Chromatic Harmony

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www.stephengoss.net

Overview

- Common practice harmony and the ii V I paradigm
- The Phrygian cadence and chords of the augmented 6th
- The Neapolitan 6th
- Secondary dominants

1 - Common practice harmony and the ii V I paradigm

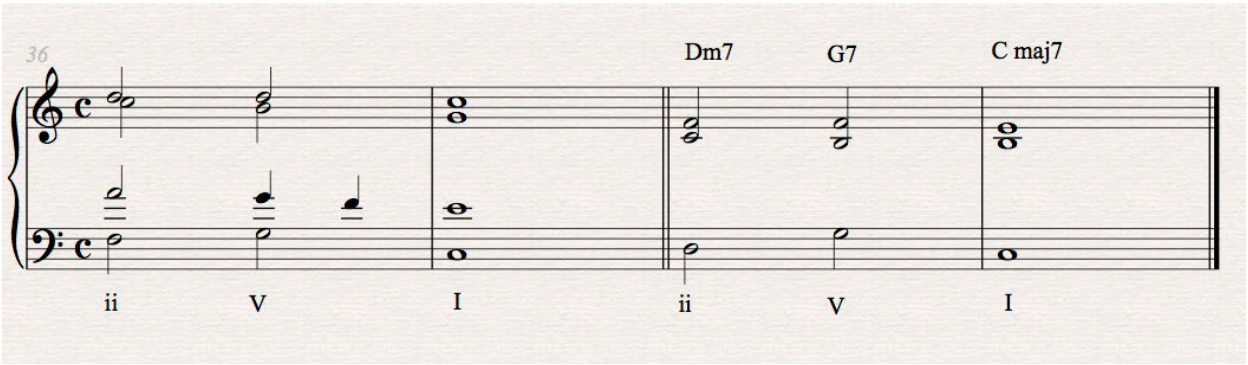
The basics

Three kinds of chords

- Tonic I or vi
- Dominant V or vii
- Pre-dominant ii or IV

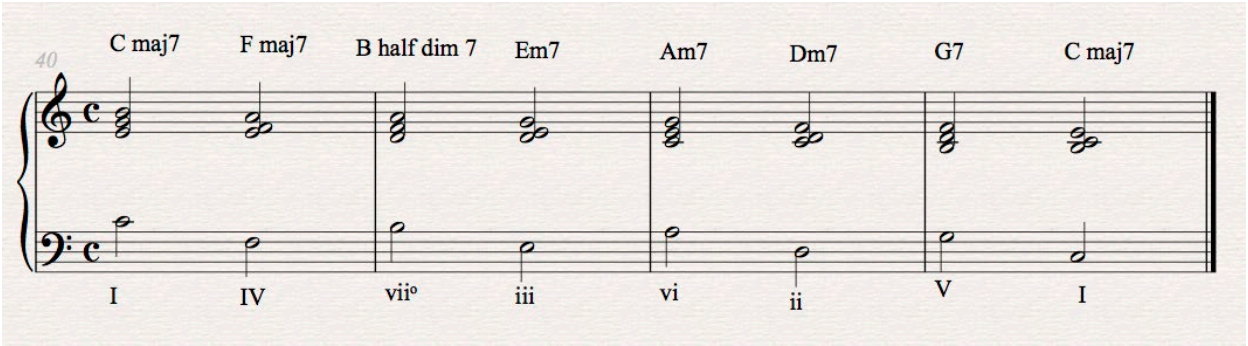
ii – V – I progression

Pre-dominant – Dominant – Tonic

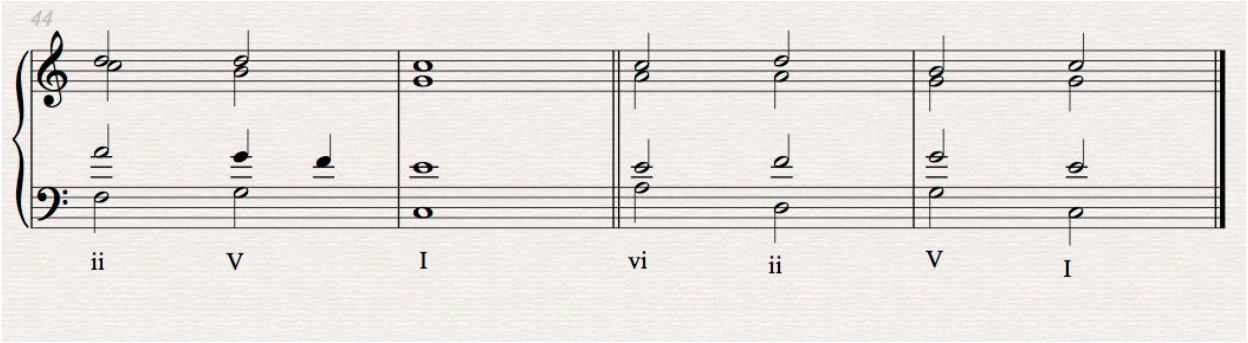


The diatonic cycle

I – IV – vii° – iii – vi – ii – V - I



ii – V – I and vi – ii – V - I



