FIGURED BASS

HARMONIZATION

Introduction

This document is intended to introduce the basic of baroque and classical figured bass, and to visualize the rules of its harmonization by examples with comments below (if needed). The examples does not belong to me, neither most of the comments. The book I used to elaborate this document was the book of Dr. Lőrinc Kesztler, ex-professor of the Hungarian Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music.

http://www.kotta.info/en/product/1184/KESZTLER-LORINC-Oesszhangzattan

The document goes through on the basics of figured bass harmonization, not including the altered harmonics theory. It may be published later, but if you are interested, please contact me, and I will send you the sample files to make the look consistent (in Finale 2012).

About the examples:

These examples does not negotiate the formal notations, symbols and numbering of the figured bass harmonization. If you are not proficient, I recommend to read these first:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triad_(music)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inversion_(music)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figured_bass

… and keep on browsing…

All of the examples are in C major / A minor in order to make it easy to read for beginners, and easy to transpose for experts. Further examples I may publish in the future in various keys.

You may also note:
Finale 2012 (the program I use) does not support top- and lower indexes. To clarify this "problem", I used '/' symbols to substitute the "missing index levels".

> **For example:**
> I6/4 means $I^{6}/_{4}$ means I^{6}_{4} means… and so on (including more complicated expressions like #-s, multi-level fractions, etc.)

About me:

My native language is not English, but I owe an advanced level exam of it, not professional. That means, I did my best, when I translated my notes to English, to find the corresponding translation of the professional words (*note, tone, inversion, position, beat, etc.*). If any mistake, typo, bad translation or contradiction are noticed, please do contact me at the following address:

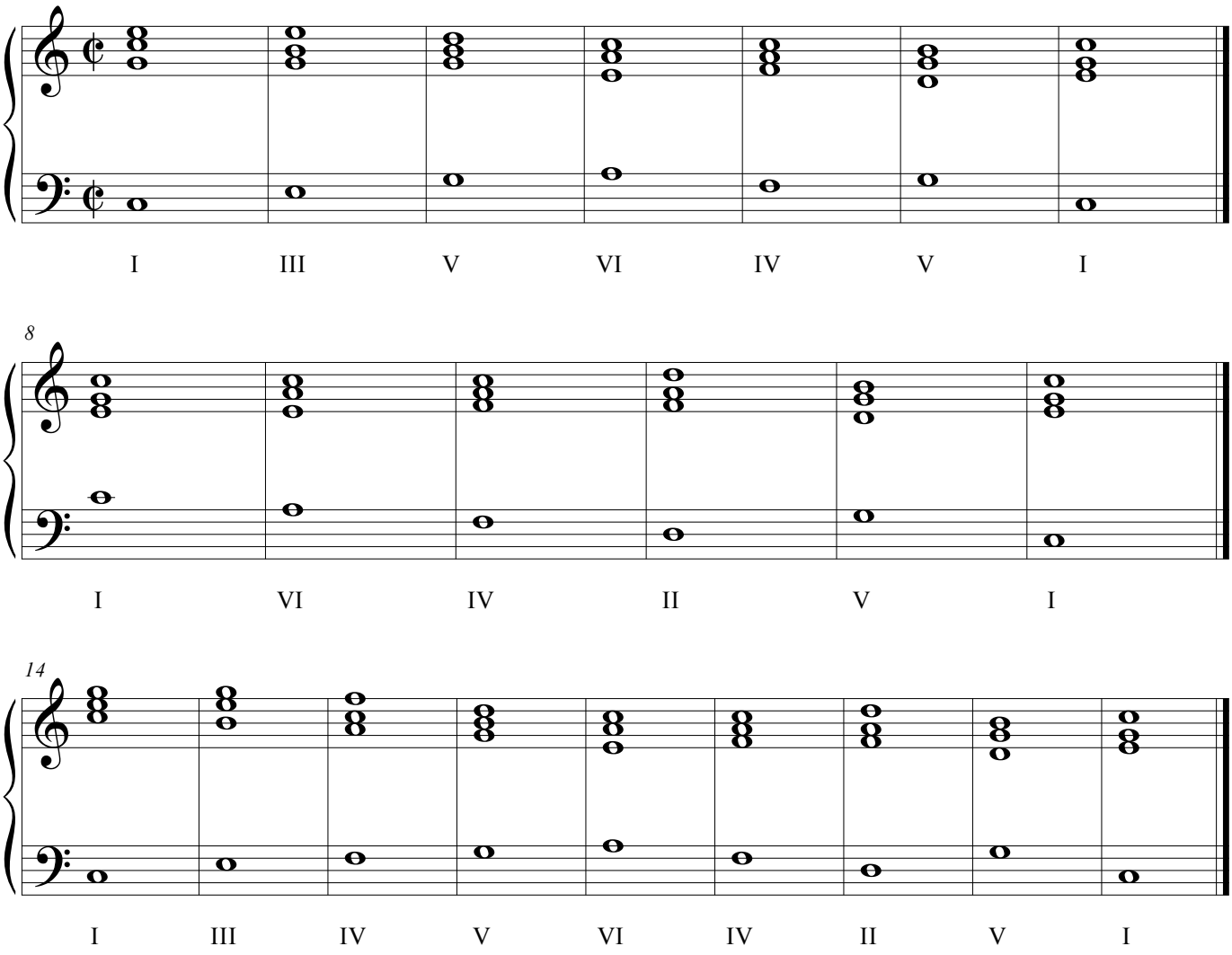
markusz996@gmail.com

Thank you for reading my "masterclass", I hope it can lend you the help you were looking for! Bests!

Mark Szabó

1.

Basic triads in Major



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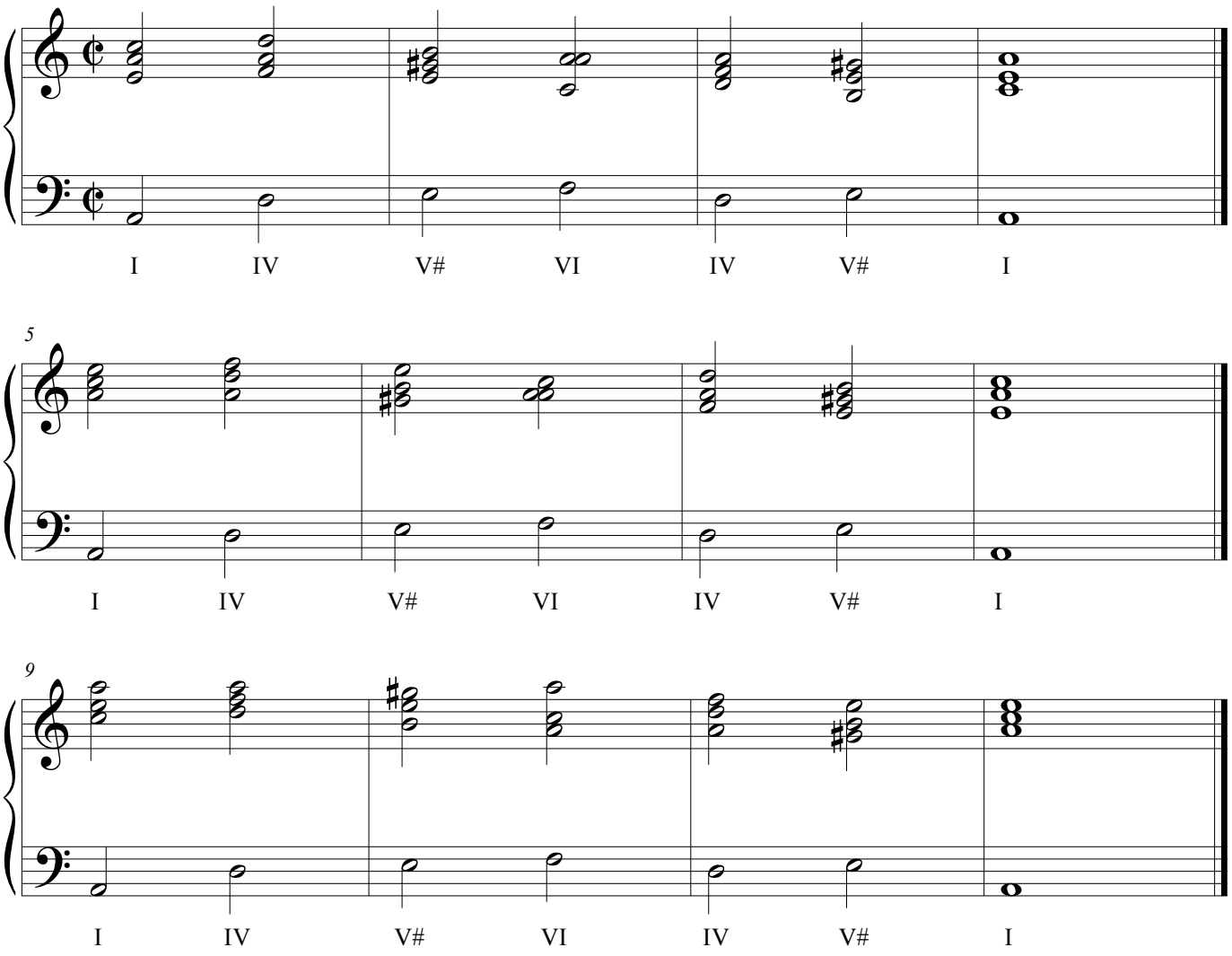
2.

