## UNIT X: FULL-DIMINISHED AND HALF-DIMINISHED SEVENTHS SECONDARY DOMINANTS

#### The Full-diminished seventh: <sub>o</sub>vii<sup>7</sup>

The seventh chord built on the leading-tone in minor has a structure of three superposed minor thirds; the outermost interval in this arrangement is a diminished seventh. The chord is a common element of the harmonic vocabulary in tonal music from at least 1700 onwards. Since it shares most of its pitches with the  $V^7$ , and frequently behaves much the same way, and since the chord contains no perfect 5th, many theorists prefer to call it a " $V_0^9$ ", a dominant ninth chord without its root. We will, however, refer to it simply as  $_0vii^7$  – for simplicity, and because the concept of "rootless chord" seriously calls into question the concept "root".

Since  $_{o}vii^{7}$  uses the lowered 6°, it is technically a chord of the minor mode, and so (in the 18th century) used mostly with a minor tonic. The chord can, however, resolve as well to a <u>major</u> triad, and this is frequently the case when  $_{o}vii^{7}$  is used as a secondary dominant - see below, p.4. In the harmony of later periods,  $_{o}vii^{7}$  is used virtually as often with the major as with the minor tonic. (We will discuss this "modal borrowing" – the use of pitches from the minor mode in a major context, and vice versa – in more detail later. Another familiar example is the "Picardy third".)

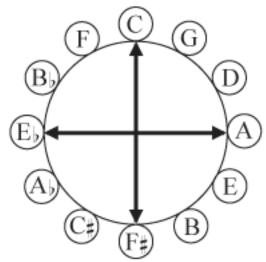
In the resolution to the (major or minor) tonic,  $_{0}vii^{7}$  behaves like V<sup>7</sup>: the tritone 4°-7° resolves in contrary motion to 3° and 1°, and the lowered 6° descends to the 5°. Thus a complete tonic triad results: EX 1. (The other tritone, 2°-6°, may contract also, producing a doubled third: EX 2.) Almost always, the  $_{0}vii^{7}$  is written complete; when a tone must be omitted, it is generally the 3rd. In some distributions of the chord, direct fifths result in the tonic resolution: EX 3. Bach generally disguises these - EXX 4-5 - and avoids altogether such a succession of tritone-fifth when one of the voices involved is the bass.

The resolutions of the inverted  $_{0}vii^{7}$  to the tonic are, with some care, unproblematic: EX 6. Note that in the progression  $_{0}vii_{5}^{6}$ -i, direct fifths with the bass are unavoidable. Therefore  $_{0}vii_{5}^{6}$  virtually always progresses to  $i^{6}$  (or  $I^{6}$ ).

The  $_{o}vii^{7}$  is frequently used as a passing chord, or with a passing chord, in a pattern known as a "diminished seventh exchange": EX 7.

One of the remarkable features of the full diminished seventh is its symmetry; this is easily observed if we diagram such a chord on the circle of fifths: EX 8.

If we imagine transposing – "rotating" - the chord, we can see that in term of pitch-content, there are but three distinct diminished sevenths. Because of this symmetry, any diminished seventh is enharmonically equivalent to an inversion of three other diminished 7ths; alternatively, any given set of four pitches in this configuration has (without using double flats or sharps) four different spellings that preserve the structure in thirds: EX 9. This gives the



chord great versatility as a pivot chord for remote modulation: the chord need only be enharmonically re-interpreted (re-spelled) with a different note as leading-tone: EX 10. Such modulations are naturally more a characteristic of later music than of a repertory like the Bach chorales.

#### Irregular Resolutions of ovii<sup>7</sup>

The  $_{o}vii^{7}$  is too ambiguous a chord to have convincingly "deceptive" resolutions. In the case of the progression  $_{o}vii^{2}$  - vi, we would prefer to consider the diminished seventh the enharmonic equivalent of  $_{o}vii^{7}/vi$ : EX 11 (see below, secondary dominants). And in the case of  $_{o}vii^{7}-VI$  or  $_{o}vii^{7}-IV^{6}$ , EX 12, we again have a situation with an alternative interpretation, that is, as an "embellishing diminished seventh", to be studied later. Finally, the progression  $_{o}vii^{7}-V$  is not so much a real change of chord as an embellishment of the dominant: EX 13.

Secondary diminished sevenths are involved in several irregular resolutions: see below.

### The Leading-tone Seventh in Major: øvii7

This chord is the second half-diminished seventh we've looked at; the other was  $_{\phi}ii^{7}$ . The  $_{\phi}vii^{7}$  chord is not a typical chord in Baroque music, and it occurs in the Bach chorales mostly as a result of multiple NHTs: EXX 14-15. The chord is really more characteristic of Classic music: EXX 16-17.