The expressive qualities of chromatic chords

- Affekt and the Baroque
- Tension and release
- Harmony as a tool for expression

2 - The Phrygian Cadence and Chords of the Augmented 6th

Pre-dominant function in a minor key

Derived from chord iv in first inversion

- The Italian 6^{th}
- The German 6^{th}

Derived from chord ii in second inversion

- The French 6^{th}

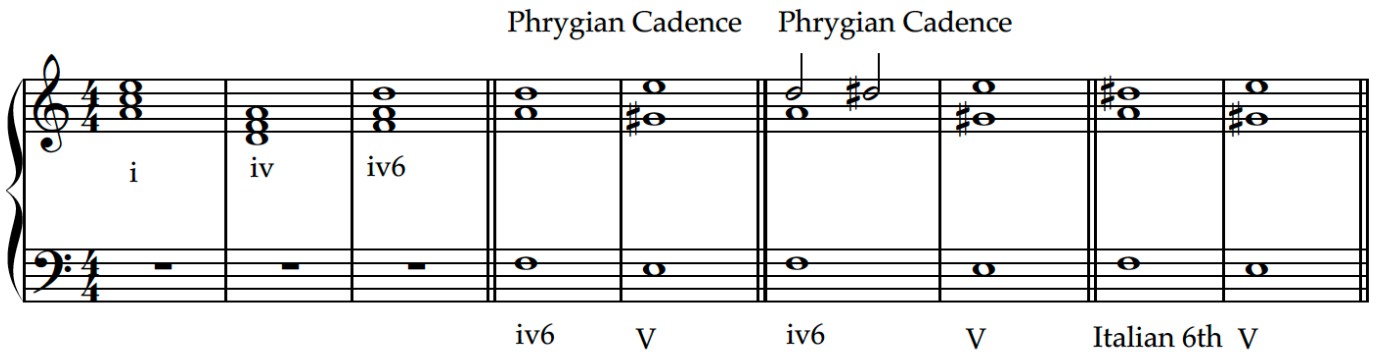
Chords of the Augmented 6^{th} have a bass note that is one half-step above the dominant.

There is an interval of an augmented 6^{th} between the bass note and the chromatic note.

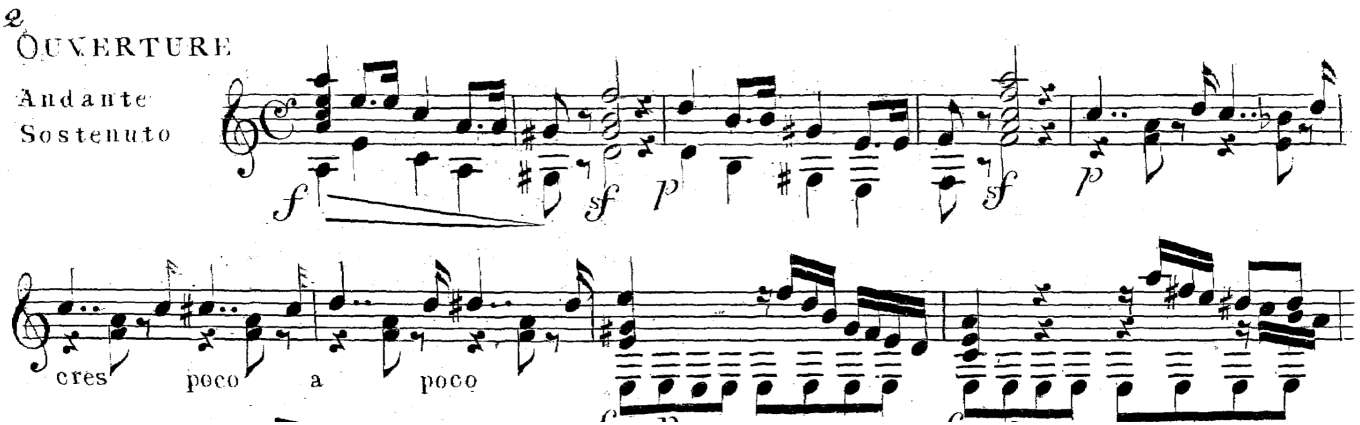
2 - The Phrygian Cadence and Chords of the Augmented 6th

