

CHAPTER 6

Inversions of Primary Triads

Triad inversion is discussed in Basic Music (TC 12-41/NAVEDTRA 10244). Inversions are used to give the Bass voice smoothness and variety. Voice leading may differ from that described for root position primary triads; however, objectionable motion must still be avoided.

FIRST INVERSION

First inversion primary triads require no new doubling rules. Figured bass for triads in first inversion with the:

root doubled is $\begin{matrix} 6 \\ 6 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$. This is often abbreviated $\begin{matrix} 6 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$ or more commonly 6.

B:

FIGURE 6.1: Doubled Root Figuring for First Inversion

G^b:

FIGURE 6.2: Doubled Fifth Figuring for First Inversion

third doubled is 8
6.
3

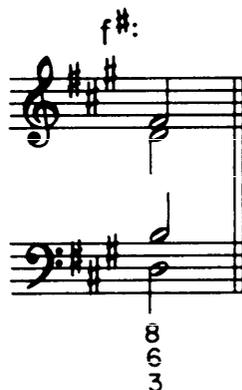


FIGURE 6.3: Doubled Third Figuring for First Inversion

root tripled and fifth omitted is 6
6 This voicing is rarely used and should be avoided
6

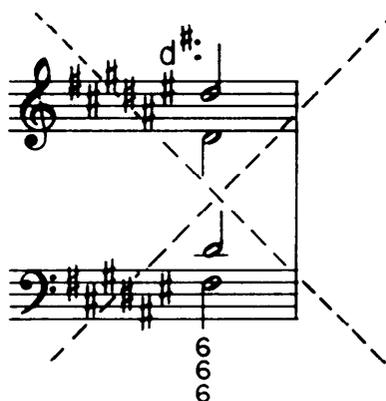


FIGURE 6.4 Tripled Root Figuring for First Inversion

CHORD SUCCESSION

Chord succession involving first inversion triads remains the same as that for root position. Although IV6 to V6 is now available in major key, it is not written in minor (iv6 to V6) as this results in an augmented second in the Bass voice.

A *Phrygian cadence* is created with the use of inversions in a minor key. It is a form of Half cadence created by the progression iv6 to V# with subdominant to dominant voice leading in the Soprano. The semitone in the Bass voice resembles the lowered supertonic to tonic movement and the Soprano resembles the subtonic to tonic movement of a Phrygian mode.

FIGURE 6.5: Phrygian Cadence

SECOND INVERSION

Second inversion chords generally do not take part in a progression but rather appear in a pattern in conjunction with other chords. Double the fifth of all second inversion chords.

This results in a figured bass of $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ 6, 6 \\ 4, 4 \end{matrix}$ being the accepted abbreviation. Second inversion chords are commonly called *Six-Four Chords*.

FIGURE 6.6: Second Inversion Figuring

TYPES OF SECOND INVERSIONS

Cadential

The most widely used of all second inversions is the *Cadential six-four*, a second inversion tonic chord which moves to the dominant chord at a cadence. Normally, the sixth and fourth above the Bass note resolve down by step to a fifth and third respectively. A cadential six-four and its resolution to the dominant usually appear in a strong-weak rhythmic relationship. A weak-strong relationship may occur at a Half cadence. In triple meter it is often found on the second beat with the final tonic triad occurring on the first

beat of the following measure.

$\text{IV } \text{IV}^6 \text{I}_4 \text{V } \text{I}$ $\text{i}^6 \text{iv } \text{V}^4 \text{iv}_3 \text{i}_4 \text{V}^4$ $\text{IV } \text{I}_4 \text{V } \text{I}$ $\text{IV } \text{I}_4 \text{V}$

Cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ in a half cadence Cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ in triple meter Cadential $\frac{6}{4}$ weak-strong in a half cadence

FIGURE 6.7: Cadential Six-Four

Passing

A *passing six-four* occurs when a second inversion chord appears between root position and first inversion of another chord. Therefore, a V^6_4 may appear between a I and I⁶ or a I⁶ and I. A I^6_4 may appear between a IV and IV⁶ or a IV⁶ and IV. Passing six-fours must appear in a weak rhythmic position.

$\text{i } \text{V}_4 \text{i}^6 \text{iv}$ $\text{IV}^6 \text{IV } \text{I}^6 \text{V}_4 \text{I}$ $\text{IV } \text{I}_4 \text{IV}^6$

$\text{V}^\# \text{iv}^6 \text{i}_4 \text{iv } \text{V}^\#$ $\text{I } \text{V}_4 \text{I}^6$

FIGURE 6.8: Passing Six-Four

Auxiliary

An *auxiliary six-four* (also called a *pedal six-four*) occurs between two root positions of the same chord where the fifth of the auxiliary six-four is the same note as the root of the root position chord. Expressed in terms of voice motion, an auxiliary six-four occurs when the third and fifth of a root position triad, with root doubled, ascend by step and return. Auxiliary six-fours must occur in a weak rhythmic position.

I IV⁶₄ I V⁶₃ I i⁶₃ IV V[#] i⁶₄ V[#] V⁶₃ i i iv⁶₄ i V[#]

FIGURE 6.9: Auxiliary Six-Four

Arpeggiated

An *arpeggiated six-four* occurs when the second inversion of a chord is immediately preceded or followed by the same chord in root position and/or first inversion.

i i⁶₄ iv⁶ V* V⁶₃ V⁶₄ I i i⁶ i⁶₄ iv IV⁶ IV⁶₄ V⁶ I

FIGURE 6.10: Arpeggiated Six-Four

