

**Topics in Chapter 35 of *The Complete Musician*, Steven Laitz**

- 1. Augmented triads, pp. 813–19.**
- 2. Altered dominants, pp. 813–19.**
- 3. Common-tone sevenths and augmented sixth chords, pp. 820–24.**

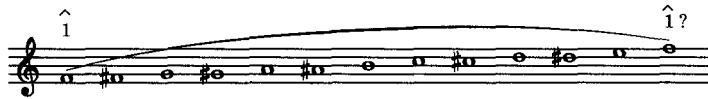
**For extra fun:**

**The Omnibus Progression, pp. 845–86.**

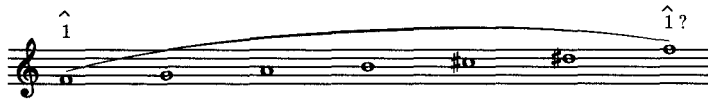
asymmetry—specifically the asymmetry associated with major and minor scales. Imagine what would happen to tonality if scales were composed solely of whole steps or half steps or of consistently alternating half and whole steps. If you try singing the scales in Example 35.5, you will soon discover that a sense of goal-directed motion and tonal grounding disappears because every scale step is as stable (or as unstable) as every other step.

### EXAMPLE 35.5

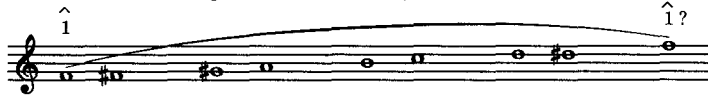
chromatic = all half steps



whole tone = all whole steps



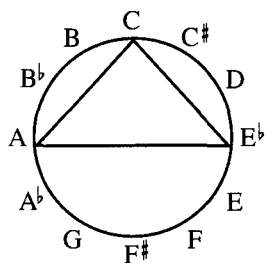
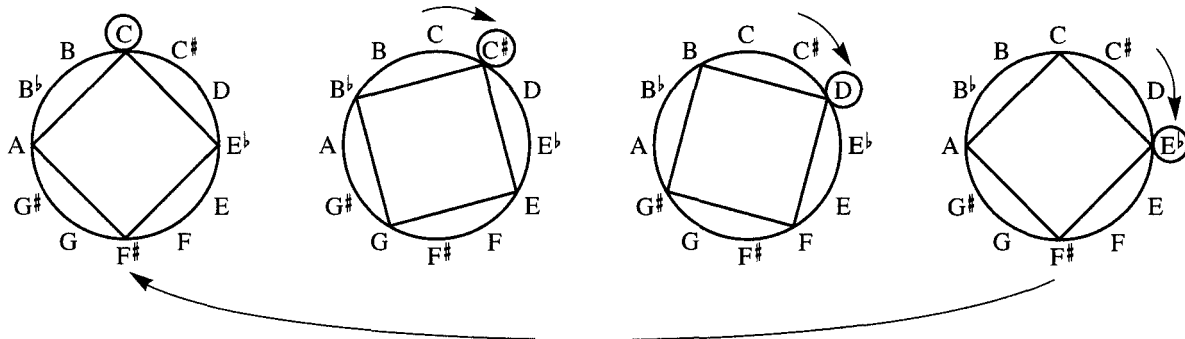
octatonic = alternating half and whole steps



Just as symmetrical structures (major and minor triads) help to create tonality, the use of symmetrically constructed harmonies and harmonic progressions results in tonal ambiguity, an important feature of nineteenth-century music. Symmetrical harmonies and symmetrical tonal progressions develop from two late-eighteenth-century precedents: chromatically altered dominant harmonies and chromatic sequences. We devote the rest of this chapter to the exploration of chromatically altered harmonies.