The chord is rarely found in 3rd inversion ( ${}_{\emptyset}vii^{2}$ ), but the other positions are common. It resolves just like V<sup>7</sup> or  ${}_{0}vii^{7}$ : the tritone moves to the tonic and mediant: EX 18. Note that  ${}_{\emptyset}vii^{7}$ -I requires that the 3rd be doubled in the tonic triad, to avoid parallel fifths. For the same reason,  ${}_{\emptyset}vii^{5}_{5}$  usually resolves to I<sup>6</sup> rather than to I.

The  ${}_{\emptyset}vii^{7}$  chord is generally found only in major contexts; it is not "borrowed" for use in the alternate mode, as is  ${}_{0}vii^{7}$ .

Modulation using  ${}_{\emptyset}vii^{7}$  as a pivot is possible to the relative major/minor, in which advantage is taken of the fact that  ${}_{\emptyset}ii^{7}$  and  ${}_{\emptyset}vii^{7}$  are both half-diminished sevenths: EX 19.

#### Secondary Dominants

It frequently happens in common-practice music that a diatonic chord other than the tonic will be preceded (or at times followed) by a chromatically-altered chord functioning as its dominant: EX 20. Such an altered chord is known as a <u>secondary dominant</u> (also as an "applied" or "borrowed" dominant); it can be any dominant-function chord in that key of which the chord to which it is applied is the tonic. That is, V/V ("five of five"),  $V^7/ii$ ,  $_0vii^6/IV$ ,  $_0vii^7/vi$ ,  $V_5^6/iii$ ,  $_0vii_5^6/_bVII$ , etc., are all possible secondary dominants. In 18th-century music, dominants are generally applied only to diatonic scale degrees which bear a major or minor triad, and so can readily act as a "local tonic". Thus one finds only rarely V/vii, or in minor V/ii, or V/#vi.

The most common secondary dominant is V/V: EXX 21-22. As in these examples, it is common at cadences; it is heard so often that it hardly attracts attention as an "altered" chord at all. Dominants applied to other scale degrees are found in EXX 23-30.

In the Chorales, very often secondary dominants are used in the harmonization of a chromatic conjunct bass: EXX 31-33, 27, 29, 30, 39.

With respect to voice-leading, secondary dominants behave just like ordinary diatonic dominants. They are smoothly introduced in a number of ways: by following a chord that might be a pivot: EX 26; or by smoothly-chromatic voice-leading: EX 23. The latter is facilitated when the chord before the secondary dominant has the same root: EX 30.

Each secondary-dominant usage could, of course, be considered a very local modulation, but theorists prefer instead to speak of "tonicization", to draw attention to the temporary nature of this kind of keychange. The kind of chromatic appoggiaturas found typically in Mozart, EX 34, are in a sense a reduction of the secondary-dominant principle to its essence: a given diatonic pitch is preceded by its own leading-tone.

<u>Modulation by means of secondary dominants</u> is quite feasible, but like any modulation that turns on a dominant, the new key will usually need to be confirmed by a cadence.

Less common resolutions of secondary dominants can be classified roughly into three types:

1. Deceptive resolutions: V-vi (VI) or V-iv (IV) in the local key. These are especially effective when the second chord is equivalent to a chord in the surrounding tonality. The most common pattern is (in the key of *vi*, the submediant: IV - as in EXX 35-36.

Other versions, however, are equally possible: EXX 37-39.

Another possibility is to use the second chord in such a "borrowed deceptive cadence" as a pivot to modulate to a third key: EXX 40, 74.

2. Resolutions to a chord with the anticipated root, but which is itself made a dominant rather than a tonic: EXX 4, 15, 21, 72; even in barber-shop quartets: EX 41. Other secondary dominants so resolving occur in EXX 29, 33.

A chain of secondary dominants linked in this fashion forms a familiar kind of sequence progressing around the circle of fifths: EXX 42-43.

Some experimentation shows that when root-position dominants (major-minor sevenths) succeed each other like this, some will usually have to be written incomplete. But successive <u>inverted</u> dominants can usually be complete.

3. Other types:

a. V/V readily resolves to  $I_4^6$  as a delay of the dominant at cadences: EX 44.

b. The succession of two chords, the first with a root a third above the second, offers several secondary-dominant possibilities:

i) The so-called "bifocal cadence" of the Baroque slow movement, which in the key of the relative minor is V - III; in the relative major is V/vi - I: EXX 45, 48. This chord succession is often found as an "incomplete half-cadence" EXX 49-51.

ii) Both chords so related may be dominants: EXX 46, 52.

iii) Or, only the second may be a dominant: EXX 47, 53.

c. The use of "incomplete half-cadences", as in EXX 49-51, is not confined to V/vi: EXX 23, 54-56.

