DOMINANTS

HEIN VAN DE GEYN

G

Dominant Chords

Hein Van de Geyn

Hein Van de Geyn / Forms
© 2015 - 7
ISBN

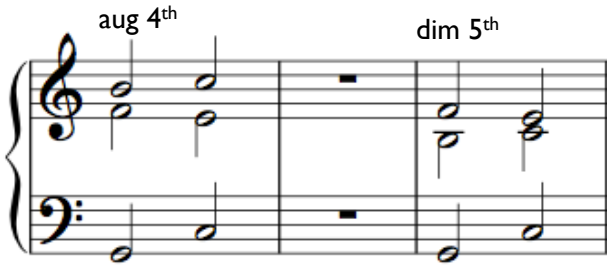
Baseline Music Publishing

www.comprehensivebassmethod.com
all rights reserved

1

The function of dominant chords

Dominant chords are chords that offer a variety of possible additions in their upper structures. It is the essential tritone (diminished fifth/augmented fourth) inside the chord that gives it it harmonic tension. This interval (named "diabolus in musica" many centuries ago) has a lot of inner tension, and in a normal V-situation will consist of 2 leading tones that have a strong desire to go back to the tonic.



- The 9th can be regular or flattened. Once there is a ♭9, the siamese twin of this note, the ♭10 can be present*.

- The 11th is either avoided or if desired as a static note, it will have to be raised to a ♯11.

- The 13th can be regular or flattened.

---

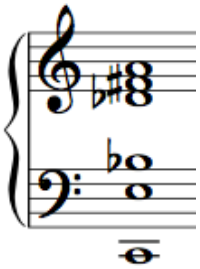
* I am sorry, but I cannot name a note ♯9, when it is a ♭10. The B♭ in G7 is not an A♯. We cannot have two 9ths in a chord, we can have a tension of a minor 3rd above the chord though.

What is very important to realise is that a ♭9 can have a regular 13th accompany it; but once the tension of a ♭13 is present, the 9th has to be altered to a ♭9 as well. The sound with a ♭13th and regular 9th does exist, but the ♭13 is a ♯5 in that case. Somehow there is a hierarchy in the tensions where the 9th is the first one to become altered and the 13th can follow, or not - but not the other way around.

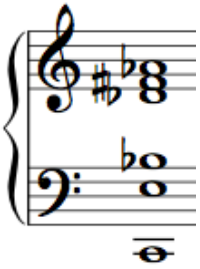
This implies that in fact we can have 3 potential colours for a complete dominant chord:

9 - ♯11 - 13 I name this WHITE (WHT)

♭9 - ♯11 - 13 I name this OCTATONIC (OCT)

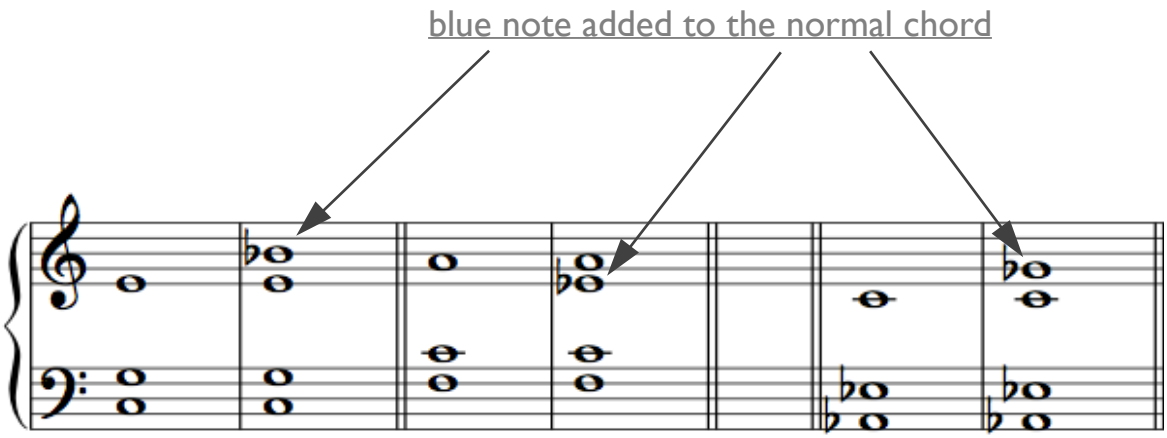


♭9 - ♯11 - ♭13 I name this ALTERED (ALT)



