

Lesson 14

14.1

Feature

- the introduction of the diminished seventh chord (Dim 7th)
- consolidation of familiar chords/patterns

Benefit

Before continuing to read about this lesson in the following paragraph, it may be helpful to learn to play it first:- all 12 progressions, with confidence.

You may notice that although you have played the same progression in 12 different keys, you have only played three different Dim 7ths (the four note chord played on the fourth beat of the first bar of each progression). This is because there are only three Dim 7th chords. Notice that the Dim 7th in this lesson's C major progression is the same chord (although in a different inversion) as that from the progression in the keys of E flat, F sharp and A.

These four keys, C, E flat, F sharp and A, reside at equidistant points on the Circle of Fifths, such that this progression's Dim 7th chord is equally related to a set of four major keys that couldn't be more unrelated to each other! Notice that this pattern holds for the other two Dim 7ths and the remaining 8 major keys.

Musical notation for Lesson 14.1, first example. The progression is: I, I₅, IV, Dim, I₅, I, V⁷, I. The bass line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a quarter note followed by a dotted quarter note.

Musical notation for Lesson 14.1, second example. The progression is: I, I₅, IV, Dim, I₅, I, V⁷, I. The bass line includes a quarter note followed by a dotted quarter note and a quarter note followed by a dotted quarter note.

This illustrates that Dim 7th is atonal (it sits outside any key), and as a consequence it is often used in modulation (changing from one key to another). Lsn 14.1 illustrates that the Dim 7th can be used simply for its dissonance.

Notice that this example contains voicing that directs the harmony from chord IV to chord I₅.

Method

Lsn 14.1 is similar to the progression from Lsn 9.3 and Lsn 10.1- it should be easy to learn to play- if not, practise with hands separately first.

Only say the chords that are unfamiliar to you. You may only need to say "diminished!".