One of the characteristic harmonizations in the Baroque of an ascending melodic-minor bassline uses a major-minor seventh rooted on the subdominant. This chord should <u>not</u> be considered a secondary dominant - not V/ VII - but rather just  $IV^7$  or  $IV_5^6$ : EX 57. EX 37 shows an extraordinary extension of this progression, using three consecutive first-inversion major-minor sevenths.

#### Leading-tone sevenths as secondary dominants

<u>The full-diminished ovii</u><sup>7</sup> is fully as useful as a secondary dominant applied to both major and minor triads, as is V or V<sup>7</sup>. No special considerations apply; the chord in such situations is extremely versatile: EXX 58-60; 4, 5, 32, 37.

A number of irregular resolutions are possible in such cases:

1. Resolution to another diminished seventh, most typically in the progression  $_{o}vii^{7}$  -  $_{o}vii^{7}/V$ : EX 61.

2. As an extension of this, a chain of successive diminished sevenths moving stepwise is a device used since the Baroque to maximize tonal ambiguity: EX 62.

3. Delaying the resolution of  $_{0}vii^{7}/V$  by interpolation of the I $_{4}^{6}$  is common: EX 63.

<u>The half-diminished seventh,  $_{\emptyset}vii^7$ </u>, is less common in the Baroque as a secondary dominant, and it can be applied only to major triads. It occurs in the Chorales mostly as a result of passing voices: EXX 64-65.

But  $_{\emptyset}$ vii<sup>7</sup>/V forms part of a Classic cadence formula: EX 66. Again, notice the delay of the resolution by means of the I  $_{4}^{6}$ .

<u>The plain diminished triad,  $_{o}vii$ </u>, is also perfectly acceptable as a secondary dominant, especially of V: EXX 32, 39, 65, 67-69.

#### Secondary dominants as alternative resolutions for V

The deceptive resolution V-vi is often expanded by the interpolation of a dominant of vi, as in EXX 23, 29, 44.

Progressions of V to a secondary dominant of IV occur in EXX 27, 32, 39, 43, 44, and 67; and to a dominant of ii in EX 65.

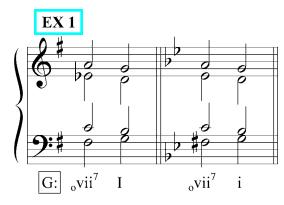
In the Chorales, the succession V - V/V occurs mostly with the secondary dominant acting as a passing or neighbor-chord: EXX 70-71. But in the Classic style, V - V/V is a useful deceptive cadence: EX 72.

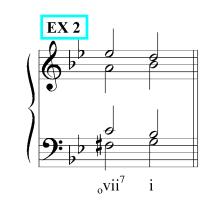
Finally, V-V/iii does not seem to occur, though its reverse, as we have seen, is a favorite Schubert progression: EX 52.

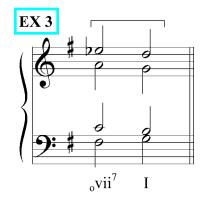
Irregular resolutions of <sub>o</sub>vii<sup>7</sup> were discussed above.

The concept of "secondary dominant" leads to the speculation, can there be other such isolated secondary-function chords? We have seen in the examples such chords as "vi/IV" or "IV<sub>5</sub><sup>6</sup>/III", but these have been part of progressions that continue on to the secondary dominant (EXX 37, 65). In 18th-century music it is really only as dominants that secondary-function chords occur <u>by themselves</u>. But there are passages in nineteenth-century music that seem to tonicize a local harmony without benefit of dominant: in EX 73 occurs a "modulation" so abrupt that the B<sub>b</sub> chord could, with justice, be called a secondary <u>sub</u>dominant, and the E<sub>b</sub> chord following, IV of that. With respect to the surrounding C-major, then, the E<sub>b</sub> chord is IV/IV/IV!

