

## Leading-Tone Seventh Chords

## Leading-tone Seventh Chords

- One of the most common types of seventh chords is the leading-tone seventh chord, which has a dominant function like the V7
- Its root is the leading-tone (scale degree 7)
- In major, the leading-tone seventh chord is *half-diminished* ( $\text{vii}^{\text{b}7}$ )
  - Also known as *diminished-minor* because it contains a diminished triad and a minor seventh
  - In other words, it is a diminished triad with a major third on top (m m M)

## Leading-tone Seventh Chords

- In minor, the leading-tone seventh chord is *fully-diminished* ( $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$ )
  - Also known as *diminished-diminished* because it contains a diminished triad and a diminished seventh
  - In other words, it contains all minor thirds (m m m)
- In minor keys, you have to raise the root of the  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$  chord, because the root is supposed to be the *leading tone*
- The fully diminished seventh chord creates a good deal of harmonic tension

## Resolving the LTDS

- Both leading-tone seventh chords usually move directly to I (i)
  - The leading tone root always resolves up
  - The seventh always resolves down
  - Never double the root of this chord (since it is the leading tone)
- You can also alter just one of the notes so that it becomes a dominant seventh—this strengthens its dominant function

## Voice-leading the LTDS

- The voice-leading for the LTDS is usually quite smooth, with the voices all resolving by step
  - Resolve the tendency tones first: leading tone up, seventh down
- The  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$  chord has two tritones in it—these tend to resolve in, which would result in a doubled third in the I chord
  - However, composers more often use unequal fifths in resolving  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$  to I, doubling the root
- Beware of parallel fifths when resolving  $\text{vii}^{\text{o}7}$  to I