V - VI connection in Minor



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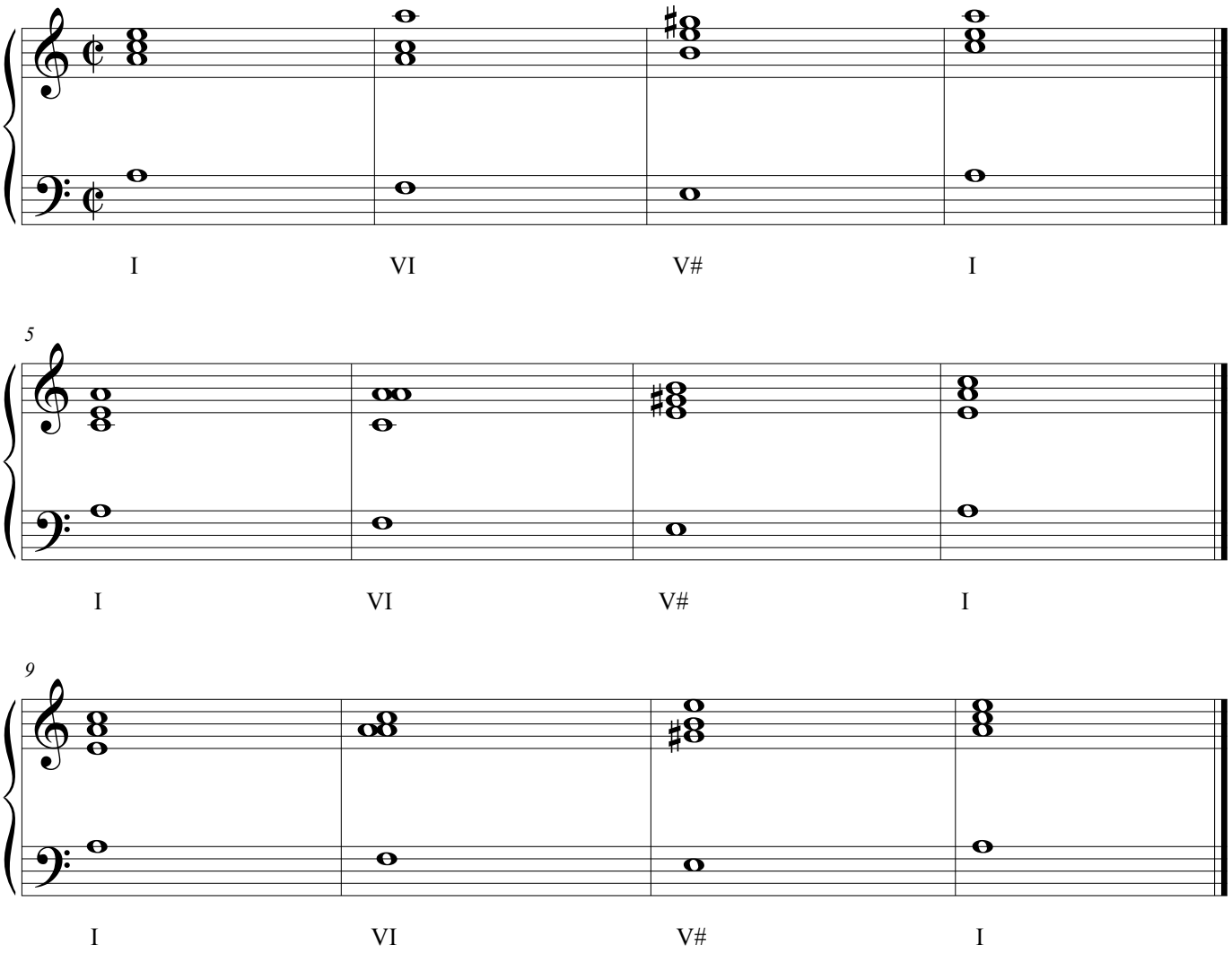
3.

VI - V connection in Minor

Duplicated third tones in advance



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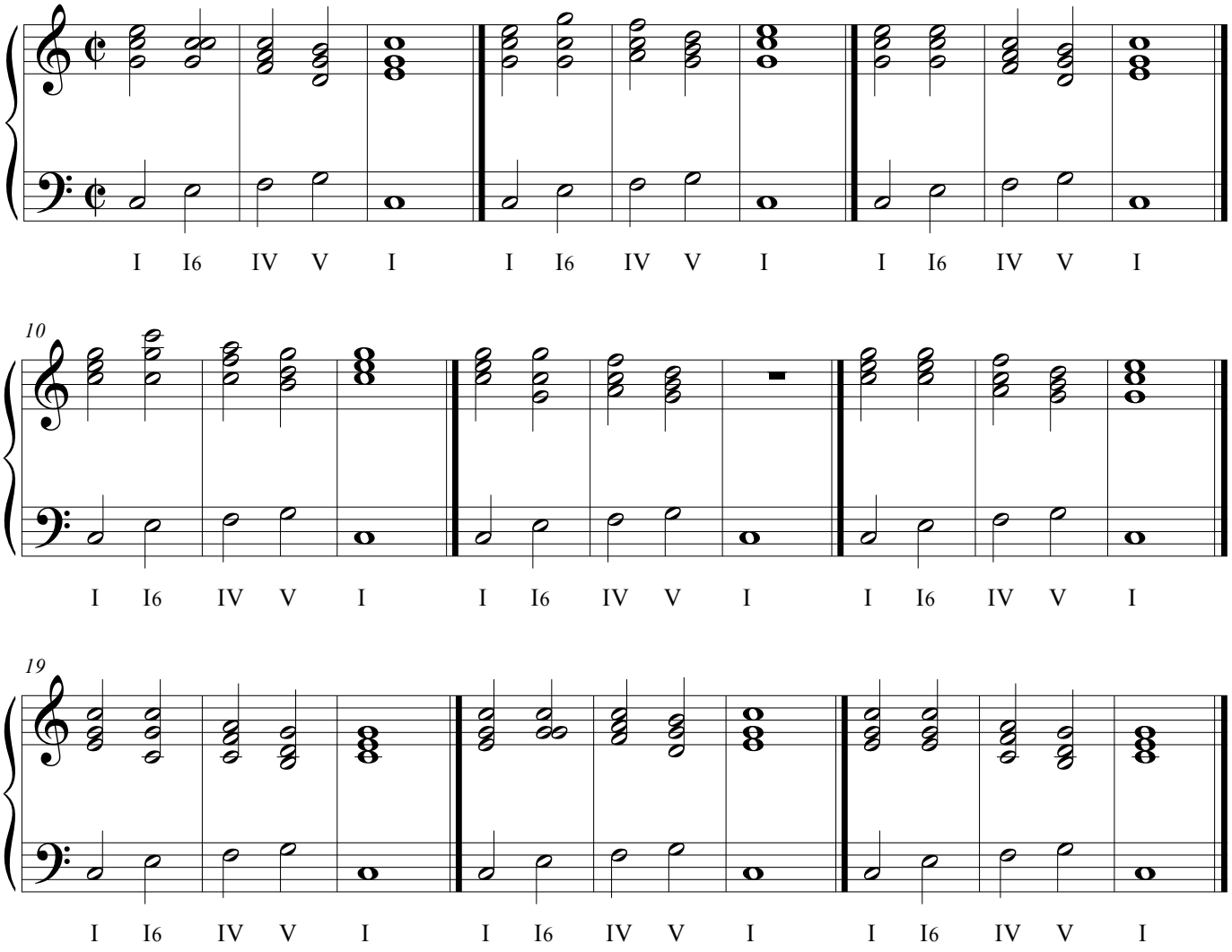
First inversion of principal triads (in Maj.)

4.

Duplication:
- Primarily base tone
- Secondly fifth tone
- Thirdly third tone



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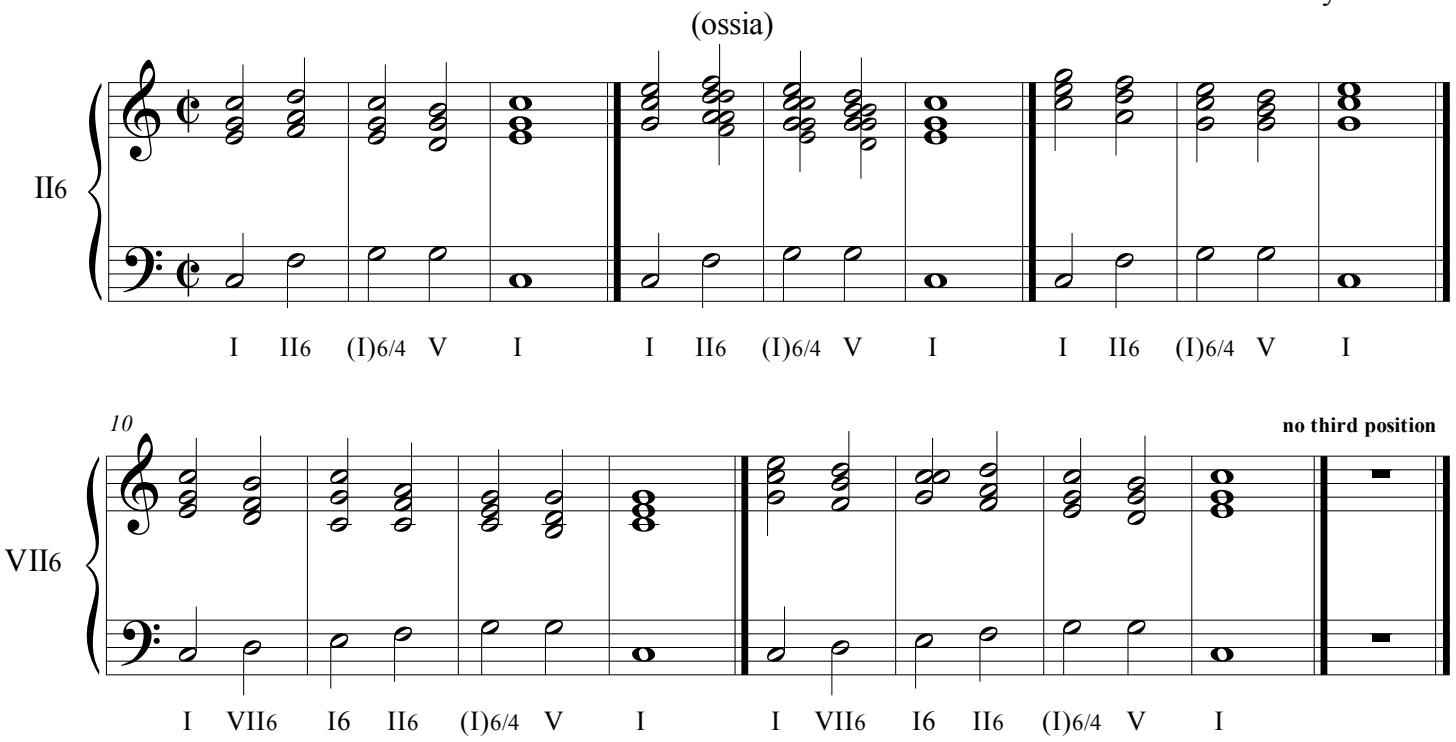
5. # First inversion of extracurricular triads