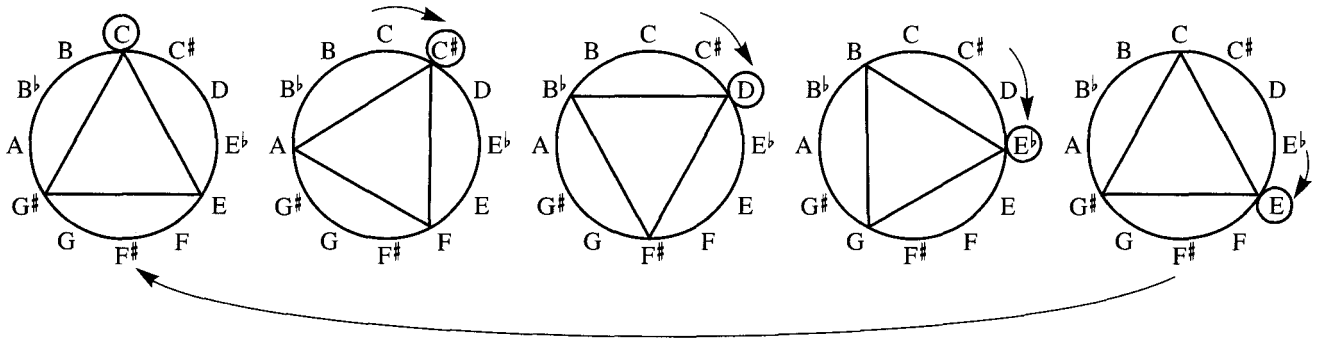
## The Augmented Triad

So far, we have considered only one symmetrical triad—the diminished triad. It has a symmetrical construction because its two component intervals are both minor thirds (Example 35.6A). It does not, however, equally partition the octave (since it spans a tritone, it only partitions half of the octave evenly). By contrast, the diminished seventh chord partitions the octave symmetrically (Example 35.6B). Notice how the lines connecting the pitch classes that make up a diminished seventh chord symmetrically partition the octave. Moving the diminished seventh chord up by one half step (i.e., starting the next “square” on C#) does not, of course, alter its symmetrical structure. Transposition by three semitones (i.e., starting the chord on E<sup>b</sup>) results in a restatement of the same pitch classes, thus revealing how there are only three distinct diminished seventh chords.

**EXAMPLE 35.6****A. Diminished Triad Clock****B. Diminished Seventh Chord Clocks**

Like the diminished triad, the highly dissonant **augmented triad** (shown in Example 35.7) is symmetrical, consisting of two major thirds and spanning an augmented fifth. Moreover, like the diminished seventh chord, the augmented triad also partitions the octave equally. Unlike every other triadic structure, the augmented triad retains its major third and augmented fifth intervals (or their enharmonic equivalents) under inversion. Compare the inversions of the minor triad to the inversions of the augmented triad. A minor triad in root position contains a minor third (e.g., C–E $\flat$ ) and a major third (E $\flat$ –G), which together span a perfect fifth (C–G). Its first inversion yields a major third (E $\flat$ –G) and a perfect fourth (G–C), which together span a major sixth. Its second inversion yields a perfect fourth (G–C) and a minor third (C–E $\flat$ ), which together span a minor sixth. But when we invert an augmented triad (such as C–E–G $\sharp$ ), no matter how many times we cycle the three pitches around, only major thirds (or diminished fourths) and minor sixths (or augmented fifths) result. Thus, there is no way aurally to distinguish inversions of the augmented triad. Its symmetrical construction is harmonically ambiguous and thus well suited to the experimental works of the late nineteenth century.

**EXAMPLE 35.7** Augmented Triad Clock



The augmented triad originally was a by product of melodic motion before becoming an independent sonority. Listen to Example 35.8. It is likely that you heard an augmented triad (G–B–D#) on the upbeat to m. 1. It is metrically weak, with the D#s arising from passing motion; thus, it is not an independent harmonic entity.

Now listen to Example 35.9, and note the function of the augmented triads. Again, the augmented triad in m. 2 is not an independent triad, because F# is functioning simply as an appoggiatura to the chord tone G.

