

Music 232

Chapter 14, The II⁷ and VII⁷ Chords

These notes are a distillation of Kostka/Payne's Tonal Harmony. They are in no way a substitute for reading and working through the actual text book.

Overview

After the V⁷, the II⁷ and VII⁷ are the next most frequently used chords. In the major mode, the most commonly used 7th chord after the V⁷ is the ii⁷.

The general voice leading tendencies for these seventh chords are:

1. The chordal 7th resolves down by step
2. The approach to the 7th is varied, but the suspension and passing approach figures are the most common
3. Incomplete 7th chords must at least contain the root and 7th.
4. Do not double the chordal 7th (a tendency tone), and of course, do not double the leading tone (also a tendency tone).

II⁷

The II⁷ in major (ii minor seven) or minor ii half-diminished seven) is usually followed by dominant harmony (V, V⁷, vii^{o6}, cadential six-four). A first inversion II (II^{6/5}) often approaches a root position V⁽⁷⁾ because the bass line smoothly follows the scale degree pattern of 4-5.

Less commonly, the II⁷ in first inversion (II^{6/5}) substitutes for a IV/iv chord in a plagal cadence. Where the bass line follows the scale degree pattern of 4-1.

VII⁷

In Major–Half Diminished

The VII⁷ in major and minor functions as dominant harmony. It may lead directly to the tonic, or first move to a V⁷ chord and then to the tonic (or resolve deceptively).

The root of the chord resolves up and the seventh resolves down.

In Minor–Fully Diminished

Root position:

The diminished VII⁷ has two tritons: the diminished 5th tends to resolve out; the augmented 4th tends to resolve in. This will result in the doubling of the third of the tonic (which is acceptable).

But scale degree 2 (the 3rd of the chord) may resolve *down* instead, creating a complete tonic chord (except when it creates unequal fifths with the soprano).

Inversions:

A Vii^{o6/5} easily resolves to a i⁶

A vii^{o4/3} easily resolves to a i⁶

A vii^{o4/2} resolves to V⁽⁷⁾ or a i^{6/4}