Duplication:
- Primarily third tone
- Secondly fifth tone



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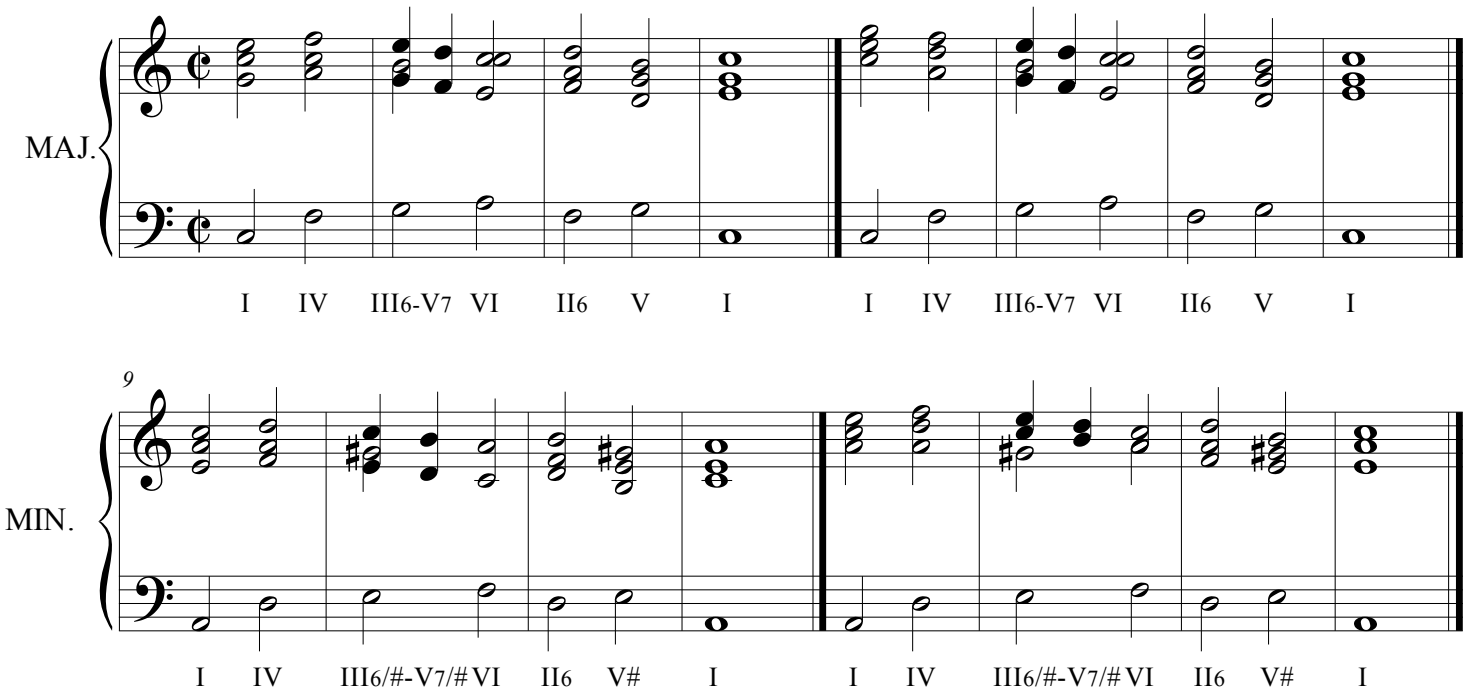
6.

The III6 Chord

in Major and in Minor



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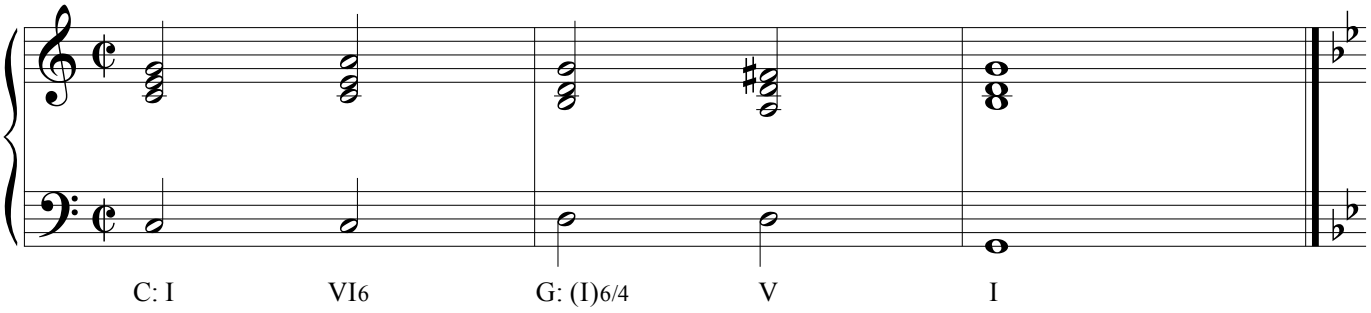
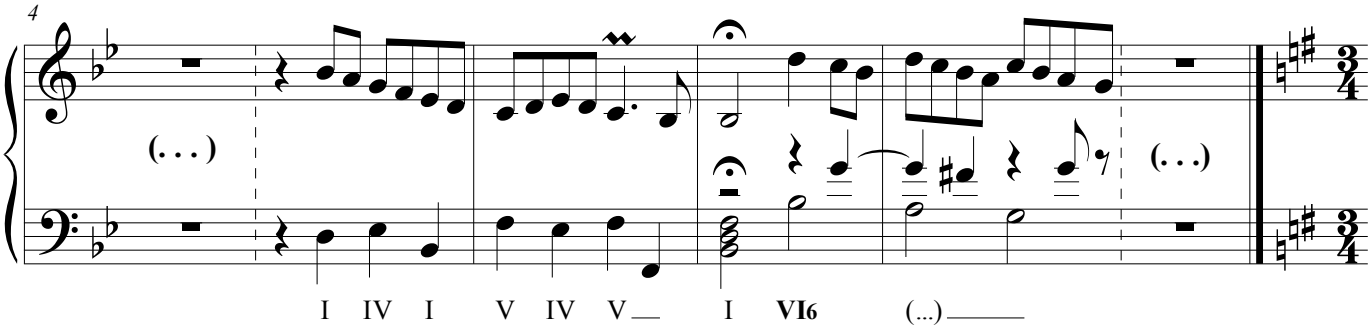
The VI6 Chord (rare occurrence)

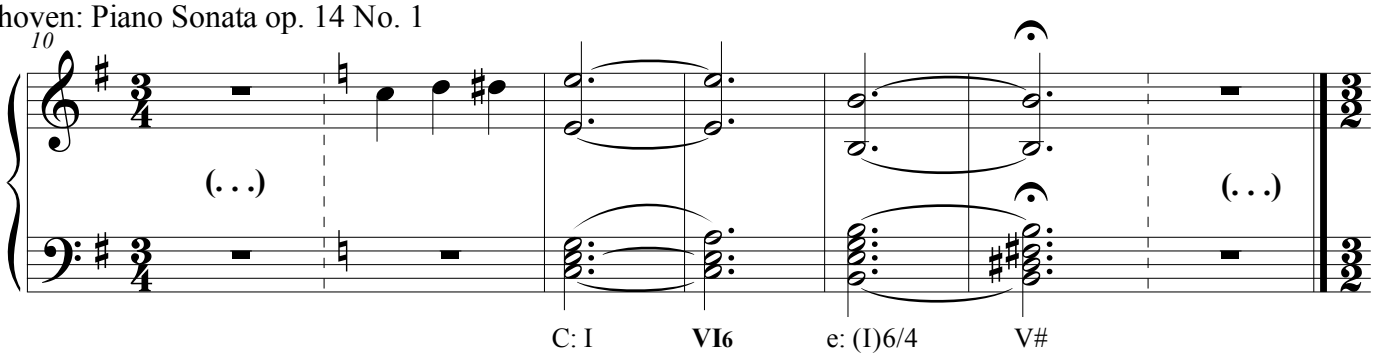
and occurrences in music



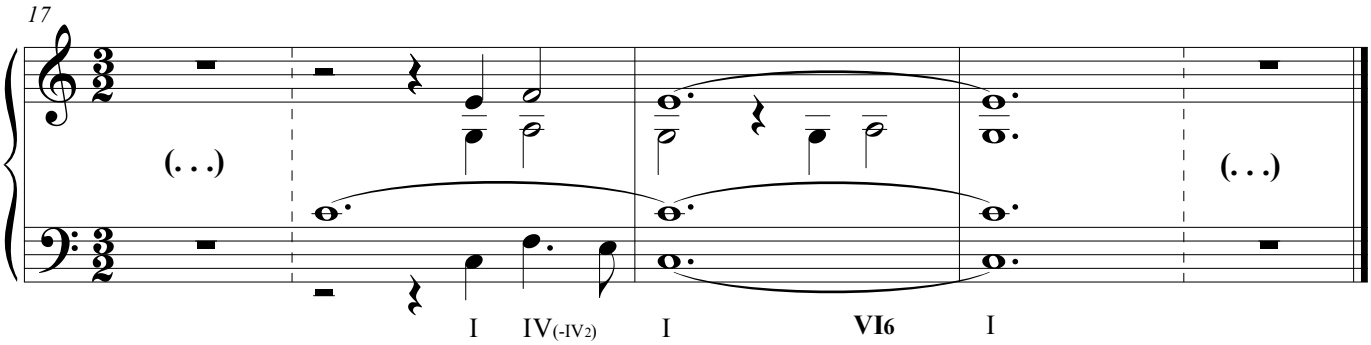
Couperin: Les Moissonneurs



L.W. Beethoven: Piano Sonata op. 14 No. 1



J. des Prés: Missa Pange Lingua - Sanctus



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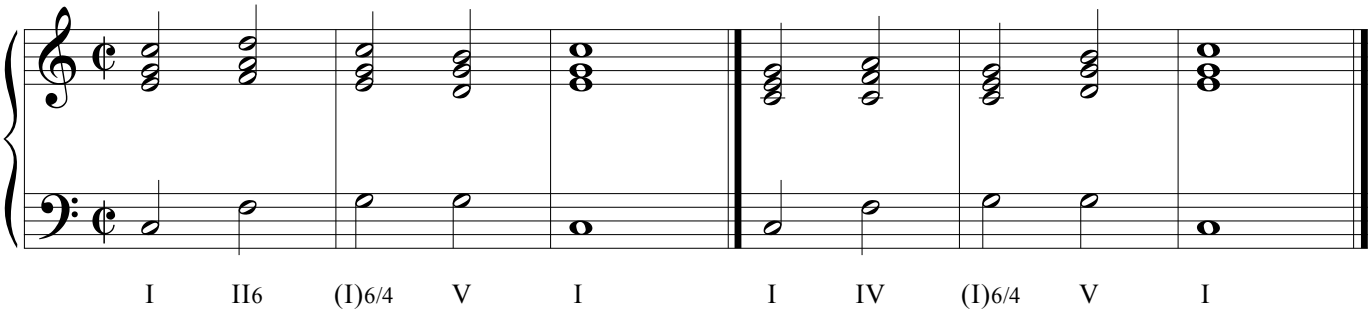
8.

