

Glossary - terms used in music analysis

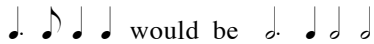
Accidental - a sharp, flat or natural found within a bar of music (not in the key signature).

Aeolian mode - an ancient scale which is identical to the natural minor scale. See mode.

Appoggiatura - a note which does not belong to the prevailing harmony (chord), which moves by step (usually downwards) to a chord note. For example, in a C major chord, F could be an appoggiatura (resolving to E). The term comes from an Italian word meaning "leaning". Appoggiaturas are always played or sung with more emphasis than the note of resolution, and make music more expressive. In the Baroque and Classical periods, appoggiaturas were often written as grace notes.

Atonality - the absence of any recognisable key or tonal centre. In an atonal composition, all pitches are theoretically of equal importance, so there is no tonic.

Augmentation - to make larger, generally referring to rhythmic values. Hence, the augmentation of



Augmented sixth chord - a chromatic chord (i.e. one which uses accidentals without changing the key) containing a major 3rd and an augmented 6th above the root. There are three types: Italian, French and German. All augmented 6th chords contain a tritone which resolves outwards by step. For example, in the augmented 6th chord built above a C, the E and A# must resolve to D# and B, respectively, in the next chord. Augmented 6th chords are usually followed by the dominant chord.

Auxiliary note - a note which does not belong to the prevailing harmony (chord), which links two chord notes of the same pitch by step. Auxiliary notes can be diatonic (not requiring an accidental) or chromatic (requiring an accidental and moving by semitone step). For example, in C major, C-B-C contains a diatonic auxiliary note, while G-F#-G contains a chromatic auxiliary note. See unessential notes.

Bitonal - where two different keys are combined simultaneously, e.g. having a different key for each hand in a piece of piano music.

Blues scale - a scale used in popular music. There are many versions of this scale; one of the most common is (if in the key of C): C-Eb-F-Gb-G-Bb-C.

The blues scale is an attempt to replicate the "blue notes" of African-American vocal music, where some scale notes, particularly the 3rd and the 7th, are sung at a pitch somewhere *between* major and minor (e.g. between E and Eb, or between B and Bb). String and wind instruments can produce this effect by bending the pitch of the note. Piano music in a blues style will sometimes use both major and minor 3rds

and 7ths in order to try to capture something of the flavour of the "blue notes".

Canon - an imitative style of composition, like a round. Two or more voices (or instrumental lines) have the same melody (or a transposition of it), but one is always at a fixed distance (commonly one bar) behind the other. There are famous examples by Pachelbel and Tallis.

Chromatic - pertaining to the chromatic scale, which divides an octave into 12 semitones. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "coloured". A chromatic note is one which does not belong to the prevailing major or minor key, but which moves by semitone step (as in a chromatic scale) to a note of the major or minor key. Chromatic harmony involves chords which require one or more chromatic notes. See also diatonic.

Chromaticism - the use of chromatic harmony, or of chromatic unessential notes. In such cases, accidentals do not necessarily indicate a modulation.

Cluster chord - a chord formed using every available pitch within a specified range.

Coda - the final section of a piece.

Codetta - a short concluding passage (not necessarily at the end of the piece).

Consecutive fifths or octaves - where the interval of a perfect 5th or a perfect 8ve is heard twice in succession between the same two voice parts. Consecutive 5ths and 8ves are forbidden in functional harmony, because they cause the individual voices to lose their independence. However, they have been employed deliberately by some composers from the late 19th Century onwards, such as Debussy.

Consonance - a harmonious or restful sound, e.g. a 3rd, a 6th, or a perfect interval. See also dissonance.

Contrapuntal - a style of music which makes use of counterpoint. Similar in meaning to polyphonic.

Counterpoint - two or more lines of melody heard simultaneously, in a way that makes musical sense.

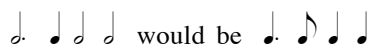
Cycle of fifths - a progression of chords whose roots fall a 5th (or rise a 4th). Also called "Circle of 5ths". A cycle of 5ths is often used prior to a perfect cadence (e.g. vi - ii - V - I), and may make use of secondary dominant 7th chords (e.g. A7 - Dm - G7 - C).

Development - where the melodic, rhythmic or harmonic components of a theme are broken down and reshaped to produce new musical material.

Diatonic - pertaining to a scale containing 5 tones and 2 semitones, such as a major, minor or modal scale. Diatonic harmony consists of chords which are made entirely from scale notes, without containing any foreign notes. See also chromatic.

