

FUNDAMENTAL HARMONY

Dr. Declan Plummer

Lesson 11: Chromatic Chords Part 2

(Diminished 7th Chords, Augmented Sixth Chords and Neapolitan Chords)

Creating the Neapolitan Chord

1. Like the augmented 6th chord it is a type of chromatic alteration.
2. It is **ALWAYS** a major chord built on the lowered second scale degree.
3. In root position it is referred to as a bII , but it is more common in first inversion (bII^6), so it's frequently referred to as a Neapolitan Sixth Chord (N6) because of the **minor 6th degree** that results from first inversion.
4. Common amongst 18th Century Neapolitan School of composers: Scarlatti, Pergolesi, Cimarosa, but established well before them (used by Purcell in 17th Century)



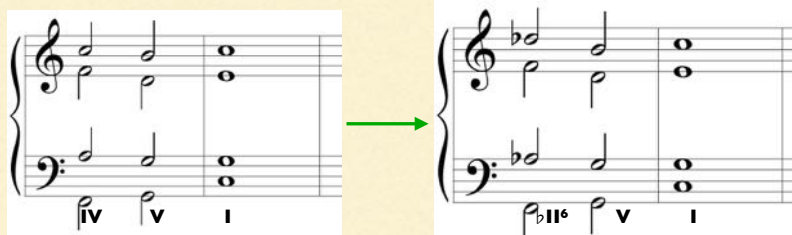
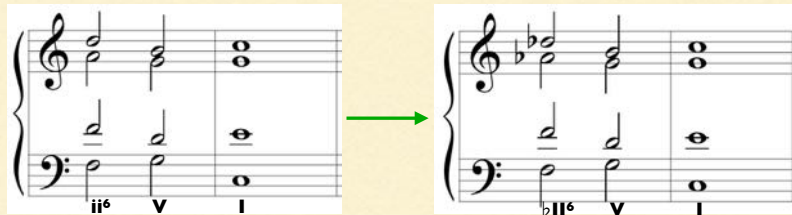
Key: C Major bII^6
or N6



Key: C Minor bII^6
or N6

Using the Neapolitan Chord

5. Usually appears at authentic cadences as a chromatic alteration of a pre-dominant harmony, substituting for IV or ii (particularly ii^6) chord. So like augmented chords it can be another **type of pre-dominant chord!**



The Neapolitan Chord in Minor Keys



**In minor keys,
only one note
needs altered!**



Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.14 'Moonlight Sonata'

Start

VI i2 V7 4/5 4/5 4/5 i

iv=F#-A-C#
bII=D#-F#-A

Nocturne in F minor, Op.55 No.1 by Chopin

0:16 (p) etc.

V₅ i bVII⁶ III bII⁶ i⁶/₄ V⁷ i

Waltz No.2 Op.32 by Chopin
espressivo

A minor: I bII⁶ V⁷ VI

Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op.31 No.2 (1st mvt)
(Allegro) 7:50

D minor: bII⁶ bII⁶

Chopin, Prelude, Op.28 No.20
(Largo) 0:42 (p) *ritenuto*

not as common in root position bII

Mozart: Piano Concerto in A K488 (2nd mvt)
Adagio 0:30

F[♯]min: I VI bII⁶ i⁶/₄ V⁷ i

Modulation & Neapolitan Chords

6. Like other chromatic chords, the Neapolitan chord can also be used for **modulation**: it is the most common means of modulating down **a semitone** (e.g. A \flat major to G minor)

2:50 (Allegretto) Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op.31 No.1 (3rd mvt)

A \flat major: V_5^6 — I — V_5^6
 G minor: bII^6

Piano Sonata in A, D.959 by Schubert

A minor: i^6 $VI^{b6}_{(Germ.)}$ i^4 V^7
 (A minor): Bb major: bII^6 II^4_3 A minor: V^7 $VI^{b6}_{(Germ.)}$ i^4 V^7
 (A minor): A major: I^6 II^4_3 I^4_4 V^7

3:56 (Allegro) Beethoven, Piano Sonata in C minor ('Pathétique'), Op.13 (3rd mvt)

C minor: i^6 bII^6
 A \flat major: IV^6 V_5^6 —
 C minor: VI