**EXAMPLE 35.8** Beethoven, Theme and Variations in G major, WoO 77, Thema: *Andante, quasi Allegretto*

5-#5  
 G: I ii<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I V I V<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub> I V  
 I EPM I CL I NI V  
 T HC

DVD 1  
 CH 35  
 TRACK 1

**EXAMPLE 35.9** Schubert, “Der Atlas,” from *Schwanengesang*, D. 957, no. 8

g: i i<sup>6</sup> APP i APP i

DVD 1  
 CH 35  
 TRACK 2



example, which we hypothesized could work just as well in A minor.) The  $V_7$  resolves deceptively to VI; this pattern begins again in m. 2, transposed down a third. Only in m. 3 does a goal-directed progression begin, leading to a half cadence in A minor. It is difficult to miss the explicit connection between the meaning of the song's title and Grieg's musical setting.

Finally, the augmented triad can become an independent sonority. Listen to the opening of Liszt's "Nuages gris" (Example 35.12), in which all of the chords but the first take the form of augmented triads. As Liszt obscures all sense of tonality with chromatically descending augmented chords (m. 11), he brings to life the image of visible yet amorphous gray clouds.

### EXAMPLE 35.12 Liszt, "Nuages gris" ("Gray Clouds"), S199, LW 305

DVD 1  
CH 35  
TRACK 5

### Altered Dominant Seventh Chords

The fifth of the  $V_7$  chord,  $\hat{2}$ , is a weak tendency tone when compared to the leading tone ( $\hat{7}$ ) and the chordal seventh ( $\hat{4}$ ). But when  $\hat{2}$  is raised—creating an **altered dominant seventh chord**—it forms an augmented sixth interval with  $\hat{4}$ , and, as a strong tendency tone, it must rise to  $\hat{3}$  (Example 35.13). Because of the proper resolution of the chordal seventh, the following tonic chord has a doubled third.

## EXAMPLE 35.13

7 — 5 — #5  
C: V<sup>7</sup> I

It is also possible to alter  $V_7$  by lowering  $\hat{2}$  a half step; this chord often plays a crucial role in late-nineteenth-century music (Example 35.14A). When  $\hat{2}$  is lowered it forms an augmented sixth with the leading tone; composers place the chord in second inversion so that  $b\hat{2}$  is in the bass. This inversion, shown in Example 35.14B, produces a chord that is identical to a French augmented sixth chord. Thus, the altered dominant seventh chord functions in a reciprocal process (Chapter 34): The chord sounds like it participates in a half cadence ( $Fr_3^4 \rightarrow V$ ), but it actually functions as part of an authentic cadence (altered  $V_3^4 \rightarrow I$ ). For now, we will label this type of altered dominant as  $FrV_3^4$ , which shows its function as a dominant and its intervallic properties that are similar to the regular  $Fr_3^4$ .

## EXAMPLE 35.14

A.

7 — 5 — b5  
C: V<sup>7</sup> I

B.

C: I — 6 V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> FrV<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> I F: Fr<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> V I

Listen to the opening of the last movement of Brahms's Fourth Symphony (Example 35.15). What is ambiguous about the cadence? Perhaps you were once again struck by a disparity between what you saw and what you heard at the cadence in m. 8. There are two reasons why what looks like a weak authentic cadence—in which  $V_3^4$  (F replaces F $\sharp$ ) resolves to I—actually sounds





## The Common-Tone Diminished Seventh Chord

We have encountered a number of ways to extend an underlying harmony contrapuntally. In addition to embedded phrase models (EPMs), we have learned about passing and neighboring chords, such as  $\text{vii}^\circ_6$ ,  $\text{P}^6_4$ ,  $\text{N}^6_4$ ,  $\text{vii}^\circ_5$ , and  $\text{IV}_6$ , which usually occur in first or second inversion so as to allow them smoothly to connect structural harmonies in root position.

We will now learn about two additional harmonies that can prolong I and V through neighboring and passing motions. These new chords contain chromaticism and *maintain the root of the harmony they extend*.

