The Logic of Six-Based Minor for Harmonic Analyses of Popular Music

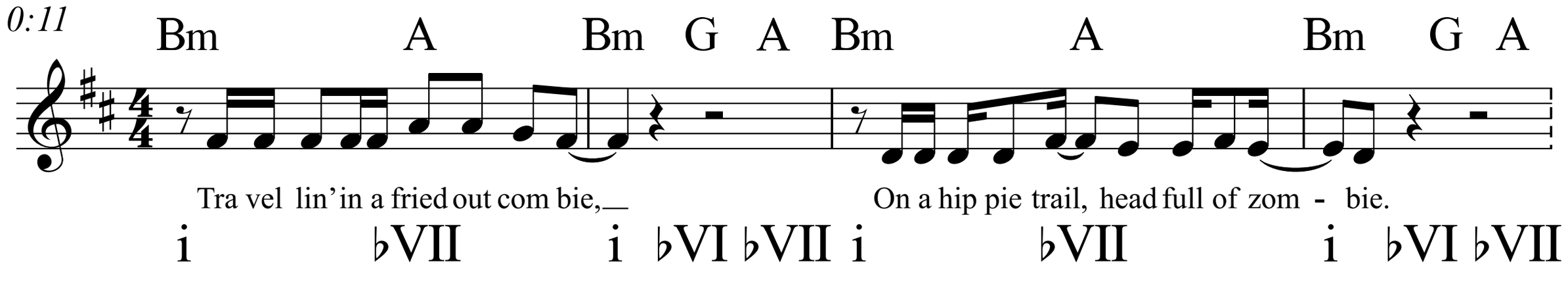
Trevor de Clercq

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

SMT Conference
November 5, 2021
Virtual

Minor Tonic = i

“Down Under” (Men at Work), Verse



(Doll 2011)

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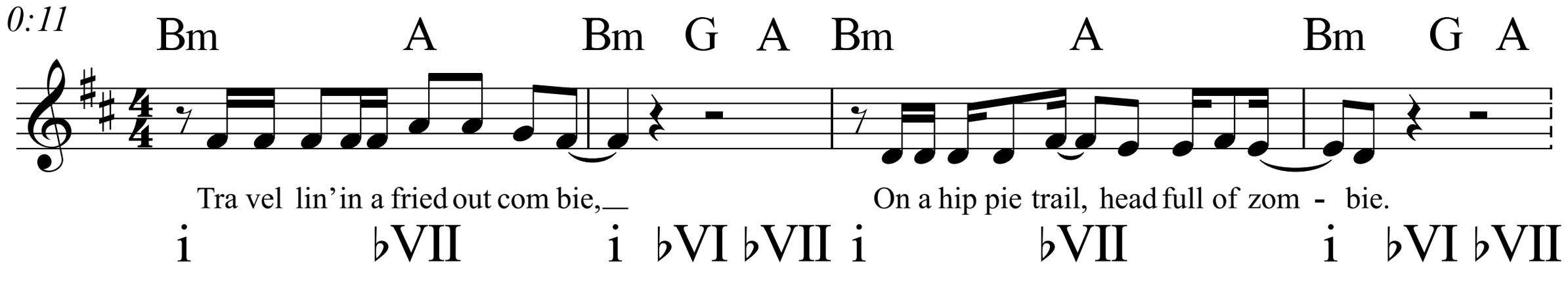
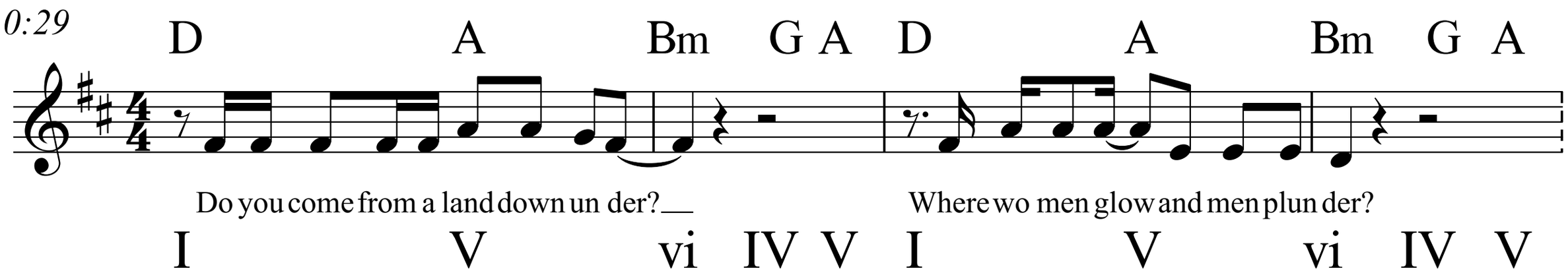


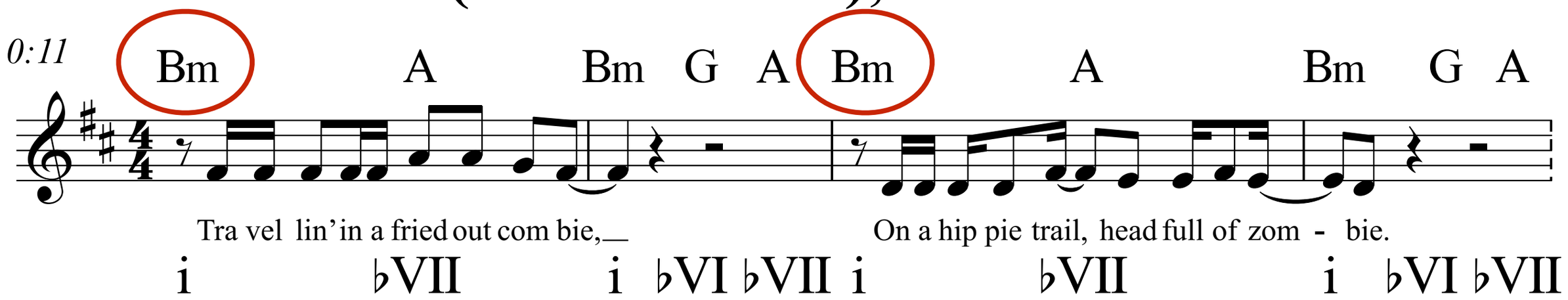
“Down Under” (Men at Work), Chorus



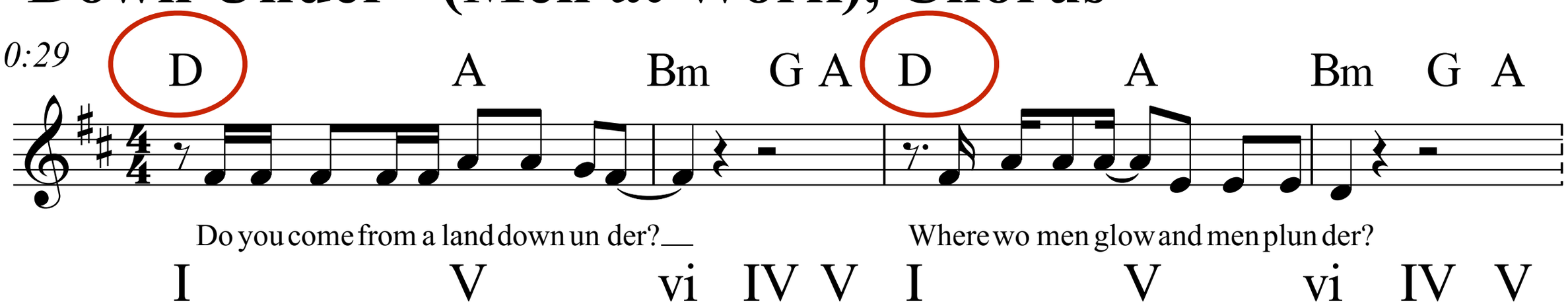
(Doll 2011)

