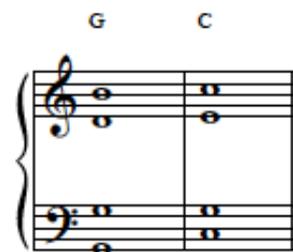


# MUSIC THEORY.aargh©

## Accidentals - 1 (Session 24) For Harmonic Reasons: Secondary Dominant

By Dr. Ona Pinsonneault

Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, - - - What note is next? How urgent is it that you get to the next note? Play the first seven notes of the scale and let your ear tell you what note **has** to be next. Yes, we need to go to “Do” pitch 8 of the scale. Pitch 7 is called the “**Leading Tone**” as it leads to 8, or tonic. How far is 7 to 8 on the keyboard? Right, it is a half step. The urgency for it to “resolve” up to tonic is due its placement in the scale.

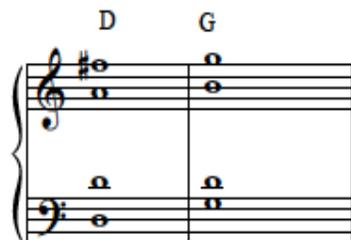


C Major: V I

Authentic  
Cadence

The leading tone (pitch 7) is an important pitch in the Authentic Cadence we discussed in Session 21, November 2015. (Notice the highest line in the staff above.) This is our ending cadence, circle progression of a descending fifth, which gives strength to the key.

If the composer were to add an **accidental** to a score on a raised (#) 4th scale degree we could have a series of pitches as below.



(GM: V I)

Including the #4 in chord progression will give the chord built on D the quality of Major, the same as the Dominant in the key of G Major. But, if the composition doesn't change keys, this chord contains only a momentary **accidental** and the composition can return to C Major. It is not the Dominant, but is called a **Secondary Dominant** as it takes on the character of the Dominant belonging to the key, the Primary Dominant. The #4 is the leading tone of 5, giving momentary extra emphasis to 5. What a great way to give color, enrichment of tone, serious harmonic change, and stress to a pitch other than tonic if only for a moment. (And stress to the finger assigned to that pitch!) The #4 is an **accidental**.

Until next time,

Dr. P

[Ona.pinsonneault@normandale.edu](mailto:Ona.pinsonneault@normandale.edu)

August 2016