Derived from chord iv in first inversion

- The Italian 6th



Giuliani Grand Overture example

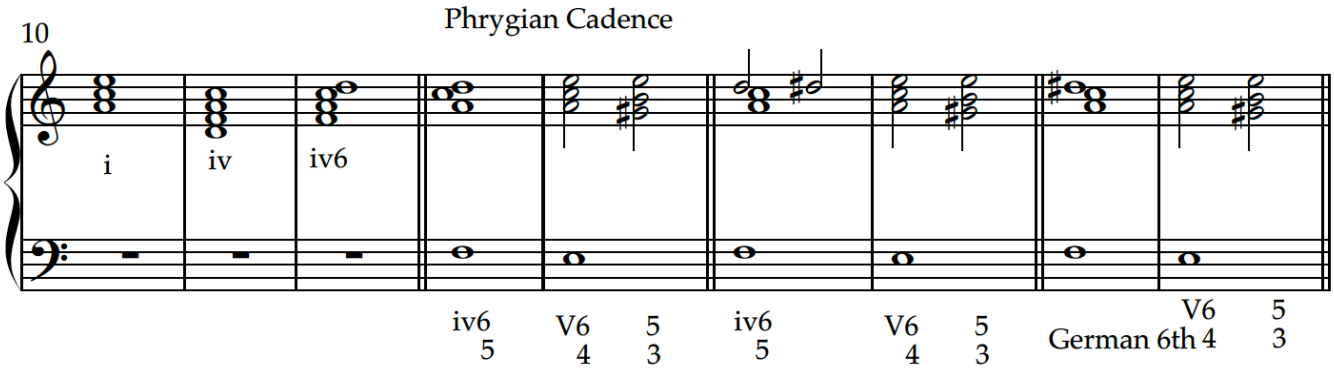


VI VI+ iv It 6^{th} V

2 - The Phrygian Cadence and Chords of the Augmented 6th

Derived from chord iv in first inversion

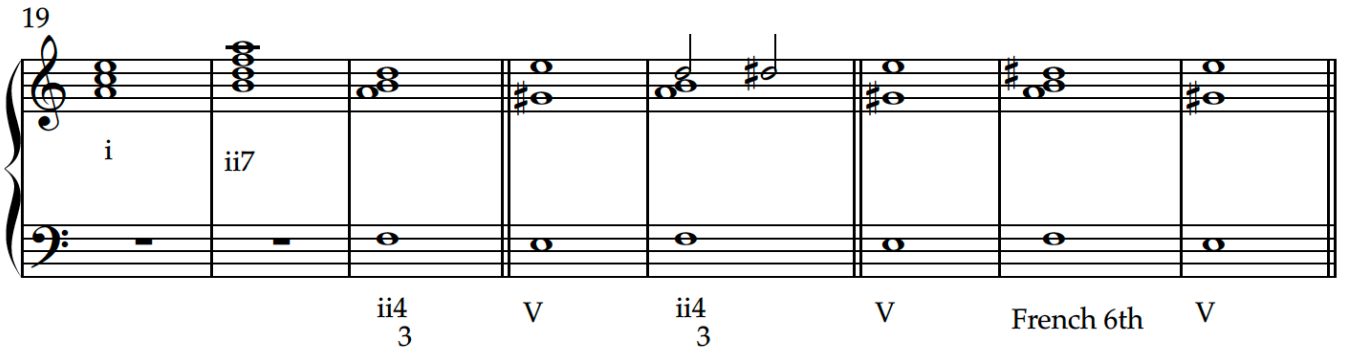
- The German 6th



2 - The Phrygian Cadence and Chords of the Augmented 6th