Diminished seventh chord - a chord containing three superimposed minor 3rds. There are only three unique transpositions of this chord: B-D-F-Ab, C-Eb-Gb-A and C#-E-G-Bb. The diminished 7th chord can be used for dramatic effect, as in the beginning of Beethoven's *Pathétique Sonata*. It is also very useful in modulations, since any note of a diminished 7th chord can be treated as a leading note. The diminished 7th chord is usually followed by a dominant or tonic chord.

Diminution - to make smaller, generally referring to rhythmic values. Hence, the diminution of



Dissonance - a clashing sound, e.g. a 2nd, a 7th, or an augmented or diminished interval. In functional harmony, a dissonance must be followed by a resolution. Treatment of dissonance became much more liberal during the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Dominant - the 5th note of a scale. Hence G is the dominant note of C major, G-B-D is the dominant triad of C major, and G major is the dominant key of C major. The dominant chord is the second most important chord in any key, after the tonic.

Dominant seventh chord - a dominant triad with an added minor 7th above the root. In F major, the dominant 7th chord would be C-E-G-Bb. The dominant 7th chord always contains a tritone (E-Bb in the example above) which must resolve inwards (to F-A using the example above). The dominant 7th chord is followed by a tonic or submediant chord in functional harmony. The added dissonance in a dominant 7th chord makes the imperative of resolution stronger than is the case with a regular dominant chord. See also secondary dominant 7th.

Dominant pedal - the sustaining or repetition of the dominant note, usually in the bass. A dominant pedal builds expectation for the return of the tonic chord.

Episode - a contrasting section that is not based on the main theme or subject.

Dorian mode - a scale similar to the minor scale, with a raised 6th and no raised 7th note. See mode.

Enharmonic equivalent - an alternative name for the same pitch. So C# is the enharmonic equivalent of Db. An example of an enharmonic modulation is in Chopin's *Raindrop Prelude*: C# minor to Db major.

French sixth chord - a type of augmented 6th chord containing an augmented 4th as well as a major 3rd and augmented 6th, e.g. C-E-F#-A#.

Fugal - a contrapuntal style of composition in which each voice enters in turn with the subject (or a transposition of the subject).

Functional harmony - a harmonic system in which each chord has a particular function or role: the dominant chord leads to the tonic, chords II, IV and VI prepare for the dominant, etc. Functional harmony

was used in most classical music from 1700 to 1900.

German sixth chord - a type of augmented 6th chord containing a perfect 5th as well as a major 3rd and augmented 6th, e.g. C-E-G-A#. A German 6th chord is the enharmonic equivalent of a dominant 7th chord, but its resolution is different - the tritone (E-A# in the example above) must resolve outwards, so the resolution of the chord above would be B-D#-[F#]-B, not F-A-C-F.

Half-diminished seventh chord - a chord containing two minor thirds and one major 3rd (e.g. C-Eb-Gb-Bb). See also diminished 7th chord.

Harmonic minor scale - a form of minor scale where the 7th note is raised by a semitone. This allows for a leading note, but creates an augmented 2nd interval between the 6th and 7th notes, which can sound awkward when used melodically.

Hemiola - a change in rhythmic grouping, so that the pulse ♩ ♩ becomes ♩ ♩ ♩
Commonly used in the Baroque period, especially before cadences, and also frequently used by Brahms. Bernstein's *America* contains constant examples.

Homophony - a style of composition having a single melody line, with a simple accompaniment. Homophony was prevalent in the galant and classical periods, and was to some extent a reaction against the complexity of polyphony in the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Imitation - where the melody or rhythm of one voice part is copied by another. Imitation may be strict (if the intervals of the original are preserved) or free (where some modifications are allowed).

Imperfect cadence - a musical ending in which a phrase finishes on the dominant chord. The imperfect cadence is also referred to as a "half close".

Interrupted cadence - a corruption of the perfect cadence in which a submediant chord is used in place of the tonic chord.

Inversion - to turn upside down. This can apply to intervals, chords or melodies. When an interval is inverted, the pitch names remain the same (hence C - E becomes E - C). When a chord is inverted, the root is no longer the lowest sound. When a melody is inverted, the size of each interval remains the same, but its direction (up or down) is reversed. Hence, the inversion of C - E - D is C - A - B.

Italian sixth chord - a type of augmented 6th chord containing a major 3rd and augmented 6th above the root, e.g. C-E-A#.

Leading note - the 7th note of a scale, which leads by semitone step to the tonic. See also subtonic.