Example 35.16 shows the first type of harmony: The lower neighbors on beat 3 of m. 1—together with the 5–6 motion (A–B) in the left hand—create a diminished seventh chord. Notice that the root of the tonic chord (D) is sustained as a common tone. Contrapuntal diminished seventh chords such as this one are called **common-tone diminished seventh chords**, labeled “c.t. $^\circ_7$ .”

### EXAMPLE 35.16 Schubert, Waltz in D major, 34 *Valses Sentimentales*, op. 50, no. 12, D. 779

D:

5	—	6	—	5
5	—	#4	—	5
3	—	#2	—	3

I c.t. $^\circ_7$  I V I

DVD 1  
CH 35  
TRACK 7

We now have two functions for diminished seventh chords: They can be tonicizing (as a  $\text{vii}^\circ_7$  or an applied  $\text{vii}^\circ_7$ ) or contrapuntal (as a c.t. $^\circ_7$  or an applied c.t. $^\circ_7$ ) (Example 35.17). The following guiding principles may be useful when attempting to determine the function of a fully diminished sonority.

### EXAMPLE 35.17

A. common tone

B. no common tone

C. no common tones

A: I c.t. $^\circ_7/V$  V I vii $^\circ_7/ii$  ii

C: I $^6$  vii $^\circ_7/V$  V $^6_4$  I

- Common-tone diminished seventh chords share a common tone with the following chord of resolution (Example 35.17A).
- $\text{vii}^\circ_7$  and applied  $\text{vii}^\circ_7$  chords have no common tones with the following chord of resolution (Example 35.17B).
- Beware of the progression  $\text{vii}^\circ_7/\text{V}$  to cad.  $\frac{6}{4}-\frac{5}{3}$ . The  $\text{vii}^\circ_7/\text{V}$  chord shares common tones with the cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord. The common tones, however, are misleading, for they are not chord tones but suspensions that fall to the  $\frac{5}{3}$  chord, which shares no pitches with the applied  $\text{vii}^\circ_7$  chord (Example 35.17C).

It can be difficult to distinguish between the different types of diminished seventh chords. The chromatic bass line in Example 35.18 suggests that the diminished seventh chord will function as a  $\text{vii}^\circ_7/\text{ii}$ . However, B is not the root of the chord on the downbeat of m. 2; it is a  $\text{V}^4_3$  chord. Further evidence against viewing the diminished seventh chord as  $\text{vii}^\circ_7/\text{ii}$  may be seen in the octave E, which is a common tone of both the diminished seventh chord and the following  $\text{V}^4_3$  chord. As you know, there are no common tones between an applied  $\text{vii}^\circ_7$  chord and its resolution, so this diminished seventh cannot be applied. Rather, it is a contrapuntal chord (c.t. $^\circ_7$  of V) that connects I and  $\text{V}^4_3$  by means of a chromatic passing tone in the bass.

### EXAMPLE 35.18 Brahms, “Heimweh III” (“Homesickness III”), op. 64, no. 9

$\text{vii}^\circ_7/\text{ii}$  ? (no)  
c.t. $^\circ_7$ /V ? (yes)

DVD 1  
CH 35  
TRACK 8

### Common-Tone Augmented Sixth Chords

Example 35.19 contains another chromatic common-tone harmony over a tonic pedal that arises from contrapuntal motion, but it is not a diminished seventh chord. Look at the figure for the first chord. Does the presence of both flat and sharp accidentals remind you of any other chords we have learned? The sonority sounds and looks like a  $\text{Ger}^6_3$  chord, since it contains an augmented sixth ( $\text{A}^\flat-\text{F}^\sharp$ ). It is a bit peculiar, however, not to have the  $\flat\hat{6}-\hat{5}$  motion in the bass, for we expect an augmented sixth chord moving to its resolution. Instead, the bass voice sustains a common-tone C. The result of this voice leading is a chord that extends the tonic rather than leading strongly to the dominant. Such a chord is referred to as a **common-tone augmented sixth chord** (c.t.+6).