Minor Tonic = i

“Down Under” (Men at Work), Verse



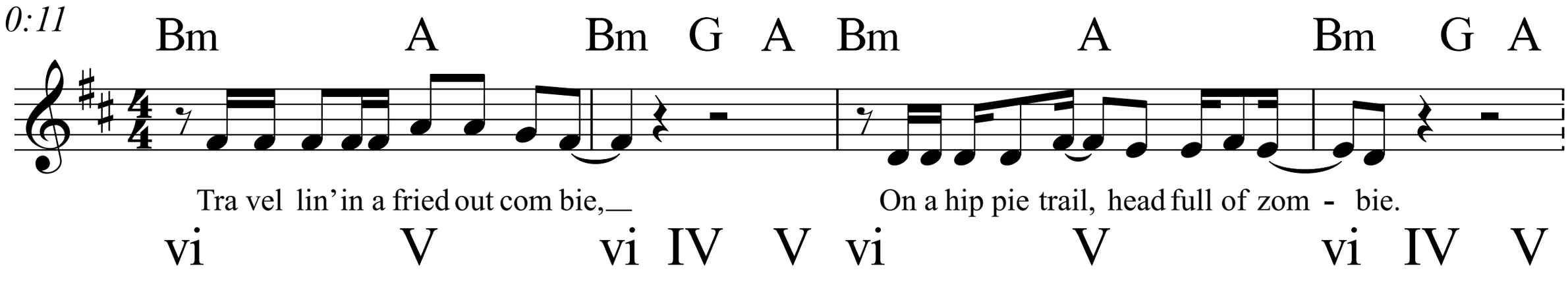
“Down Under” (Men at Work), Chorus



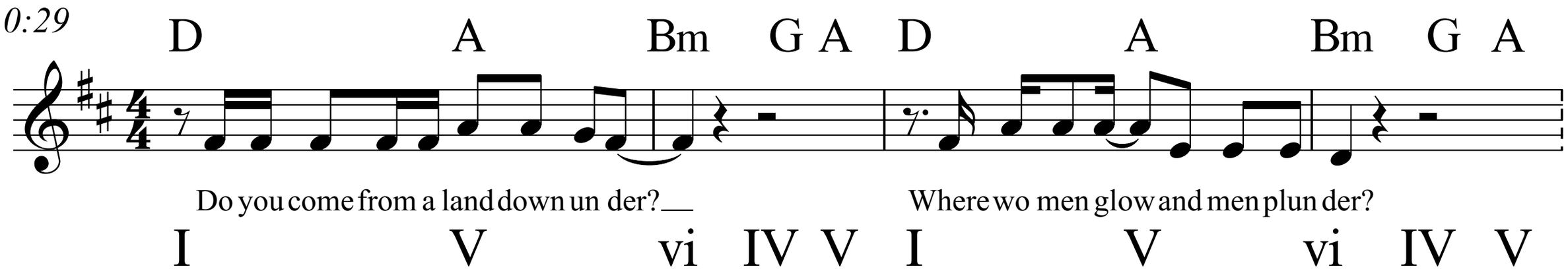
(Doll 2011)

Minor Tonic = vi

“Down Under” (Men at Work), Verse

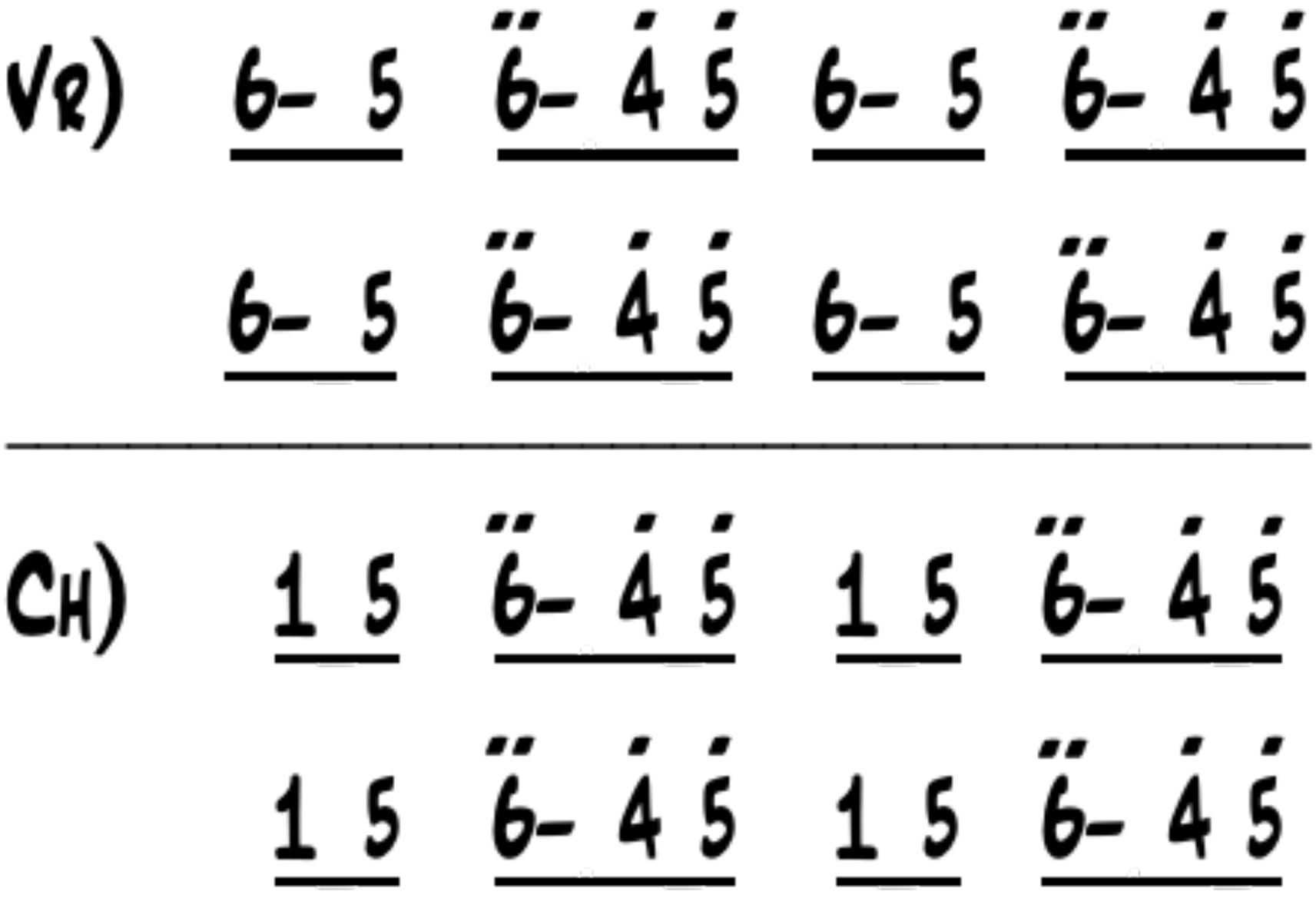


“Down Under” (Men at Work), Chorus

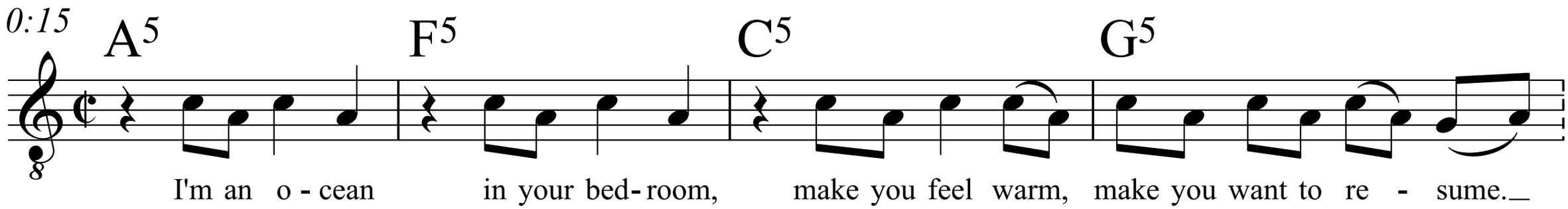


Nashville Chart

“Down Under” (Men at Work)