Lydian mode - a scale similar to the major scale, but with a raised 4th note. See mode.

Mediant - the 3rd note of a scale.

Melodic minor scale - a form of minor scale having a raised 6th and 7th note ascending, and using the natural minor scale descending. This allows for a leading note in the ascending scale, without having the augmented 2nd interval found in the harmonic minor scale.

Mixolydian mode - a scale similar to the major scale, but with a flattened 7th note. See mode.

Mode - an ancient scale which divides an octave into five tones and two semitones. Modes were used for composing religious chants in the Middle Ages. Initially, modes contained no sharps or flats, and so could be played using only the white notes of the piano. The principal modes were:

Ionian - starting and ending on C (i.e. the same as a major scale), with semitones between 3-4 and 7-8.

Dorian - starting and ending on D, with semitones between 2nd-3rd and 6th-7th notes.

Phrygian - starting and ending on E, with semitones between 1st-2nd and 5th-6th notes.

Lydian - starting and ending on F, with semitones between 4th-5th and 7th-8th notes.

Mixolydian - starting and ending on G, with semitones between 3rd-4th and 6th-7th notes.

Aeolian - starting and ending on A (i.e. the same as a natural minor scale), with semitones 2-3 and 5-6.

Modes have been used by more modern composers (particularly from the time of Debussy onwards), and are also used frequently in jazz; in these instances, the modes may undergo transposition, which means that sharps or flats would be required to preserve the pattern of tones and semitones.

Modulation - a change of key during the course of a piece, due to the use of accidentals. The simplest, and most common, modulations are those to the most closely related keys (e.g. dominant, subdominant or relative major/minor), which involve the fewest added accidentals. A modulation generally requires a perfect cadence in order to establish the new key.

Natural minor scale - a form of minor scale without a raised 7th note. The 7th note of this scale is called the subtonic, and does not progress to the tonic note as strongly as the leading note found in the harmonic minor scale.

Neapolitan sixth chord - a chromatic chord (i.e. one which uses accidentals without changing the key) built on the flattened 2nd note of a scale. It is generally used in first inversion (hence the designation 6th, indicating a 6-3 or first inversion chord). In C# minor, the Neapolitan 6th chord would be F#-A-D (a D major chord); this chord can be found in the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. The Neapolitan 6th chord is generally followed by the dominant chord.

Neighbour note - see auxiliary note.

Ninth chord - a 5-note chord of superimposed 3rds. The most common of these are the dominant major 9th (e.g. G-B-D-F-A) and the dominant minor 9th (e.g. G-B-D-F-Ab).

Octatonic scale - an 8-note scale, consisting of alternating tones and semitones, used by various 20th Century composers. There are only three unique transpositions of this scale:

C - D - Eb - F - F# - G# - A - B [- C]
C# - D# - E - F# - G - A - Bb - C [- C#]
D - E - F - G - G# - A# - B - C# [- D]

Parallel chords - a series of chords where all notes or voices are moving in similar motion. For example, the following ascending series:

C-E-G-Bb D-F#-A-C E-G#-B-D

Chords moving in parallel do not obey the rules of functional harmony, since they involve consecutive 5ths, consecutive 8ves or unresolved dissonance.

Passing note - a note which does not belong to the prevailing harmony (chord), which links two other notes by step. Passing notes can be accented (i.e. on the beat) or unaccented, and can be diatonic (not requiring an accidental) or chromatic (requiring an accidental, and moving in semitone step). For example, C and E could be linked by the diatonic passing note D, while G and A could be linked by the chromatic passing note G#.

Pentatonic scale - a 5-note scale. There are many versions of this scale, the most common being the one formed using the five black keys on the piano (used in the central section of Debussy's *Voiles*). Most pentatonic scales have no harsh dissonance between any notes.

Perfect cadence - a musical ending consisting of the dominant chord followed by the tonic chord. The perfect cadence is also referred to as a "full close", and is the strongest type of ending, since the roots of the chords fall a 5th, and the leading note rises a semitone to the tonic.

Phrygian mode - a scale containing a minor 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th. See mode.

Plagal cadence - a musical ending consisting of the subdominant chord followed by the tonic chord. The plagal cadence is also referred to as a "full close", but is not as strong in effect as a perfect cadence.

Polyphony - where several melodic lines are combined simultaneously. Similar in meaning to counterpoint.

Polytonal - when several keys or tonal centres are being used simultaneously.

Primary triads - the tonic, dominant and subdominant chords in any key. Some scholars consider only the tonic and dominant chords to be primary triads.

