

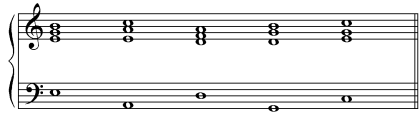
Harmonic Progressions

Meaningful harmonic progressions

- What's wrong with this sentence?
Pet Not Raccoons I Ever Rabid Do
- The words are in the wrong order and the sentence is unclear—similarly, if we use chords in the wrong order, the music will be unclear
ii I I I vi V IV
- Good chord progressions are like good sentence structure:
I Do Not Ever Pet Rabid Raccoons
I IV I vi ii V I

Circle of fifths progressions

- A circle of fifths progression is one in which the chord roots move by descending fifths (or ascending fourths):



C: iii vi ii V I

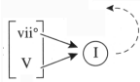
- Circle of fifths progressions are quite common

Three chord functions

- There are three basic chord functions
 - Tonic (the I chord)
 - Dominant (the V and vii chords)
 - Predominant (the ii and IV chords)
- Tonic:
 - The I chord has a tonic function
 - It is the most stable chord and the most essential chord in communicating the key
 - The I chord is the harmonic goal of most tonal music
 - From the I chord you can progress to any chord

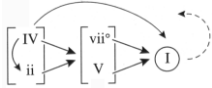
The dominant function

- Dominant
 - The V chord has a dominant function
 - The dominant progresses to the tonic
 - This relationship between tonic and the dominant is the most important in tonal music
 - The dominant creates tension from which the tonic provides release
 - The vii can substitute for the V chord—both have a dominant function, but the vii is much weaker



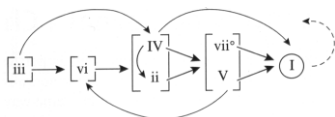
The predominant function

- Predominant
 - The predominant function includes any chord that moves to the dominant
 - The ii chord is a predominant chord, since it moves to V in a circle of fifths progression
 - The IV can substitute for the ii chord—it also has a predominant function
 - IV can move to ii, but not vice versa
 - IV can also go directly to I (“Amen”)



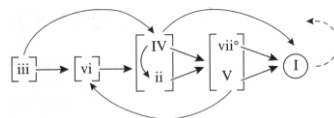
The vi and iii chords

- vi
 - The vi chord precedes the ii chord in a circle of fifths progression (with a predominant function)
 - In the deceptive progression, V moves directly to vi
 - (here vi substitutes for I, giving it a tonic function)
- iii
 - The iii chord precedes the vi chord in a circle of fifths
 - iii sometimes also moves directly to IV



Typical harmonic progressions

- The circle of fifths (iii – vi – ii – V – I)
- Descending thirds (I – vi – IV – ii or vii° – V)
- Ascending seconds (I – ii or IV – V or V – vi)



Differences in minor

- The qualities of the chords are different
- The VII (major subtonic) chord is added
- The III chord is more common in minor keys than in major keys—why?
 - It is the relative major key