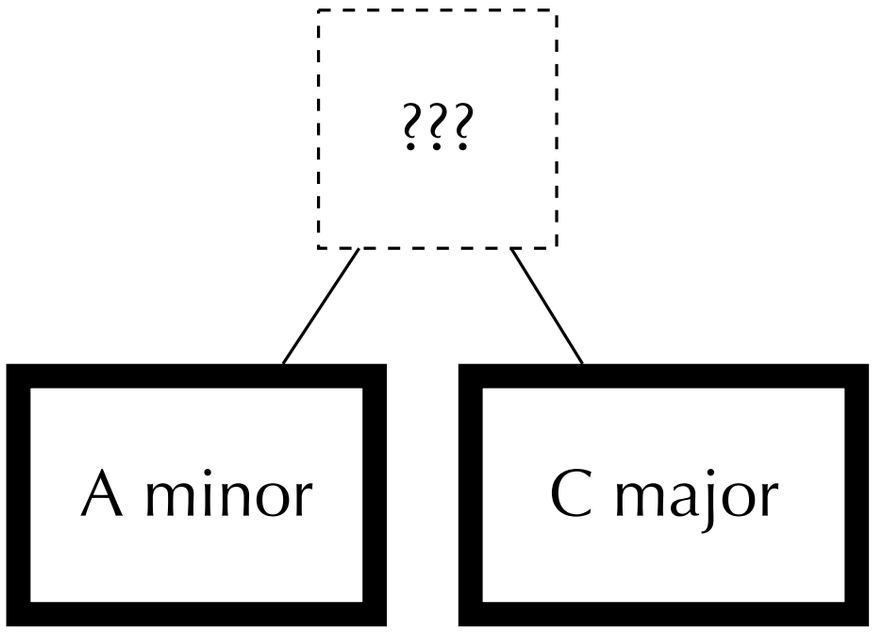
Tonal Ambiguity:
The “Axis” Progression



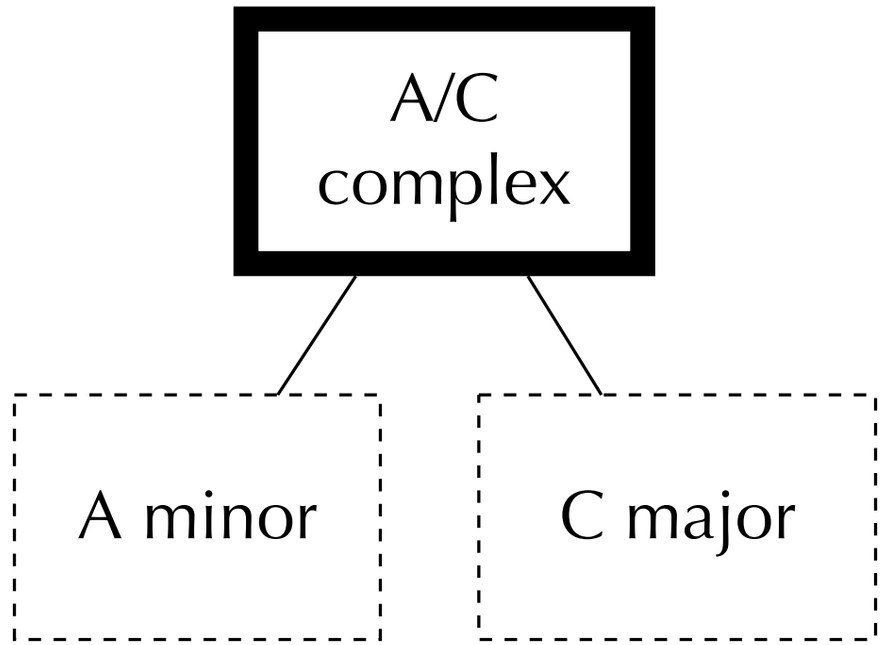
A = 1	i	♭VI	♭III	♭VII
C = 1	vi	IV	I	V

“Don’t Forget Me”
(Red Hot Chili Peppers)

Tonal Ambiguity



Double-Tonic Complex

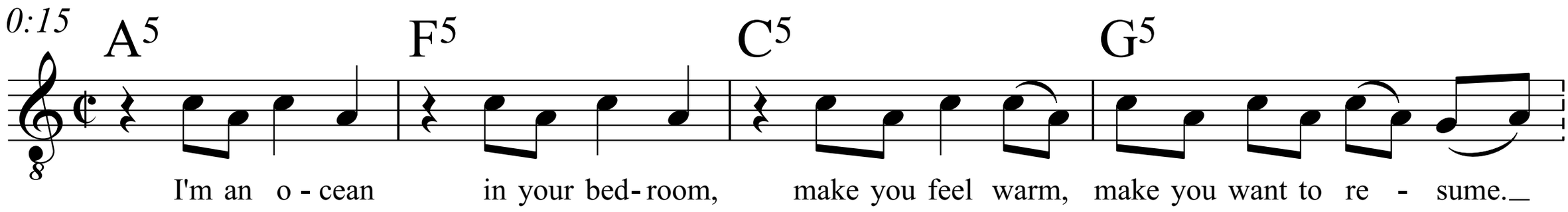


Nobile (2020)

Aeolian-Ionian Complex

	Am	C	Dm	Em	F	G
A minor	T	T	S	D	S	D
C major	T	T	S	D	S	D

Double-Tonic Complex (Nobile 2020)



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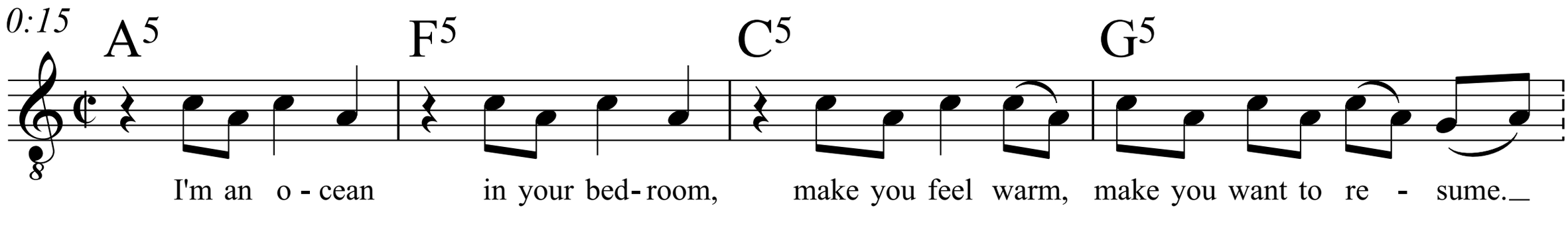


~~A = 1~~	~~i~~	~~♭VI~~	~~♭III~~	~~♭VII~~
C = 1	vi	IV	I	V

“Don’t Forget Me”
(Red Hot Chili Peppers)

A Few Other Double-Tonic Complex Loops

||: vi I V IV :||

||: vi V I IV :||

||: vi I IV V :||

||: vi IV I iii :||

||: vi I V iii :||

||: vi I V ii :||

||: ii vi I V :||

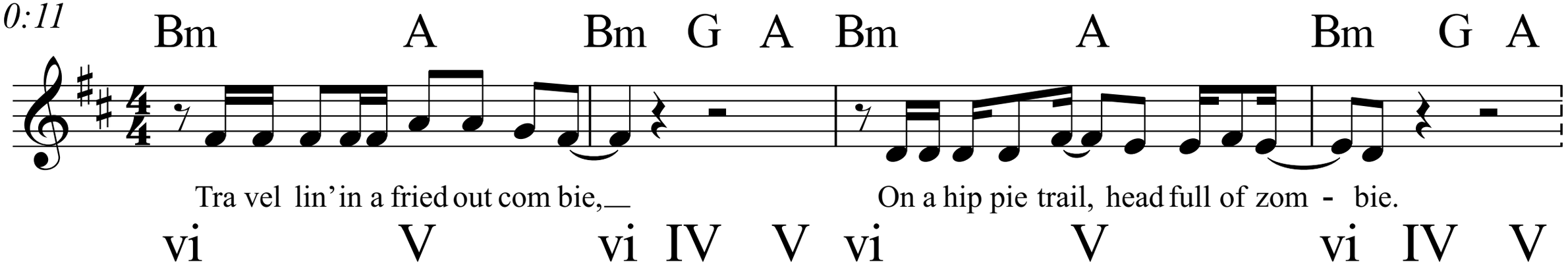
A Few Other Double-Tonic Complex Loops

- “Jar of Hearts” (Christina Perri)
- “Set Fire to the Rain” (Adele)
- “Prayer in C” (Lilly Wood and the Prick)

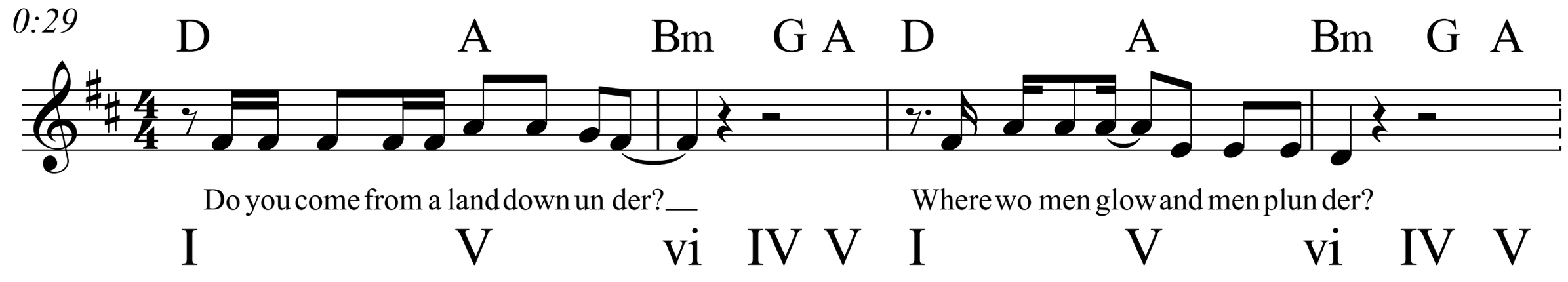
||: vi I V ii :||

Shifting Between Relative Tonal Centers

“Down Under” (Men at Work), Verse



“Down Under” (Men at Work), Chorus



From Minor (Verse) to Relative Major (Chorus)

