



MTO 24.4 Examples: Seress, Polarization, Modal Orientation, and Voice Leading

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
<http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.18.24.4/mto.18.24.4.seress.html>

Example 1. Basic transformations

Diagram illustrating basic transformations between six chords. The transformations are labeled with coordinate pairs and operation types:

$(-1,0)$	$(+1,0)$	$(0,+1)$	$(0,-1)$	$(-1,0)$	$(+1,0)$
\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow
P	P	R	R	L	L

Example 2. Modally orientated basic transformations

Diagram illustrating modally orientated basic transformations between six chords. The transformations are labeled with chord pairs and operation types:

CM Cm	Cm CM	CM Am	Am CM	CM Em	Em CM
\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow	\rightarrow
P ⁺	P ⁻	R ⁺	R ⁻	L ⁺	L ⁻

Example 3. Modally orientated and polarized basic transformations

CM Cm → P⁺ Dominant

Cm CM → P⁻ Sub-Dominant

CM Am → R⁺ Dominant

Am CM → R⁻ Sub-Dominant

CM Em → L⁺ Sub-Dominant

Em CM → L⁻ Dominant

Example 4. The chains of transformations with distance and direction

Direction / Distance	Asc.	Desc.	Asc.	Desc.	Asc.	Desc.	Asc.	Desc.
	M - M	M - M	M - m	M - m	m - M	m - M	m - m	m - m
Semitone (1 unit)	P ⁺ L ⁺ R ⁺ L ⁻ -5 Dom.	L ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ P ⁻ +5 Subdom.	L ⁻ P ⁻ R ⁻ +4 Subdom.	L ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ +2 Subdom.	L ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ -2 Dom.	L ⁻ P ⁻ R ⁻ -4 Dom.	L ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ P ⁻ -5 Dom.	P ⁺ L ⁺ R ⁺ L ⁻ +5 Subdom.
Tone (2 units)	R ⁺ L ⁺ R ⁺ P ⁺ +2 Dom.	P ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ R ⁻ -2 Subdom.	<u>R⁺L⁺R⁺</u> <u>-1</u> <u>Dom.</u>	P ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ R ⁻ P ⁻ -5 Subdom.	P ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ R ⁻ P ⁻ +5 Dom.	<u>RL⁻R⁻</u> <u>+1</u> <u>Subdom.</u>	P ⁻ R ⁻ L ⁻ R ⁻ P ⁻ +2 Dom.	RL ⁺ R ⁺ P ⁺ -2 Subdom.
Minor third (3 units)	P ⁻ R ⁻ -3 Subdom.	R ⁺ P ⁺ +3 Dom.	P ⁻ R ⁻ P ⁻ -6 Subdom.	<u>R⁺</u> <u>0</u> <u>Dom.</u>	<u>R⁻</u> <u>0</u> <u>Subdom.</u>	P ⁻ R ⁻ P ⁻ +6 Dom.	R ⁺ P ⁺ -3 Subdom.	P ⁻ R ⁻ +3 Dom.
Major third (4 units)	L ⁺ P ⁺ +4 Subdom.	P ⁺ L ⁺ -4 Dom.	<u>L⁺</u> <u>+1</u> <u>Subdom.</u>	P ⁺ L ⁺ P ⁺ +5 Dom.	P ⁺ L ⁺ P ⁺ -5 Subdom.	<u>L⁻</u> <u>-1</u> <u>Dom.</u>	P ⁺ L ⁺ +4 Subdom.	L ⁺ P ⁺ -4 Dom.
Perfect fourth (5 units)	<u>R⁺L⁺</u> <u>-1</u> <u>Dom.</u>	<u>L⁻R⁻</u> <u>+1</u> <u>Subdom.</u>	R ⁺ L ⁺ P ⁺ -4 Dom.	L ⁺ R ⁺ P ⁺ -2 Subdom.	L ⁺ R ⁺ P ⁺ +2 Dom.	R ⁺ L ⁺ P ⁺ +4 Subdom.	<u>L⁻R⁻</u> <u>-1</u> <u>Dom.</u>	<u>R⁺L⁺</u> <u>+1</u> <u>Subdom.</u>
Augmented fourth (6 units)	R ⁺ P ⁺ R ⁺ P ⁺ +/-6		R ⁺ P ⁺ R ⁺ +3 Dom.		R ⁺ P ⁺ R ⁺ -3 Subdom.		R ⁺ P ⁺ R ⁺ P ⁺ +/-6	

Example 8. Direction of the polarity and the voice leading

The musical score consists of eight staves, each containing a sequence of chords. Below each chord, its polarity is indicated by a label (e.g., L^+ , R^-) and a coordinate pair (e.g., $(-1,0)$, $(+2,-1)$). The labels and coordinates are as follows:

