

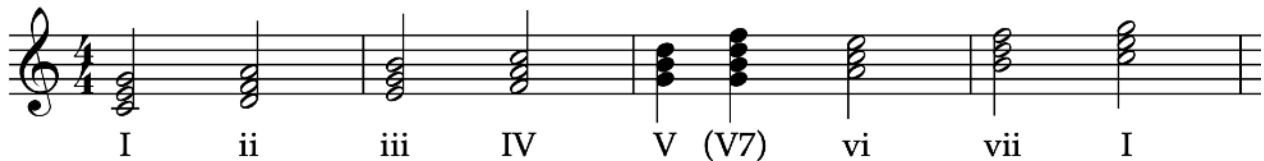
## Rob's Piano Room - Module 17 - PDF Secondary Dominants

### Main points

There is a lot in this module - I would recommend learning each new chord/concept on its own and practicing it until comfortable before moving on, just to keep it clear. There is nothing saying you have to know all of these before you can use any of them

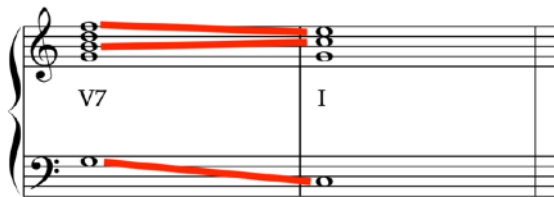
Before we start looking at how secondary dominants work, let's review a few theoretical concepts

We'll first review the chords of the major scale



So we have three major chords (I, IV and V) and three minors (ii, iii, and vi), as well as the vii, which is a diminished triad.

As well, let's review the idea of V7 to I, as this will be very important in our secondary dominant discussion. The important part here is that the various movements from chord to chord shown here work together to confirm the feeling of I as the home base chord.



Just hearing the I chord by itself does not convince us that we have moved to that key, but the combination of V7 to one, and the various pulls inside the chord progression move to solidify I as the new key

Also notice the shape of the V7 chord - a major triad with a minor 7th as the top note. We are going to use this specific shape often in this discussion - let's refer to it as a 'dominant' shape chord.

Now let's look at the progression vi-ii-V-I. Notice the the root of the (minor) vi chord is a fifth above the ii chord that follows. We are now going to replace the vi chord, which is minor, with a dominant shape chord, which we'll notate as V<sup>17</sup> - ii - V - I. It is as if we are momentarily pretending that ii is the home base chord and preceding it by its dominant (the chord a fifth above) and giving this chord the appropriate shape (major triad plus minor 7th). However, as soon as we reach the ii chord itself, we resume thinking as if we are in C. It's as if we were playing the V7 chord that would go to ii (if ii was home base), but then once we are actually on the ii we revert to our original key. The effect of all of this is to heighten the pull towards the ii, and add some new colours to the progression.

VI7  
or "V7 of ii"  
(dominant quality chord  
leading to ii, as if ii  
momentarily  
acting as I)

ii      V7      I

(Note that VI7 can lead to ii as if it was its dominant ,  
because VI is a perfect fifth above ii)

This is what a secondary dominant is: a dominant shape chord that leads to a chord in the scale **other than I**, in order to add new colours and movement to the progression.

Now lets's play this in the left hand, and make melodies over top in the right hand, using just chord tones on the VI7 chord, for now. As usual, start out of time at first. Remember to pay attention to resolving the seven and the three of the secondary dominant chord in a satisfactory way to the next chord, as we saw above with the dominant chord example.

Then when you can, try it in 4/4. This is just an example left hand, feel free to .modify for your needs.

Spend some time with this progression before moving on, so each one is as clear as possible

Next , let's look at the secondary dominant that would lead to three. Five notes above three is seven, so we end up playing a VII7 chord ( a dominant shape chord with the seven as the root, B7 in C major for example) to precede the iii

Here are two possible chord progressions employing this

VII7  
or "V7 of iii"  
(dominant quality chord  
leading to ii, as if ii  
momentarily  
acting as I)

iii VI7 ii V7 I

(Note that VII7 can lead to iii as if it was its dominant , because VII is a perfect fifth above iii)

VII7 iii IV I

Familiarize yourself with these progressions, then move them to the left hand as above, and start playing right hand melodies overtop, out of time at first as always. Still play only chord tones on the secondary dominants themselves

Again, spend time on these progressions before moving on

We will now move on to the secondary dominant that leads to vi. The three is five notes up from the six, so we will have a III7 chord leading to the vi chord.