Vr)	6-	4	6-	4
	6-	4	6-	4
Pre)	5	5^{2-3}	4	4^{2-3}
	5	5^{2-3}	4	4 5
Ch)	6-	4	1	5
	6-	4	1	$\frac{5}{7}$

"Innocence"
(Avril Lavigne)

From Minor (Verse)
to Relative Major (Chorus)

C♯m

Vr)	6-	4	6-	4
	6-	4	6-	4

Pre)	5	5^{2-3}	4	4^{2-3}
	5	5^{2-3}	4	4 5

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	5	5^{2-3}	4	4 5

Ch)	6-	4	1	E	5
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“Innocence”
(Avril Lavigne)

From Minor (Verse)
to Relative Major (Chorus)

C♯m

Vr)	6-		4		6-		4
	6-		4		6-		4
Pre)	5	B	5^{2-3}		4	A	4^{2-3}
	5		5^{2-3}		4		4 5
Ch)	6-		4		1	E	5
	6-		4		1		$\frac{5}{7}$

“Innocence”
(Avril Lavigne)

“Miss Americana….”
(Taylor Swift)

0:24

Vr)

Bm A

A - mer - i - can glo - ry fa-ded be-fore___ me, now I'm feel-ing hope - less, ripped up my prom___dress run-ning through rose

5

G A

___ thorns, I saw the score - board and ran for my life.___

9

Pre)

G Bm A

No cam-era's catch my pag-eant smile; I coun-ted days, I coun-ted miles

13

G

to see you there, to see you there. It's been a long time com-ing, but....

17

Ch)

G Bm A Bm

It's you and me,__ that's my whole world. They whis-per in the hall-way,"She's a bad, bad girl."

21

G Bm A

The whole school is roll - ing fake dice. You play stu-pid games, you win___ stu-pid pri - zes.

“Miss Americana….”
(Taylor Swift)

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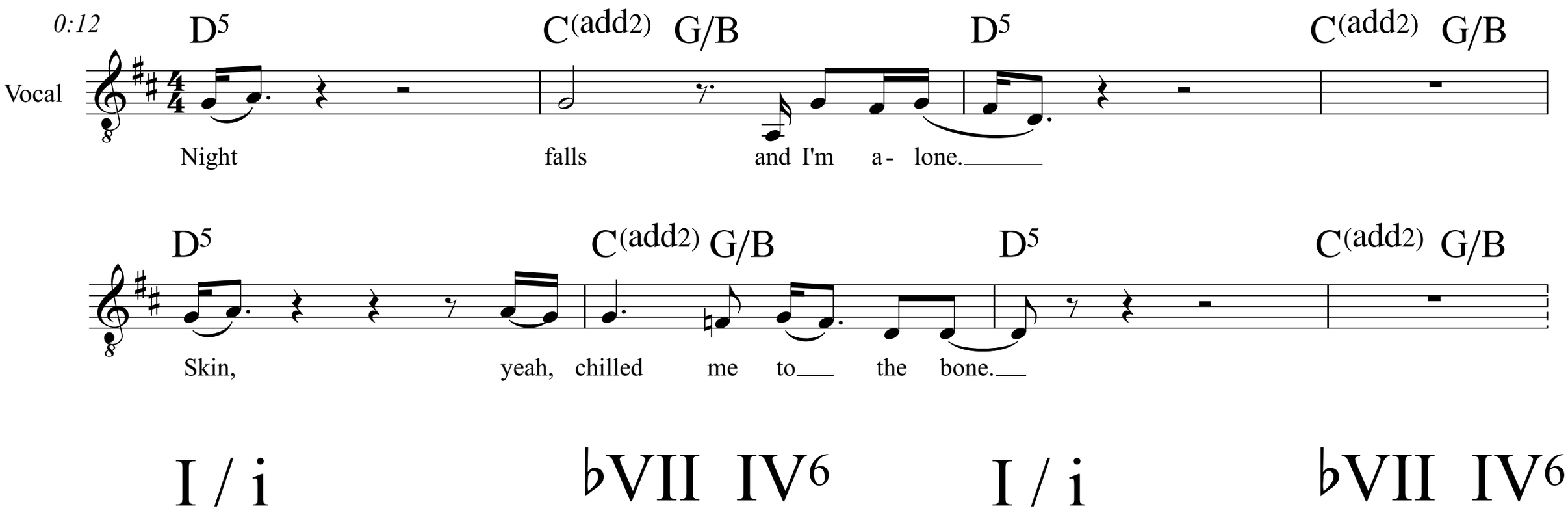
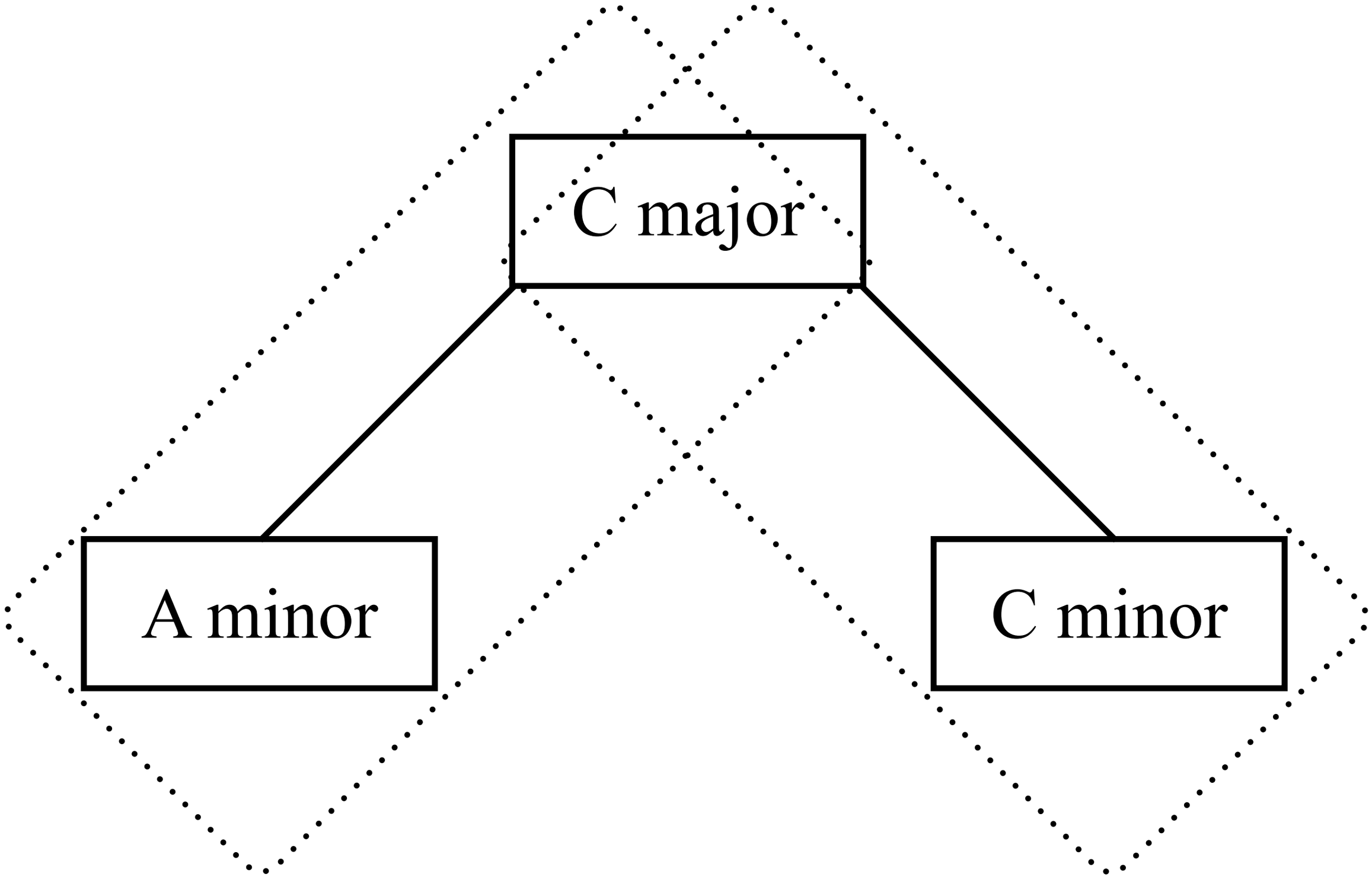
Double–Parallel Tonics



“Blue on Black”