Cadential (Appoggiatura) six-four chord



The six-four inversion of the Tonic is not independent.
It is being created by the third and the fifth tone of the V (dominant), both delayed (sounds on emphasis instead of accent).
The cadential six-four chord can only exist on emphasis (not on unaccented)!
This melodical figuration is called "delay".

In fact it is not Tonic chord, but a figuration of the Dominant chord, therefore:

- by functionality, it is Dominant,
- as a delay, it sounds on unaccented,
- it's fifth tone is duplicated.

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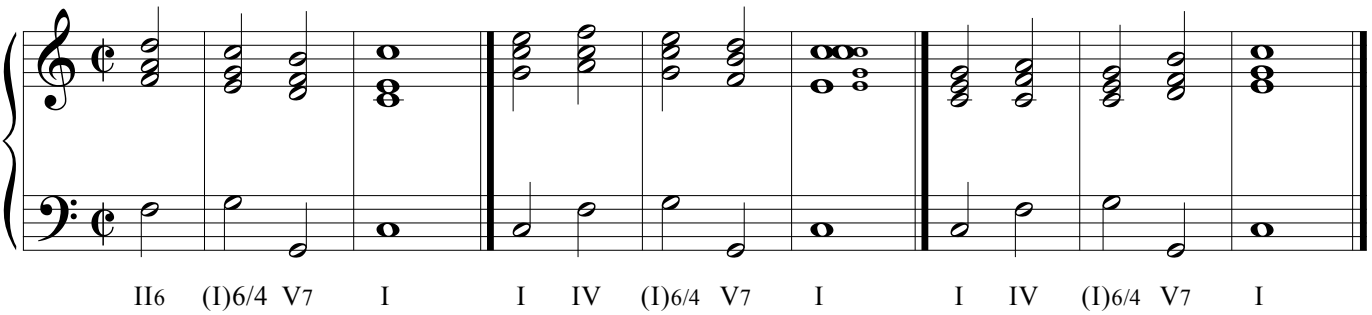
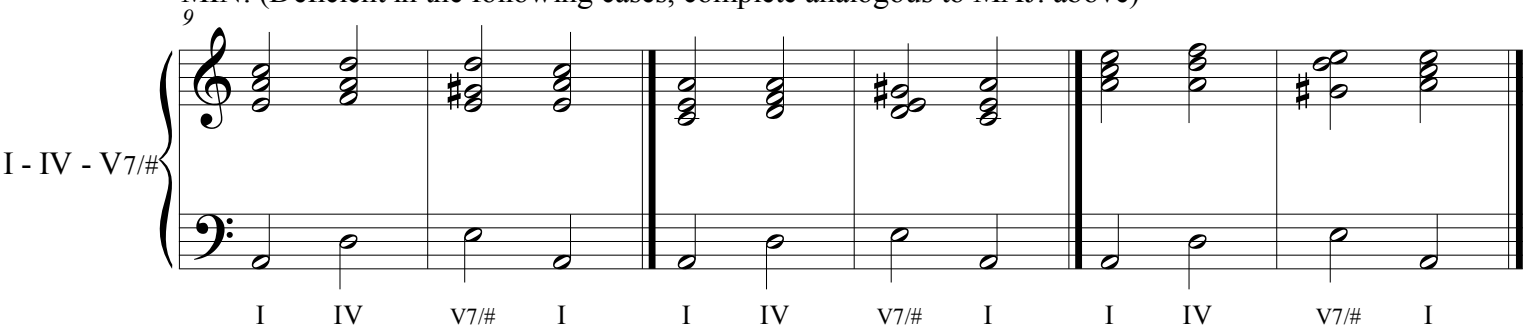
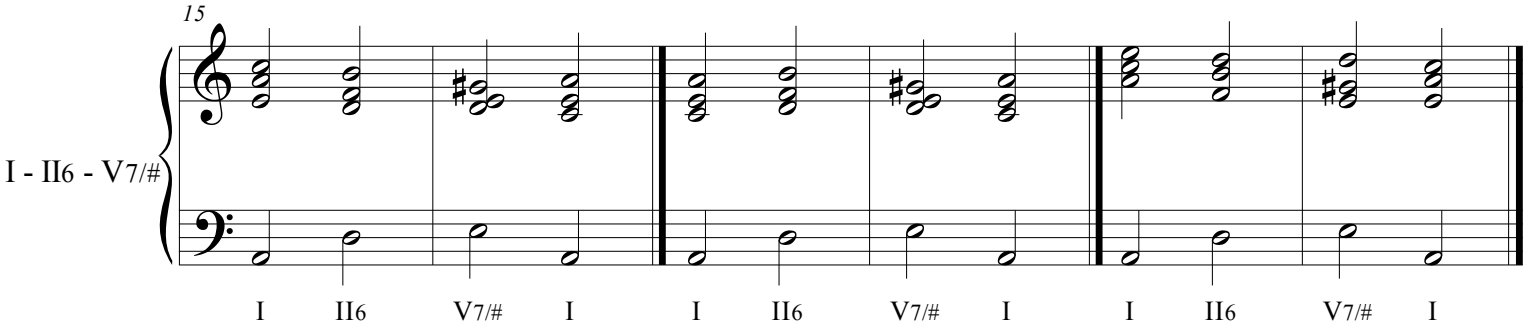
9. Complete and deficient Dominant seventh chord

MAJ.



MIN. (Deficient in the following cases, complete analogous to MAJ. above)





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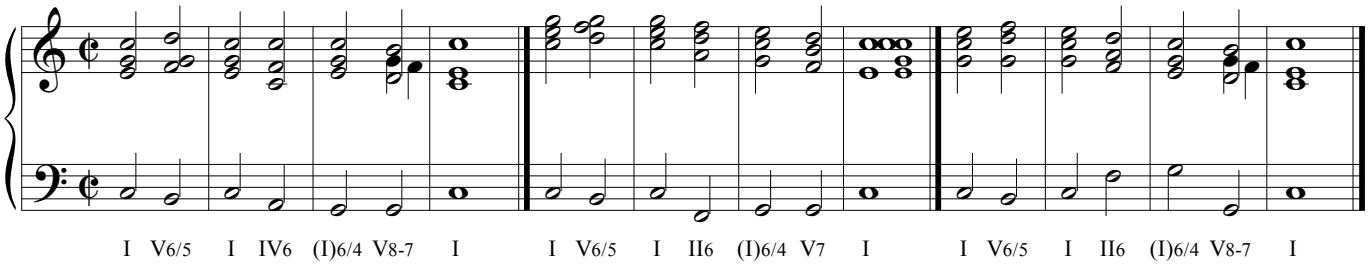
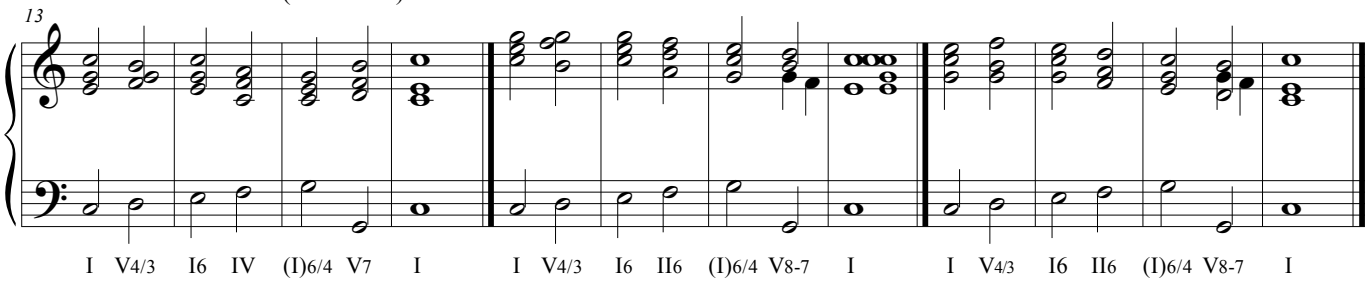
Inversions of the Dominant seventh chord (MAJ)

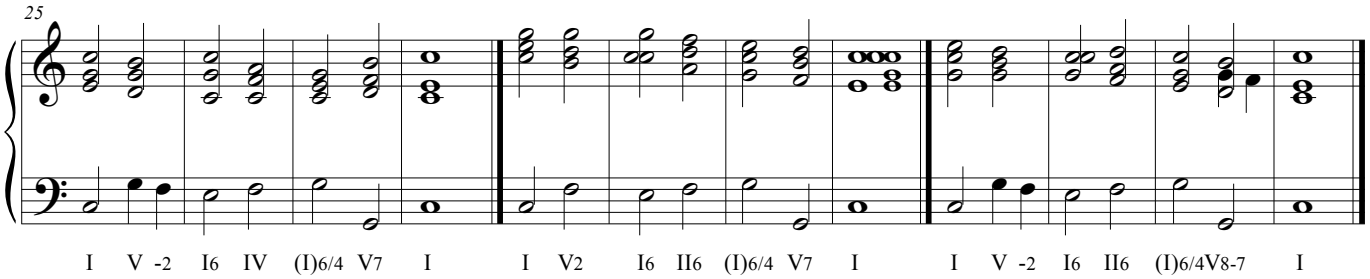
FIRST INVERSION (six-five)



