CHAPTER 17

Neapolitan Sixth Chord

A *Neapolitan sixth* chord is a major triad constructed on the lowered supertonic scale degree and is used in first inversion. It is analyzed and figured as $\text{II}^{\flat 6}_{\flat 3}$. $\text{II}^{\flat 6}_{3}$. The chord has a subdominant function. The third is always doubled.

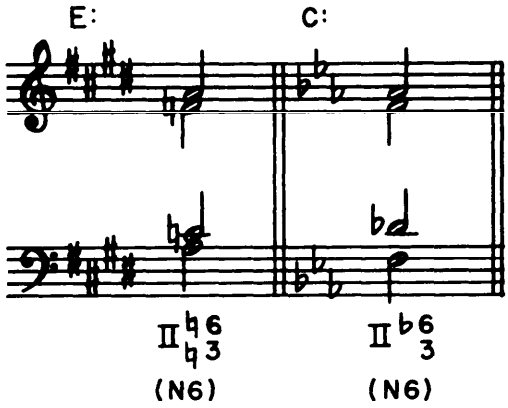

FIGURE 17.1. The Neapolitan Sixth Chord

The N6 chord progresses to dominant harmony or dominant harmony decorated by tonic six-four. When resolving to the dominant chord the lowered supertonic (root of N6) moves to the leading tone (third of V). This produces a cross relation which is not objectionable.

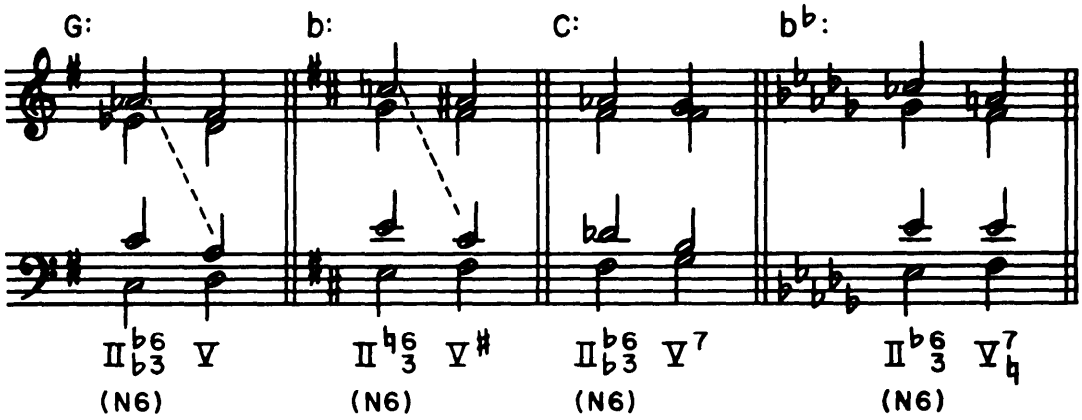

FIGURE 17.2. Progressions of the Neapolitan Sixth

The Neapolitan chord may occur in root position progressing to a root position tonic chord. The fifth will ascend to the tonic to avoid parallel fifths.

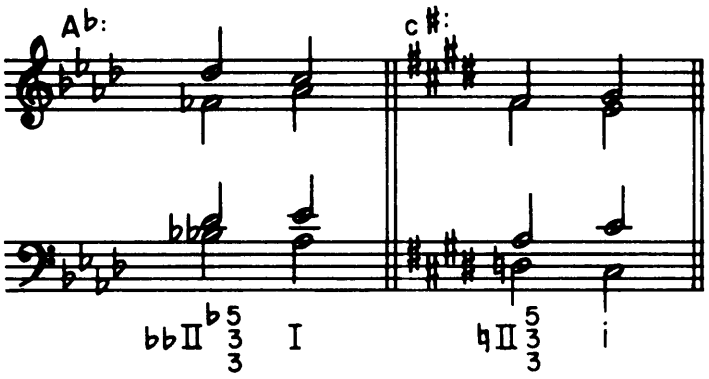

FIGURE 17.3. Voice Leading of the Neapolitan Chord in Root Position

The Neapolitan sixth chord may be preceded by its secondary dominant or secondary dominant seventh chord.

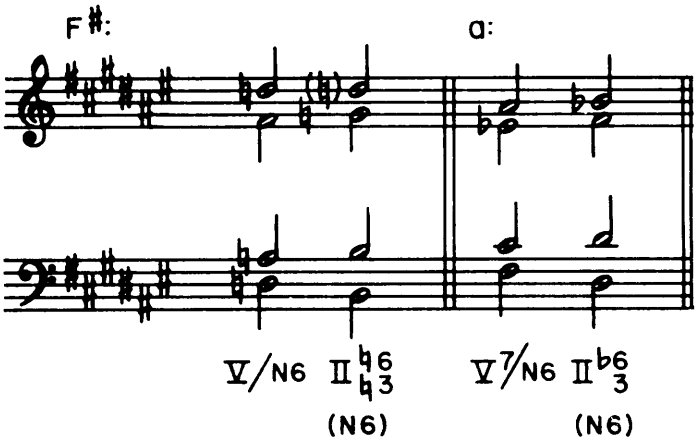

FIGURE 17.4. The Neapolitan Sixth Preceded by Secondary Dominant

Chords similar to the Neapolitan chord may be found on other scale degrees progressing to other than dominant chords.