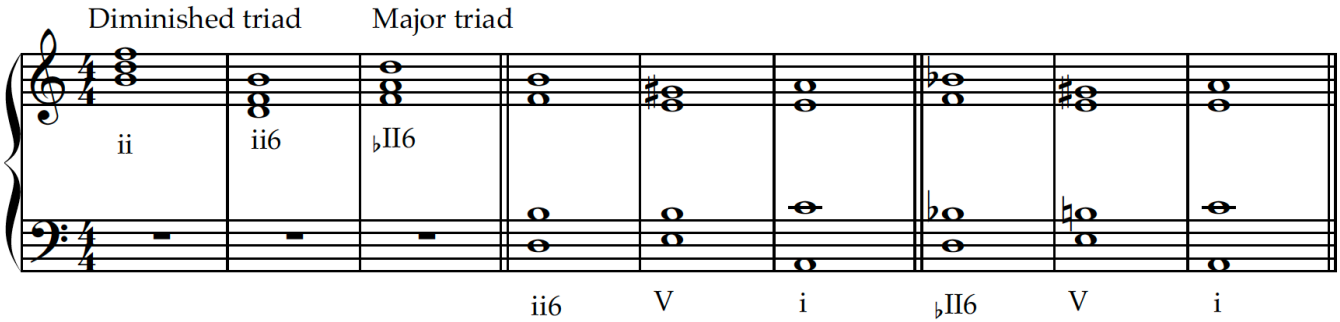
Derived from chord ii in second inversion

- The French 6th



3 - The Neapolitan 6th

- Pre-dominant function in a minor key
- An alternative major version of chord ii



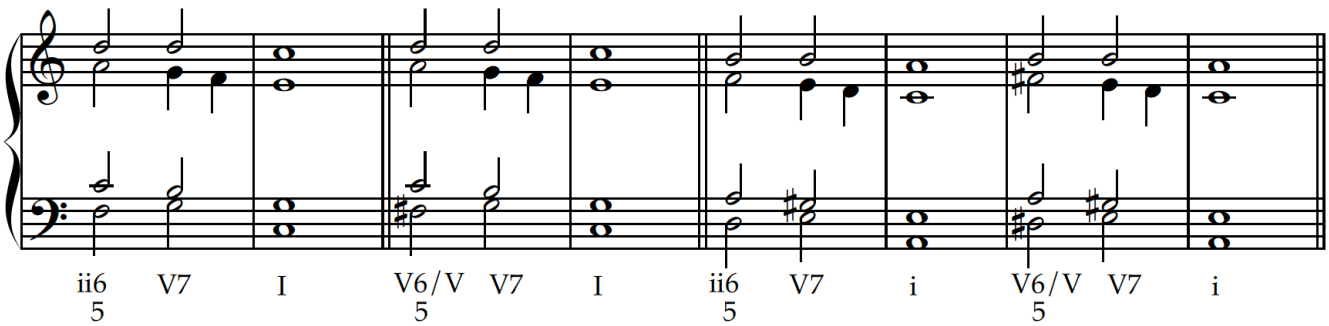
4 – Secondary Dominants

- Pre-dominant function in major or minor key
- Dominant of the dominant – V of V