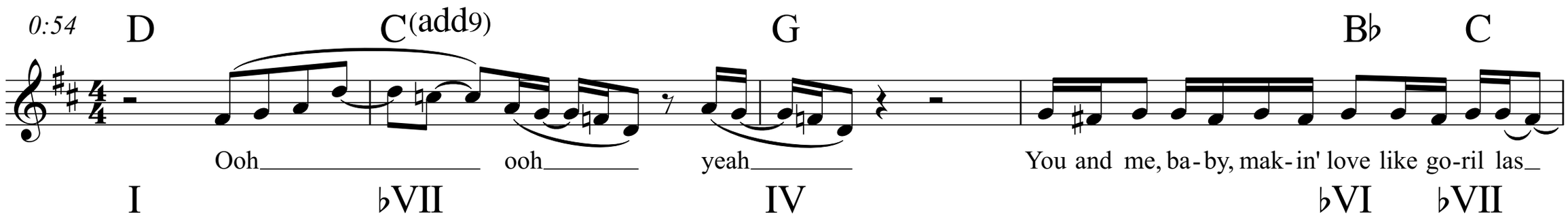
(Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band)

The Triple-Tonic Complex



A Triple-Tonic Complex

“Gorilla” (Bruno Mars), Chorus



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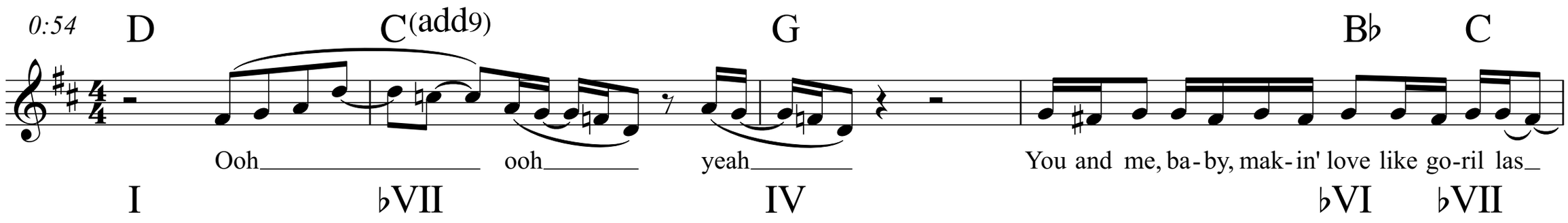
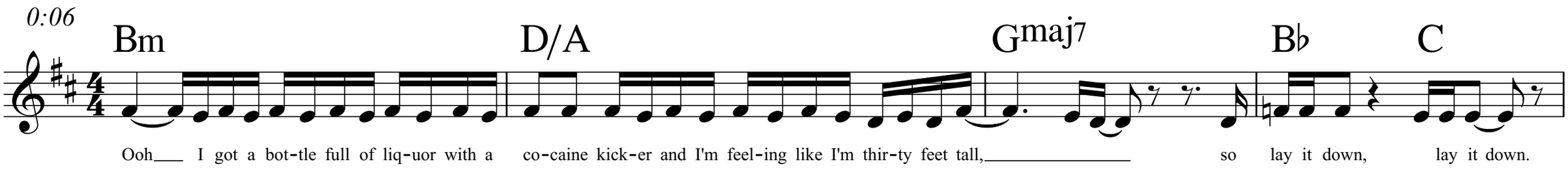


“Gorilla” (Bruno Mars), Verse



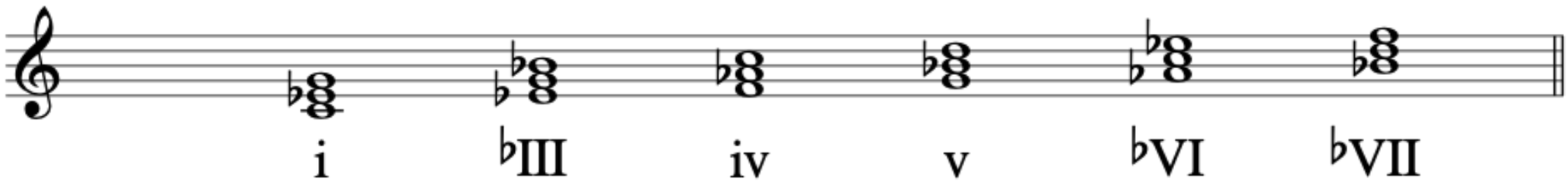
D = $\hat{1}$	vi	I^{6}_{4}	IV	♭VI	♭VII
B = $\hat{1}$	i	$♭III^{6}_{4}$	♭VI		

VII ♭II
or
♭VI/♭III ♭VII/♭III

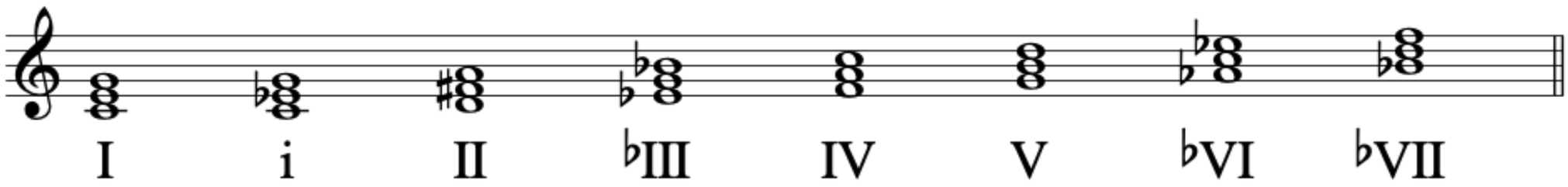
Three Harmonic Palettes

Stephenson (2002)

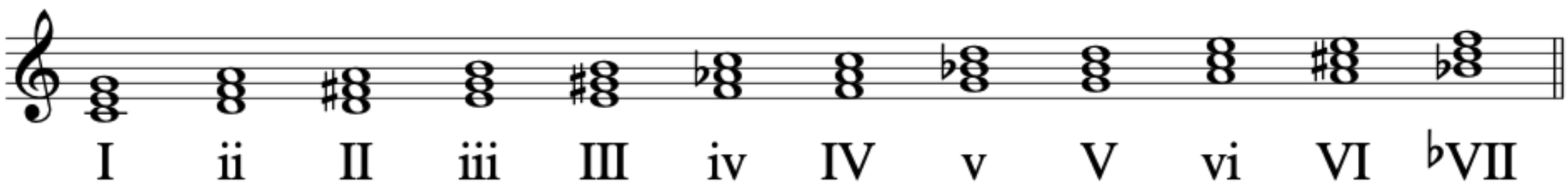
Natural Minor (One-Based)



Chromatic Minor



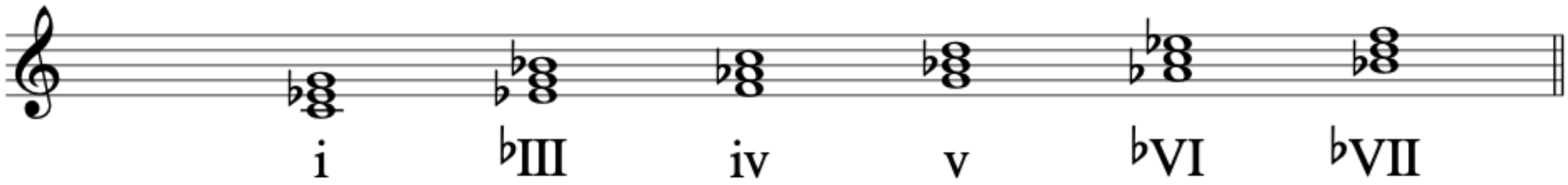
Major



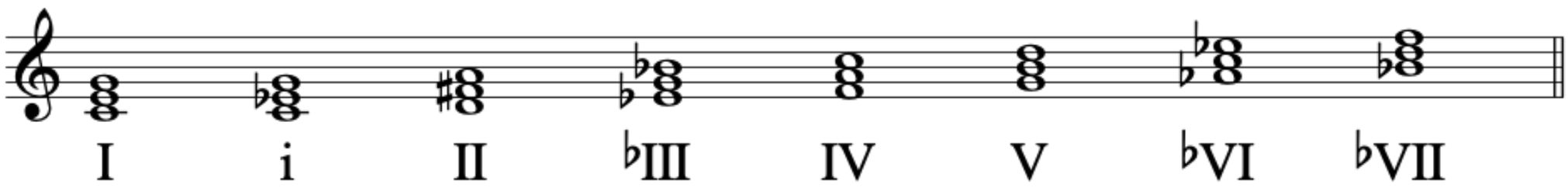
Three Harmonic Palettes

Stephen Benson (2002)

