

CHAPTER 13

Nondominant Seventh Chords

TOPICS

Nondominant Seventh Chords Minor-Minor Diminished-Minor
Major-Major

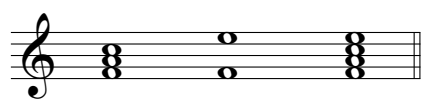
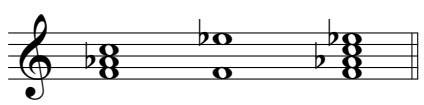
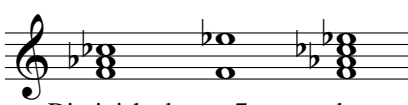
IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

The previous two chapters were devoted to seventh chords possessing dominant function (V^7 , $vii^{\circ 7}$, and $vii^{\circ 7}$). This chapter addresses the nondominant seventh chords—a collection of chords built on the remaining scale degrees. These seventh chords often serve as preparations for dominant function harmonies.

Nondominant Seventh Chords

Nondominant seventh chords are those diatonic seventh chords that do not possess dominant function. Since only the dominant and leading-tone seventh chords are considered to have dominant function, then all others are nondominant seventh chords. Although the nondominant category encompasses a variety of seventh chord qualities (particularly when we consider the three variants of the minor scale), nondominant seventh chords appear most often in music literature as *major-major* (MM), *minor-minor* (mm), and *diminished-minor* (dm) seventh chords.

Figure 13.1

Major-Major (MM):	Minor-Minor (mm):	Diminished-Minor (dm):
		
Major triad + M7 = MM	Minor triad + m7 = mm	Diminished + m7 = dm triad

Roman Numeral Symbols

Nondominant seventh chords are represented in Roman numeral analysis with a superscript ⁷ attached to the Roman numeral triad symbols. No additional characters are necessary for the major-major and minor-minor seventh chords, but the diminished-minor chord is accompanied by the half-diminished symbol (^ø) positioned between the Roman numeral and the ⁷:

1. Examples of nondominant *major-major* (MM) symbols: I^7 , IV^7 , III^7 , VI^7 .
2. Examples of nondominant *minor-minor* (mm) symbols: i^7 , ii^7 , iii^7 , iv^7 , vi^7 .
3. Examples of nondominant *diminished-minor* (dm) symbols: $ii^{\circ 7}$, $vi^{\circ 7}$.

Seventh Chords in Major and Minor Keys

Illustrated in Figure 13.2 are all of the diatonic seventh chords generated by the major and three minor scales. Although some of these chords do not appear in music literature very often, it is nonetheless important for you to understand that variances in the scales influence the quality of diatonic seventh chords. The double-letter label beneath each chord specifies (1) the quality of the triad and (2) the quality of the seventh:

MM = major-major	dd = diminished-diminished
Mm = major-minor	mM = minor-major
mm = minor-minor	AM = augmented-major
dm = diminished-minor	

Note that some of the Roman numeral symbols in Figure 13.2 are accompanied by a subscript M or m beneath the 7. The $\overset{7}{M}$ means that the interval between the chord root and seventh is major; $\overset{7}{m}$ means that the seventh is minor. This letter has been added as a courtesy symbol to specify the quality of the seventh in the less-common seventh chords.

Figure 13.2

Major scale:

Major scale chords in C major:

MM	mm	mm	MM	Mm	mm	dm
C: I ⁷	ii ⁷	iii ⁷	IV ⁷	V ⁷	vi ⁷	vii ^{ø7}

Natural minor scale:

Natural minor scale chords in c minor:

mm	dm	MM	mm	mm	MM	Mm
c: i ⁷	ii ^{ø7}	III ⁷	iv ⁷	v ⁷	VI ⁷	VII ⁷ _m

Harmonic minor scale:

Harmonic minor scale chords in c minor:

mM	dm	AM	mm	Mm	MM	dd
c: i ⁷ _M	ii ^{ø7}	III ⁺⁷ _M	iv ⁷	V ⁷	VI ⁷	vii ^{ø7}

Melodic minor scale:

Melodic minor scale chords in c minor:

mM	mm	AM	Mm	Mm	dm	dm
c: i ⁷ _M	ii ⁷	III ⁺⁷ _M	IV ⁷ _m	V ⁷	vi ^{ø7}	vii ^{ø7}

Although the Roman numeral symbols in the preceding figure may seem complicated, some of the symbols are rarely used in analysis. Figure 13.3 lists the diatonic Roman numeral symbols that appear most often in major and minor keys. It is important to note that the chords indicated for minor keys do not use just one form of the minor scale. The mediant seventh chord (III⁷) is derived from the natural minor scale, whereas the dominant and leading-tone seventh chords (V⁷ and vii^{ø7}) are byproducts of the harmonic and melodic minor scales.