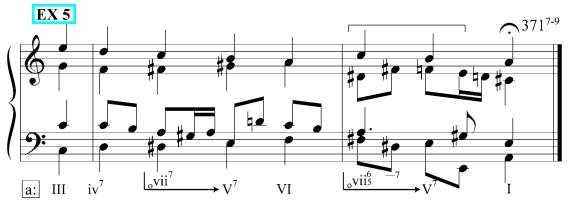
# Examples, Chapter X

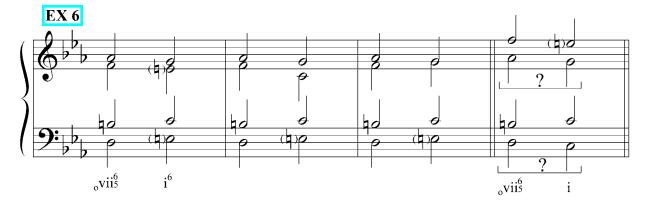


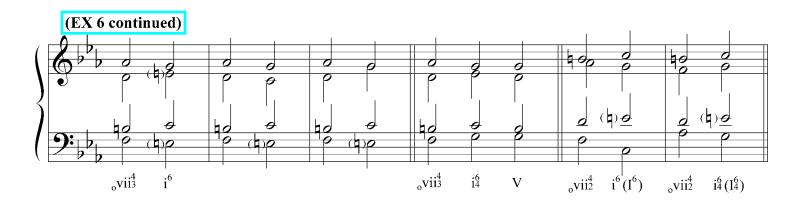




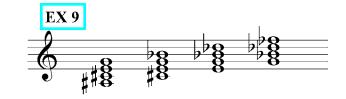


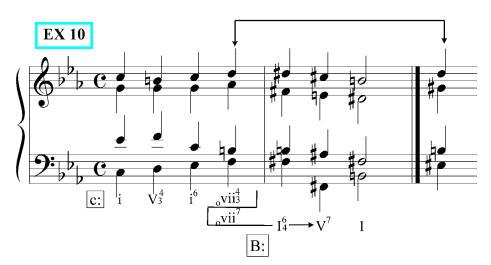


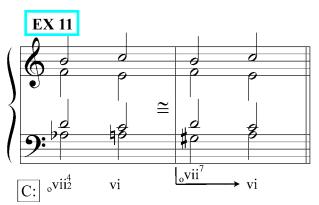


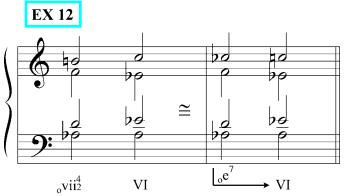


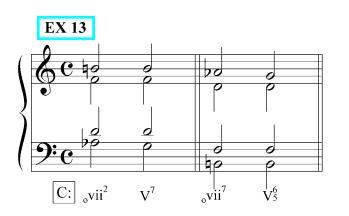


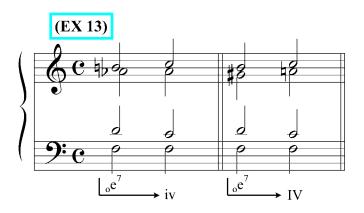


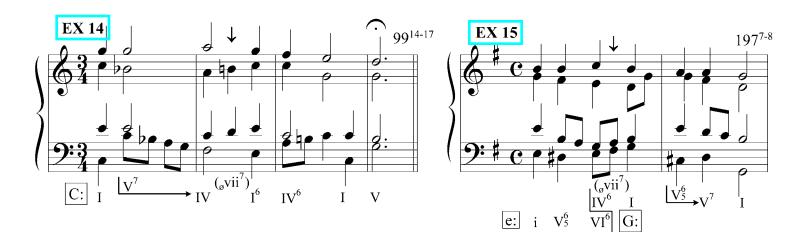


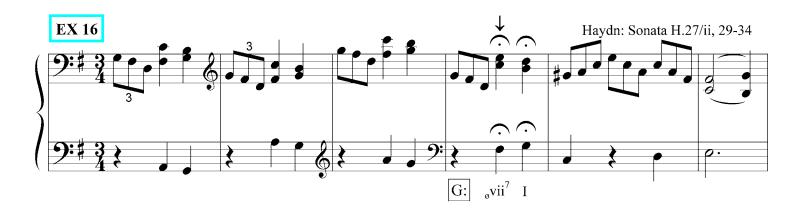


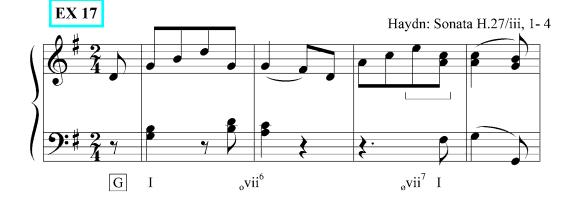


