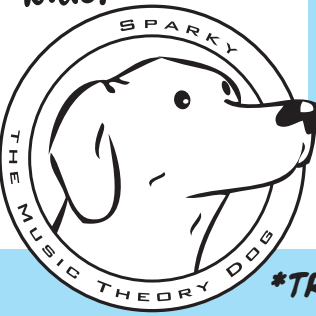


hey, it's
kids!

SPARKY THE MUSIC THEORY DOG!



Dear Sparky:
Q: Can you elaborate on why suspensions are identified by numbers? Also, what should one watch out for when writing suspensions in four-part harmony?

--S.S., Detroit, MI

A: WOOF!*

***TRANSLATION:** WHEN ANALYZING SUSPENSIONS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY BOTH THE **NOTE OF SUSPENSION** (THE NON-HARMONIC TONE ITSELF) AND THE **NOTE OF RESOLUTION** (THE NOTE THAT COMES RIGHT AFTER THE NON-HARMONIC TONE IN THE SAME VOICE).



C: IV V⁶

THIS **A** IS THE
NOTE OF SUSPENSION...
 IT DOESN'T BELONG IN
 THIS **G** MAJOR TRIAD.

IT RESOLVES TO
 THIS **G**, WHICH **DOES**
 FIT IN THE CHORD.
 IT'S THE **NOTE OF**
RESOLUTION!

IN ALMOST EVERY CASE,
 THE SUSPENSION IS
 THEN LABELED USING
 TWO INTERVALS: THE
 INTERVAL BETWEEN THE
NOTE OF SUSPENSION
 AND THE **BASS**, AND THE
 INTERVAL BETWEEN THE
NOTE OF RESOLUTION
 AND THE **BASS**.



C: IV V⁶
 ...SO IT'S A
7-6 SUSPENSION!

WHEN **WRITING** AN EXAMPLE WHICH INCLUDES A SUSPENSION, IT IS VERY OFTEN USEFUL TO **BEGIN** BY WRITING THE CHORD THAT IS GOING TO CONTAIN THE SUSPENSION, **THEN** ADDING THE SUSPENSION, AND FINISHING BY WRITING THE **CHORD OF APPROACH**.



C: vi V

...SO IT'S A
2-3 SUSPENSION!

THE ONLY EXCEPTION TO THIS IS THE **2-3 SUSPENSION**, WHERE THE SUSPENSION OCCURS IN THE **BASS**. FOR THIS ONE, WE LOOK AT THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE NOTES OF SUSPENSION AND RESOLUTION AND THE **NEAREST CHORD TONE**, WHICHEVER VOICE IT MAY BE IN.

THE REAL TRICK, THOUGH, IS TO **PLAN AHEAD...** IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO WRITE A PARTICULAR TYPE OF SUSPENSION, YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT THE **INTERVAL THAT NEEDS TO BE PRESENT** IN THE CHORD THAT INCLUDES YOUR SUSPENSION.

FOR THE **9-8 SUSPENSION**, THE SUSPENSION RESOLVES TO AN **OCTAVE** ABOVE THE **BASS**... THAT'S **EASY**, SINCE **ANY** CHORD CAN INCLUDE AN OCTAVE.

FOR THE **7-6 SUSPENSION**, THE SUSPENSION RESOLVES TO A **SIXTH** ABOVE THE **BASS**. THAT MEANS YOU CAN'T USE A CHORD IN **ROOT POSITION**, BECAUSE THEY HAVE A FIFTH AND A THIRD ABOVE THE **BASS**. YOU NEED A **FIRST** OR **SECOND INVERSION TRIAD!**

FOR THE **4-3 SUSPENSION** AND **2-3 SUSPENSION**, YOU NEED A CHORD WITH A **THIRD** ABOVE THE **BASS**... WHICH MEANS YOU CAN USE ANYTHING **EXCEPT** A **SECOND INVERSION TRIAD**.

DOING STUFF THE SPARKY WAY IS ALWAYS FUN!