

# 9

## Other Chords of the Major Key

*Scope: This chapter introduces the Super-Tonic, Mediant, Sub-Mediant and Leading Tone Chords of the Major Key.*

So far in our study, we have only looked at the Major Chords found in the Major Key. The Major Chords are the Tonic, Sub-Dominant, and Dominant Chords whose roots are the first, fourth and fifth tones of the Major Diatonic Scale respectively.

The chords whose roots are the second, third, sixth and seventh tones of the Major Diatonic Scale are the Super-Tonic, Mediant, Sub-Mediant and Leading Tone Chords respectively. See pages 13 through 15 for a review of how these chords are made.

Since these chords contain a minor third as their bottom interval, they are Minor Chords. Since they are minor chords, they are sometimes called Secondary Chords or Borrowed Chords, borrowed from the minor to use in the major key.

### **Super-Tonic Chord**

The Super-Tonic Chord is built on Re, the second tone of the Major Diatonic Scale. It is made up of the tones Re, Fa and La. It is identified with a "ii".

Examples of the Super-Tonic Chord are shown below. Figured bass for first inversion is designated with a "6", just as with Major Chords and second inversion is "6,4", the same as Major Chords.

The image shows musical notation for the Super-Tonic Chord (ii) in various positions across the major scale. The notation is presented in two systems: a treble clef system (top) and a bass clef system (bottom), both in 4/4 time. The scale is divided into two octaves, with a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning of the second octave. The notes are numbered 1 through 8. The Super-Tonic Chord is shown in its root position (ii) and first inversion (6) in both octaves. The figured bass for first inversion is designated with a "6", and the figured bass for second inversion is "6,4".

Scale Degree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Chord	ii	ii	ii	ii	ii	ii	ii	ii
Figured Bass				6	6	ii	6	6
Figured Bass (2nd Inversion)					6			6
Figured Bass (2nd Inversion)					4			4

### **Mediant Chord**

The Mediant Chord is built on Mi, the third tone of the Major Diatonic Scale. It is made up of the tones Mi, So and Ti. It is identified with a "iii".

Examples of the Mediant Chord are shown below, in root, first inversion and second inversion forms.

The diagram shows 12 examples of the Mediant Chord (iii) in 4/4 time, arranged in two staves (treble and bass clef). The notes are marked with diamonds. Above the treble staff, numbers 1 through 12 indicate the example number. Below the treble staff, the chord quality 'iii' is written for each example. Below the bass staff, the chord quality 'iii' is written for each example. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated by a sharp sign on the F line between measures 6 and 7. Inversions are indicated by numbers 6 and 4 below the notes.

### **Sub-Mediant Chord**

The Sub-Mediant Chord is built on La, the sixth tone of the Major Diatonic Scale. It is made up of the tones La, Do and Mi. It is identified with a "vi".

Examples of the Sub-Mediant Chord are shown below, in root, first inversion and second inversion forms.

The diagram shows 14 examples of the Sub-Mediant Chord (vi) in 4/4 time, arranged in two staves (treble and bass clef). The notes are marked with squares and triangles. Above the treble staff, numbers 1 through 14 indicate the example number. Below the treble staff, the chord quality 'vi' is written for each example. Below the bass staff, the chord quality 'vi' is written for each example. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated by a sharp sign on the F line between measures 8 and 9. Inversions are indicated by numbers 6 and 4 below the notes.

### Leading Tone Chord

The Leading Tone Chord is built on Ti, the seventh tone of the Major Diatonic Scale. It is made up of the tones Ti, Re and Fa. It is identified with a "vii<sup>o</sup>".

As pointed out on page 11, the "o" denotes a diminished chord. All Major Chords are made up of a major third interval as the lower interval and a minor third upper interval. Minor Chords are made up of a minor third interval as the lower interval and a major third upper interval. The vii<sup>o</sup> chord, however, is made up a two minor third intervals, thus a diminished chord.

Examples of the Leading Tone Chord are shown below, in root, first inversion and second inversion forms.

### Using Minor Chords within Major Keys

The main usage of Minor Chords within major music is to smooth the bass voice part as the harmony moves from one Major Chord to another. This does not mean that this is the only use or that they cannot be used between other Minor Chords. Since most of our music is major and the Major Chords are much stronger than the Minor Chords, then these Minor Chords should be used to enhance the Major sound of the music and not weaken it. If too much time is spent within a song on consecutive Minor Chords, then the Major sound is lost.

The Super-Tonic Chord is best approached from the Sub-Dominant, Sub-Mediant, or Tonic 6,3. It is best followed by the Tonic 6,4. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

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The Mediant Chord is best approached from the Tonic or Tonic 6,3 and followed by the Dominant or Sub-Mediant. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

The Sub-Mediant Chord is best approached from the Tonic and followed by the Sub-Dominant. It can also be approached from the Dominant or Dominant Seventh and followed by the Dominant or Super-Tonic. It should not be followed by the Tonic, especially if it was preceded by the Tonic. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

The Leading Tone Chord is best employed when associated with the Dominant Seventh Chord as in the following example. As with any other chord containing Ti, do not double the Ti.