SECOND INVERSION (three-four)



THIRD INVERSION (second [2])



The inversions of the Dominant seventh chord are complete, their resolution is dual:

- seventh tone resolves downwards
- leading tone resolves upwards

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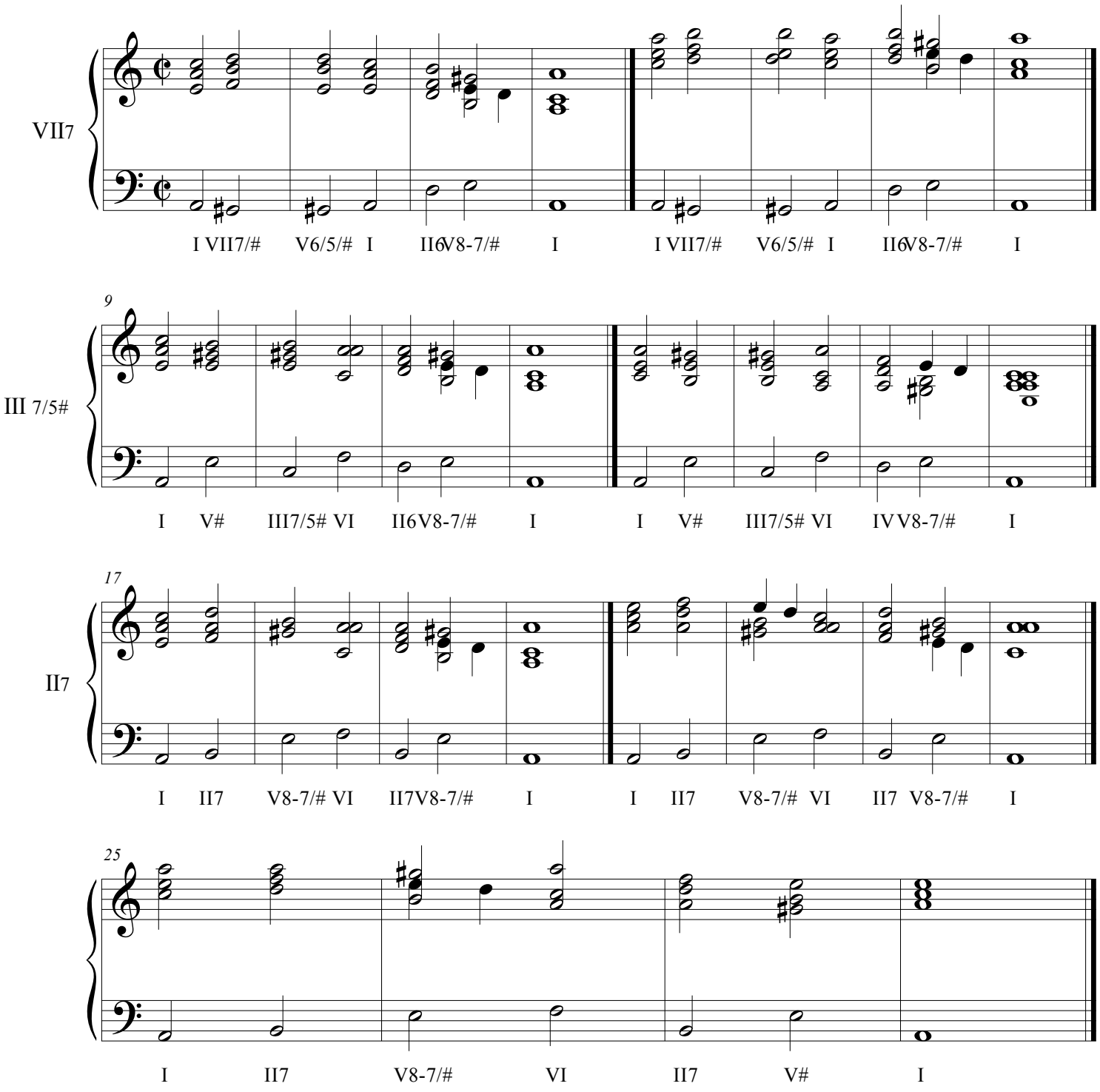
11.

Extracurricular sevenths in Minor

VII7 III7 II7



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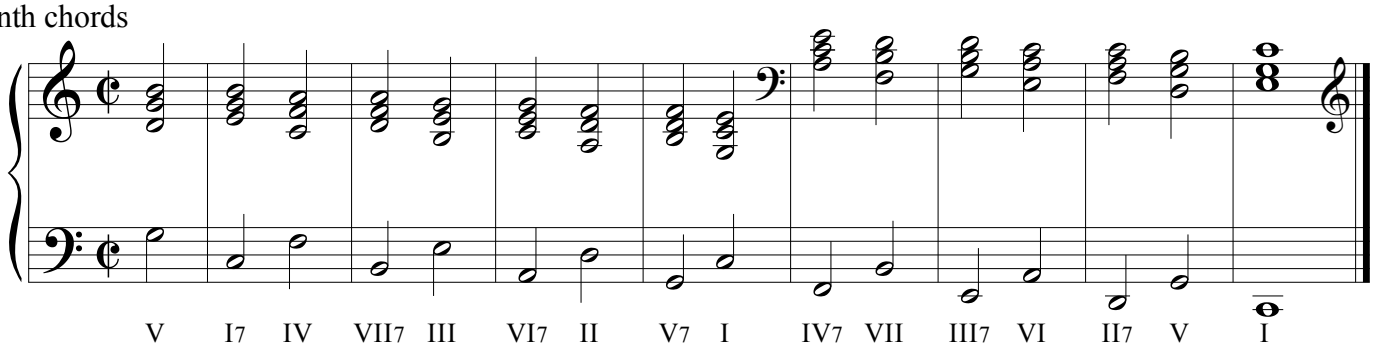
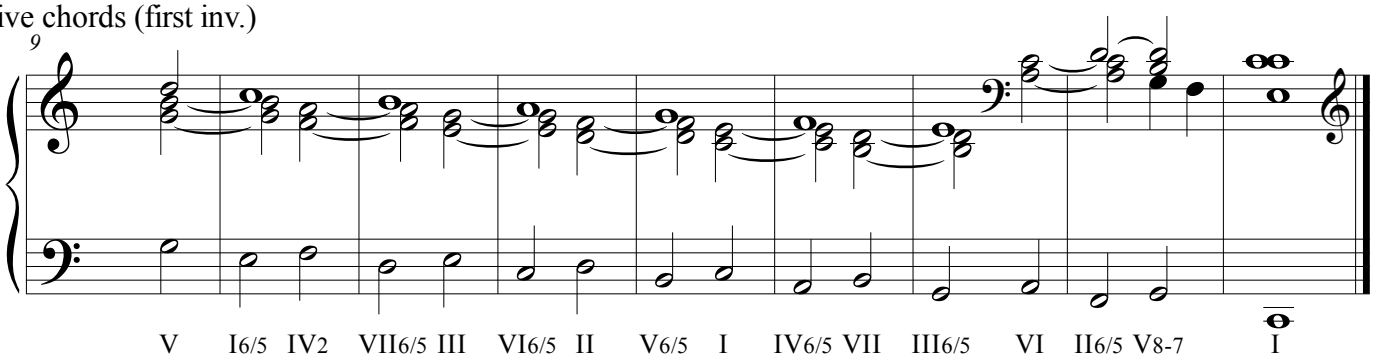
Extracurricular sevenths in Major

by Sequences

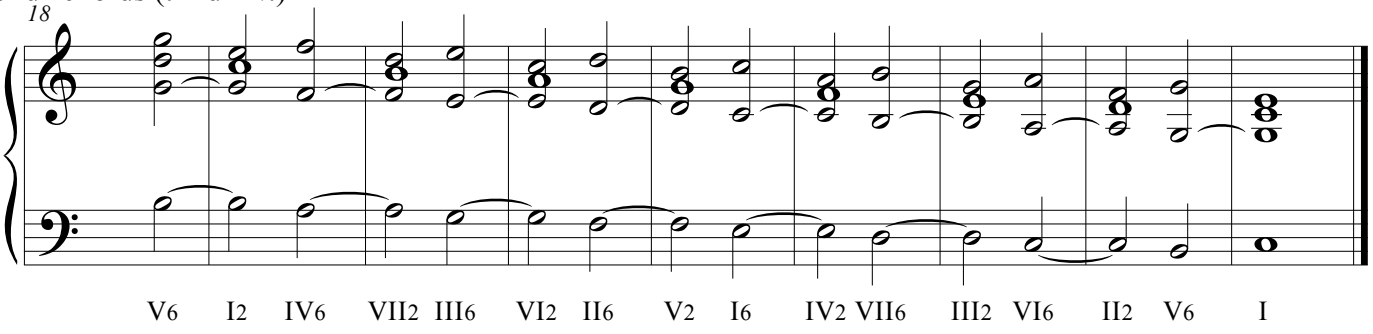
With seventh chords



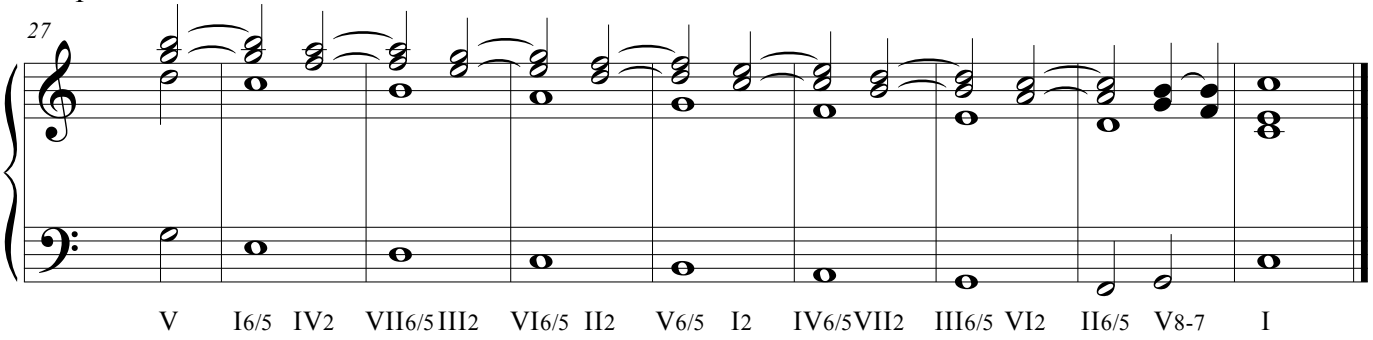
With six-five chords (first inv.)