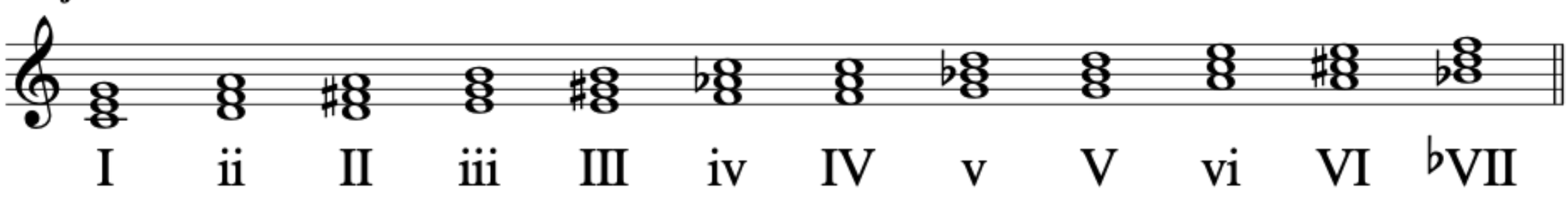
Natural Minor (One-Based)



Chromatic Minor



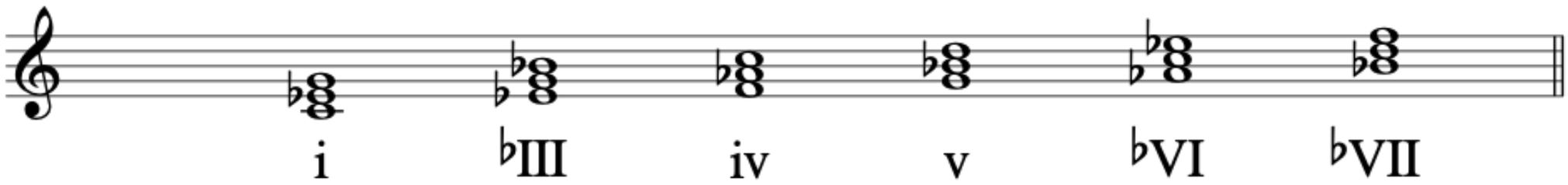
Major



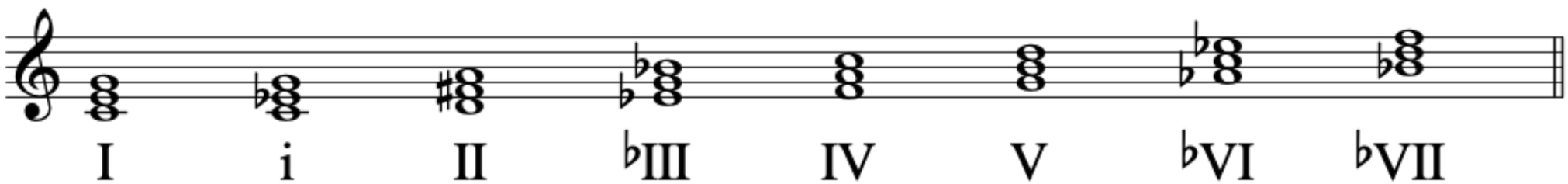
Three Harmonic Palettes

Stephenson (2002)

Natural Minor (One-Based)



Chromatic Minor



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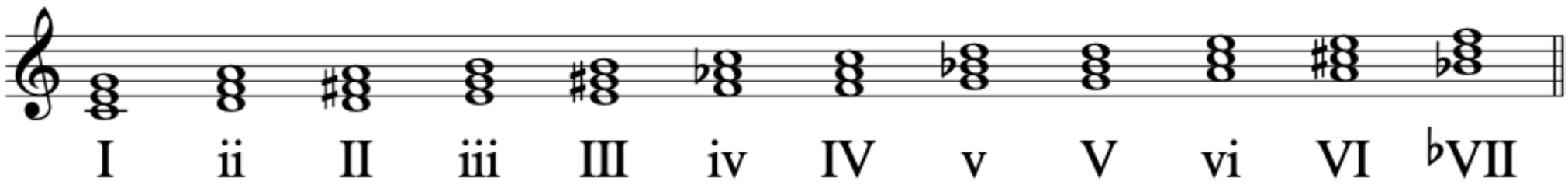
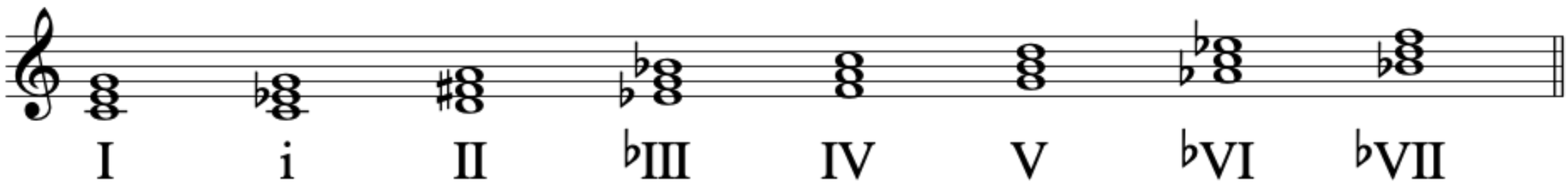


Three Harmonic Palettes

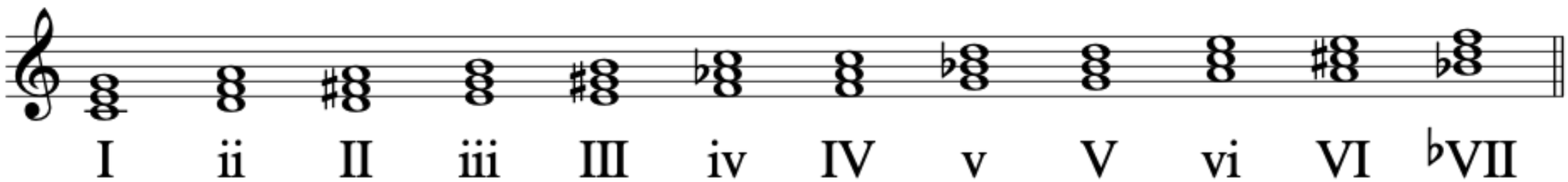
Stephenson (2002)

Natural Minor (One-Based)