d = ii, G = V, C = I

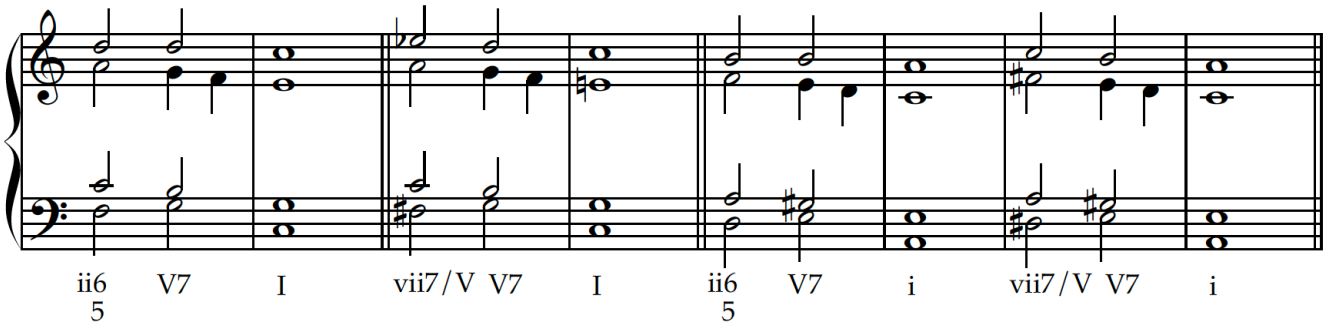
becomes

D = V of V, G = V, C = I



4 – Secondary Dominants

- Diminished 7th chords as alternative dominants

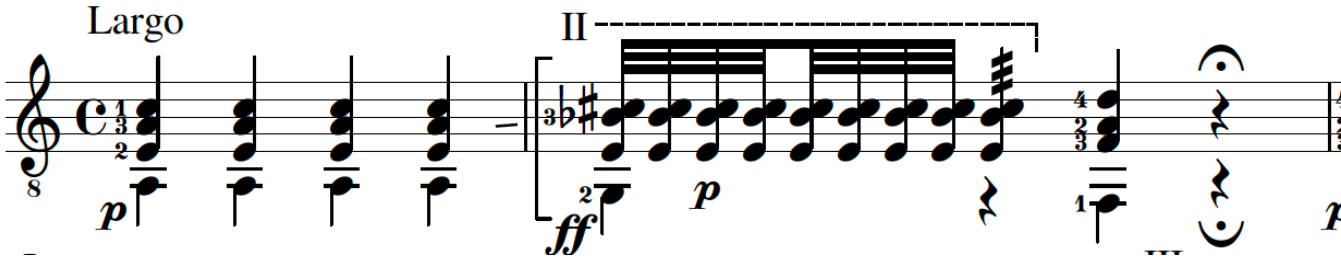


4 – Secondary Dominants

Any chord can be decorated by its dominant

V/V or vii7/V

Legnani Op 19



i Vii7 / iv iv6

4b – Borrowed Chords

- All the interesting chromatic chords seem to be in the minor keys
- So composers borrowed chords from the minor to make their major key pieces more chromatic
- For example, your piece is in C major, but you can borrow chords from C minor.

Examples

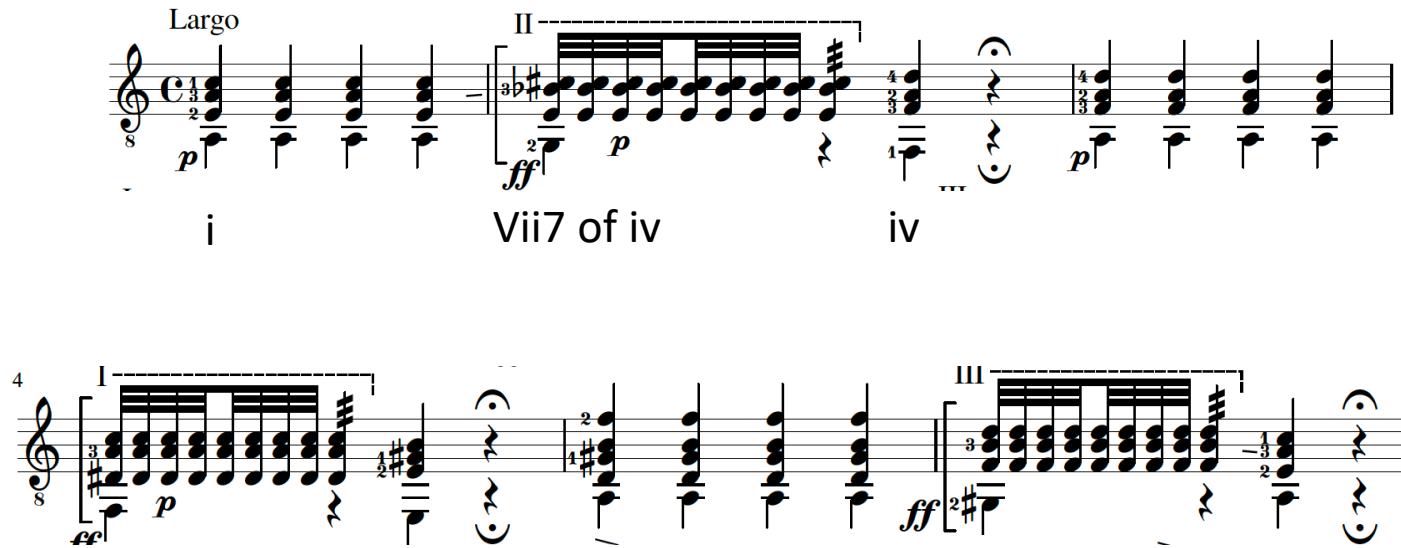
Fantasia

Brillante e Facile

Op. 19

Eingerichtet von Stefan Apke

Luigi Legnani (1790 – 1877)



Sor Op 35 No 22 B minor

Questions and further examples