

## Augmented 6th chords

Aldwell/Schachter 512-517 (§1-6), 518-526 (§8-16)

Augmented 6th chords come in three distinct flavors: Italian, French, and German. The Italian has three different pitch-classes, while the French and German have four. Note how the latter two "contain" the Italian 6th chord. Memorize the figured bass associated with each type.

It <sup>6</sup>                      Fr <sup>6</sup><sub>4/3</sub>                      Ger <sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>

**A. Derivation of the augmented 6th chord from its diatonic basis.** Each type of augmented 6th chord can be understood as a chromatic intensification of the predominant function, specifically of the iv<sup>6</sup> chord. Consider the derivation of the It <sup>6</sup> chord:

(1) Recall the phrygian semicadence:

(2) Now add a chromatic passing tone:

(3) Finally, elide the diatonic F5:

i    iv<sup>6</sup>    V<sup>b7</sup>    i    iv<sup>6</sup>    V<sup>b7</sup>    i    It<sup>6</sup>    V<sup>b7</sup>  
(notice the doubling)

**B. Derivation of the French and German augmented 6th chords from the Italian 6th chord.**

(1) French augmented 6th chord.

Add a (diatonic) 4th above the bass instead of one of the doubled 3rds of the Italian 6th.

(2) German augmented 6th chord.

(a) Add a (diatonic) 5th above the bass instead of one of the doubled 3rds of the Italian 6th (but notice the parallel 5ths that result).

(b) To avoid the parallels, move first to a cadential ♯.

i    Fr <sup>6</sup><sub>4/3</sub>    V<sup>b7</sup>    i    Ger <sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>    V<sup>b7</sup>    i    Ger <sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>    6 4 = 5

**C. Another common soprano voice.**

**D. Avoid the aug 2nd.**

**E. How to write an augmented 6th chord.**

(a) bass

(b) aug 6 - 8ve

(c) remaining voices

i    Fr <sup>6</sup><sub>4/3</sub>    V<sup>b7</sup>    i    It<sup>6</sup>    V<sup>b7</sup>    Ger <sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>    V<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> = 5

**F Approaching an augmented 6th chord.** Because any of the augmented 6th chords are chromatic alterations of  $\text{iv}^6$ , they can be approached in any way that  $\text{iv}^6$  is approached. Metrical placement is generally on a weak beat, preceding a metrically strong (cadential) dominant.

(1) approach directly from iv<sup>6</sup>

(2) the same underlying progression, successively chromaticized (notice the chromatic outer voices in contrary motion)

[illegible]

(3)  $\text{Fr}_3^6$  approached via  $V_3^4/V$

(4) Fr  $\frac{6}{3}$  as neighboring chord prolonging V    (5) Ger  $\frac{6}{5}$  proceeds smoothly from VI

i V $\frac{6}{3}$ /V Fr  $\frac{6}{3}$  V $\flat$  i VI ii $^{\circ 6}$  V $\flat$  (Fr  $\frac{6}{3}$ ) V $\flat$  i VI Ger  $\frac{6}{5}$  V $\frac{6}{4}$  i

(6) DP prolonged by chromaticized voice exchange

(a) iv leads to  $\text{Ger}^5$  via passing  $6_4$

(b)  $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}/V$  leads to  $\text{Ger } \S \# \text{ia}$  passing  $\S 4$

i      iv (6/4) Ger 6/5      V4/2 = 5/4      i      vii°b7/V (6/4) Ger 6/5      V4/2 = 5/4

DP      DP

### G. Characteristic figuration

i Fr<sup>6</sup><sub>4/3</sub> V<sub>4</sub> i Ger<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub> V<sub>4</sub>

Why doesn't the Ger  $\frac{6}{5}$  move to a cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$ ?