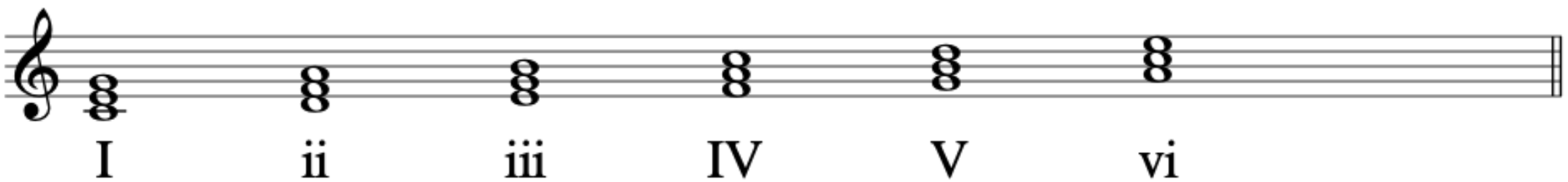
Chromatic Minor



Major

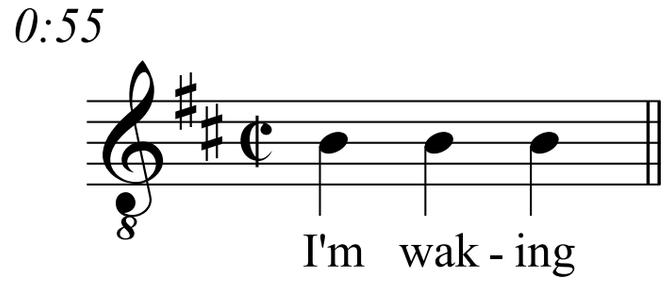


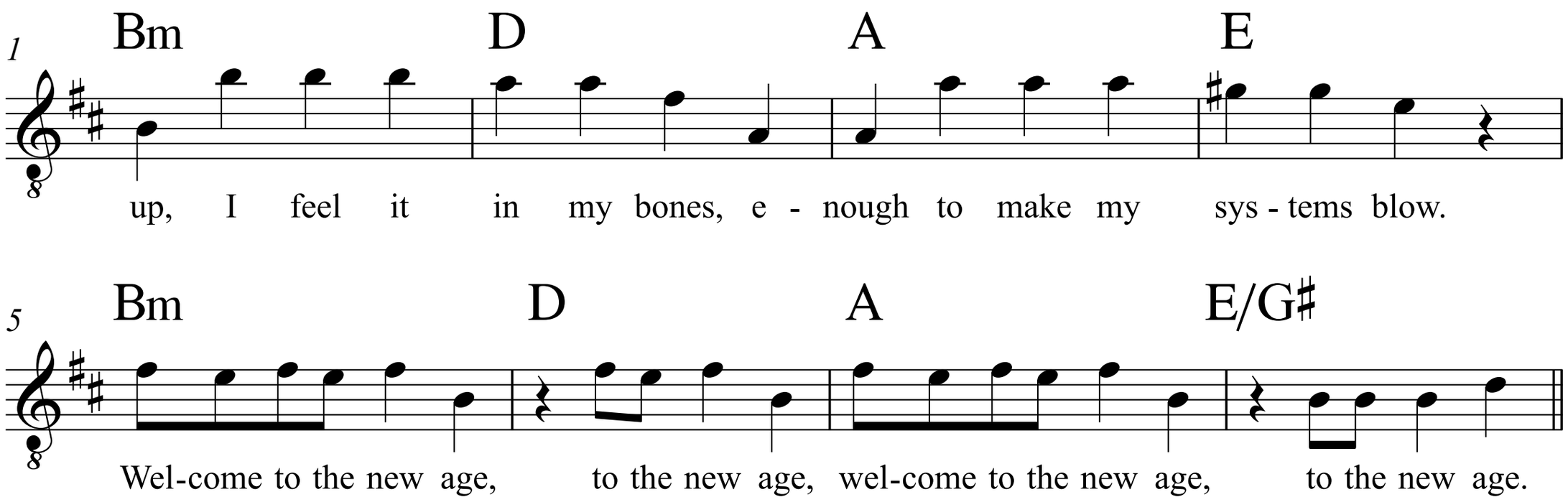
Natural Minor (Six-Based)



Triple-Tonic Complex

“Radioactive” (Imagine Dragons), Chorus





B = 1 i ♭III ♭VII IV6

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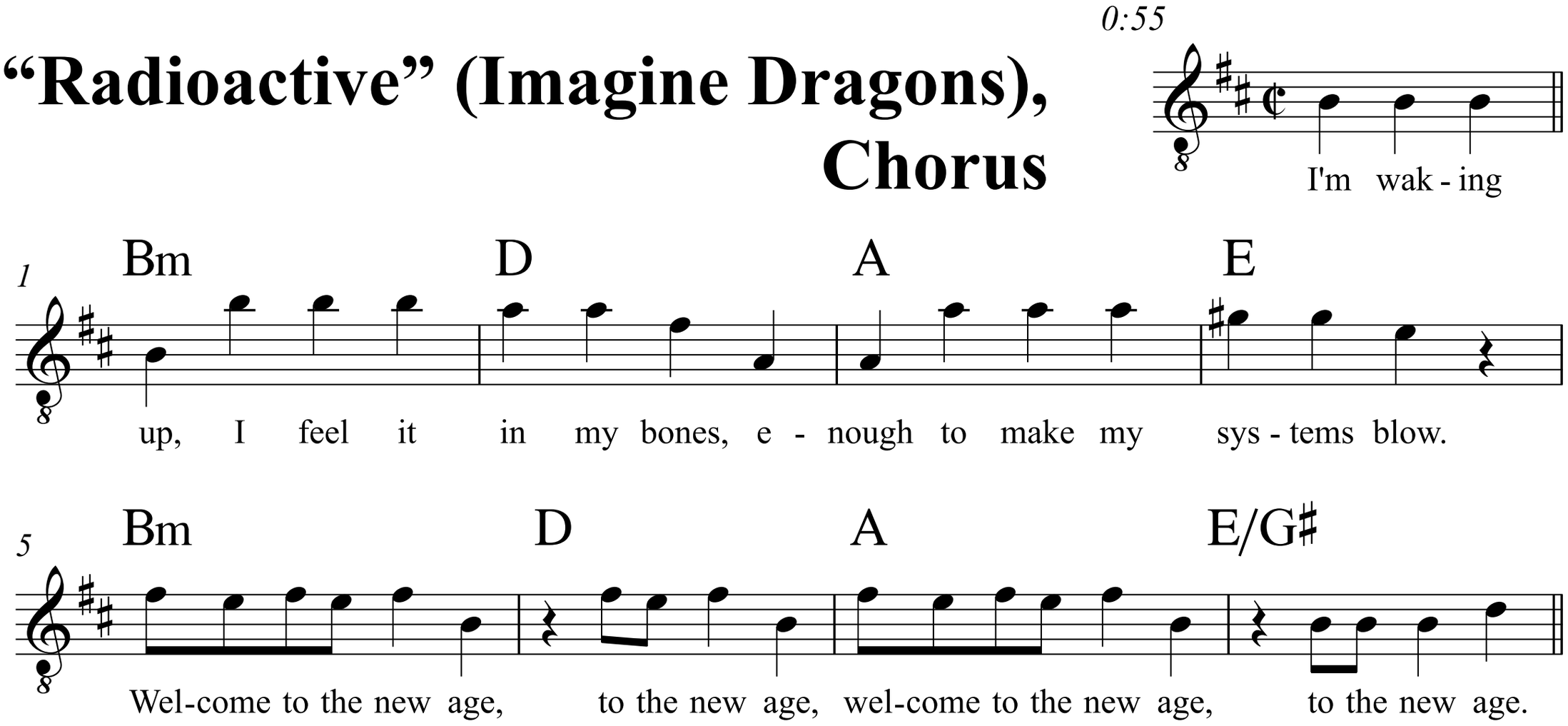
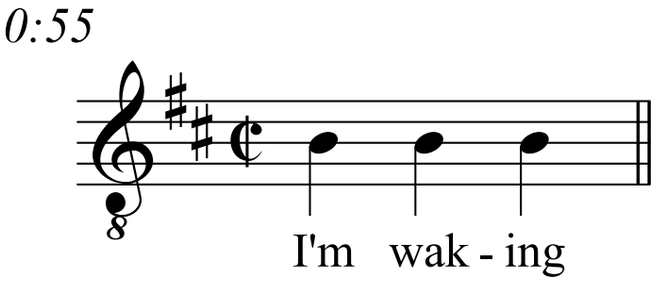
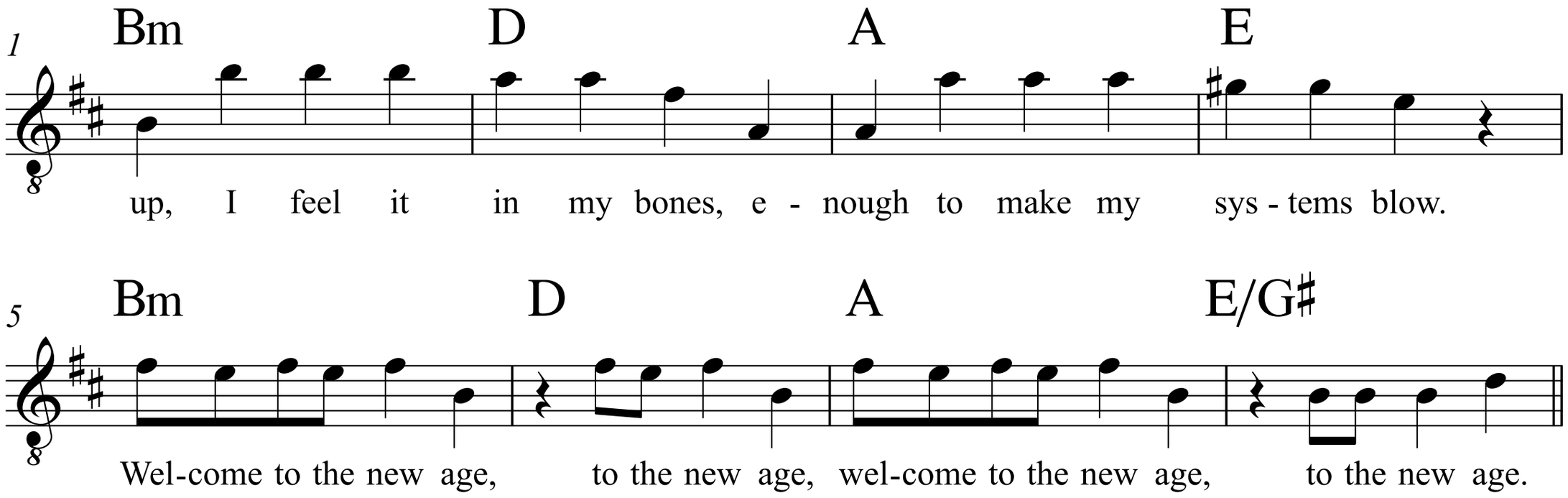


