

Music 232

Other 7th 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: supertonic and leading tone chords

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 7th chord after the V^7 is the ii^7 .

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).

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 , 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 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 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 i^6

A $vii^{o4/3}$ easily resolves to a i^6

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

Other 7th Chords: Overview

The IV⁷, VI⁷, I⁷ and III⁷ chords follow the same voice leading tendencies as the more frequently-used seventh chords.

IV⁷

The IV⁷ 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 IV⁷ usually goes to V or vii^{o6}, and may first pass through ii⁽⁷⁾ or I/i^{6/4}

VI⁷

The VI⁷ 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).

I⁷

The I⁷ 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^o 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).

III⁷

Like its triad counterpart, the iii⁷ 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 iv⁷-VII⁷-III^{M7}-VI^{M7}-ii^{o7}-V⁷-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 vii^{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.

Questions to Consider

What are the typical voicing and voice leading procedures for all 7th chords?

What unusual doubling might result from the resolution of a $\text{vii}^{\circ}7$ chord?

What kind of doubling pattern usually occurs with root position 7th chords in a circle of 5ths sequence?