With "second" chords (third inv.)



Combined example



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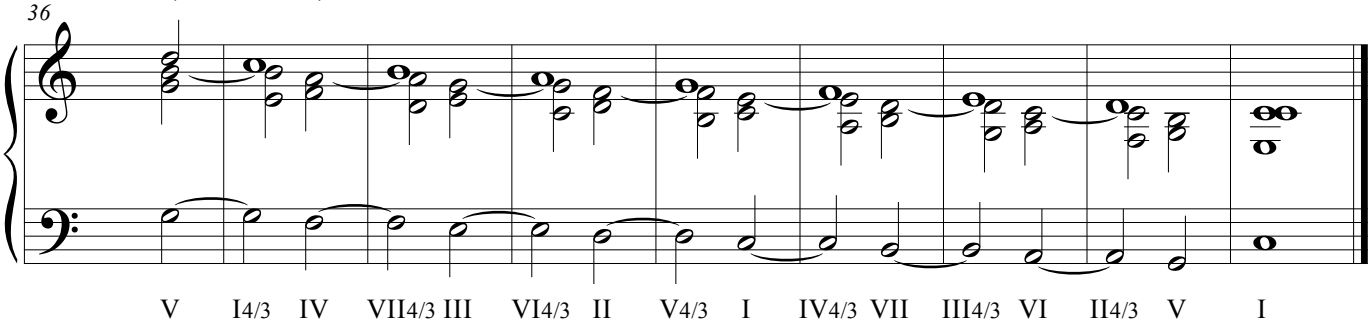
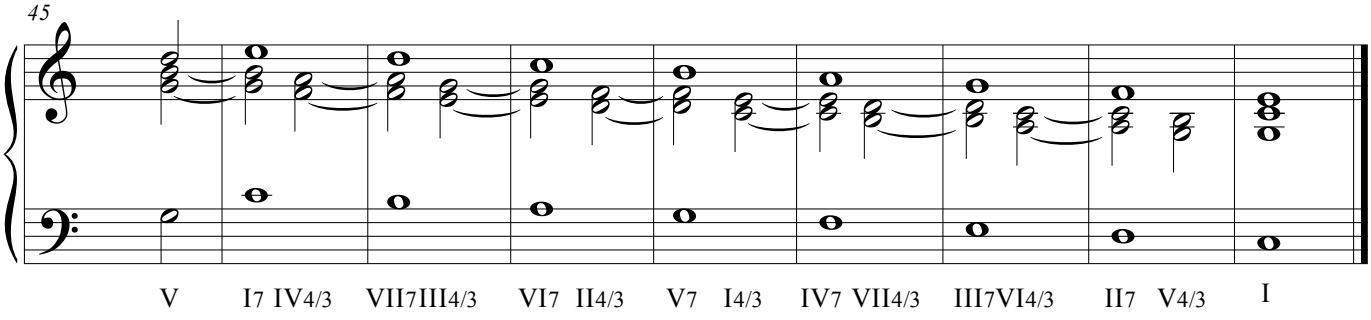
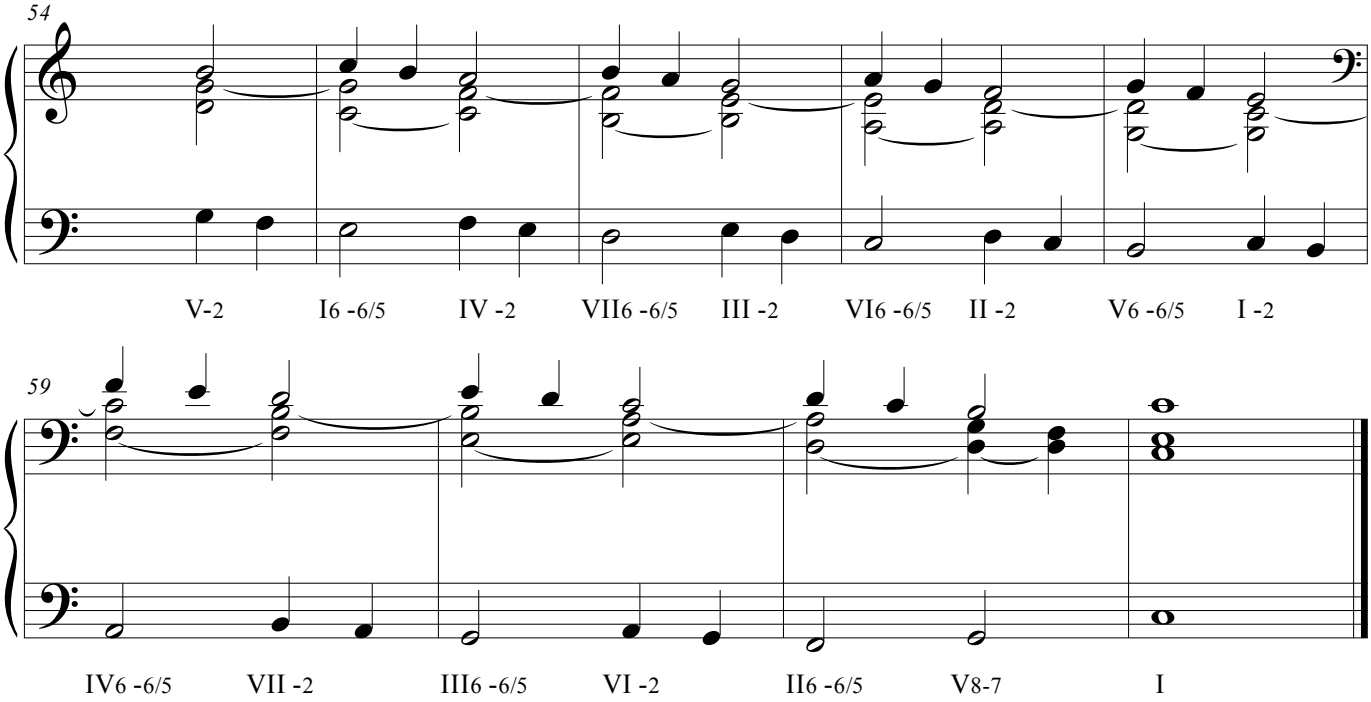
With three-four chords (second inv.)



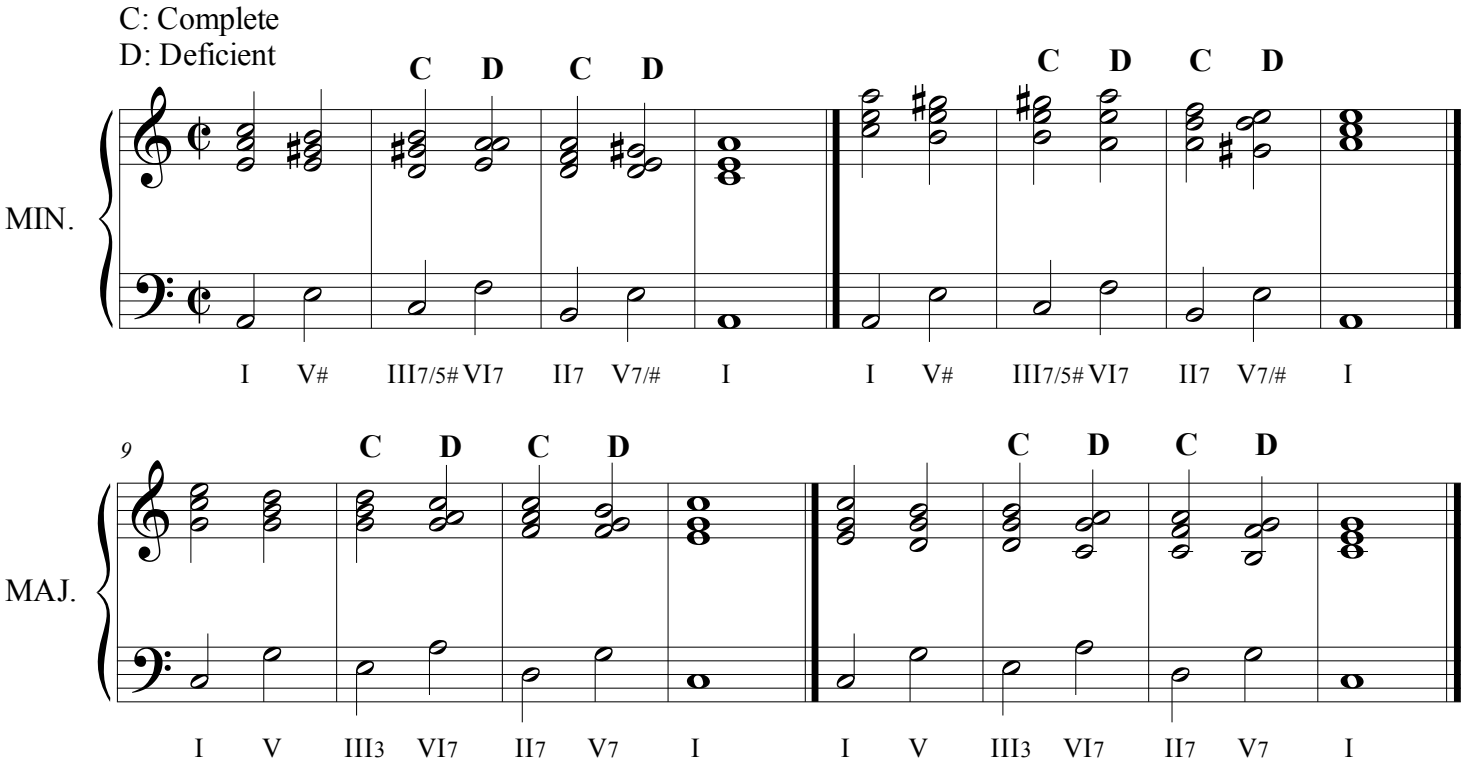
Combined example:



With transient seventh tone:



Seventh - Seventh connections



A seventh chord can resolve not only to a triad, but to another (new) seventh chord.
If many seventh chords are following each other in a row, a Complete-Deficient-Complete-Deficient-... alternation must be observed.
(To resolve and to prepare the seventh tone of the chord.)
The specialities of this phenomenon:

- The constant seventh tone presence causes a stronger connection between the chords.
- The dissonance and the resolution are present at the same time .