B = 1	i	♭III	♭VII	IV^{6}
D = 1	vi	I	V	II^{6}

Dorian–Lydian Complex

“Radioactive” (Imagine Dragons), Chorus





~~B = 1 i III VII IV6~~

D = 1 vi I V II6

The Three Modal Complexes

Aeolian-Ionian: A, B, C, D, E, F, G

6 7 1 2 3 4 5

Dorian-Lydian: A, B, C, D, E, F♯, G

6 7 1 2 3 ♯4 5

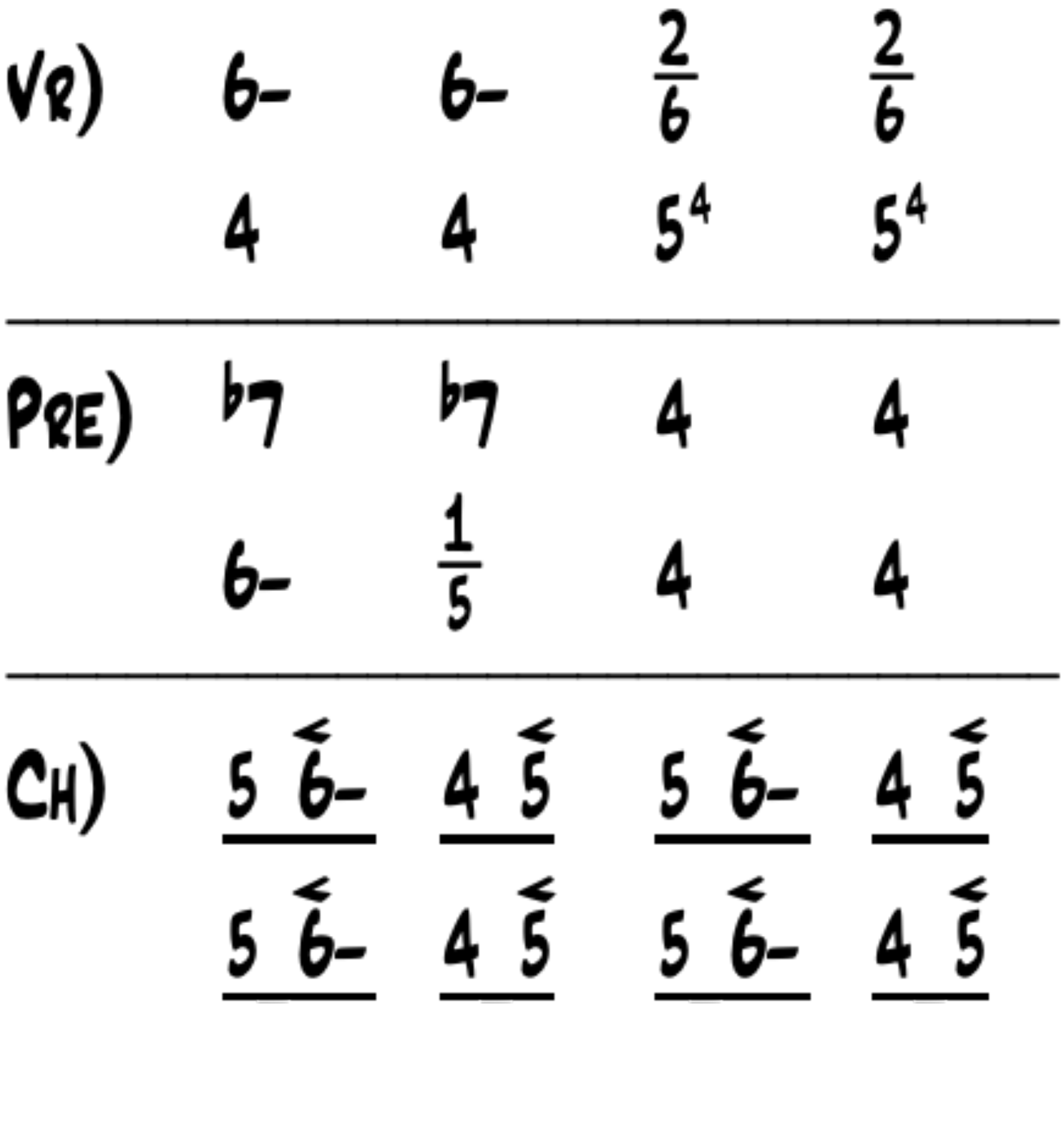
Phrygian-Mixolydian: A, B♭, C, D, E, F, G

6 ♭7 1 2 3 4 5

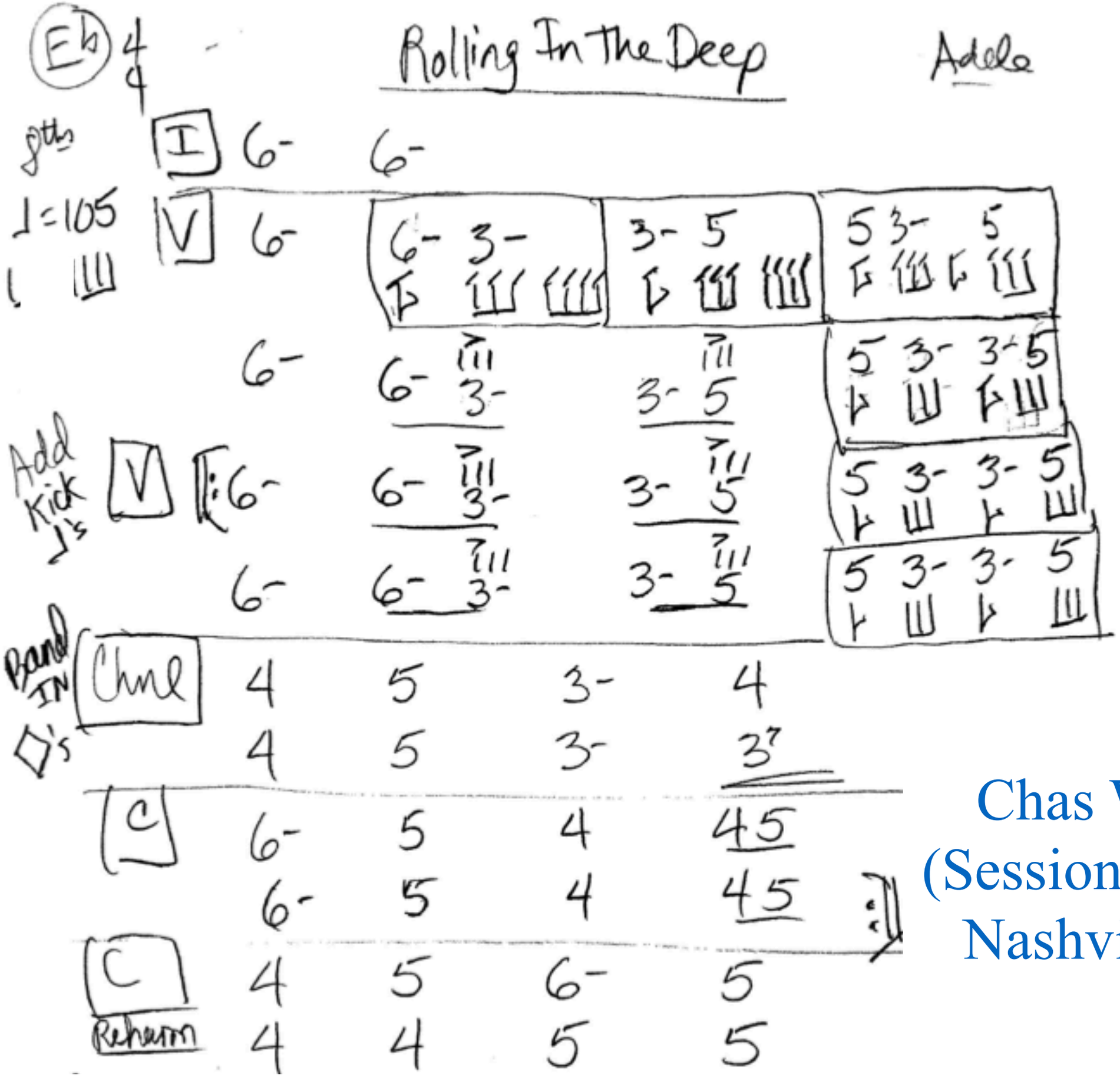
“Save Me” (Fleetwood Mac)

Vr)	Am	Am	D/A	D/A
	F	F	G	G
Pre)	B♭	B♭	F	F
	Am	C/G	F	F
Ch)	G Am	F G	G Am	F G
	G Am	F G	G Am	F G

Phrygian-Mixolydian Complex



"Save Me"
(Fleetwood Mac)



Chas Williams
(Session Musician)
Nashville Chart

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THANK YOU!

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