

# Modulation

## Musical Interest...

There are many ways to create musical interest, the goal is to not be too predictable. Even with the best ideas, if your musical thoughts don't include some type of variety, they become predictable. This creates musical boredom. It would be like listening to a monotone speaker, someone who has not developed thought profoking stories, or presentation style.

It doesn't take much to create musical interest (two or three ideas), in many ways too much variety can clutter your music making it hard to listen to, and difficult to create an emotional connection.

Here is a partial list of some ways you could use to create musical interest.

Changing Keys

Layering Your Arrangement

Texture

Monophonic (single melodic line)

Heterophonic (melody & possibly counter-melody with a harmonic accompaniment)

Homophonic (vertical harmony, hymn-like)

Polyphonic (multiple melodies, Bach-like)

Inversions

Embellishments

Neighboring Tones

Grace Notes

Substitutes

Orchestration Changes

Voicings

Parallel Keys (ie: C Major vs. C minor)

Modulations

A great skill to learn in creating musical interest is Modulation. This skill can provide you ways of connecting various songs together, or perhaps just being able to change keys in a song. Many of the skills you might already know can be included to help create wonderful interludes, transitions, modulations, intro and endings.

The goal to modulation is to be able to move from one Key into another with some coherence and musical stability. The first step is to identify the chords that belong to each key.

For example:

Key of "C"

The chords involved would be the major diatonic chords for this key...

|   |     |     |    |    |     |      |
|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|------|
| I | ii  | iii | IV | V7 | vi  | vii° |
| C | Dmi | Emi | F  | G7 | Ami | B°   |

If you haven't already done so, memorize this pattern of chords. This sequence of chords will be consistent for all Major Keys. The first chord will always be Major, the second minor, etc..

# Modulation

Once you have figured out the original key, you would then need to do the same for the Key you are transitioning to. For example, you might be moving from the Key of “C”, to the Key of “B<sup>b</sup>”.

|                |     |     |                |    |     |                  |
|----------------|-----|-----|----------------|----|-----|------------------|
| I              | ii  | iii | IV             | V7 | vi  | vii <sup>o</sup> |
| B <sup>b</sup> | Cmi | Dmi | E <sup>b</sup> | F7 | Gmi | A <sup>o</sup>   |

The basic idea is to use a transitional chord that is related to both keys. Preferably the same chord name, or one that is closely related such as a chord that begins with the same letter... C and Cmi. If these aren't available, then you could try a chord that at least uses a strong root progression.

Once you have identified the common chords (or closely related), you would compose a sequence of chords from the original key to the new key with the common chord as your transition (common denominator). The strongest progression in music is the V7 to I. Your target with your new progression would be the V7 of the new Key.

You can accomplish this a number of ways, two that I have covered in other lessons are the Strong Root Progression system, and the Cadence system.

As an example, I might pick the “Dmi” chord since it is found in both keys... my progression might use the strong root progression system...

(Original Key)

C Ami Dmi Cmi F7 Bb

(New Key)

My progression would be ↓3↑4↓2↑4↑4

Another favorite trick of mine is the IV/V... this is where the bottom letter is the V (single note) and the chord above would be the IV (chord)... for example F/G (the Left Hand plays “G”, single note, and the Right Hand would play an “F” chord).

Anywhere you have a “V7” chord, you could replace it with the “IV/V”.. you could then resolve it into the “V7” which then would proceed to the “I” chord. (ie: F/G, G7, C).

This creates a V7sus<sup>4</sup><sub>2</sub>, since the “F” chord includes the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, this becomes your suspension which would then resolve to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of the V7 chord.

Using any compositional method you might know, you can create great musical transitions and modulations with lots of musical interest. Look for the common chord, target the V7 of the new key, try using the IV/V.