

Secondary dominants

Secondary dominants are based on the notion of **tonicization**. Tonicization is that process where a chord **other** than tonic is given the emphasis of a **tonic** function, usually through the use of a dominant chord (or dominant seventh) of that chord coming before the chord in question. That dominant or dominant seventh is called a **secondary dominant**. In the case of secondary dominants, the temporary tonicization of a chord other than tonic usually lasts for just a few beats (thus, it's too short to be a real **modulation**, which we'll study later in the semester).

Secondary dominants thus emphasize one chord by preceding it with **its own** dominant triad or dominant seventh chord. The term is "secondary" because the "primary" dominant is simply V^7 in the key. Secondary dominants are notated like this: V^7/V ; this chord would be called "five seven of five."

1. Any diatonic **major or minor triad** may be preceded by its secondary dominant. Notice that this **excludes** diminished or augmented triads; thus there's no such thing as V/ii° , nor V/vii° . This makes sense: if a secondary dominant and its chord of resolution create a temporary tonicization, then what's tonicized has to be major or minor--there's no such thing as the temporary key of "B diminished."
 2. For now, the possibilities are V/x and V^7/x and their inversions. Just as V^4_2 resolves to I^6 (or i^6 in minor), so does V^4_2/x resolve to x^6 . In a couple of weeks you'll find out more about other kinds of secondary functions.
 3. **Voice leading**: secondary dominants resolve **just like** primary dominants--just like $V^7 \rightarrow I$ (or i). The **third** of the chord goes **up** (like $ti \rightarrow do$), and the **seventh** of the chord goes **down** (like $fa \rightarrow mi$). Any of the three $V^7 \rightarrow I$ configurations (complete to complete, complete to incomplete, and incomplete to complete) is possible. **Note carefully** that notes with added **sharps** (those notes which are altered to be higher than their normal diatonic spelling) usually resolve **up**, while notes with added **flats** (those notes which are altered to be lower than their normal diatonic spelling) usually resolve **down**.
 4. Note that V/V or V^7/V can progress to I^6_4 (or i^6_4) before moving on to its V , thus:
 $V^7/V \rightarrow I^6_4 \rightarrow V^{(7)} \rightarrow I$.
 5. Secondary dominants thus have a **chromatically altered note** (or sometimes two; the only secondary dominants which **don't** have any chromatically altered notes are V^7/III and V/VI in minor). Note that V/IV in major is identical to the tonic chord, thus composers almost always add the seventh, creating V^7/IV .
- The chromatically altered note usually functions like a temporary or secondary **leading tone**. Just like the "regular" $\hat{7}$ intensifies the resolution to $\hat{1}$, this secondary leading tone intensifies motion to the temporary tonic. By the way, don't confuse chromatic nonchord tones with chromatically altered notes that are part of a secondary dominant.
6. So, this means that you follow this procedure: 1) look for chromatically altered notes; 2) see if they're part of a major triad or major-minor seventh; then 3) check to see that the chord in question resolves to its "tonic" [**root movement** (as distinct from bass line movement) up a P4 or down a P5].

G: — — — —

Writing them. Given F: $V^6_{/ii}$, think ii is G. A perfect fifth above G is D. A dominant seventh chord built on D (or, V^7 of g) is D F# A C. $\frac{6}{5}$ means that the third--the F#--should be in the bass.

Hearing them. 1) determine where you hear major-minor seventh chords; 2) determine whether they're diatonic or chromatic; 3) after determining the chromatic chords, listen to where they resolve; 4) listen carefully to the bass motion to determine the inversion. An example:

you hear ??→ii. Identify the ii chord, then listen to how it was approached in the bass. Say the bass moved up a half step: this means that the secondary dominant was $V^6_{/ii}$.

KNOW the chromatically altered notes:

Think here that # means “raised a half-step from the normal diatonic scale degree” and that b means “lowered a half-step from the normal diatonic scale degree.”

Major: $V^7/V = \#4$, $V^7/IV = b7$, $V^7/ii = \#1$, $V^7/vi = \#5$, $V^7/iii = \#2$ and $\#4$.

Minor: (here, $\#6$ means raised to be a half-step higher than the 6 indicated by the key signature, like an F# in the key of a minor. Also, $b7$ here represents the subtonic rather than the leading tone, like a G \flat in the key of a minor. There would be no accidental for $b7$ in this case.)

