Mixture

MIXTURE involves chromatically altering one or more notes in chords, in order to decorate and intensify diatonic harmonic progressions. This is generally done in one of the following ways:

(i) **borrowing any chords from the parallel minor in a Major key**, as follows:
I becomes **i**, ii » **ii°**, iii » **bIII**, IV » **iv**, V » **v**, vi » **bVI**, and vii° » **bVII**, *or* vii°^{7} » **vii°^{7}**.

•*In general, mixture chords involving b$\hat{6}$ are the most common*: **ii°**, **iv**, **vii°7**. and **bVI**. [why?]
•**bIII** and **bVII** are possible but less common.
•**i** and **v** in a Major key are possible, but rare. [why?]
•Mixture can be also be applied in a larger scale (macro-level): The entire **key** can **change mode** to the parallel minor (e.g. from D to d), or **modulations to mixture key forms** (e.g. D to Bb) may occur.

Mixture can also be used to create chromatically-altered **Dominants** (which will be studied later):

vii°^{7} and V^{b9} (both of which use b$\hat{6}$), and also V^{b13} (which involves b$\hat{3}$)

(ii) **changing the mode of *any* diatonic triad**, just because it sounds good to do so; i.e. no further theoretical justification is necessary. This is done as follows:

Major to minor (or augmented), minor to diminished (or Major), and diminished to minor or Major (rare)

In Major keys, the *new* (i.e. chords not already discussed in category (i)) chords that this produces are:

II, III, (VI), and (VII or vii).

•Note that all of these chords are Major, and are more likely be functioning as 2^{ry} V's than mixture chords. How can you tell the difference? Could 2^{ry} V's be considered type (ii) mixture chords?

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

•*Mixture chords generally **function** in the same way as the diatonic chords on which they are based* (i.e. iv functions like IV, bVI like vi, etc.).

•*Mixture is much more common in Major keys than minor*; the only common mixture chord in minor keys is I (TdP[1]). [Think about this and try to explain why this might be]

•*Mixture is often used in modulations*; using it in a pivot chord can simplify modulations to more distant keys. Less commonly, it can be used in the *new* key *after the pivot chord* to reinforce the sense that the music is moving away from the previous key.

DOUBLING, VOICE-LEADING: •Avoid doubling chromatically-altered notes (some exceptions occur with chords whose *roots* are chromatically-altered, like bIII, bVI, and bVII; in these cases the roots, being relatively stable, can sometimes be doubled if doing-so improves the voice-leading).

•Chromatically-altered notes *tend to* resolve in the direction of the accidental (lowered notes continue down, raised notes continue up), although there are frequent exceptions. [Discuss]

•Chromatically-altered notes need to be approached carefully; by chromatic or diatonic step, or small skip (preferably followed by change of direction) is best.

COMBINATION PLATTERS: 1. A series of mixture chords in a row is not uncommon, such as {**iv - ii°**}, or {bIII - bVI - **iv - ii°**}; 2. When one chord has **two** chromatically-altered notes (like bIII or bVI), it often proceeds to *another* mixture chord with at least **one** chromatically-altered note (so bIII might go to iv, or bVI might go to iv or ii°). bVII only has one chromatically-altered note (the root), so it can go to V (which has no chromatically-altered notes) easily. 3. iv - ii°^{6} (-V) sounds better than iv - ii^6 (-V); why? III - IV sounds better than III - iv; why? bVI - ii°^{6} (-V) sounds better than iv - ii^6 (-V); why?

•MIXTURE IS AN EXPRESSIVE DEVICE, often linked to reinforce the meaning of the text, title, or programme, or, in the case of absolute (i.e. non-programmatic, non-texted) music, to heighten drama.

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[1]TdP stands for *Tierce de Picardie,* or Picardy Third (= raising third from minor to major in final tonic triad in a minor key).