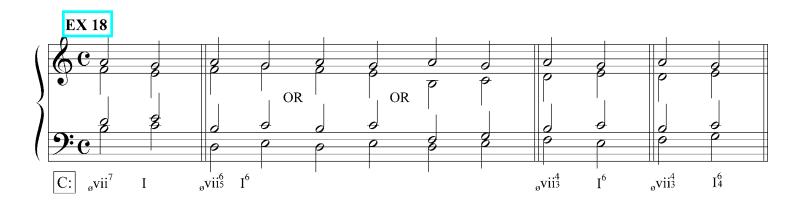


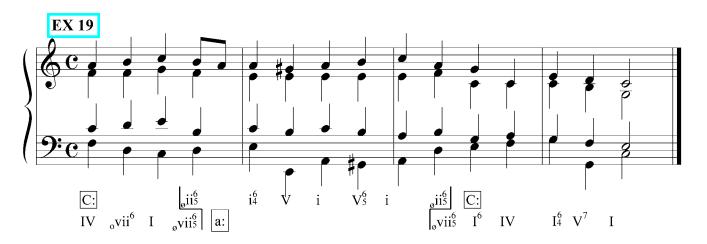


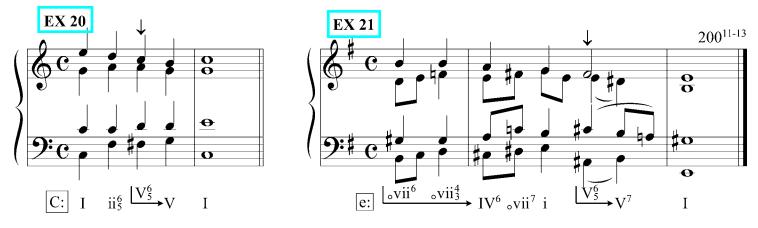


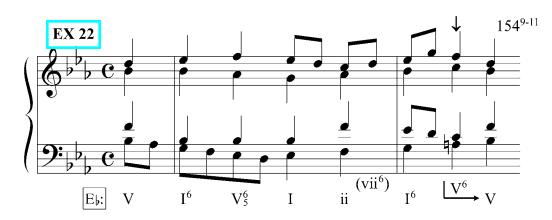


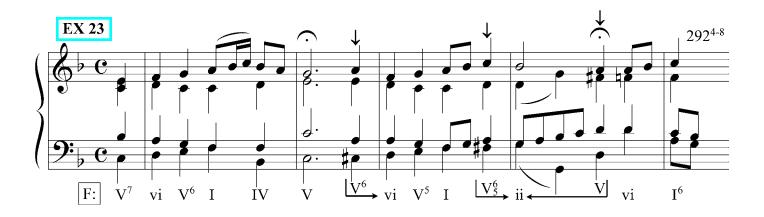


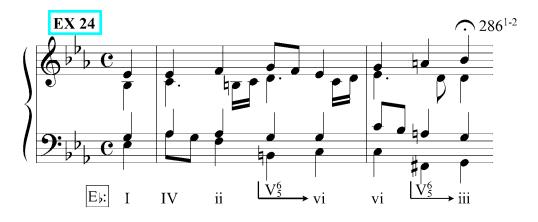


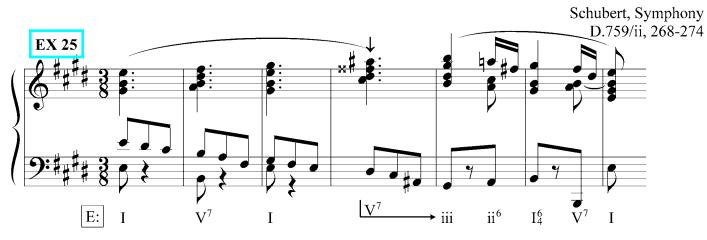


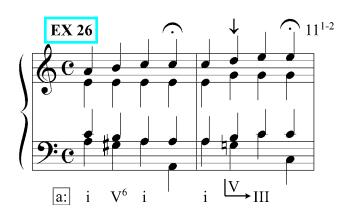


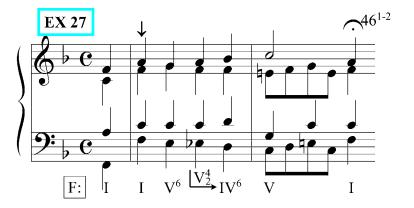


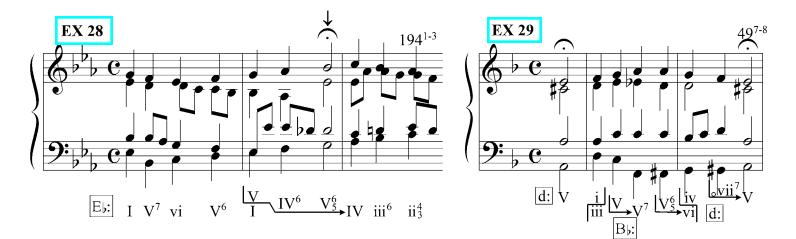


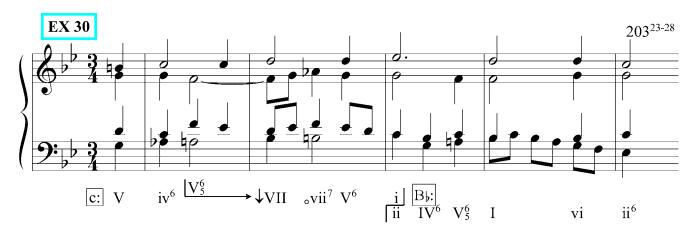




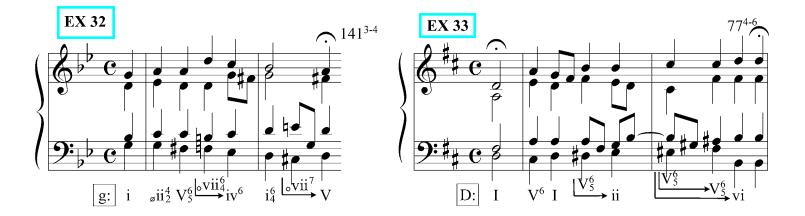




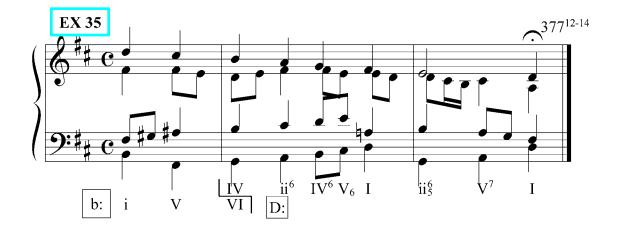


