



# SEVENTH CHORDS

Chapter 8

# LESS COMMON SEVENTH CHORDS

- **Augmented triad with major seventh**
- **Augmented triad with minor seventh**
- **Chords such as these are generally reserved for jazz and pop idioms**

# SEVENTH CHORDS

- **Seventh chords are named by the quality of the triad plus the quality of the seventh when measured from the root.**
  - **A major-major seventh chord (MM7) has a major triad and a major 7<sup>th</sup> (CEGB). This is also known as a major 7<sup>th</sup>.**
  - **A minor-minor seventh chord (mm7) has a minor triad and a minor 7<sup>th</sup> (CEbGBb). This is also known as a minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord.**
  - **A major-minor seventh chord (Mm7) has a major triad and a minor 7<sup>th</sup> (CEGBb). This is also known as a **dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord****
- **See Ex. 8.1 to analyze examples of 7<sup>th</sup> chords**

# DIATONIC 7<sup>TH</sup> CHORDS IN MAJOR KEYS

- **These chords are built above each note of a major scale by adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> above each scale degree triad (see Ex. 8.2)**
  - **7<sup>th</sup> chords built on 1 and 4 are major seventh chords (MM7).**
  - **7<sup>th</sup> chords built on 2, 3, and 6 are minor seventh chords(mm7).**
  - **The 7<sup>th</sup> chord built on 5 is a dominant seventh chord(Mm7)k.**
  - **The 7<sup>th</sup> chord built on 7 is called a half-diminished seventh chord because the triad is diminished but the 7<sup>th</sup> is not diminished. This is shown by a degree sign with a slash through it before the 7**

# SEVENTH CHORDS IN INVERSION

- **Symbols for 7<sup>th</sup> chord inversions:**
  - **7 for root position**
  - **6/5 for first inversion**
  - **4/3 for second inversion**
  - **4/2 for third inversion**
- **To find the root of a 7<sup>th</sup> chord, always find the upper note of the 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

# DIATONIC SEVENTH CHORDS IN MINOR KEYS

- **See Ex. 8.5 for a list of all the triads built on minor scale degrees.**
- **Generally the flat 7 from a minor key is raised (like in a harmonic minor scale), so the seventh chord built on the leading tone thus introduces another 7<sup>th</sup> chord type—a fully diminished 7<sup>th</sup> (or diminished 7<sup>th</sup>)—which is a diminished triad with a diminished 7<sup>th</sup>.**
- **In minor keys, we will often have both fully diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords (vii) and half diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords (ii)**
- **The seventh chords on 1 and 4 are minor sevenths (mm7).**
- **The seventh chords on flat 3 and flat 6 are major sevenths (MM7).**
- **The seventh chord on a 5 is a dominant seventh (Mm7).**

# SPELLING ISOLATED SEVENTH CHORDS

- **Start by writing 3 thirds (on the staff it would be line-line-line or space-space-space)**
- **Check the quality of the triad and add accidentals as needed:**
  - **MM7 and Mm7 have major triads**
  - **Mm7 has a minor triad**
  - **Fully diminished and half diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords have diminished triads**
- **Check the quality of the seventh and add accidentals as needed:**
  - **MM7 has a major 7<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Mm7, mm7, and half diminished 7 have a minor 7<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Fully diminished 7 has a diminished 7<sup>th</sup>**

# SEVENTH CHORDS IN POPULAR STYLES

- **This system is used in lead sheet notation and sometimes in conjunction with guitar tabs**
- **A capital letter is used for the chord's root. If a capital letter appears alone, it is a Major triad.**
- **A letter name plus 7 assumes a Mm7 (dominant 7<sup>th</sup>) quality**
- **Other seventh chord types use abbreviations and other symbols (see Ex. 8.8)**
- **Half-diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chords are often notated at minor sevenths with a flat 5.**

# ARPEGGIATED TRIADS AND SEVENTH CHORDS

- **Chords are played one note at a time instead of all at the same time**
- **To analyze (see Ex. 8.11):**
  - **First write all the pitches represented in the order they are played**
  - **Second stack in thirds to determine the root of the chord in order to determine the proper Roman numeral**
- **Alberti bass—a common accompaniment of the classical period**
  - **Arpeggiated chords**
  - **Low-up-down-up pattern**
  - **To analyze, stack the chords in 3rds to determine root and quality**

# SEVENTH CHORDS AND MUSICAL STYLE

- **The use of seventh chords varies by musical style.**
  - **In Classical period music, only sevenths built on scale degrees 2, 5, and 7 are used.**
  - **In Romantic period music, jazz, and popular music, sevenths are used on all scale degrees**
  - **In some styles, the 7<sup>th</sup> is approached and resolved by step, but in some styles like jazz it may be left completely unresolved for dramatic effect.**