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Harmonize the following using the indicated chords.

Musical notation for measures 1-8. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 2/4 time signature. Melody: 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter), 5 (quarter), 6 (quarter), 7 (quarter), 8 (quarter). Chords indicated: iii, iii, V, vi, iii.

Musical notation for measures 9-16. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 2/4 time signature. Melody: 9 (quarter), 10 (quarter), 11 (quarter), 12 (quarter), 13 (quarter), 14 (quarter), 15 (quarter), 16 (quarter). Chords indicated: vi, IV, 6, vi, ii, 6/4, 7.

**Summary:** *Minor Chords in Major music are mainly used to smooth the bass line, allowing the bass to move in smaller moves, as the harmony is moving from one Major Chord to either the same or another Major Chord.*

## **Additional Notes**

# 10

## Other Seventh and Ninth Chords of the Major Key

*Scope: Introduction of the Tonic Seventh, Tonic Flat Seventh, Diminished Dominant Seventh, Super-Tonic Seventh, Tonic Ninth and Dominant Ninth Chords.*

### Tonic Seventh Chord

The Tonic Seventh Chord is formed from Do, Mi, So and Ti. It is usually used in first inversion (Mi in the bass) and in fourth position (Ti in the Soprano). It follows the **I** and precedes the **IV** as in the following example.

### Tonic Flat (Diminished) Seventh Chord

Like the Tonic Seventh, the Tonic Flat Seventh Chord is used to pass from the **I** to the **IV**, but in this case, the transition is so strong that it gives the impression that a new key is being sung when the **IV** is reached. This is called *Modulation*. In the following example, note how the Te (Ti flatted) in the **I<sup>b7</sup>** moves a half step to the La of the **IV**.

### **Super-Tonic Seventh Chord**

The Super-Tonic Seventh Chord is made up of Re, Fa, La and Do. It is usually used in first position (Re in the Soprano) and first inversion (Fa in the bass) and is used when passing from the first to the second inversions of the Tonic.

Musical notation for Super-Tonic Seventh Chord progression in 2/4 time. The treble clef shows notes: 1 (C4), 2 (D4), 3 (E4), 4 (F4). The bass clef shows notes: I (C4), 6 I (D4), 6 5 ii (E4), 6 4 I (F4), 7 V (G4), I (C5).

### **Tonic Ninth Chord**

The Tonic Ninth Chord is made up of Do, Mi, So, Ti and Re. It is usually used in first inversion when passing from the Tonic to the Sub-Dominant. Either the fifth or seventh tones can be omitted.

Musical notation for Tonic Ninth Chord progression in 2/4 time. The treble clef shows notes: 1 (C4), 2 (D4), 3 (E4), 4 (F4). The bass clef shows notes: I (C4), I (D4), I (E4), IV (F4), IV (G4), I (C5).

### **Dominant Ninth Chord**

The Dominant Ninth Chord is made up of So, Ti, Re, Fa and La, usually omitting the fifth. It is usually found in the setting of the Dominant Seventh Chord as shown below.

Musical notation for Dominant Ninth Chord progression in 3/4 time. The treble clef shows notes: 1 (C4), 2 (D4), 3 (E4), 4 (F4). The bass clef shows notes: I (C4), I (D4), V (E4), V (F4), V (G4), V (A4), V (B4), I (C5).



### Passing Chords

All of the chords discussed in this chapter are considered passing chords. They are used to smooth the movement from one chord to another. They are usually best employed on the weak beats. Other chords like the Tonic 6,4 and Dominant Seventh can also be considered as passing chords.

In the exercise below, harmonize the given melody. Make sure you use the inversions and chords shown.

**Summary:** Seventh and ninth chords are most often used to smooth the bass voice part when either moving within a chord or moving from one type of chord to another.

## **Additional Notes**

# 11

## Cadences

*Scope: Cadences are introduced and applications discussed.*

Cadences are a set of harmonic chords at the end of a phrase that give finality, or lack thereof, to the sound of the phrase. There can be a feeling of approaching closure even before the actual end of the phrase. When the Dominant and Tonic Chords are involved, they are called Authentic Cadences. When the ending chord is the Tonic and the tone of the soprano is the keytone, it is called a perfect, complete or full cadence.