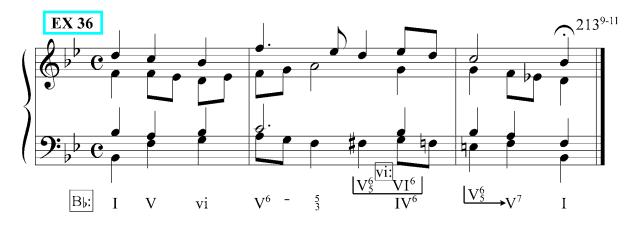


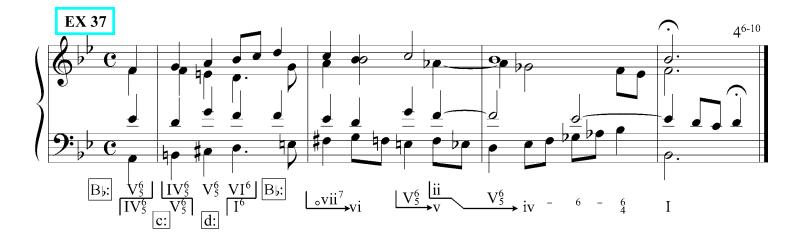


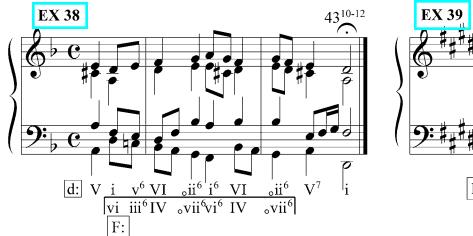


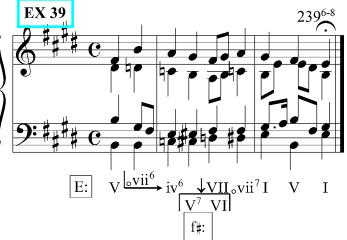


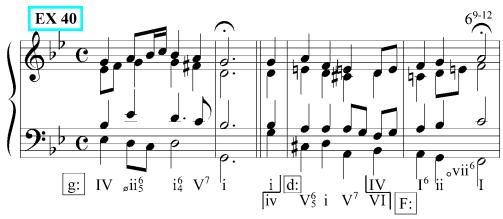


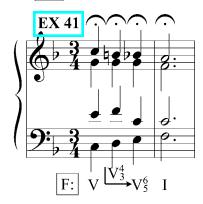


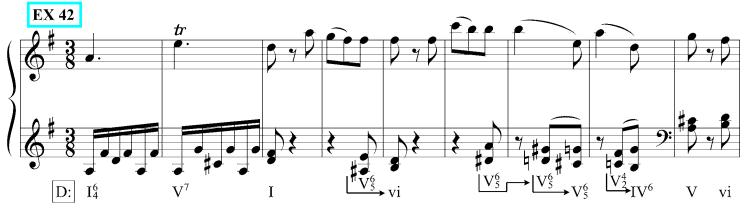








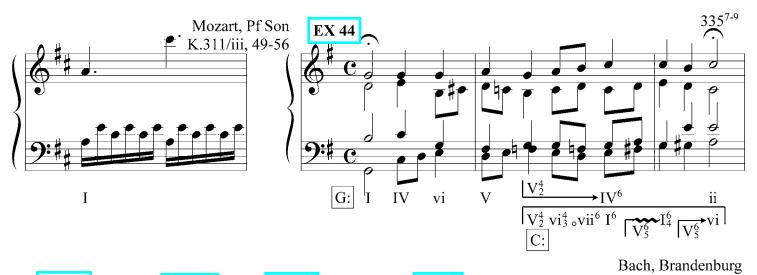


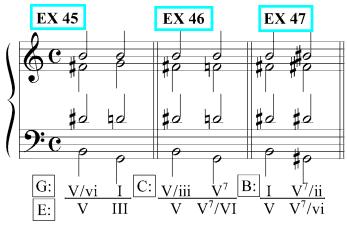


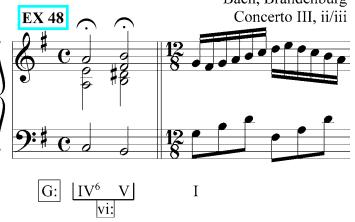
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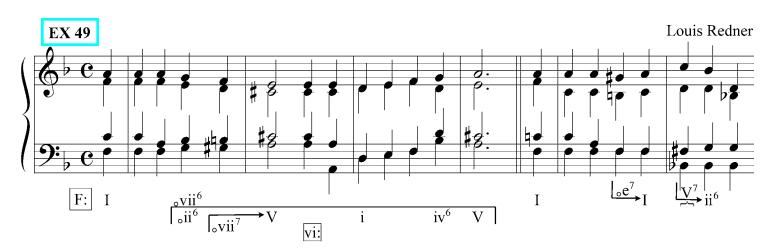