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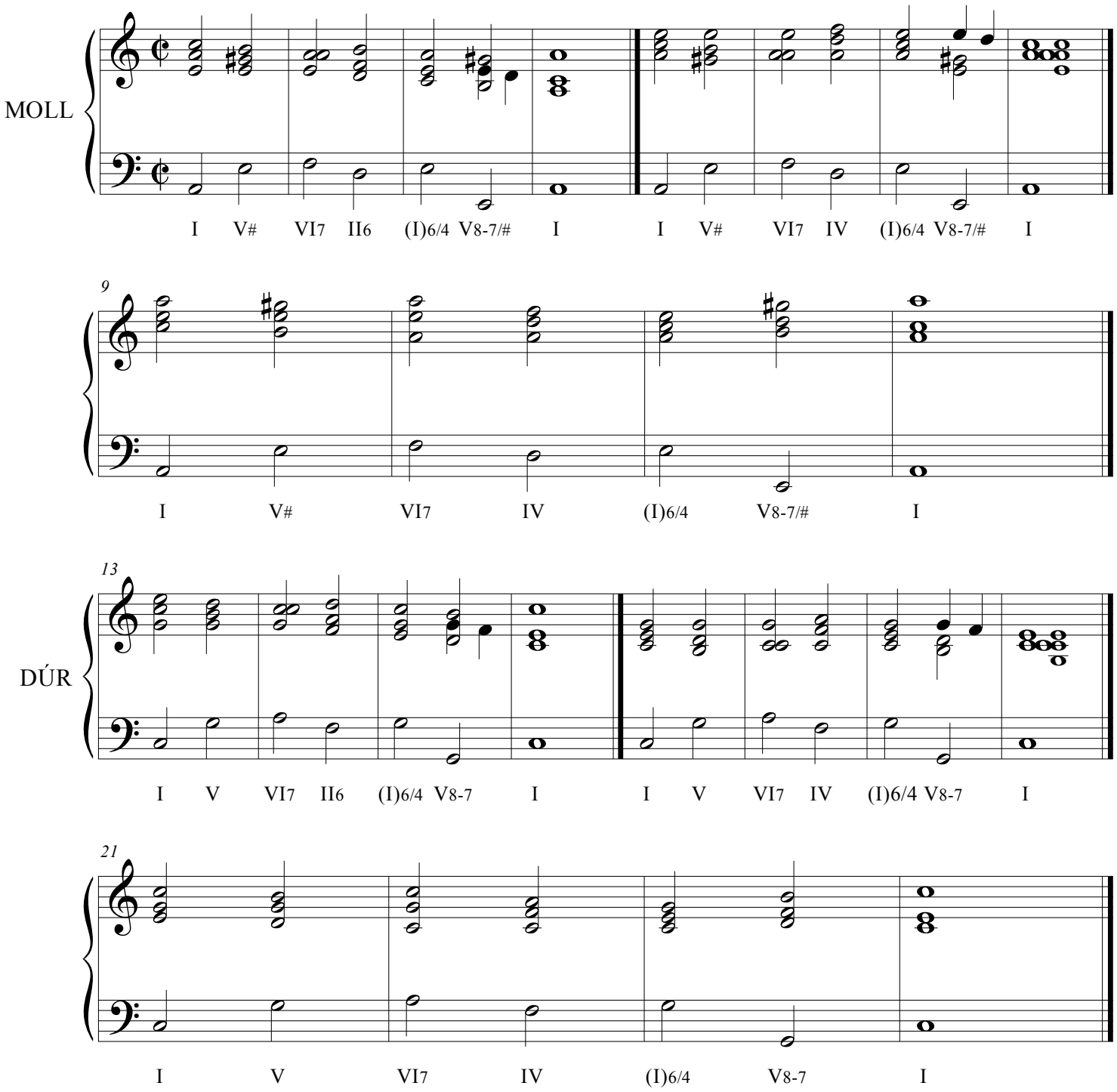
14.

The VI seventh chord



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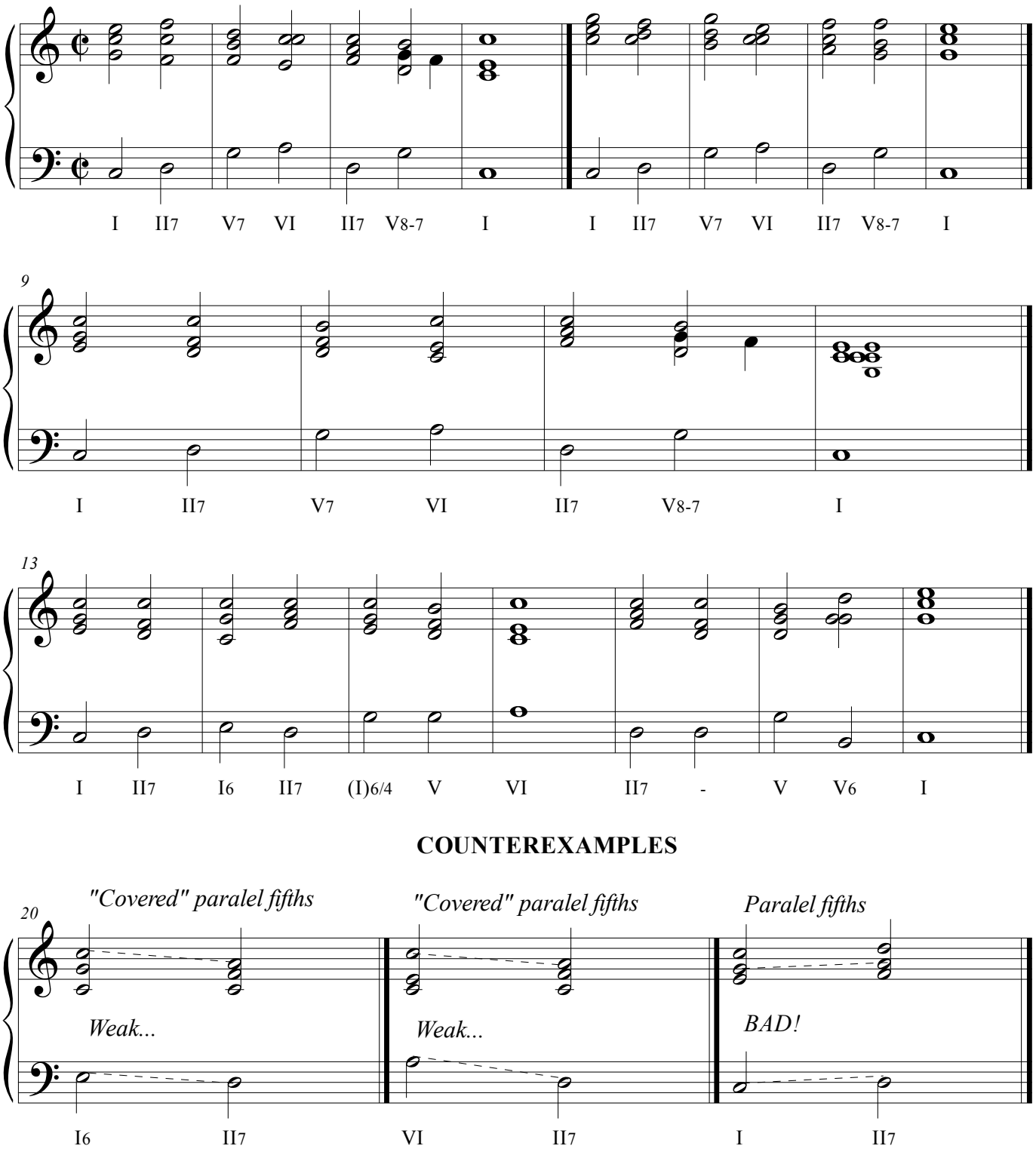
The II seventh chord



In Major the I - II7 connections are deficient (missing fifth tone) in every case.

