

Tonal Harmony in the Late Nineteenth Century

The music of the late Nineteenth Century involves a breakdown of the tonal system. This was achieved in the following ways:

- **Counterpoint** : An increase in the amount of contrapuntal writing.
- **NCTs** : Harmony and chord function was blurred through the use of longer (in duration) and stronger NCTs.
- **Excessive Modulation** : A faster rate of modulation, or continuous modulation. Key succession was very flexible. Chromatic mediant relationships as well as doubly chromatic mediant relationships were used frequently.
- **Noncentric tonality** (also called “progressive” or “open” tonality) was used where the ending key is not the same as the opening key. The sense of a single tonic key was minimized.
- **Avoidance of V-I progressions.**
- **Avoidance of strong cadences** (PAC).
- **Avoidance of the tonic** altogether. Deceptive progressions abound.
- **Exploitation of ambiguously functioning chords** (Mm7th, fully dim.7th, +, Fr+6).
- Sequences may be used to legitimize nontraditional relationships.