

Second Inversion Triads

Second inversion triads NEVER function independently in harmonic progressions. Instead, they depend on an adjacent harmony for their functional significance. Through one of FOUR specific stereotyped usages, second inversion triads add interest to a more fundamental harmonic situation. In this way, second inversion triads *prolong* the more fundamental harmony.

1. Passing 6/4:

- Based on ANY major or minor triad moving from root position to first inversion, or vice-versa.
- Bass moves from root to third OR third to root.
- Another voice has the bass notes in reverse order. (This is called a *voice exchange*.)
- Yet another voice has a lower neighbor figure using the ROOT of the prolonged chord.
- The remaining voice holds the common tone.
- **Metrically UNaccented.**

C: I I⁶ C: I V₄⁶ I⁶ [OR] C: I⁶ I C: I⁶ V₄⁶ I

2. Arpeggio 6/4:

- Bass arpeggiates through A SINGLE triad.
- Upper voices may change notes within the prolonged triad.
- **Metrically UNaccented** - must be preceded by root position OR first inversion of same triad.

3. Pedal 6/4:

- Based on ANY major or minor triad.
- Bass and one other voice restate the SAME NOTE 3 times.
- Remaining two voices have an upper neighbor pattern.
- **Metrically UNaccented.**

ARPEGGIO: PEDAL:

C: I I I I⁶ I C: I I I IV₄⁶ I

4. Cadential 6/4:

- ALWAYS used to prolong a **DOMINANT** harmony.
- MUST resolve to V by the 6th above the bass descending to a 5th, the 4th to a 3rd.
- Can be preceded in the previous bar by chords that lead to dominant, such as IV, ii or I.
- **Metrically ACCENTED.**
- N.B. This is the ONLY situation where you will use a metrically accented 6/4 chord!

C: V I NOTE FIGURED BASS SYMBOLS C: V I

6 5 4 3 2 1