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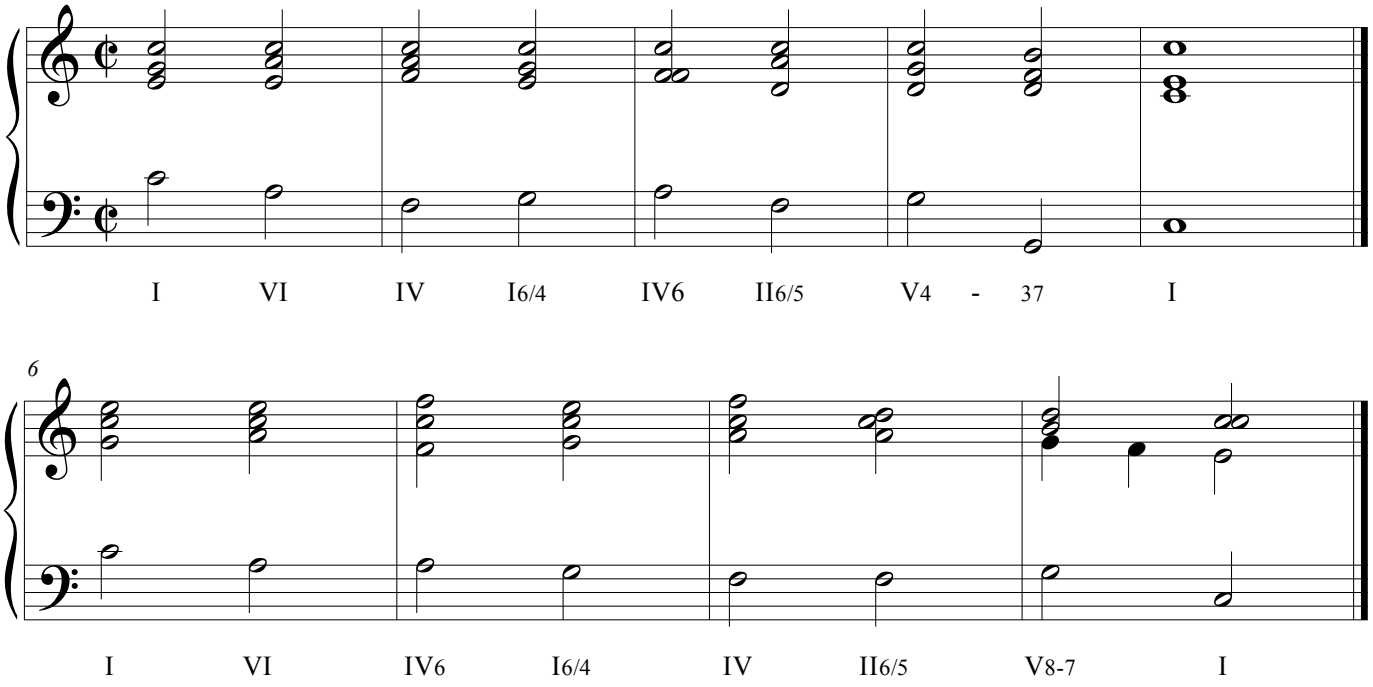
Transient I6/4 chord



Types of I6/4:

a.) Cadential (Appoggiatura): By functionality, it is Dominant (delayed as negotiated
b.) Transient: - Makes connection between two figures (mostly root and 1st inv.) of the IV chord (subdominant). By functionality, it is Tonic.
- Duplicating the fifth tone is expedient, to make it more melodic.

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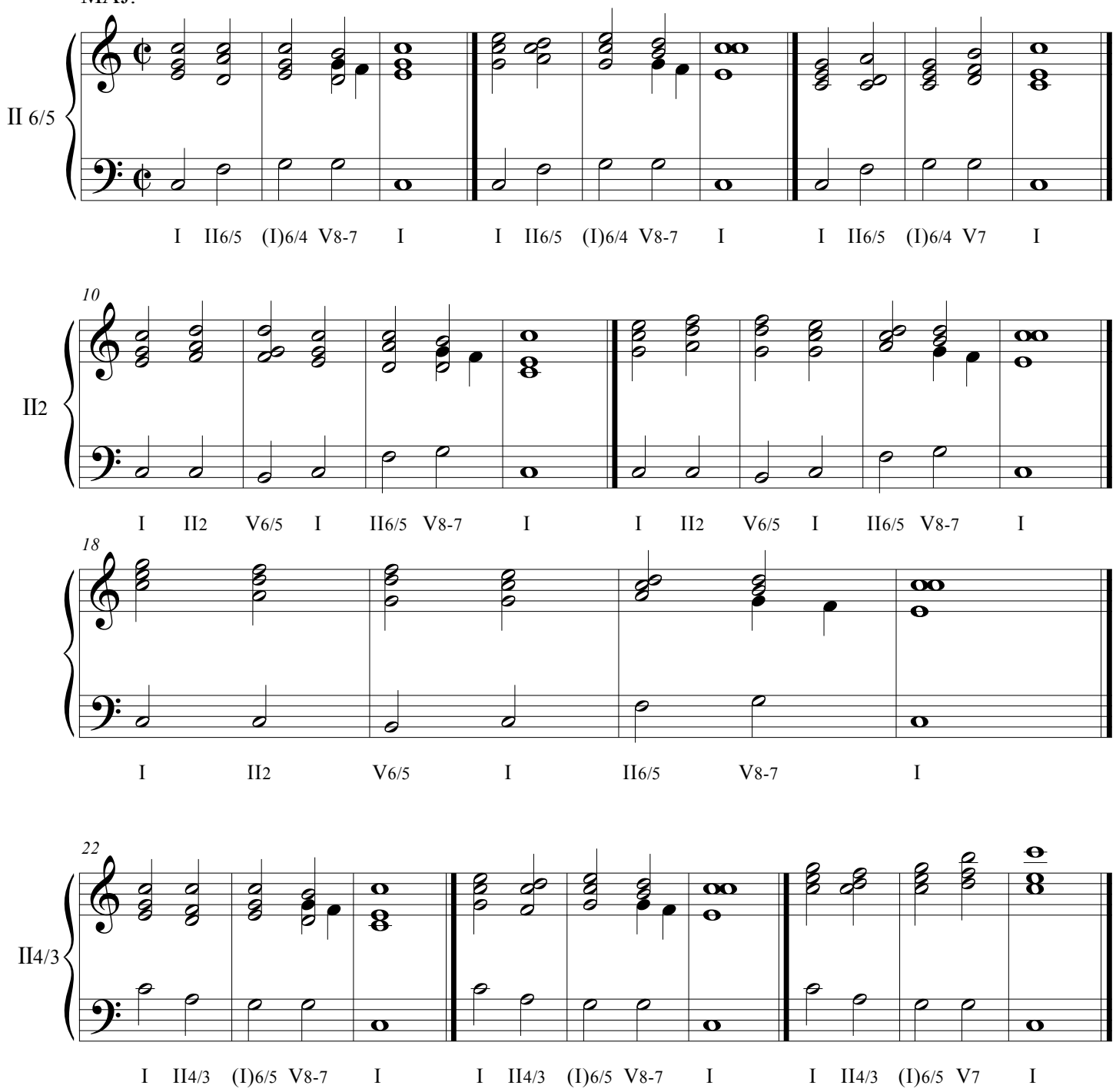
17.

Inversions of extracurricular seventh chords

MAJ.



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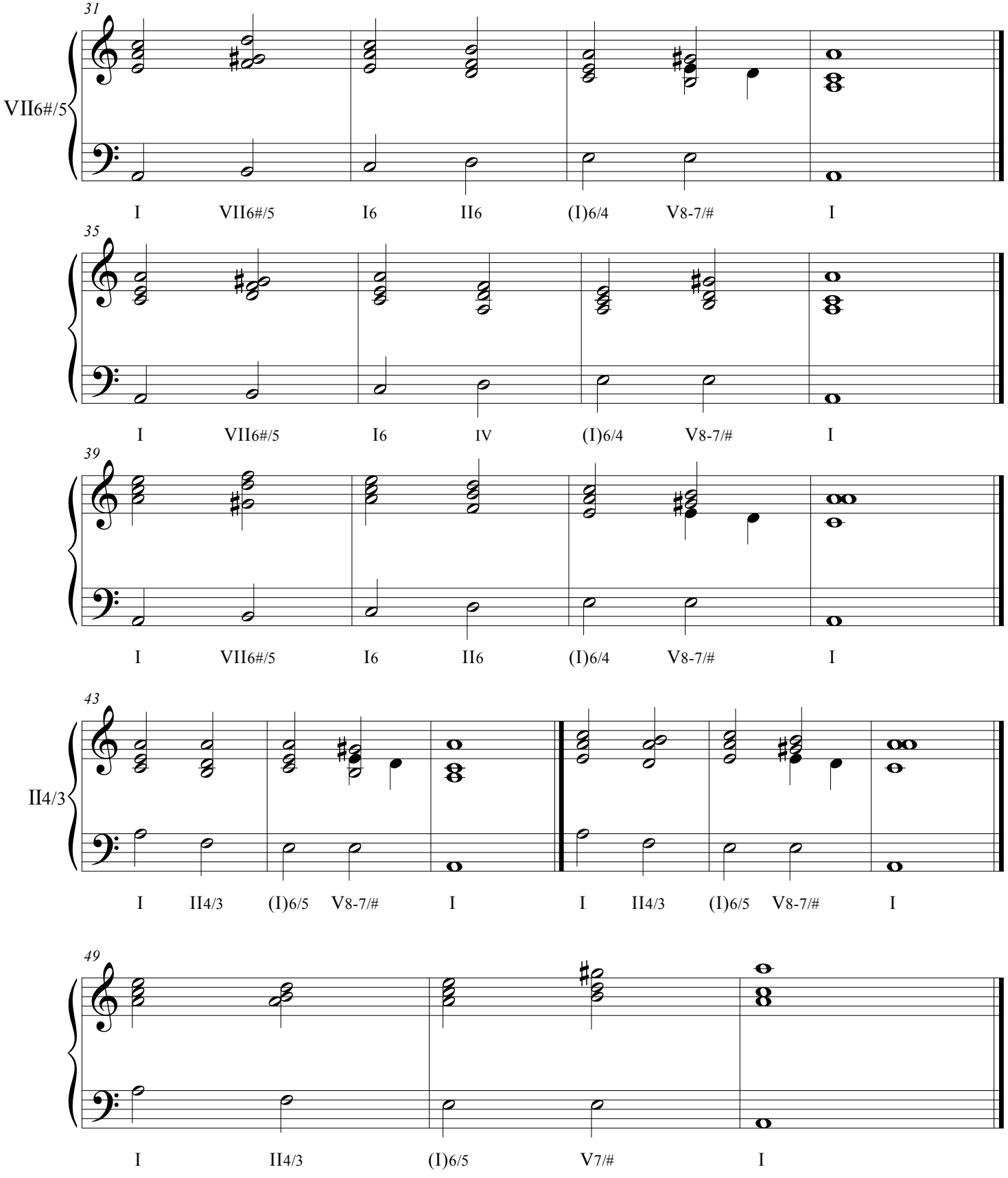
MIN.



VII6/5 - I6 connection duplicates the third tone of the I6
Reason: resolution of the seventh tone, to avoid diminished-clear fifth parallelism,
to observe the duplication rule (hierarchy) of the tones.