Figure 13.3

Seventh Chord Analysis—Major Keys

C: I⁷ ii⁷ iii⁷ IV⁷ V⁷ vi⁷ vii^{ø7}

Seventh Chord Analysis—Minor Keys

c: i⁷ ii^{ø7} III⁷ iv⁷ V⁷ VI⁷ vii^{ø7}

↑ Natural Minor ↑ Harmonic/Melodic Minor

Macro Analysis Symbols

The macro analysis system also recognizes seventh chords with a superscript ⁷ label. This ⁷ is coupled with root and chord quality symbols that differentiate the various types of seventh chords. The following chart summarizes the macro analysis symbols used to label both dominant and nondominant seventh chords:

Macro Analysis Symbol	Chord Quality	Examples
Capital letter with ^{M7}	major-major (MM)	G ^{M7} , F ^{#M7} , B ^{bM7}
Capital letter with ⁷	major-minor (Mm)	G ⁷ , F ^{#7} , B ^{b7}
Lowercase letter with ⁷	minor-minor (mm)	g ⁷ , f ^{#7} , b ^{b7}
Lowercase letter with ^{ø7}	diminished-minor (dm)	g ^{ø7} , f ^{#ø7} , b ^{bø7}
Lowercase letter with ^{o7}	diminished-diminished (dd)	g ^{o7} , f ^{#o7} , b ^{bo7}

The addition of a seventh to a triad does not change the application of the macro analysis slur symbols. Solid and dotted slurs are attached to their respective circle and leading-tone progressions whether or not chord sevenths are present. (See Appendix B for a summary of the macro analysis symbols.)

Figure 13.4

Schumann: Novelletten, op. 21, no. 2, mm. 313–317.

Macro analysis: A⁷ D^{M7} G^{M7} c^{#ø7} f^{#7} b⁷ e⁷ A⁷ D

(D: V⁷ I⁷ IV⁷ vii^{ø7} iii⁷ vi⁷ ii⁷ V⁷ I)

History

In the Renaissance period, music was not organized in terms of functional harmony. However, like the dominant and leading-tone seventh chords, vertical sonorities resembling nondominant seventh chords may be found.

With the advent of functional harmony at the beginning of the baroque period, nondominant seventh chords, although sparse at the outset, grew in numbers to become an integral part of baroque musical style. Figure 13.5 is a typical example of nondominant seventh chord usage in the baroque period.

Figure 13.5

Bach: “O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort” (“O Eternity, Thou Word of Thunder”), BWV 20, mm. 3–4.

F d g a⁷ d⁷ g⁷ F C
 F: I vi ii⁶ iii⁷ vi⁷ ii⁷ I⁶ V

Continuing the trend developed in the baroque period, nondominant seventh chords are found in large numbers in the music of the classical period. Figure 13.6 demonstrates the sequential treatment of a series of seventh chords joined by diatonic circle progressions.

Figure 13.6

Mozart: Sonata in F Major, K. 332, I: Allegro, mm. 196–201.

f bb⁷ Eb⁷ Ab^{M7} Db^{M7} g^{ø7} C⁷
 f: i iv⁷ VII⁷ III⁷ VI⁷ ii^{ø7} V⁷

With the increased use of altered chords (chords containing nondiatonic notes), nondominant seventh chords, especially those in circle progressions, became somewhat less common in the romantic period. The following excerpt illustrates a typical use of nondominant seventh chords in this period. Note the organization of chord roots, alternating between an ascending third and a descending fifth. This root movement results in unresolved sevenths for some of the chords.

Figure 13.7

Schumann: “Ich Grolle Nicht” (“I Bear No Grudge”) from *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, no. 7, mm. 5–8.

The figure shows a musical score for Schumann's "Ich Grolle Nicht" from *Dichterliebe*, op. 48, no. 7, measures 5–8. The top staff is the vocal line in C major, 4/4 time, with the lyrics "E - wig ver - lor' - nes Lieb, e - wig ver - lor' - nes Lieb,". The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with a simple bass line. Below the piano part, chord symbols are provided: a, C^{M7}, F^{M7}, a⁷, d⁷, F^{M7}, b^{ø7}. Roman numerals are also shown: C: vi, I₃⁴, IV⁷, vi₃⁴, ii⁷, IV₃⁴, vii^{ø7}.