$V^7/V = \#4$ and $\#6$, $V^7/iv = \#3$ and $b7$, $V^7/vi = b2$ and $b7$, $V^7/III = b7$, $V^7/bVII = \#6$.

The moral of the story: you have to fuss more in minor.

CM:

am:

$\#1$ $\#4$ $b7$ $\#4$ $\#5$ $\#6$ $b2$ $\#6$ $\#3$ ($b7$)
 $\#2$ ($b7$) $\#4$ ($b7$)

Know the chord roots: $V^7/V = 2$, V^7/IV (or iv) = 1 , $V^7/ii = 6$, V^7/vi (or VI) = 3 ,
 V^7/iii (or III) = 7 , $V^7/bVII = 4$.

Here's a quick way to nail 'em down: a secondary dominant of some chord is built on the note immediately before it in the circle of fifths:

1 - 4 7 3 - 6 2 5 1
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## Deceptively- and irregularly-resolving secondary dominants; also consecutive secondary dominants

### Deceptively-resolving:

They will almost always occur in **root position**, and they resolve by root movement **up a step**, usually to a diatonic chord. When part-writing, double the **third** of the chord of resolution. This is just like a deceptive cadence, moving  $V^7 \rightarrow vi$  (or VI) in some temporary key.

G:  $V^7$  vi    G:  $V^7/V$  iii    e:  $V^7/VI$  iv    B $\flat$ :  $V^7/V$  iii

### Irregularly-resolving:

Fairly uncommon, these include root movement by **third** or **down a second**, along with other possibilities.

An approximate hierarchy of voice-leading principles **not** to break:

1. No parallel fifths or octaves.
2. 7th resolves down (unless smooth, stepwise voice leading overrides it).

In general, use smooth, stepwise motion. You can use incomplete Mm7ths, if needed. **Keep common tones** whenever possible.

**Consecutive secondary dominants:** generally by circle of fifths, as shown below.

(Asterisks denote incomplete triads or 7th chords)

C: I  $V^7/vi$  vi  $V^7/ii$  ii  $V^7/IV$  V  $V^7$  I I  $V^7/vi$   $V^7/ii$   $V^7/IV$   $V^7$  I

## Secondary $\circ 7$ chords (also $\emptyset 7$ and $\circ 6$ )

Note: some theorists use the label  $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}/x$  (or whatever) for these chords; we will eliminate the "vii" and simply use the quality and inversion labels:  $\circ 7/x$ .

Secondary  $\circ 7$  chords (and also  $\emptyset 7$  and  $\circ 6$ ) function just like secondary dominants, only the secondary function (and thus the tonicization of the diatonic chord) is now created through the fully-diminished sound of the  $\circ 7$  chord (or half-diminished, or diminished triad in first inversion).

1. Any diatonic **major or minor** triad may be preceded by its secondary  $\circ 7$  (or sometimes  $\emptyset 7$  or  $\circ 6$ ). Notice that this **excludes** diminished or augmented triads; thus there's no such thing as  $\circ 7/\text{ii}^{\circ}$  nor  $\circ 7/\text{vii}^{\circ}$ , etc. This is just like it was with secondary dominants. **Note carefully** that it's possible to have a chord with **both a sharp and a flat** in it (for example,  $\text{C}\sharp \text{ E G B}\flat$ ).
2. The possibilities are thus  $\circ 7/x$  and its inversions, as well as  $\emptyset 7/x$  and its inversions. The  $\emptyset 7/x$  is most often used to embellish the dominant in a major key, thus:  $\emptyset 7/\text{V}$ . The  $\circ 6/x$  (a secondary diminished triad) is also possible--generally in just this inversion.
3.  $\circ 7/x$  generally resolves to  $x$ ;  $\circ 6_5/x$  generally resolves to  $x$  (occasionally to  $x^6$ );  $\circ 4_3/x$  generally resolves to  $x^6$ ;  $\circ 2_2/x$  (rarely used but certainly possible) generally resolves to  $x^6_4$ . The same resolution tendencies apply for  $\emptyset 7/x$ .  $\circ 6/x$  generally resolves to  $x$ , or sometimes to  $x^6$ . By the way: double the **bass note** in the  $\circ 6/x$ .
4. **Voice leading:** the easiest thing to remember is that the **root** resolves **up**, and the other notes all resolve **down**. Be careful to avoid parallel fifths in the progression  $\emptyset 7/x \rightarrow x$ . Composers sometimes resolve the **third** of the  $\circ 7/x$  **up**, thus creating a doubled third in  $x$ . This is O.K. to do, except that doubling the third of the  $\text{V}$  chord means doubling the leading tone in the key--avoid this. **Note carefully** that notes with added **sharps** (those notes which are altered to be higher than their normal diatonic spelling) usually resolve **up**, while notes with added **flats** (those notes which are altered to be lower than their normal diatonic spelling) generally resolve **down**.
5. Note that  $\circ 7/\text{V}$  (or  $\emptyset 7/\text{V}$ , or  $\circ 6/\text{V}$ ) can progress to  $\text{I}^6_4$  (or  $\text{i}^6_4$ ) before moving on to its  $\text{V}$ , thus:  $\circ 7/\text{V} \rightarrow \text{I}^6_4 \rightarrow \text{V}^{(7)} \rightarrow \text{I}$ .
6. Secondary  $\circ 7$  chords (also  $\emptyset 7$  and  $\circ 6$ ) thus have at least one **chromatically altered** note (sometimes more). The chromatically altered note usually functions like a temporary or secondary leading tone. Just like the "regular"  $\hat{7}$  intensifies the resolution to  $\hat{1}$ , this secondary leading tone intensifies motion to the temporary tonic.
7. Sooo, this means that you follow this procedure: 1) look for chromatically altered notes; 2) determine whether they're part of a  $\circ 7$  (or  $\emptyset 7$  or  $\circ 6$ ) chord (remember that it may be a "plain old secondary dominant"-- $\text{V}^7/x$ ), then check to see that it resolves to its "tonic" [in this case, **root movement** (as distinct from bass line movement) up a half step].

