Analysis of the Chopin Nocturne in C# minor (1830)

Analysis of these measures might look like the line below. Note that functions I, IV, etc are combined with identities, Im, VI#6, and VM. 'VI<sup>#6</sup>' is particularly disturbing since its identity is not given, only the function '#6'. An 'augmented-six' chord is a 'dominant'<sup>1</sup>, and since it doesn't fall on 'V' it should be regarded as a 'secondary dominant', according to the theory.



If it were to be designated as a 'secondary dominant' it might look like the line below. However, this doesn't do the trick because an 'augmented-six' chord isn't a 'dominant-seventh'...or is it?<sup>2</sup>



When harmonic functions (I, IV, V) are separate from harmonic identities (m, M, x), a more logical analysis presents itself.  $^3$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In addition, the word 'dominant' has only one definition in a musical sense, that of the fifth note of a scale. Period. There is no contrasting definition. (see two definitions of 'dominant').

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> To help the reader understand the resolution to this problem, refer please to 'The Tritone Its Function'. <sup>3</sup> The reason theory texts are so convoluted and irrational is because the PhD's who write the texts refuse to provide the dominant with an identity apart from its function, and they insist that a function is an identity, which mixes apples and oranges... so to speak. A function is a number, a position, I, II, III, etc. An identity is a symbol or letter, M, m,  $\emptyset$ , V7. Doesn't that look strange, however? Why is 'V7', a function included with harmonic identities? That, my good reader, is the enigma that has confounded theorists for the past 300 years! They simply will not allow the dominant an identity. The solution is to provide the dominant with the identifier, 'x'. 'x' does not conflict with any other harmonic symbol, and it solves most of the problems of music theory. Now a complete roster of harmonic identities may be listed as; M, m, x,  $\emptyset$ , and o ...major, minor, dominant, half-diminished, and diminished, respectively.



The same line below shows the first chord of the second measure as a super-tonic dominant ninth; II and  $x^9$ . You will notice that the treble notes are the same as the original by Chopin! Whereas the 'F-double-sharp' is a major  $3^{rd}$  here, it was the augmented-six in the original, VI<sup>#6</sup>. This, however, is not the main point. Characteristic intervals are. They define harmonies, and in the case of the dominant (x), the major  $3^{rd}$  and the minor  $7^{th}$  define the dominant (x); they are the characteristic intervals. And, the forth measure shows the original chord.









Without this vital information, ear training of chord identities, especially of the dominant is impossible. One does not hear, as a dominant, an 'augmented-six' chord.<sup>4</sup> In addition, 'secondary dominants' only indicate functions of functions (V7/V) and not the identity of the chord. It's not there, having been replaced by a function of a function. These two issues provide ample reason to remove the theory of the 'secondary dominant' from all music theory textbooks.

Measure 17 shows a 'D' major chord with the  $3^{rd}$  in the bass, a 'neapolitan'. Measure 18 shows a dominant (x) on the leading-tone, VII, with 'B' as the root, followed by a dominant (x) on the sub-dominant, IV with an augmented-sixth (minor 7<sup>th</sup>) in the bass leading up to 'G' the tonic (I).



The key of the Sub-Dominant (IV), 'A' major is well established by the number of V-I movements.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Refer to the article "There is No Such Thing as an Augmented-Six Chord" by the author.

The key of the Super-Tonic (II), 'F-sharp' minor is well established also with V-I movements, as is the following change of key to the key of the Sub-Mediant (VI), 'C-sharp' minor.









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