

iii

The mediant triad has much in common with vi. Like vi, it is a minor triad in the major mode, and a major triad in the minor mode.

Note that in minor, III always uses the subtonic, not the leading tone. III+, usually in first inversion, is really V with a sixth above the root substituting for the fifth.

Like vi, a iii-chord that is really a iii-chord is always in root position. iii6 is a voice-leading chord (with functions similar to the passing I6/4) or else, as in minor, a V-chord with a sixth substituting for the fifth..

Like vi, it has two common tones with I, and it can either substitute for or extend tonic function. It can also serve as dominant preparation, often overlapping with tonic function.

In root position, the root is usually doubled.

The iii chord has the following uses:

Harmonize descending leading tone (or subtonic):

In minor, note use of subtonic

I iii IV V₈ 7 I

T DP D T

Expanding tonic

i III iv V₈ 7 i

T DP D T

Circle of fifths progression:

Directly to V:

I iii vi ii V₇ I

T DP D T

I iii vi ii V₇ I

T DP D T

Substitute for I6 in idiomatic progressions:

Three notes:

- 1) The progressions in which V or vii° move to iii are only useable in major. In minor, the downward chromatic alteration from the leading tone to the subtonic would create a strange effect. This move is possible, but it involves the future topic of secondary dominants.
- 2) The progressions all substitute for I6 specifically with scale-degree five in the soprano; why?
- 3) Note in some cases the doubled 3rd in iii.

The musical notation shows four idiomatic progressions substituting for I6. Each progression consists of two measures. The first measure contains three notes (soprano, alto, bass) and the second measure contains three notes. The progressions are:

- Progression 1: I (C4, E4, G4) to IV₆ (F4, A4, C5) to iii (Bb3, D4, F4)
- Progression 2: I (C4, E4, G4) to vi (A3, C4, E4) to iii (Bb3, D4, F4)
- Progression 3: I (C4, E4, G4) to vii°₆ (Bb3, D4, F4) to iii (Bb3, D4, F4)
- Progression 4: V₂⁴ (G4, B4, D5) to iii (Bb3, D4, F4)