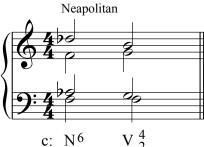
Pre-dominant Chromatic Harmonies: N6 and +6 chords

By Mark Feezell

There are many ways to emphasize or embellish the dominant of a key. Other than secondary dominants and secondary leading tone chords, here are four of the most common chromatic chords used. (Chromatic means using notes outside of the key.)

Neapolitan 6th.

The neapolitan is a major triad built on the lowered second step of the scale. Because the third is usually in the bass, it is often called a "neapolitan 6th." The most important thing to remember about resolving N6 chords is that the voice that has the lowered second step of the scale resolves to the leading tone.



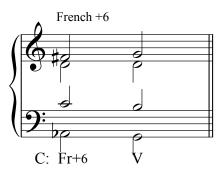
Italian +6

An augmented sixth chord is a chord that contains the interval of the augmented sixth, which resolves to an octave. The +6 is usually created between the lowered sixth step of the scale (already lowered in minor) and the raised fourth step of the scale (here=F#). Their are three main types of +6 chords. The simplest, called an Italian+6, has 3 notes. Study the intervals and resolution on the right.



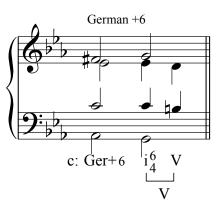
French +6

To create a Fr+6, first build an It+6, then add a note that is a **Major 2nd** above the "center note." In this case, D is a M2 above the "center note" C. Study the intervals and resolution at right.



German +6

To create a Ger+6, first build an It+6, then add a note that is a **minor 3rd** above the "center note." In this case, Eb is a m3 above the "center note" C. Ger+6 chords occur more often in minor keys, because they require only one accidental in minor. (In C major, we would have needed Eb and F#, not just F#.) To smooth the voice leading, Ger+6 chords often resolve to a cadential 6/4 chord before going to the dominant. Study the intervals and resolution at right.



Other +6 chords and resolutions (less common)

- 1. A note other than the lowered sixth step of the scale may be in the bass (order of parts rearranged).
- 2. The +6 **interval** may resolve to the root of a a chord other than the dominant. In this case, you label it as "+6/x" where x is the step of the scale to which the +6 interval resolves.
- 2. The +6 interval may resolve to the third or fifth of a chord instead of its root.
- 3. Some +6 chords contain notes other than a M2 or m3 above the "center note."