

A Note from Barbara Franklin about Ted's pages on MODULATION:

Ted loved to play in ALL keys. If you listen to any of his chord melody arrangements you will hear the frequency with which he modulates to various keys in the same song. Ted told me that he began doing this because staying in one key became stale for him, and that a new key brought him much needed personal stimulation in addition to rekindling interest in and infusing new life into the song.

The following pages were written by Ted in 1973, and are his only written texts detailing his procedures for **MODULATION**. Although the pages are adequate, knowing Ted, there is no doubt that if he'd written an updated definition and explanation he would have refined the text in a manner more comprehensible for the student.

In creating this page, I left much of what Ted originally wrote intact. In a few instances I rearranged the paragraphs so each section would only encompass the specifics of an individual concept. Where I felt it might be helpful I interjected brief comments to clarify Ted's explanation. In a few places I eliminated that which might otherwise be confusing.

My comments are in *italics*. If Ted would have revised these pages later in his life he certainly would have addressed this somewhat complicated subject with greater elaboration and written pages and pages of examples

DIATONIC MODULATION

by Ted Greene — 1973, May 1

Modulation is the name given to the process of changing from one key to another. There are many subtle variations of this process but the most common way is called **Diatonic Modulation**. This means: to modulate to a key whose **home chord** is **diatonic** to the key you are leaving. Example: A modulation from (*the key of*) A to Bm, C#m, D, E, or F#m is a diatonic modulation.

A diatonic modulation is almost always accomplished the same way: some variation of the V or V7 of the **new key** is introduced... Often a key is entered by its home chord and then a **cadence** is used which contains the **V7** of the **new key**.

Example:

A - F#m - Bm - C#7 - F#m.

[modulation to F#m via the V7 (C#7) of the new key of F#m.]

You might say that the F#m and Bm were still in the key of A, but they are also in the key of F#m.

One reason why diatonic modulation sounds so smooth is because there are chords that are common to **both keys** that are usually involved. These are called **PIVOT CHORDS**.

Often the V(7) of the new key is **prepared** by ii7(b5) or IV of the **NEW KEY** as well. (Actually, any chord of the new key might precede the V7, but ii and IV are the most common.)

*Diatonic modulation is also referred to as **Common Chord Modulation** in which a **Pivot Chord**, common to **both keys**, is used as the means of leaving the old key and as the entry into the new key.*

The original key should be firmly established in the first phrase, which could end in a half cadence on the V chord (dominant). This chord (the “old” V) then becomes the I chord (tonic) of the new key. The V chord is the Pivot Chord.

Temporary Modulation

If there is **no cadence in the new key**, the process of preceding a diatonic chord with its V7 is often called a **temporary modulation**.

Example:

A - C#7 - F#m - Bm - D - E7 - A.

[The F#m - Bm is the temporary modulation]

Although A - C#7 - F#m could be said to be a modulation from A to F#m, however, because of the briefness of such a chord progression the ear doesn't really accept this fact as much as if a final cadence progression is played in the new key:

A - C#7 - F#m - Bm - F#m (2nd inversion, 5th in bass*) - C#7 - F#m.

**Ted had written F#m 6/4 - I used the “word definition” to avoid confusion due to the multiple meaning of 6/4 and the inability to properly notate the 6/4 symbol as used to designate a second inversion chord.*

Also, quite frequently the ii-V of different keys are strung together without resolving to their respective Tonics.

Example:

A - G#m7(b5) - C#7 - F#7 - Bm7 - E7 - [Em7 - A7 - D]

Notice that because this whole phrase ends on a ii-V-I of D, the ear can accept this as a modulation **even though no cadence follows**.

Most pieces of music start and end in the same key - seems to make for good sense of proportion, balance, unity, and all that good stuff.

By the way, while it is wise to know about this ii-V business in the diatonic keys, it is also important to know how they relate to the home key so that you always know where you are in relation to it in case you want to get back to it smoothly.

