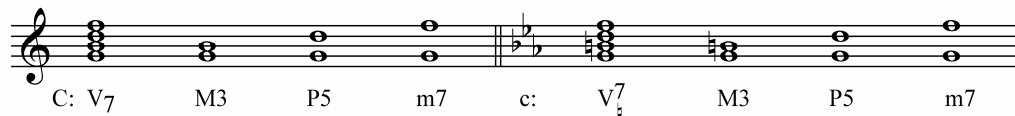


The Dominant Seventh Chord in Root Position

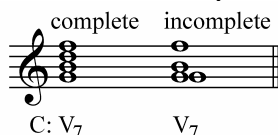
Structure and Identification

The *dominant seventh chord* (V_7) is a seventh chord built on the 5th scale degree.

The chord consists of a major 3rd, perfect 5th and minor 7th, i.e., a major triad with a minor 7th. In minor mode, the chord structure is the same as in major. Thus, the third is raised (the leading tone).



V_7 can be complete and incomplete; if incomplete, the 5th is omitted and the root is doubled.



V_7 can be used in open, close and mixed spacings.

Function

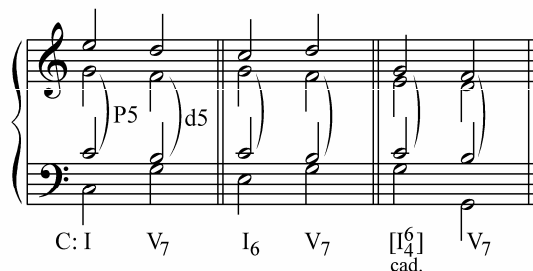
Being used very often, V_7 belongs (together with V) to the group of dominant chords which also includes the leading tone triad (vii°), leading tone seventh chord (vii°_7) and dominant ninth chord (V_9). V_7 functions almost in the same way as V and is mostly *not* used in half authentic cadences; though, in authentic cadences, it is used more often than V .

Preparation

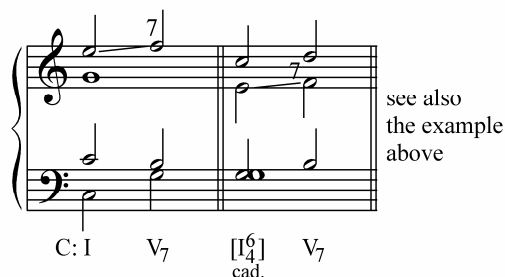
All chords (except for passing chords), that have been studied so far, can be used before V_7 . They are: I , I_6 , V , V_6 , IV , IV_6 and cadential I_4^6 .

The voice leading is usually smooth.

When connecting I , I_6 and cadential I_4^6 with V_7 , it is allowed to use a diminished 5th after a perfect one.



The 7th of V_7 can be approached by either downward or upward stepwise motions.



The 7th approached by a downward step from the root of V is called to be *passing*.

C: V (V₇) I V (V₇) I

The 7th can be also approached with a leap. Such leap is normally upward because when the 7th is being resolved it moves by step down, thus the leap is recovered.

The leap from I or cadential I₄⁶ to the 7th of V₇ is usually by the interval of a 4th, rarely, a 7th.

C: I₆ V₇ I₆ V₇ I V₇ [I₆]₄ cad. V₇

The leap to the 7th from V can be by the interval of a diminished 5th and minor 7th.

C: V V₇ I V V₇ I

A downward leap to the 7th is *sometimes* possible in the V-V₇ connection.

c: V₆ V₇ i

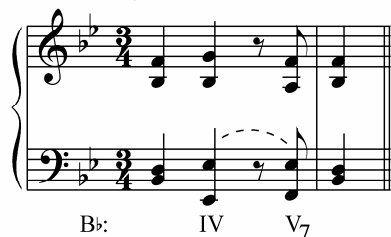
Beethoven, Symphony No. 9, Op. 125, III
Andante moderato

D: V₇

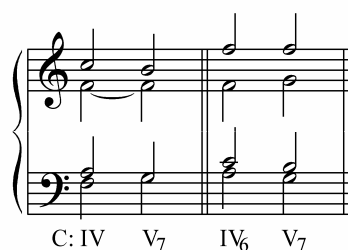
The root of IV or IV₆ and the 7th of V₇ are the common tone between the two chords; it often remains stationary. The dissonant tone is *prepared* by repeating the tone which is a chord tone of

the previous chord. That is why the 7th of V₇, which repeats the note of the previous IV in the same voice, is called the *prepared seventh*.