- Staff 1: L^+ Sub $(-1,0)$; L^+P^- Sub $(+1/-1,0)$; $P-L^+$ Sub $(+1/-1,0)$; $P-L^+P^-$ Sub $(+2/-1,0)$; L^- Dom $(+1,0)$; $L-P^+$ Dom $(+1/-1,0)$; P^+L^- Dom $(+1/-1,0)$; $P^+L^+P^+$ Dom $(+2/-1,0)$
- Staff 2: R^+ Dom $(0,+1)$; R^+P^- Dom $(+1,+1)$; $P-R^+$ Dom $(+1,+1)$; $P-R^+P^-$ Dom $(+2,+1)$; R^- Sub $(0,-1)$; $R-P^+$ Sub $(-1,-1)$; P^+R^- Sub $(-1,-1)$; $P^+R^+P^+$ Sub $(-2,-1)$
- Staff 3: $R^+P^+R^+$ Dom $(+1,+2)$; $R^+P^+R^+P^-$ (Dom); $R-P^+R^-$ Sub $(-1,-2)$; $R-P^+R^+P^+$ (Sub)
- Staff 4: R^+L^- Dom $(+1,+1)$; $R^+L^+P^+$ Dom $(+2,0)$; $L-R^+P^-$ Dom $(0,+2)$; $L-R^+$ Dom $(+1,+1)$; $R-L^+$ Sub $(-1,-1)$; $R-L^+P^-$ Sub $(-2,0)$; $L^+R^+P^+$ Sub $(0,-2)$; L^+R^- Sub $(-1,-1)$
- Staff 5: $R^+L^+R^+$ Dom $(+1,+2)$; $R^+L^+R^+P^-$ Dom $(0,+3)$; $P^+R^+L^+R^+$ Dom $(0,+3)$; $P^+R^+L^+R^+P^-$ Dom; $R^+L^+R^-$ Sub $(-1,-2)$; $R-L^+R^+P^+$ Sub $(0,-3)$; $P^+R^+L^+R^-$ Sub $(0,-3)$; $P^+R^+L^+R^+P^+$ Sub
- Staff 6: $L^+R^+L^+$ Sub $(-2,-1)$; $L^+R^+L^+P^-$ Sub $(-3,0)$; $P^+L^+R^+L^+$ Sub $(-3,0)$; $R^+P^+L^-$ Sub $(-2,0)$; $L-R^+L^-$ Dom $(+2,+1)$; $L-R^+L^+P^+$ Dom $(+3,0)$; $P^+L^+R^+L^-$ Dom $(0,+3)$; $R^+P^+L^+P^-$ Dom $(+2,0)$

Example 9. Inversion, retrogradation, and voice leading in fourth progressions

L^+R^-
 (-1,-1)
 Original
 Sub.

R^+L^-
 (+1,+1)
 Retrogradation
 Dom.

L^-R^+
 (+1,+1)
 Inversion
 Dom.

R^-L^+
 (-1,-1)
 Retrogradation and Inversion
 Sub.

Example 10. Inversion, retrogradation, and voice leading in major third progressions

L^+P^-
 (-1/+1,0)
 Original
 Sub.

P^+L^-
 (-1/+1,0)
 Retrogradation
 Dom.

L^-P^+
 (-1/+1,0)
 Inversion
 Dom.

P^-L^+
 (-1/+1,0)
 Retrogradation and Inversion
 Sub.

Example 11. Dohnányi, Piano Quintet op. 26, I, tonal and thematic paths

Exposition				Recapitulation		
mm. (1-76)	mm. (77-91)	mm. (91-125)	mm. (125-131)	mm. (165-214)	mm. (215-229)	mm. (229-276-294)
E_bm Primary Material	GM Secondary Material (first key)	F_♯M Secondary Material (second key)	F_♯m	Cm Primary Material	EM Secondary Material (first key)	E_bm Secondary-Primary Material (second key)
<p>P-L⁺P⁻ →</p> <p>R-P⁺ →</p> <p>P-R⁺ →</p>				<p>P-L⁺P⁻ →</p> <p>R-P⁺ →</p> <p>P-R⁺ →</p>		

Example 12. Dohnányi, Piano Quintet op. 26, I, mm. 8–11, voice leading

Harmonic section into primary material

E_bm mm. 1-11	(Gm) mm. 11-15	E_bm mm. 16-27
<p>P-L⁺ →</p>		

Example 13. Dohnányi, Piano Quintet op. 26, I, mm. 28–35, harmonic progression

Transition before primary material

mm. 28-31 / 135-138

mm. 32-35 / 141-144

$E_{\flat}m: B_{\flat} \rightarrow G_{\flat}$
 R^{-}

$E_{\flat}m: B_{\flat} \rightarrow Gm$
 $P \cdot L^{+}$

Example 14. Dohnányi, Piano Quintet op. 26, I, mm. 64–71, harmonic progression

mm. 64-71, last bars of primary material

$E_{\flat}m$

$E_{\flat}7$

$A7$

Gm

$P^{-(+1,-1)}$
 instead of $(+1,0)$

$R^{+}P^{-}R^{+}P^{-}$ $(+1/-1,0)$
 instead of $(+1,+1,+1)$

$P^{+}R^{-}L^{+}R^{-}$ $(+1,+1/-1)$
 instead of $(0,-3)$

$P \cdot L^{+}P^{-}$ $(+2/-1,0)$