Quartal harmony - the use of chords based on 4ths or 5ths (e.g. C-F-Bb) rather than triads.

Relative major/minor - the major and minor scales having the same key signature, e.g. G major and E minor.

Reprise - the return of something that was heard previously.

Resolution - a consonance which follows a dissonance, with the dissonant notes usually moving by step (semitone or tone). The resolution releases the tension created by the dissonance.

Retrograde - reversing the order of pitches or rhythms. Hence C - D - E would become E - D - C.

An early example can be found in the Minuet of Haydn's Sonata Hob XVI/26, composed in 1773. This technique was used frequently by 20th Century composers such as Schoenberg.

Root - the note above which a chord is built. Hence C is the root of the chord C-E-G. In root position, the root is the lowest note of the chord.

Secondary dominant seventh chord - a chromatic chord which temporarily functions as a dominant 7th to a chord that is not the tonic. For example, in C major, the chord D-F#-A-C could be used as a secondary dominant 7th if followed by the triad G-B-D, without necessarily being considered a modulation. See also cycle of fifths.

Seventh chord - a 4-note chord of superimposed major or minor 3rds). These include the major 7th chord (a major triad with an added major 7th, e.g. C-E-G-B), minor 7th chord (a minor chord with added minor 7th, e.g. C-Eb-G-Bb), dominant 7th chord, diminished 7th chord and half-diminished 7th chord.

Stretto - the overlapping of subject entries in a contrapuntal piece. The term comes from the Italian for "drawn together", and can also indicate an *accelerando* when used as a performance instruction.

Subdominant - the 4th note of a scale. Hence F is the subdominant note of C major, F-A-C is the subdominant triad of C major, and F major is the subdominant key of C major.

Subject - a theme or melody; particularly used to designate important themes in fugues or sonatas.

Submediant - the 6th note of a scale (a 3rd below the tonic). Hence A is the submediant note of C major and A-C-E is the submediant triad of C major.

Subtonic - the 7th note of a natural minor scale, a tone below the tonic. See also leading note.

Supertonic - the 2nd note of a scale, a tone above the tonic.

Suspension - a prepared appoggiatura. The dissonance (i.e. non-chord note) must be prepared by being sounded in the previous chord. Sometimes the preparation note and the suspension are tied together, though this is not essential.

Syncopation - displacing the normal accent scheme by placing an accent or long note on a weak beat, or by having a rest or tie across a strong beat. Syncopation is used occasionally in classical music, an extensively in popular music.

Tierce de Picardie (Picardy third) - an alteration to the tonic chord in a minor key, changing the minor 3rd to a major 3rd to make a major chord. Commonly applied to the final chord of compositions in minor keys during the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Tonal centre - when a piece of music has no recognisable major or minor key, but still has an identifiable main note, this note is the tonal centre.

Tonic - the first, and most important, note of a scale. The tonic note is also known as the keynote, and the tonic triad is the "home" chord of any key.

Tonic major/minor - the major and minor keys having the same tonic. Hence C major is the tonic major of C minor.

Tonic pedal - the sustaining or repetition of the tonic note, usually in the bass. A tonic pedal confirms or strengthens the sense of key.

Transposition - where a given melody is heard or written in a different key. The characteristic shape of the melody is preserved, but it will sound at a higher or lower pitch.

Triad - a 3-note chord of superimposed 3rds. Triads can be formed above any note of a scale.

Tritone - an interval spanning three tones, e.g. from C to F#. May also be called an augmented 4th or diminished 5th. It is one of the most dissonant of all intervals, and was called *diabolus in musica*, or the devil's interval, in the Renaissance period. Keys which are a tritone apart (e.g. C major and F# major) sound extremely distant harmonically.

Twelve bar blues - a chord progression of 12 bars length, using only primary triads, which is repeated to form the harmonic basis of certain styles of popular music. The basic chord progression is:

I I I I IV IV I I V IV I I

The 12th chord may be V if the piece is continuing. Seventh chords are frequently used.

Unessential notes - a note which does not belong to the prevailing harmony (chord), which links two chord notes of the same pitch by step. Examples are passing notes, auxiliary notes, appoggiaturas and suspensions. Unessential notes should be disregarded when analysing a chord or determining the key.

Whole tone scale - a 6-note scale, consisting only of whole tones. There are only two unique transpositions of this scale:

C-D-E-F#-G#-A#-[C] and C#-D#-F-G-A-B-[C#]

Because there are no semitones in the whole tone scale, there can be no leading note, so the whole tone scale creates a highly ambiguous tonality.