

RACHMANINOFF'S SUBDOMINANT
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The term "Rachmaninoff's subdominant" (*Rakhmaninovskaia subdominanta*) refers to a half-diminished sonority in minor, that includes scale degrees $^4-^b6-^{\#}7-^b3$. The concept was introduced by the Russian-Soviet theorist Viktor Berkov in a 1960 article devoted specially to this chord.

I contextualize this harmony in modern theories of harmonic function to explain the chord as functionally mixed. I then demonstrate the chord's large-scale role in two important kinds of late-Romantic structures: tonal pairing and plagalism. Showing how Rachmaninoff's chord reaches into deeper voice-leading levels, I also suggest (1) a quasi-Schenkerian plagal background for one of the examples and (2) a deep-middleground pre-dominant role of this chord in another.

The examples include three of Rachmaninoff's works: two songs ("Loneliness," op. 21 no. 6, and "Oh, Stay, My Love," op. 4, no. 1) and a semi-independent section from the opera *Aleko*.