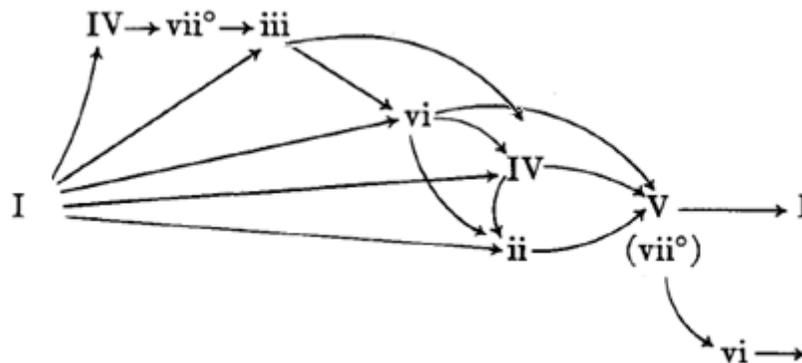


THEORY II: HARMONIC PROGRESSIONS

Up until now in this course, we have dealt with discussing how chords function with one another in a system of diatonic harmony. We have discussed three different “categories” of functional harmonies, seen in the table below. The table leaves out scalar variations and modally borrowed chords, as they usually function similarly to their counterparts.

	<u>TONIC</u>	<u>PRE-DOMINANT</u>	<u>DOMINANT</u>
Major Mode	I (vi)	IV, ii, vi, (iii)	V, vii ^{o6} , vii ^{o7}
Minor Mode	i, (VI)	iv, ii ^o , VI, III	V, vii ^{o6} , vii ^{o7}

Furthermore, the graphic below shows how these chords often relate to one another.¹ Tonic harmonies will move to pre-dominant harmonies, pre-dominant to dominant, and dominant to tonic.



However, often in our part-writing assignments this model feels limited. Meter, rhythm, melody, harmonic rhythm, instrumentation, and many other factors can influence how composers write. One of the most important ways to consider is how individual harmonies are chained together to create *harmonic progressions*.

¹ Benjamin, Horvit, Nelson, and Koozin, *Techniques and Materials of Music*, pg. 240

Most harmonic progressions can be classified into one of three main types: *Prolongational*, *Sequential*, and *Cadential*.²

1. Prolongational Progressions

- a. Harmonic progressions that sustain an individual harmony (the prolonged harmony, usually tonic or dominant) with intervening harmonies.
- b. Intervening harmonies might include neighboring chords, passing chords, or substitute harmonies. We have seen linear embellishing six-four chords used like this.
- c. Examples:
 - i. $I - vii^{o6} - I^6$ (Passing)
 - ii. $IV^6 - [I^6_4] - IV$ (Passing)
 - iii. $I - V^6_5 - I$ (Neighboring)
 - iv. $IV - ii - IV$ (Substitute)
 - v. Several chords presented over a pedal tone is considered prolongational.

2. Sequential Progressions

- a. Harmonic progressions that utilize a consistent pattern of root motion to destabilize harmonic activity.
- b. Note that often models and copies of harmonic sequences will exist, not every sequential progression will fit into the models discussed previously in class.
- c. Examples:
 - i. Circle of fifths progressions: Descending 2nd (common) or Ascending 2nd (rare)
 - ii. Descending 3rd (or “Pachelbel”) or Ascending 5-6 progressions
 - iii. Stepwise bass
 1. Ascending: $I - ii - iii - IV$
 2. Descending: $i - v^6 - iv^6 - V^\#$ (The Lament Bass), $IV - iii - ii - I$
 - iv. Chords whose roots descend by third:³ $I - vi - IV - ii$

3. Cadential Progressions

- a. Harmonic progressions that work towards confirming the tonal center are called cadential progressions
- b. Cadential progressions can result in either *authentic* or *half-cadences*. Notice that cadential progressions often begin with a I^6 chord.
- c. Examples:
 - i. $I^6 - ii^6 - V^7 - I$ or $i - iv - V - i$ (authentic cadential progressions)
 - ii. $I - ii^6 - V$ or $I^6 - IV - V$ (half-cadential progressions)

² William Caplin, *Analyzing Classical Form*, ch. 1

³ The way that theorists discuss sequences can be confusing at times. Caplin uses different names for these progressions than we use in class (that follow Laitz). Caplin classifies sequential progressions based on root motion rather than how the model and copies relate to one another, which is how Laitz does it. So Laitz’s “Descending 3rd” refers to the copy being a third lower than the model, while Caplin’s “Descending thirds” refers to chords whose roots fall by thirds. This is because Laitz is more focused on the relationship of the sequence and Caplin is more focused on the way that chords appear in the phrase model. Both are useful.

Typically, prolongational progressions are found at the beginning of phrases, sequential progressions in the middle of phrases, and cadential progressions at the end of phrases. Music theory is prescriptive, not descriptive, but these roles in the phrase model are fairly standard.

Try to find progressions of each type in the examples below. Note: Example 2 begins in f minor and modulates to Ab major in measure 99.

Example 1:

Andante

Musical score for Example 1, measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time and G major. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score consists of two systems. The first system contains measures 1-4. The right hand features a melodic line with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 5 is the start of the second system.

Example 2:

Andante

Musical score for Example 2, measures 1-4 and 99-102. The piece is in 3/4 time and starts in f minor. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score consists of two systems. The first system contains measures 1-4, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with a half note F4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system contains measures 99-102, starting with a fortissimo (*fp*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with a half note F4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 99 is the start of the second system.