### EXAMPLE 35.19 Schubert, “Am Meer” (“By the Sea”), *Schwanengesang*, D. 957, no. 12

Sehr langsam

Das Meer erg-länz-te — weit hin-aus im letz-ten A-bend\_schei - ne,

DVD 1  
CH 35  
TRACK 9

Continued

C:

b6	5
#4	5
#2	3

c.t. +<sub>6</sub>I

The bass in c.t.<sub>+6</sub> chords may skip down a major third to what would be the usual bass of an augmented sixth chord (Example 35.20). The fact that the augmented sixth chord returns to the tonic, however, demonstrates its common-tone function. Nineteenth-century music contains a variety of chromatic third-related vacillations.

### EXAMPLE 35.20

C: I c.t.+6 I

T \_\_\_\_\_

### Analytical Interlude

We have learned that composers do not choose harmonies in a capricious manner. Chords both progressive and prolongational play important roles in the harmonic and melodic domains, where they project motives at deep structural levels. We also have seen how harmonic and melodic choices in *Lieder* are often made to project images from the texts. Let's see what new effects are created in late-nineteenth-century songs by the incorporation of these common-tone chromatic harmonies (see Example 35.21).

### EXAMPLE 35.21 Wolf, "Man sagt mir, deine Mutter woll' es nicht" ("They tell me your mother doesn't approve of it"), *Italienisches Liederbuch*, no. 21

Man sagt mir, dei - ne Mut - ter woll es nicht;  
They tell me your mother doesn't approve of it;

mf p mf p

3 3 3

DVD 1  
CH 35  
TRACK 10

Continued

3  
so blei - be weg, mein Schatz, tu' — ihr den Wil - len. Ach Lieb - ster,  
Then stay away, my dear, do what she wants. Ah, beloved,

6  
nein! tu' ihr den Wil - len nicht, be - such mich doch, tuis — ihr zum Trotz im  
no! Do not do what she wants; Come to me, do in spite of her, secretly

The story is simple: A girl teases her lover, saying that because his mother disapproves of their relationship, he should simply stay away. But in the next phrase, the girl contradicts herself and says that her lover should ignore his mother's wishes so that he may secretly visit her even more often. The following analysis reveals how Wolf's musical setting reflects the text.

The key of the song is clearly A minor, in spite of the c.t.+6 on beat 2 of the first measure, which creates a neighbor figure above and below the fifth of the tonic harmony. When the first harmonic change occurs in m. 4, an apparent altered  $V_7$  of G major (Example 35.22A) actually functions as an altered augmented sixth chord when it leads to  $F\sharp$  major (see Example 35.22B).

### EXAMPLE 35.22 Augmented sixth chord resolution in m. 4, beat 4

A. mm: 4 B. mm: 4 5

not: a: i  $V_{\#5}^7 \rightarrow G$  but rather a:  $+6$   $F\sharp:$

The key of F# major, with its six sharps, vividly contrasts with A minor's zero sharps. In fact, F# major and A minor are nearly as tonally distant as two keys can be. This unusual and very sudden shift occurs at the very point where the girl says, "den Willen" ("do what she wants"). In the very next phrase the girl reverses her proclamation, saying that the boy should ignore his mother's desires and visit her daily. The unexpected tonal shift from A minor to F# major could be Wolf's imaginative way of creating a musical analogue that reflects the girl's sudden change of mind.

## EXERCISE INTERLUDE



### ANALYSIS

#### 35.3

Analyze the following excerpts, which contain augmented triads, altered dominant seventh chords, common-tone diminished seventh chords, and common-tone augmented sixth chords.

A.

The ending of this exercise is tonally ambiguous. Discuss.

B. Chopin, Nocturne in A<sup>b</sup> major, op. 32, no. 2

Lento

*sempre piano e legato*

C. Brahms, "Unbewegte laue Luft" (Motionless, Tepid Air"), op. 57, no. 8

Langsam

Un - be - weg - te lau - e Luft, tie - fe  
Motionless, tepid air deep