For example, *the chords in brackets:*

A - [G#m7(b5) - C#7 - F#m]
 could be called: [iiim7(b5) - V7 - i of F#m]
OR (could be called) [viim7(b5) - III7 - vi] (in the key of A.)

Know it both ways and you will get the most out of it.

Direct Skip

Another common device in diatonic modulation is that of modulation at the end of a phrase or by **direct skip**.

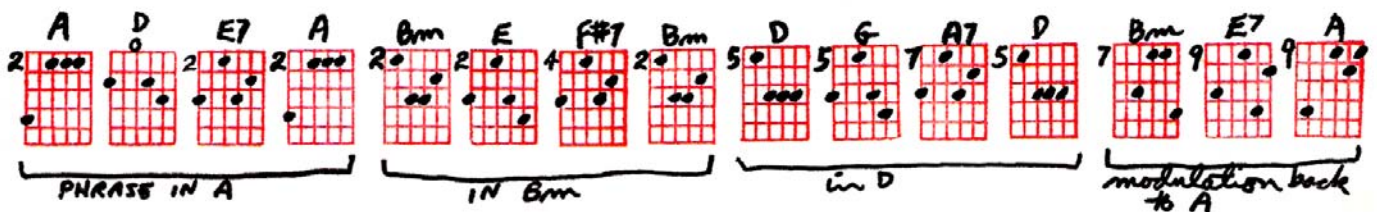
Example: A - F#m - Bm - D - A - E7 - A [pause] || E - A - E - B7 - E.

Because of the pause in the phrase, the ear readily accepts the modulation.

Sequence

Sometimes the same idea will be repeated at a different pitch level, this is known as a **sequence**.

Example:

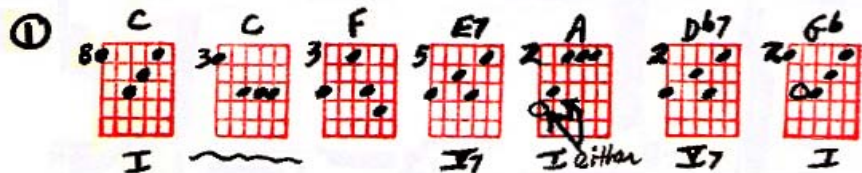


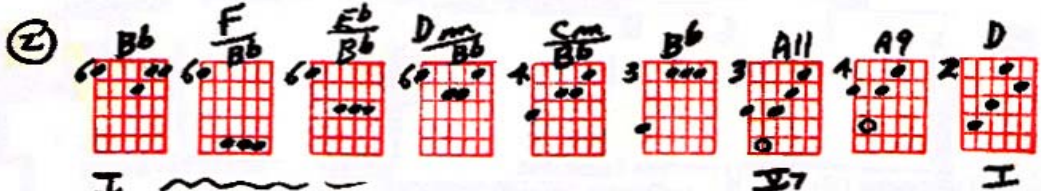
The important thing in all these thoughts expressed on this page is not to argue over whether this or that is a temporary modulation or a real modulation or such, but to learn to **hear** these type of progressions in songs, to learn to **use** them, and to **understand** what and why you or others are doing certain chord changes no matter what you call them.

