{6}$  and  $\hat{7}$  (F $\sharp$  and G $\sharp$ ) are part of the ascending melodic minor scale, IV<sup>6</sup> and V<sup>6</sup> are not borrowed chords.

Likewise, when it appears in the middle of a phrase within a minor-key context, the major form of  $\hat{3}$  usually forms part of an applied chord to IV, rather than part of a borrowed chord.

### 29.13 Jacquet de la Guerre, Suite in D Minor ➡



D min.: i  $V^6/iv$  iv  $V^7$  i V

F# (major form of  $\hat{3}$ ) in mid-phrase here is part of  $V^6/iv$ , not a borrowed chord.

The only common instance of a borrowed chord within a minor key arises when the third of a tonic chord is raised at the *end* of a phrase. In this case, the minor form of  $\hat{3}$  is replaced by its major form, so that the final tonic chord of the phrase is a major triad rather than a minor one. The raised  $\hat{3}$  is known as a **Picardy third**.

### 29.14 Jacquet de la Guerre, Suite in D Minor ➡



D min.:  $V_2^4$   $i^6$   $iv^7$  V I

In minor keys, i is a minor triad.

**Picardy third:** The final chord of the phrase is a major triad (I, not i), as F (third of chord,  $\hat{3}$ ) is raised to F#.

# review and interact

## POINTS FOR REVIEW

- Modal mixture usually occurs when notes or harmonies from the parallel minor appear within a major key. Modal mixture may involve as little as a single note or chord, or as much as an entire section.
- Since modulation involves changing tonic notes, moving between parallel major and minor keys is not considered to be a modulation.
- Modal mixture that changes the quality of a single harmony creates a *borrowed chord*. The use of modal mixture in a borrowed chord does not change its harmonic function.
- The most common borrowed chords are those that use the minor form of  $\hat{3}$ ,  $\hat{6}$ , or both within a major key.
- Modal mixture may also occur when a section in a major key appears within a minor-key piece.
- At the end of a phrase in a minor key, the minor tonic triad may be replaced by a major chord by raising the third of the chord ( $\hat{3}$ ) by a half step. This raised third is known as a *Picardy third*.

## TEST YOURSELF

1. In major keys, which of the following chords involve modal mixture?

- ☐ a iv
- ☐ b vi
- ☐ c IV
- ☐ d  $ii^6$
- ☐ e  $ii^{o6}$
- ☐ f  $bIII$
- ☒ g i
- ☐ h iii

Show answers

2. What accidentals are missing in the following chords (all of which involve modal mixture)?

The image shows six musical staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The chords are represented by their letter names and figured bass notation. The missing accidentals are indicated by red letters above each staff:

- a. G: iv
- b. Eb: bVI
- c. B:  $ii^{o7}$
- d. F: i
- e. F min.: I
- f. D:  $vii^{o7}$

3. Which of the following statements are true?

Modal mixture may arise when there is a move to the parallel minor key within a major-key piece, or vice versa.

There can be a modulation from D major to D minor.

A borrowed chord in a major key always involves using a flat for  $\hat{3}$  or  $\hat{6}$ .

The most common borrowed chords use the minor form of  $\hat{3}$ ,  $\hat{6}$ , or both within a major-key context.

A Picardy third is found at the end of a phase, rather than in its middle.

## Know It? **Show It!**

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**Focus by working through the tutorials on:**

- Recognizing modal mixture 
- Writing a chord progression using mixture 



**Learn with inQuizitive.**



**Apply what you've learned to complete the assignments:**

- Spelling Borrowed Chords
- Realizing Roman Numerals
- Realizing Figured Bass
- Composition
- Analysis