### **Perfect Authentic** $V^7 \rightarrow I$

The Perfect Cadence ends with the Tonic Chord with Do in the bass and with Do in the Soprano. It is preceded by either the Dominant or Dominant Seventh Chord. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

### **Imperfect Authentic** $V^7 \rightarrow I$

The Imperfect Cadence ends with the Tonic Chord with Do in the bass but with the Soprano on Mi or So. It is preceded by either the Dominant or Dominant Seven Chord. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

**Authentic Half** I → V

The Half Cadence ends with the Dominant Chord with So in the bass and the Soprano on any tone of the Dominant Chord. It is preceded by the Tonic Chord. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

**Perfect and Imperfect Plagal** IV → I

The Plagal Cadence ends with the Tonic Chord with Do in the bass and Do of the Tonic Chord in the Soprano for the Perfect and either Mi or So in the Tonic for the Imperfect. It is preceded by the Sub-Dominant Chord. It is the familiar “Amen” ending. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

**Half-Plagal** I → IV

The Half-Plagal Cadence ends with the Sub-Dominant Chord and is preceded by the Tonic Chord. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

### ***Deceptive***

The Deceptive Cadence is any ending to a phrase in which the harmony was set up for any of the above cadences but the ending chord was something different. Write in the figured bass for the example below.

Musical score for a deceptive cadence in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of chords: C major (beat 1), F major (beat 2), C major (beat 3), and F major (beat 4). The bass clef staff shows the corresponding figured bass notation: C4 (triangle), F4 (diamond), C4 (triangle), F4 (diamond), and C4 (triangle).

### ***Suspensions in Cadences***

A suspension holds over a tone from a preceding chord into the next. The tone will be one that is not a common tone between the two chords. Usually, the suspended tone is left and moves to a tone of the new chord after a short period of time. They should be used on the accented beats of the measure.

Musical score illustrating suspensions in cadences in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of chords: C major (beat 1), F major (beat 2), C major (beat 3), and F major (beat 4). The bass clef staff shows the corresponding figured bass notation, including suspensions of the left hand (L) and right hand (R) tones.

Suspensions can even occur with half-plagal and deceptive cadences as seen below.

Musical score illustrating suspensions in half-plagal and deceptive cadences in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff shows a sequence of chords: C major (beat 1), F major (beat 2), C major (beat 3), and F major (beat 4). The bass clef staff shows the corresponding figured bass notation, including suspensions of the left hand (L) and right hand (R) tones.

## Anticipation

Anticipation is reaching a tone or chord before what would seem to be the proper time.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Do the following exercise.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

6 6 6 7  
I ii I V vi iii ii 7

**Summary:** Cadences are the set of chords at the end of a phrase and can give the phrase a final or unfinished feeling.

# 12

## Altered and Power Chords

*Scope: Applications on altering chords are discussed.*

Altered chords are those chords that have at least one Diatonic tone changed by the use of an accidental to a tone that is no longer a diatonic tone (one of the tones of the scale). This is called chromatic alteration. Any chord can be altered but the ones listed here are the most useful.

### ***Tonic Chord - Augmented***

The Tonic Chord can be altered by augmenting (sharpening) the fifth of the chord (the Sol). This is useful when moving from the **I** to the **IV** as shown in the following examples.

### ***Dominant Chord - Augmented***

The Dominant Chord can be altered by augmenting (sharpening) the fifth of the chord (the Re). This is useful when moving from the **V** to the **I** as shown in the following examples.

### Sub-Dominant Chord - Diminished

The Sub-Dominant Chord can be altered by diminishing (flattening) the third of the chord (the La). This is useful when moving from the IV to the I as shown in the following examples.

### Dominant Seventh Chord - Diminished

The Dominant Seventh Chord can be altered by diminishing (in this case sharpening) the root (the Sol). This produces a Diminished Chord in which all members are a minor third apart. This is useful when moving from the V to the vi chord as shown in the following examples.

Harmonize the following given the bass line.



Harmonize the following.

1 2 3 4

#5 5 6 7 viio7 6 4 7

5 *Susp.* 6 7 8

7 7 9 8 6 6 ii ii 6 4

4—3

### Power Chords

At the beginning of this study, we defined a chord as three or more tones being sounded at the same time. While this may still be true, there are times when a chord without the 3<sup>rd</sup>, called a *power chord*, can be useful. They have a very specific purpose and when used outside that purpose shows laziness on the part of the composer. This interval has a lot of raw power and is used in certain types of popular music and hard rock. It should only be used at the end of phrases where that feeling is wanted. The end of the song is another good place for its use. It should never be used in the middle of a phrase because of the speed bump effect it creates. They should also never be used in succession, which results in parallel fifths.

In the example below, the power chord is denoted by I<sup>5</sup> which can be confused with the Tonic. Notice that the soprano approaches from a step above and the alto from a half step below. The tenor has a common tone and the bass is singing the roots. The progression is easy and the result is very simple and final.

I<sup>5</sup>

**Summary:** *Altered chords are formed when one or more of the tones of a diatonic chord are altered chromatically by sharpening or flattening those tones. Their primary use is to assist in moving from one chord to another, usually a fourth or a fifth away.*

### **Additional notes**