Although functional harmony was on the decline during the post-romantic and impressionistic periods, the chord qualities represented among the nondominant seventh chords were used in large numbers. In Figure 13.8, Debussy includes diminished-minor, minor-minor, and major-major seventh chords, but the setting is the Aeolian mode. Even though Roman numerals can be applied to the individual chords, note that the harmonic movement does not progress in a tonal fashion.

Figure 13.8

Debussy: Sarabande from *Pour le Piano* (For the Piano), mm. 39–40.

The figure shows a musical score for Debussy's Sarabande from *Pour le Piano*, measures 39–40. The score is in D major, 3/4 time, and includes the instruction "animez un peu" and "p très soutenu". The piano part features complex chordal textures. Below the piano part, chord symbols are provided: d^{ø7}, c^{#7}, d^{ø7}, E^{M7}, d^{ø7}, c^{#7}, d^{ø7}. Roman numerals are also shown: c#: ii^{ø6}₅, i₃⁴, i⁷, ii^{ø6}₅, III₃⁴, ii^{ø4}₃, i₃⁴, ii^{ø6}₅.

Nondominant seventh chords, as functional harmony, ceased to exist in the contemporary period except for those composers making conscious use of traditional materials.

Even so, the romantic period's legacy of nondominant seventh chords continues to occur in large numbers in jazz and popular music. An example is shown in Figure 13.9.

Figure 13.9

Schmidt: "Try to Remember" from *The Fantasticks*, mm. 17–20.

G: iii⁷ vi⁷ ii⁷ V⁷

Nondominant Seventh Chords

Notice the use of popular music symbols in Figure 13.9. The minor-minor quality is indicated by a capital-letter symbol with mi^7 added (Bmi^7 – Emi^7 – Ami^7). Popular music symbols for the other nondominant seventh chord qualities (such as major-major = CMA^7 , major-minor = C^7 , and diminished-minor = $Cmi^7(b5)$), are listed in Appendix C.

APPLICATIONS

Nondominant seventh chords typically resolve in one of three ways: by circle progression, by noncircle progression and resolution of the seventh, and by noncircle progression with nonresolution of the seventh.

Nondominant Seventh Chords in Circle Progressions

Like the dominant seventh (see Chapter 11), nondominant seventh chords usually progress according to the circle pattern iii – vi – ii – V – I –(IV).

Nondominant Seventh Chord:	Resolves to:
ii^7 and $ii^{\circ 7}$	V or V^7
vi^7 and VI^7	ii or ii°
iii^7 and III^7	vi or VI

Resolution of the Seventh Factor

Circle progressions permit the seventh factor of a nondominant seventh chord to resolve down one scale step to the third factor of the following chord.

Figure 13.10

Circle Progressions from Nondominant Seventh Chords.

C: I⁷ IV ii⁷ V iii⁷ vi vi⁷ ii

Figure 13.11 shows some typical circle progressions involving nondominant seventh chords in inversion.

Figure 13.11

Circle Progressions from Inverted Nondominant Seventh Chords.

C: ii₅⁶ V iii₃⁴ vi vi₂⁴ ii⁶ I₅⁶ IV

Noncircle Treatment

Nondominant seventh chords may also resolve in other ways:

1. The IV⁷ (in major) and iv⁷ (in minor) generally move to V.
2. In circle progressions, all nondominant seventh chords eventually resolve to V. However, sometimes the circle is interrupted, allowing vi⁷, for instance, to resolve to IV (and then V) instead of ii (and then V). Some common progressions are shown in Figure 13.12.

Figure 13.12

Found often:	Avoid:	Better:	Found occasionally:
C: ii ₅ ⁶ (I ₄ ⁴) V	IV ⁷ V	IV ⁷ V	vi ⁷ V
	Parallel 5ths	Doubled 5th	No 7th Resolution
			I ⁷ ii
			Doubled 3rd

Figure 13.13 shows a typical example from music literature. Note the series of circle progressions connecting the nondominant seventh chords as well as the resolutions of sevenths down one scale degree.

Figure 13.13

Handel: Allegro from Suite in F-sharp Minor, G. 206, mm. 30–32.

c# A E A^{M7} f# g^{#7} c# f^{#7} B⁷ E
 E: vi IV I IV⁷ ii⁶ iii⁷ vi ii⁷ V⁷ I

**Voice Leading
of Nondominant
Seventh Chords**

This procedure continues the list presented in Chapters 9, 11, and 12. A complete list of all stylistic practices is found in Appendix A.

14. Resolve the seventh factor of nondominant seventh chords one diatonic scale degree down to the third factor of the next chord (in circle progressions). Otherwise, resolve the seventh factor down one step if its resolution is a part of the following chord.