

Music 232

The V⁷ (Dominant) Chord

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

- Root Position, 4-parts
- 3-parts
- Other Resolutions
- Inversions and Approaches

The V⁷ chord is always a Mm7th chord when functioning as a dominant harmony.

The basic voice leading for all inversions of the chord are:

- The 7th (scale degree 4) resolves down by step
- The 3rd (leading tone) resolves up by step

I. Root Position

- A. The 7th (scale degree 4) resolves down by step and the 3rd (leading tone) resolves up by step
- B. Another way to look at it is how the tritone resolves:
 1. the +4 resolves out
 2. the °5 resolves in
- C. Following this procedure for resolving complete root position V⁷ chords will yield an incomplete tonic triad.
- D. To resolve a root position V⁷ chord to a complete tonic triad:
 1. use an incomplete V⁷ chord by omitting the 5th (or less commonly, the 3rd) and doubling the root
 2. use a complete V⁷ chord, but put the leading tone (3rd of the chord) in an inner voice and frustrate (resolve down) its resolution by taking it down to the 5th of the tonic triad

II. Three-Parts

In three parts, either the 5th or possibly 3rd of the V⁷ chord will be omitted (but never the root or 7th of course)

III. Other Resolutions

- A. The V⁷ can resolve to the vi/VI deceptively, just as the V chord does
 1. the leading tone resolves up by step and the other voices move down to the nearest chord tone of the submediant
 2. the exception is when the leading tone is in an inner voice, where it may resolve down according to the practice of the frustrated leading tone
 3. in four-parts, the V⁷ chord should be complete and the bass note will be the only one that moves deceptively, as the other voices will resolve in their usual manner

IV. Inversions of the V⁷ and their resolutions

The same basic voice leading applies to resolutions of inverted V⁷ chords:

- The 7th (scale degree 4) resolves down by step
- The 3rd (leading tone) resolves up by step

A. The V^{6/5}

1. often used in a relatively weak position of a phrase (or in an IAC)
2. usually resolves to a root position tonic triad

B. The V^{4/3}

1. often used like the V^{6/4} as a passing chord between a root position and first inversion tonic triad
2. will be in the middle of a 1-2-3 or 3-2-1 bass line
3. in such cases, the 7th of the chord may resolve UP to the 5th of the tonic chord, creating parallel 10ths with the bass—a sonority that overrides the usual need for the 7th to resolve down

C. The V^{4/2}

1. Because of the usual downward resolution of the 7th, the V^{4/2} will usually resolve to a first inversion tonic chord

V. Approaching the 7th

Approaches to the 7th can be thought of in the same way that dissonances in counterpoint are prepared:

Approached by	Classification (note that the 7 th always resolves down)
Same tone	Suspension figure
Step above	Passing tone figure
Step below	Neighbor tone figure
None of the above (leap)	Appoggiatura figure (historically the least popular, but usually approached by an ascending leap)

Questions to Consider

What is the most typical voice leading feature of the V⁷ chord?

When the V⁷ resolves to an incomplete tonic chord, what is the usual voicing of the tonic chord?

What tone is usually omitted in an incomplete V⁷ chord?

Define frustrated leading tone

What voice leading "rule" can be broken by a second inversion V⁷ chord?

What inversion of the tonic chord follows a third inversion V⁷ chord?

List the four different figures used to describe the approach to the 7th of a V⁷ chord