

MUSIC THEORY.aargh©

Accidentals - 3 (Session 26)

For Harmonic Reasons: Secondary Leading Tone 7th

By Dr. Ona Pinsonneault

The Big Ring happened at the Mall of America on November 19, 2016. We rang a new Guinness record for the most ringers, ringing for at least five minutes, and ringing “recognizable music” (Hart Morris made sure of that). First we rang a peal as we entered the performance space, going down three escalators, round the corners and to our spots. The peal was the C Major scale descending. Okay, but my notes were Eb6 and F6/7, so I got to ring on every “fa,” but no “mi.” The composition that Hart Morris arranged was called “Silver Carol” and he used “Silver Bells” in the key of C Major and “Carol of the Bells” in the key of A minor for his carols. Why did I have Eb??? (The “bells used” chart also called for F#, Bb, and G#.)

We have seen that F# in the key of C Major is part of the **Secondary Dominant** of G. Also, Bb is part of the **Secondary Dominant** of F. (See sessions 24 and 25.) Both of these chords have one tritone (**Diabolus in Musica**-Devil in Music), very unstable, need to move, and their resolution pitches are G and F. (By the way, it is “Devil **in** Music” not “Devil **is** Music” as last reported in this column, little typo there.) See the notations below for a reminder of these two chords containing accidentals.

The chord that contained the Eb also contains the F#, spelled F#, A, C, Eb. This is a **chromatic** chord with two accidentals, also two **tritones**, **F# to C** and **A to Eb**. The tritone is one of the most unstable intervals and requires resolution immediately. F# and C move to G and B, and Eb and A move to D and G, all notes of the dominant chord G, B, D. Compare this chord with D, F#, A, C, having one tritone. This chord is called the **secondary leading tone seventh** because: 1) it is built on the leading tone of it’s resolution (not the V), G (half step below); 2) because it is a four note chord, seventh chord; and 3) secondary because it does not belong to the key, that would be primary.

Hart Morris’ composition only used this chord once, but because of the repeat sign I only got to ring my Eb5 twice. But it was worth it, measure 14 to 15 in his score. The chord appears on beat three and resolves on beat one of the next measure. What about the G# in this composition? Stay tuned for the next issue of Clapper Chatter when we discuss **the minor scale**. Oh, goody!

Until next time,

Dr. P

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February 2017