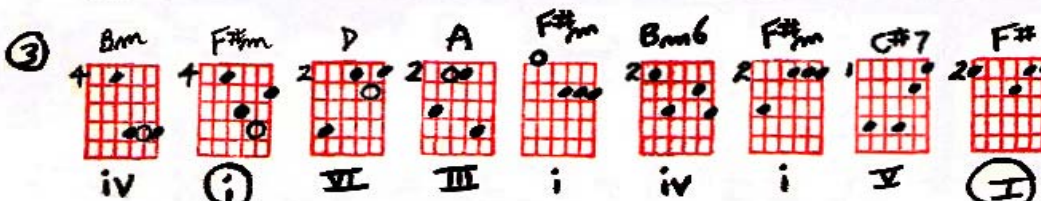
OTHER MODULATIONS

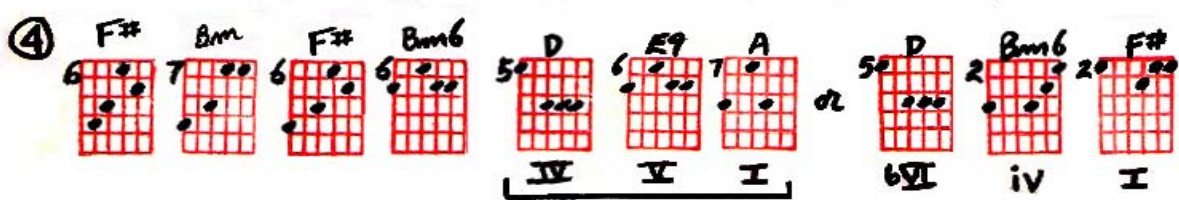
Modulations often occur to other keys than the diatonically related ones. All of the devices that worked in the diatonic modulations tend to work in these others also. The most common keys to go to that are non-diatonic are the **bIII**, **III**, **bIV**, or **IV** if the home key is **major**. If the home key is **minor** the most common keys are **I**, **IV**, and **V**.

Here are some Examples:

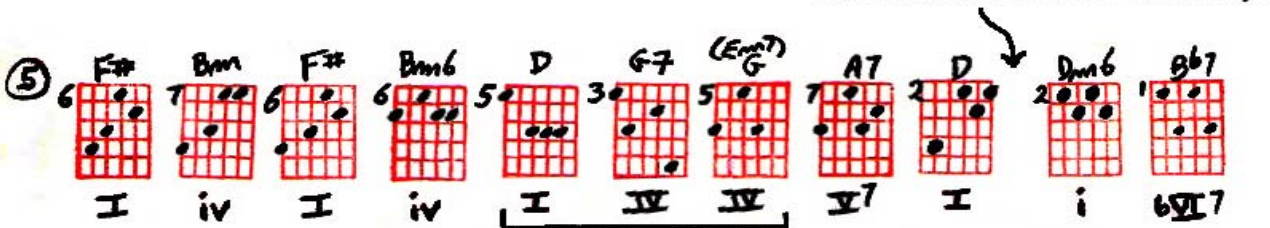
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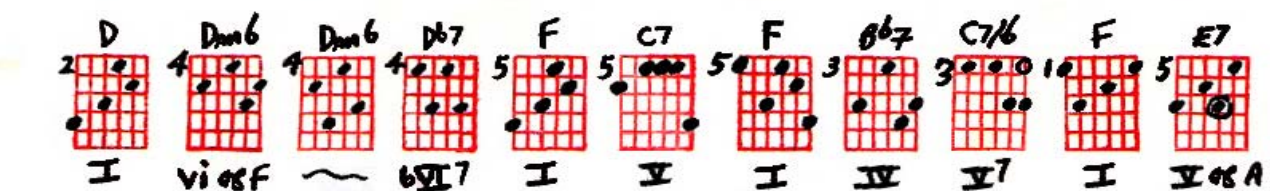
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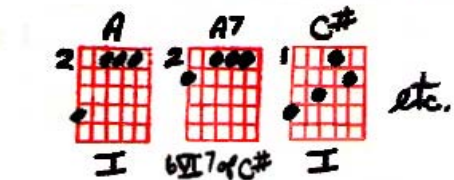
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Notice a direct modulation to Dm for a moment which leads to F eventually.

⑤ 





Much experimenting is necessary to get decent modulations, so be patient - it is worth it.

Your best bet in learning about advanced modulation (or simple modulation too) is to study many songs, preferably old standards, classical pieces, and some of the modern songs that have lots of pretty chord changes in them. Then, if you take the ideas in the songs and experiment in different inversions, and try mixing them up in various ways, you will have a whole beautiful world of sounds to play with.