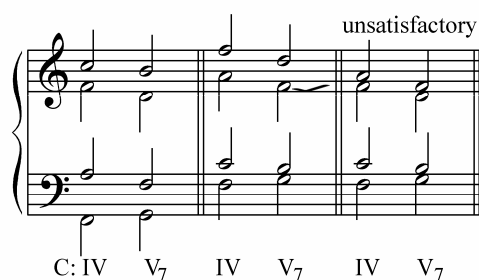
Schumann, Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42, No. 1



It is *not* possible to connect IV with a *complete* V₇ correctly using smooth voice leading. That is why it is better to connect IV with an *incomplete* V₇.



Sometimes these two chords are connected melodically. A connection, in which the 7th appears in soprano, is considered to be *unsatisfactory*.



Resolution

When a dissonant interval moves to a consonant one, the dissonant interval is called to be *resolved*.

V₇ *resolves* to the chord, the notes of which are missing in it, i.e., to the *tonic triad*.

When resolving a *complete* V₇, the voice leading is as follows:

- 1) the seventh moves by step down;
- 2) the fifth moves by step down;
- 3) the third in soprano moves by step up; the *third* in alto or tenor moves by step up (like in soprano) or leaps a 3rd down;
- 4) the root leaps to the root.

If the third (leading tone) moves by step up (to the tonic), a complete V₇ resolves to an *incomplete* I (the root is tripled and the fifth is omitted). This is called *strict resolution*. Bass may move up or down.



C: V₇ I V₇ I c: V₇ i

If the third in an inner voice moves down, a complete V₇ resolves to a *complete* I (*free resolution*). In order to avoid all voices moving down, bass must move up.



C: V₇ I V₇ I c: V₇ i V₇ i

When resolving an *incomplete* V₇, the voice leading is as follows:

- 1) the seventh moves by step down;
- 2) the third moves by step up;
- 3) the root in an upper voice remains stationary;
- 4) the root in bass leaps up or down to the root of I.



C: V₇ I V₇ I c: V₇ i V₇ i

Use

V₇ in root position is *one of the most important chords used in cadences*. In full cadences it can be used in the following ways:

IV-V₇-I
 IV₆-V₇-I
 [I₄⁶]-V₇-I
 IV-[I₄⁶]-V₇-I

In half cadences, where the dominant triad is *mostly* used, it may be found in the following ways:

IV₍₆₎-V₇
 I₍₆₎-V₇

Thus, V₇ may end the first phrase of a period if the cadential I₄⁶ is *not* present.

Practical Suggestions

In soprano line exercises it is possible to use V₇ not only in cadences but also in the middle of phrases.

In most cases, V_7 may be used where V in root position or its inversion can be used. It should be just remembered that the note, which is going to be harmonized with V_7 , should move in accordance with how the notes of V_7 are resolved.

Before, the 4th scale degree (subdominant) was considered as the note of IV only. From now on, it can be a part of V_7 if it moves (as the seventh) by step down to the 3rd scale degree (mediant).

Exercises

1. Analyze the following excerpts.

a)

Allegro Mozart, Don Giovanni, K. 527, No. 5

The musical excerpts are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Treble and bass clef, 6/8 time. Treble clef starts with a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. Bass clef starts with a half note G2 and a quarter note A2. Dynamics: *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). A V_5^6 chord is indicated below the bass clef.
- Staff 2:** Treble and bass clef, 6/8 time. Treble clef has a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. Bass clef has a half note G2 and a quarter note A2. Dynamics: *f* (forte).
- Staff 3:** Treble and bass clef, 6/8 time. Treble clef has a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. Bass clef has a half note G2 and a quarter note A2. Dynamics: *p* (piano).
- Staff 4:** Treble and bass clef, 6/8 time. Treble clef has a half note G4 and a quarter note A4. Bass clef has a half note G2 and a quarter note A2. Dynamics: *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). A V_5^6 chord is indicated below the bass clef.

b)

Allegro maestoso

Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, Op. 67, Finale

ff

v_5^6

v_5^6

v_5^6

Moderato

Chopin, Ballade No. 1, Op. 23

p dolce

ii[°]₇

V⁷_{♯/V}

a) 

b) 

c) 

d) 

e) 

f) 

g) 

h) 