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 7th (CEGB). This is also known as a major 7th.
  - A minor-minor seventh chord (mm7) has a minor triad and a minor 7th (CEbGBb). This is also known as a minor 7th chord.
  - A major-minor seventh chord (Mm7) has a major triad and a minor 7th (CEGBb). This is also known as a dominant 7th chord.
- See Ex. 8.1 to analyze examples of 7th chords
DIATONIC 7TH CHORDS IN MAJOR KEYS

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

- Symbols for 7th 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 7th chord, always find the upper note of the 2nd.
DIATONIC SEVENTH CHORDS IN MINOR KEYS

• See Ex. 8.5 for a list of all the triads built on minor scale degrees.
• Generally the flat7 from a minor key is raised (like in a harmonic minor scale), so the seventh chord built on the leading tone thus introduces another 7th chord type—a fully diminished 7th (or diminished 7th)—which is a diminished triad with a diminished 7th.
• In minor keys, we will often have both fully diminished 7th chords (vii) and half diminished 7th 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).
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 7th chords have diminished triads

Check the quality of the seventh and add accidentals as needed:
- MM7 has a major 7th
- Mm7, mm7, and half diminished 7 have a minor 7th
- Fully diminished 7 has a diminished 7th
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\textsuperscript{th}) quality
• Other seventh chord types use abbreviations and other symbols (see Ex. 8.8)
• Half-diminished 7\textsuperscript{th} 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
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 7th is approached and resolved by step, but in some styles like jazz it may be left completely unresolved for dramatic effect.