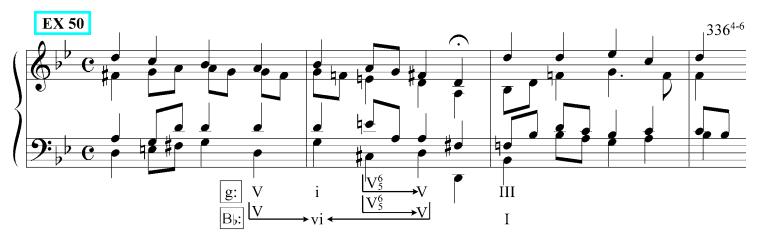


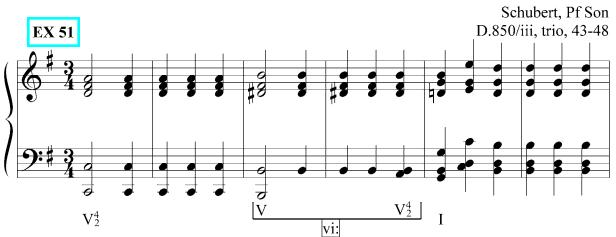


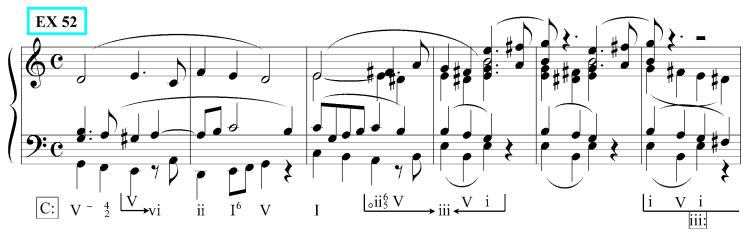


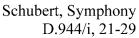




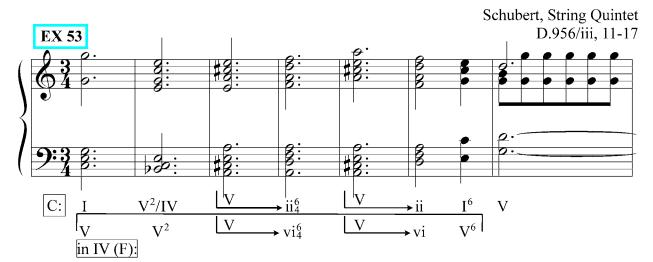


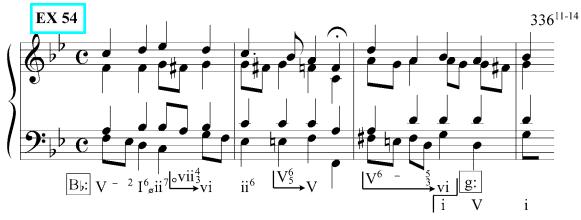


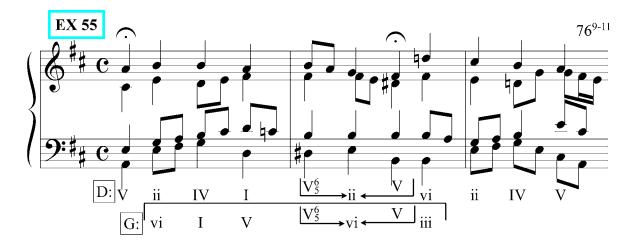


