

Music 232

Chapter 15, Other Seventh 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

The IV^7 , VI^7 , I^7 and III^7 chords follow the same voice leading tendencies as the more frequently-used seventh chords.

IV^7

The IV^7 can be a major seventh chord (in major) and minor seventh chord (in minor) and rarely a major-minor seventh chord in the melodic minor mode.

Like its triad version, the IV^7 usually goes to V or vii^{o6} , and may first pass through $ii^{(7)}$ or $I/i^{6/4}$

VI^7

The VI^7 can be a minor seventh chord (in major), a major seventh chord (in minor) and rarely a $\#vi^{o7}$ half-diminished seventh in melodic minor when the next bass note is the leading tone. Most often it goes to ii (circle of fifths progression), but it can go directly to $V^{(7)}$, where the $V^{(7)}$ chord will be in first inversion (bass line: 5-6).

I^7

The I^7 can be a major seventh (in major) and a minor seventh (in minor). The chordal seventh behaves like a descending passing tone: approached from above by scale degree 1 (in a tonic triad) and resolving to scale degree 6 (usually in a vi/VI , IV/iv or ii/ii^9 triad or seventh chord).

Deciding if the chordal seventh is an actual chord tone or just a non chord tone can depend on its relative duration or its contrapuntal behavior (i.e. if it is prepared and resolved like a chordal seventh or if rather, it behaves like a neighbor tone, for example).

III^7

Like its triad counterpart, the iii^7 or III^{M7} will easily go to the submediant ($vi^{(7)}/VI^{(M7)}$), but can also go to the subdominant ($IV^{(M7)}/iv^{(7)}$).

Circle of Fifths Sequence

Seventh chords easily fit into the previously mentioned circle of fifths sequence. The minor key version would contain a $iv^7-VII^7-III^{M7}-VI^{M7}-ii^{o7}-V^7-i$ progression.

In four parts:

- If the seventh chords are in root position, complete chords will alternate with incomplete (no 5th) chords
- If the sevenths chords are inverted, six-five chords will alternate with four-two chords, or four-three chords will alternate with root positions chords

In three parts:

- The chords will usually be in root position

Notice that in these progressions, the bass line will inevitably have an unresolved leap of either an augmented 4th or a diminished 5th (between vi^{o7} and IV^{M7} in major and VI^{M7} and ii^{o7} in minor). This is acceptable because the powerful and rhetorical drive of the sequence overpowers the apparent voice leading problem of the leap.