III7  
or "V7 of vi"  
(dominant quality chord  
leading to vi, as if vi  
momentarily  
acting as I)

vi IV V7 I

Note - III is five notes above vi

Practice this progression in the same way - first learning it as above, then in the left hand, then with melodies, using only chord tones on the secondary dominant itself

Now that we have spent time becoming familiar with these secondary dominant chords, it's time to look at how to use non-chord tones on them, with our melodies.

Notice that we have learned the secondary dominants leading to minor first. This is because they all behave in the same way when adding non-chord tones.

The general rule for these minor examples is that the secondary dominant chord will use the harmonic minor scale of the chord IT IS RESOLVING TO. For example, the VI7 chord, which resolves to ii, will use the harmonic minor scale of the ii, when choosing non chord notes. Note though, that once we reach the resolution chord itself, we will revert back to thinking of the scale of the original key.

As an example, in the key of C, if we have A7 to D minor, The A7 will pick non chord tones from the A harmonic minor scale. But, as soon as we reach D minor, we are back to using the C scale notes again.

VI7

D harmonic minor  
(Harmonic minor of ii)  
Starting from the 5th!

Here are the scales of the other two examples we have studied, in the key of C



First let's look at the secondary dominant resolving to V, which is the II7

The image shows a musical score for a piano, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into three measures. In the first measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C, labeled 'II7 (V7 of V)'. The bass staff contains a single note, F. In the second measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C with a flat on the C (F# A Cb), labeled 'V7'. The bass staff contains a single note, F. In the third measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F, A, and C, labeled 'I'. The bass staff contains a single note, F.

Now let's look at the secondary dominant leading to IV, which is actually I7. The example here is commonly heard, Starting on the I chord, then adding the unexpected flat 7th to lead us to the IV chord.

The image shows a musical score for a piano, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into five measures. In the first measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C, labeled 'I'. The bass staff contains a single note, F. In the second measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C with a flat on the C (F# A Cb), labeled 'I7 (V7 of IV)'. The bass staff contains a single note, F. In the third measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C with a flat on the C (F# A Cb), labeled 'V7'. The bass staff contains a single note, F. In the fourth measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C with a flat on the C (F# A Cb), labeled 'I'. The bass staff contains a single note, F. In the fifth measure, the treble staff contains a triad of F#, A, and C, labeled 'I'. The bass staff contains a single note, F.

So, to review. when using a secondary dominant leading to major we have can just use the tonic scale passing tones. When leading to minor, we should stick to the minor scale options shown above , as not doing so will sound awkward.

In a minor key, we will have three good options for secondary dominants – V7/iv, V7/V, V7/VI. Let's look at these now. They behave exactly as they do in major. However, notice that the V7 of V will sound best using the minor scale context for your passing tones, etc, as the V chord in minor would have been minor before raising the seventh.

V7 of iv, leading to iv is I7 – iv

(For example C7 to F minor in the key of C minor)

(Use iv harmonic on the I7 chord - semitone 'shortcut' seen above applies)

V7 of V, leading to V is II7-V

(For example D7 to G (or G7) in the key of C minor)

(Use v harmonic on the II7 chord - semitone 'shortcut' seen above applies)

V7 of VI leading to VI is III7 – VI

(For example Eb7 to Ab in the key of C minor)

The next few pages show some left hand progressions for practising secondary dominants in major and minor. Please feel free to change left hand inversions, time signatures, etc, as well as transposing to different keys once you feel ready.

VI7 ii V7 I VI7 ii V7 I

VII7 iii VI7 ii I V7 I I

VII7 III7 iii iii IV V7 I I

III7 III7 vi vi ii V7 I I

I II7 V7 I II7 V7 I I

I I I7 I7 IV V7 I I

16 bar example using all 5 secondary dominants in Major

I I7 IV I III7 vi II7 V7

I vi III7 iii VI7 ii V7 I

i I7 iv I II7 V7 i V

i III7 VI iv i V7 i

