

1-6 Beethoven: *Coriolan Overture*, Op. 62 (1807), mm. 36-46 (simplified texture)

Parallel 7 Chords

no such functional analysis is possible in the next example. Here Wagner portrays in flight by means of parallel half-diminished-7th chords, some of them enharmonically altered. The effect is not one of a progression of chords toward a harmonic goal, as like a line painted with a broad brush instead of drawn with a pen. Obviously, these chords function in the ways that half-diminished-7th chords do in diatonic music. The chords in Example 1-7 form a *nonfunctional chord succession*, which does not progress in any of the ways that diatonic chords do. Such successions are often the result of what we shall call *parallel chords*. Such chords are the result of goal-directed motion in the various

Wagner: *Götterdämmerung* (1874), Act III, Scene 2

voices, rather than an attempt to express some traditional harmonic progression. This goal-directed motion is usually stepwise, often chromatic, sometimes in similar motion and sometimes not. The resulting verticalities are usually tertian (triads and 7th chords), but the chords form nonfunctional successions or brief tonicizations. For instance, play through Example 1-8. The essential elements are a chromatic descent from B4 to E4 in the top voice and B2 to E2 in the bass to make a convincing cadence.⁶ The soprano and alto move in parallel major thirds until the last two beats, the alto stopping its descent upon reaching the leading tone, which eventually resolves. The tenor enters on a C4 and moves in parallel motion with the upper voices for three beats, stops momentarily on B4/A#3, and then moves to the 7th of the dominant chord before resolving to G3. The bass enters last, doubling the soprano momentarily before moving into its cadential figure. On a higher level, the progression in this excerpt is simply tonic-dominant-*tonic*, beginning with the incomplete tonic triad at the opening of the phrase. But on the surface, the chords created by the various voices, beginning with beat 2 of the first measure, are as follows (the C7 and the F7 are enharmonically spelled):

F-E-Eb-C7-F7-B7 (b5)-e

Although there is a IV6-i7-V4/3 progression in Bb here, it is doubtful that anyone would hear it that way. The only traditional harmonic progression in the excerpt is the final authentic cadence (with a lowered 5th in the dominant 7th creating a French 6th sonority). The music preceding the cadence makes use of voice-leading chords and creates a nonfunctional chord succession.

The voice-leading chords in Example 1-8 were created primarily by parallel or similar motion. Three independent gestures combine to produce the voice-leading chords in Example 1-9. The first gesture is a chromatic ascent in the melody from F#4 to G5 (doubled at the octave above). The second element is an augmented triad in the inner voices (beginning in the third measure of the excerpt), which moves, more slowly than the soprano, chromatically downward through a minor 3rd. The final element is the neighbor motion in the bass, swaying back and forth from Bb2 to A2, finally settling on A. The voice-leading chords created by the combination of these three gestures are sometimes tertian and some-

EXAMPLE 1-8 Grieg: "Gone," Op. 71, No. 6 (1901), mm. 1-2
(From Edition Peters.)

Andante doloroso