

Common Chord Modulations

Common chords

- Any pair of keys that are closely related will have a number of diatonic triads in common
- You can use one of these common chords as a *pivot chord* between two related keys in a modulation
- The result is a *common-chord modulation*
- Example: common chords between D and A:
 - D: I ii iii IV V vi vii°
 - D e f# G A b c°
 - A: IV vi I ii

Analysis of Common-chord modulations

- To find a common chord in a passage that modulates:
 - Find the first chord that works better in the new key—one that doesn't seem to work in the old key
 - Back up one chord to find the common chord
- Use a pivot chord symbol (a bracket or a zig-zag symbol) to show what the common chord would be interpreted as in both keys

How to Find Modulations

- Modulations are generally easier to hear than to see—but you can also see them if you know what to look for
- Cadences in a key other than the tonic
 - Learn to visually (and aurally) recognize the patterns found at cadences (such as I⁶-V⁷-I)—if you see a lot of V-I patterns in another key, you have probably modulated to that key
- The consistent use of accidentals belonging to another key