Music 232
Chapter 14, The II\(^7\) and VII\(^7\) 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 V\(^7\), the II\(^7\) and VII\(^7\) are the next most frequently used chords. In the major mode, the most commonly used 7\(^{\text{th}}\) chord after the V\(^7\) is the ii\(^7\).

**The general voice leading tendencies for these seventh chords are:**

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

**II\(^7\)**

The II\(^7\) in major (ii minor seven) or minor ii half-diminished seven) is usually followed by dominant harmony (V, V\(^7\), viio\(^6\), 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 II\(^7\) 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.

**VII\(^7\)**

**In Major–Half Diminished**

The VII\(^7\) in major and minor functions as dominant harmony. It may lead directly to the tonic, or first move to a V\(^7\) 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 VII\(^7\) has two tritons: the diminished 5\(^{\text{th}}\) tends to resolve out; the augmented 4\(^{\text{th}}\) tends to resolve in. This will result in the doubling of the third of the tonic (which is acceptable).

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

**Inversions:**

A VII\(^6/5\) easily resolves to a i\(^6\)
A vii\(^4/3\) easily resolves to a i\(^6\)
A vii\(^4/2\) resolves to V\(^7\) or a i\(^6/4\)