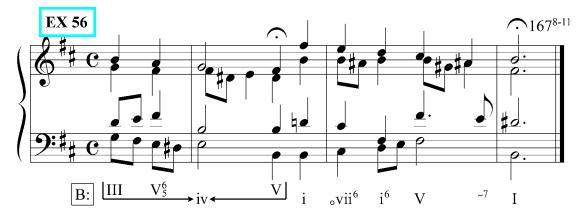


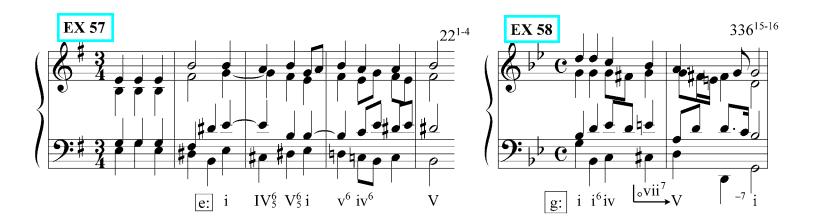


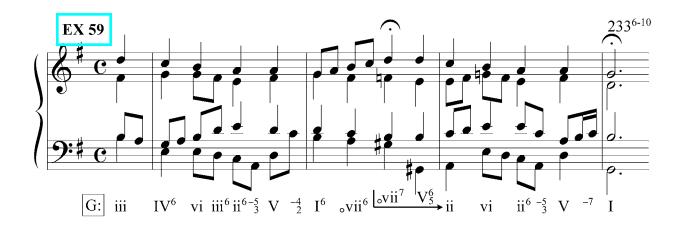




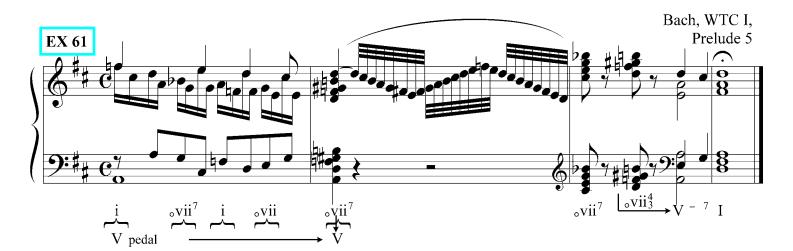


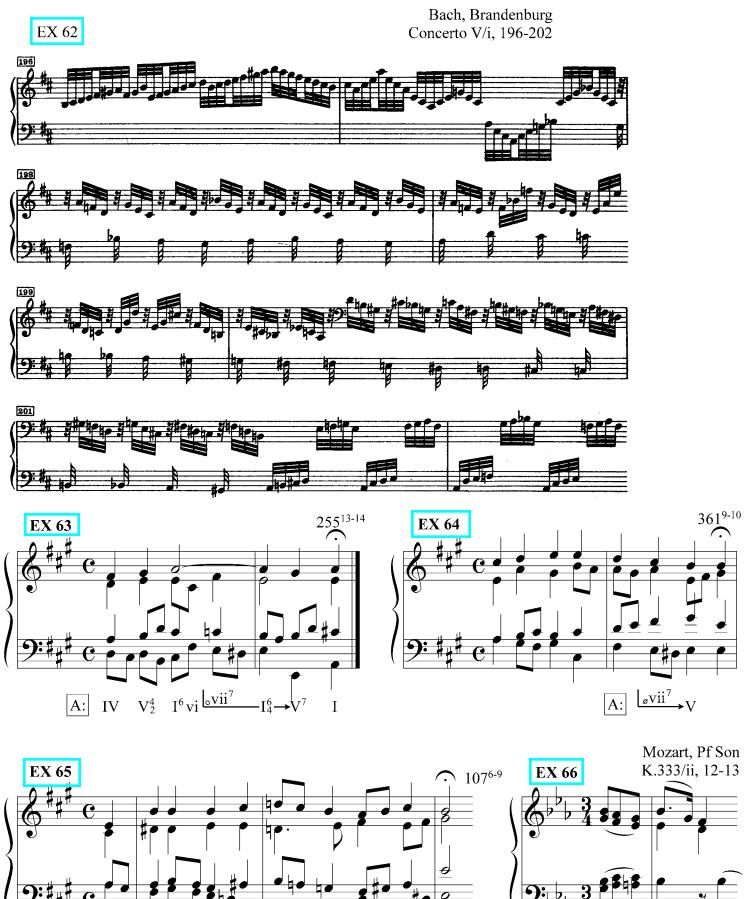












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