**Spelling and writing them:** given F:  $^{\circ}7/ii$ , think: 1) the root of ii is G. 2) Now write  $^{\circ}7/ii$  on the note a half-step below G--it's built on F $\sharp$  (F $\sharp$  is the **leading tone** to G). 3) Write a  $^{\circ}7$  chord built on F $\sharp$  (remember that a  $^{\circ}7$  chord is stacked minor thirds): F $\sharp$  A C E $\flat$  is the chord.

Another example: D:  $\emptyset^{\flat}_5/V$ . 1) V is A. 2)  $\emptyset^{\flat}_7/V$  would be written on the note a half-step below A: it's built on G $\sharp$  (G $\sharp$  is the **leading tone** to A). 3) Write a  $\emptyset^{\flat}_7$  chord built on G $\sharp$ : G $\sharp$  B D F $\sharp$  is the root-position chord. 4) Since it's  $\emptyset^{\flat}_5/V$ , the B would be in the bass.

**So remember:** they're built on the note a half-step below what they're "of."

**Hearing them:** By now, you're capable of hearing where chromatic chords occur. So, follow these steps: 1) determine where you hear chromatic chords; 2) determine whether they're major-minor (i.e. "plain old secondary dominants") or some other quality--especially fully- or half-diminished; 3) listen to where they resolve; 4) listen carefully to the bass motion to determine the inversion.

For example: you hear ??  $\rightarrow$  ii. Identify the ii chord, then go back and determine that the secondary chord was fully diminished (i.e. it's  $^{\circ}7/ii$  or some inversion thereof). Listen for the bass motion to determine the correct inversion. **Memorize the following to help you:**

$^{\circ}7/x$ : bass resolves **up a half step** (note the similarity to  $V^{\flat}_5/x$ ).

$^{\circ}6_5/x$ : bass resolves **down a whole step** (similar to  $V^{\flat}_3/x$ ).

$^{\circ}4_3/x$ : bass resolves **down a half step** if the chord of resolution is **major**; **down a whole step** if the chord of resolution is **minor** (note that this resolution is to a first-inversion chord; also note that this is identical to  $V^{\flat}_2/x$ ).

$^{\circ}4_2/x$ : **rare**; bass resolves **down a half step**, and the resolution is to a **second inversion** ( $\frac{6}{4}$ ) chord.

Some examples:

D:  $^{\circ}7/V$  V    F:  $^{\circ}6_5/ii$  ii    f $\sharp$ :  $^{\circ}4_3/V$  V $^6$     E $\flat$ :  $\emptyset^{\flat}_7/V$  V    d:  $^{\circ}6/V$  V

↑  
note the  
doubling

Notice how the **root** moves **up**, other voices **down** in all  $^{\circ}7/x$  and  $\emptyset^{\flat}_7/x$ .  $^{\circ}6/x$  is an exception.