

## Mode Mixture

### Mode Mixture

- As we learned previously, a change from a major key to its parallel minor (or vice versa) is not a modulation but rather a *change of mode*
- Major and minor are two different "modes"
  - They differ in scale degrees 3, 6, and 7, which are lowered in the minor mode
- In addition to mode changes, the major and minor modes are sometimes *mixed*
- *Mode mixture* involves the "borrowing" of chords from the parallel major or minor key
- These borrowed chords resolve and act like the standard (non-borrowed) chords that they replace

### Borrowed chords in minor

- A *borrowed chord* is a chord that is taken from the parallel major or minor key
- In minor keys, the only chord that is commonly borrowed from the parallel major is the major I



- This is what we call the Picardy third
- The practice of ending of piece of music in a minor key with a major triad dates back to the Renaissance, when minor triads were not considered strong enough to end a piece

### Borrowed chords in major

- Mode mixture is much more common in major keys (in other words, it is more common to borrow chords from the parallel minor)
- In major keys, the most commonly borrowed chords from the parallel minor key are those that use lowered scale degree 6 (in C major: A $\flat$ )
  - The minor iv chord (F A $\flat$  C)
  - The diminished ii $^\circ$  or half diminished ii $^\circ 7$  (D F A $\flat$  C)
  - The fully diminished vii $^\circ 7$  (B D F A $\flat$ )

### Other Borrowed Chords

- The other chords that can be borrowed from the parallel minor are somewhat less common
- These chords use the lowered scale degrees 3 or 7 from the parallel minor, such as the minor i chord
- When lowered scale degrees 3, 6, or 7 are used as the *root* of a borrowed chord, we put a flat ( $\flat$ ) before the roman numeral to show that the root itself has been *altered*
  - $\flat$ III (E $\flat$  G B $\flat$ )
  - $\flat$ VI (A $\flat$  C E)
  - $\flat$ VII (B $\flat$  D F)

### Uses of Borrowed Chords

- Borrowed chords sound somewhat *shady*—composers often use them to *color* their music, especially in music with words that imply something somber or mysterious
- Mode mixture can involve just one chord, or an entire passage can be in the parallel minor
- Borrowed chords can also be used to modulate
- While a change of mode is not a modulation, mode change does open up a brand new set of closely related keys, allowing you to modulate easily to a number of additional keys