

Augmented Sixth Chords

The augmented sixth chords are named Italian, French, and German. Augmented sixth chords are often identified using an abbreviation of their respective names. Augmented sixth chords progress to a dominant chord or to a tonic six-four followed by the dominant chord.

The dissonant augmented sixth interval normally occurs in outer voices and resolves to the *dominant octave*. Tendencies of the chromatically altered notes must be followed. Commonly used approach chords are supertonic, subdominant, or submediant chords.

ITALIAN

The *Italian sixth* is constructed on the raised subdominant scale degree and is used in first inversion with doubled fifth. It is analyzed and figured as IV_3^{\flat} .

The figure shows two musical examples of the Italian Augmented Sixth chord. The first example is in F# major (F#), and the second is in Eb major (Eb). Each example consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff shows the chord in first inversion with a doubled fifth. The bass staff shows the chord in first inversion with a doubled fifth. The chords are analyzed and figured as IV_3^{\flat} and V in both keys. The first example shows a progression from IV_3^{\flat} to V , and the second example shows a progression from IV_3^{\flat} to V . The analysis labels are: (It) IV_3^{\flat} V (It) IV_3^{\flat} I_4^{\flat} V (It) IV_3^{\flat} V^{\flat} .

FIGURE 16.1. The Italian Augmented Sixth

FRENCH

The *French sixth* is constructed on the supertonic scale degree and is used in second inversion. It is analyzed and figured as II_4^{\flat} .

$E^b:$ $d^\sharp:$
 $\Pi \frac{4}{3}$ V $\Pi \frac{4}{3}$ V^\sharp $\Pi \frac{4}{3}$ $i \frac{6}{4}$ V^\sharp
 (Fr) (Fr) (Fr)

FIGURE 16.2. The French Augmented Sixth

GERMAN

There are two forms of the *German sixth*. The first is constructed on the raised subdominant scale degree and is used in first inversion. It will progress to the dominant chord in major or minor. It may also progress to the tonic six-four followed by the dominant chord in minor. It is analyzed and figured as $IV^{\flat 5}$. The parallel fifths that occur in resolving this chord to the dominant are acceptable, but they should not appear in the outer voices.

$D:$ $f:$
 (P/5) (P/5)
 $IV \frac{4}{5}$ V $IV \frac{4}{5}$ V^\sharp $IV \frac{4}{5}$ $i \frac{6}{4}$ V^\sharp
 (Gr) (Gr) (Gr)

FIGURE 16.3 The German Augmented Sixth on the Raised Subdominant

The second form of the *German sixth* is constructed on the raised supertonic scale degree and is used in second inversion. It will progress to the tonic six-four followed by the dominant chord in major. It is analyzed and figured as $\overset{\flat}{\text{II}} \overset{\flat}{\text{4}}$ ₃.

G \flat :

$\overset{\flat}{\text{II}} \overset{\flat}{\text{4}}$ ₃ $\text{I} \overset{\flat}{\text{6}} \overset{\flat}{\text{4}}$ V
(Gr)

FIGURE 16.4. The German Augmented Sixth on the Raised Supertonic

Occasionally, other forms of augmented sixth are used in different inversions or are constructed on other scale degrees leading to other than dominant chords. The interval relationships must remain intact and chromatic tendencies must be followed.

