

UNIT 10: THE LEADING TONE SEVENTH CHORDS

Some theorists contend that there is a notable commonality between the dominant seventh chord and the leading tone triad. These chords share three properties: a) they have three notes in common, b) each contains a Dim. 5th, and c) each resolves most frequently to a I. Therefore, whenever writers discuss the strength of the dominant-tonic relationship, they are probably grouping together all chords built on V or vii as "dominant harmony."

The quality of the diatonic vii⁷ is different in a major key than in a minor key. In C Major, the vii⁷ is spelled B-D-F-A. It consists of a diminished triad and a minor seventh and is called a HALF DIMINISHED SEVENTH CHORD. The symbol for half-diminished used here is a circle with a line drawn through it (ø). In C minor, the vii⁷ is spelled B^b-D-F-A^b. It consists of a diminished triad and a diminished seventh, and is called a FULLY DIMINISHED SEVENTH CHORD. A circle (o) represents fully diminished.

Example 10.1

C Maj. vii⁷ C min. vii⁷

Each type of vii⁷ is not restricted to the mode in which it is diatonic. Instead, usage is fairly free and the tones are altered with accidentals as needed. Therefore, the vii⁷ is found in both major and minor keys.

Both leading tone seventh chords are considered unstable because they contain dissonant intervals which seek resolution. The fully diminished seventh chord has two diminished fifths which ordinarily contract to a third in resolution. The half diminished seventh chord has one diminished fifth which also resolves to a third.

Example 10.2

Fully Diminished 7th

Half Diminished 7th

Dim. 5 to 3rd or Aug. 4 to 6th.

The figured bass designating root position and inversions is the same as the dominant seventh chord.

Example 10.3

Example 10.3 shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in C minor and contains four chords: C min., $vii^{\circ 7}$, $vii^{\circ 6}_5$, and $vii^{\circ 4}_3$. The bottom staff is in C major and contains four chords: C Maj., $vii^{\# 7}$, $vii^{\# 6}_5$, and $vii^{\# 4}_3$. Each chord is represented by a treble clef staff with notes and a label below it.

In a four part setting the root of the vii^7 moves up by step to a I and the other voices move by step.

Example 10.4

Example 10.4 shows a four-part setting of chords in C minor and C major. The notation is spread across two staves (treble and bass clefs) and four measures. The chords are: C min., $vii^{\circ 7}$, $vii^{\circ 6}_5$, C Maj., $vii^{\# 4}_2$, and $vii^{\# 7}$. The labels below the notation are: C min. $vii^{\circ 7}$ i, $vii^{\circ 6}_5$ i⁶, C Maj. $vii^{\# 4}_2$ I⁶, $vii^{\# 7}$ I.

Drill 10.1

Write and resolve in four part harmony the fully diminished seventh and the half diminished seventh chords in the keys of D minor, Eb Major, F minor, F# minor, G Major, A Major, Bb Major. Check that you have resolved the voices as smoothly as possible.

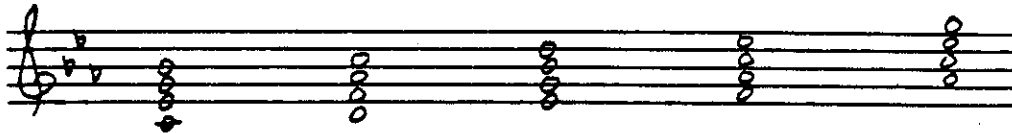
UNIT 11: THE NONDOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD

Assuming that dominant harmony includes V and vii, then the nondominant chords are I, ii, iii, IV, and vi. When adding the diatonic seventh factor to these triads, the quality is determined in the same way as other seventh chords. That is, the quality of triad and the quality of seventh equals the quality of seventh chord.

Example 11.1



C Major	I ⁷	ii ⁷	iii ⁷	IV ⁷	vi ⁷
	MM ⁷	mm ⁷	mm ⁷	MM ⁷	mm ⁷
	Maj. Triad	Min. T	Min. T	Maj. T	Min. T
	Min. 7	Min. 7	Min. 7	Maj. 7	Min. 7



C minor	i ⁷	ii ^{°7}	III ⁷	iv ⁷	VI ⁷
	mm ⁷	Dm. 7	MM ⁷	mm ⁷	MM ⁷
	Min. T	Dim. T	Maj. T	Min. T	Maj. T
	Min. 7	Min. 7	Maj. 7	Min. 7	Maj. 7

The MM⁷ is usually abbreviated to M⁷ and verbalized as a Major 7th chord and the mm⁷ is abbreviated to m⁷ and verbalized as a minor 7th chord. These two seventh chord qualities are strongly dissimilar from the V⁷ and vii^{°7} of the dominant family. To appreciate the differences, play the five different seventh chords discussed thus far, and listen carefully to each unique sound.

Example 11.2



Mm⁷ DD⁷ Dm⁷ M(M)⁷ m(m)⁷

The MM⁷ and the mm⁷ chords have strong coloristic value rather than the tendency to move elsewhere into a resolution chord. Consequently they were an indispensable ingredient in late romantic and impressionistic music, and remain today a favorite device of jazz musicians.

When writing seventh chords in four part harmony, resolve the chordal seventh down by step. Some common resolutions of the nondominant seventh chords are:

I^7 to IV IV^7 to V₇ ii^7 to V
 vi^7 to ii iii^7 to vi

Notice that, with the exception of IV^7 , the roots of the chords move up the interval of a 4th. The IV^7 , however, moves up by step to a V. These guidelines refer to root movement only, that is, the choice of Roman numerals. Inversions do not alter the Roman numeral.

Example 11.3

C Major ii^7 V ii^6_5 V
 Roots

Drill 11.1

Resolve the nondominant seventh chords. Write the Roman numerals and figured bass beneath each chord.

G Major Bb Major

Drill 11.2

Write an eight measure progression using dominant and nondominant seventh chords.

Drill 11.3

Write a short piece for piano or for a solo instrument and piano which contains a variety of dominant and nondominant seventh chords.