and the special one: 9 - ♯5 (AUG)

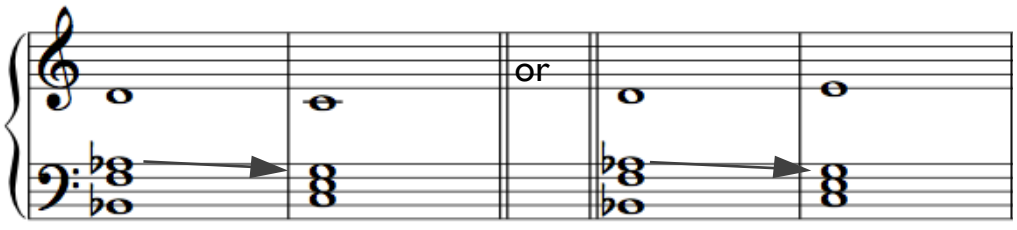
Don't confuse dominant chords with major chords that have a blue note added to them. You'll find those on the Ist and IVth degree in major and on the IVth (more about this chord later) and the VIth degree in minor.



in ma: I I*bl.* IV IV*bl.* in mi: VI VI*bl.*

These are non-functional dominant chords, and could even be replaced by their normal △7th chords - although this would lead to a dramatic changing of colour, yet not a changing of function.

A special place must be made for the dominant chord on the lowered 7th note of the scale. This is a Moll-Dur chord (see the booklet about this); a dominant chord with a subdominant function. The tritone within the chord does not give us two leading tones - only one leading tone is present.

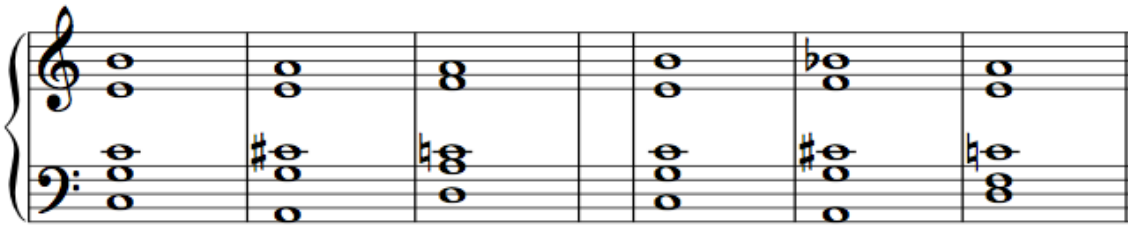


VII*MD* I VII*MD* I

2

Secondary dominants

Each chord in a key can be preceded by its own dominant. It is as if the degree sends in his butler to announce him. This is why I call these chords "butler-chords" sometimes. The butler-chord belongs to the tonality of the chord he announces and thus it will be decided by that tonality which extensions to use.

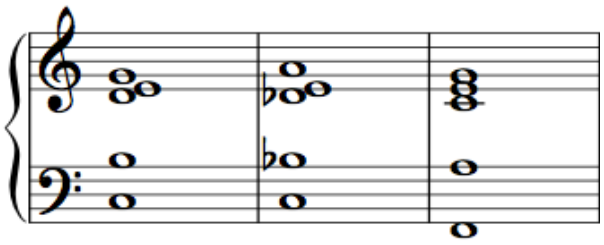


I (V) II I (V) II

♭9 and ♭13 - notes from Dmi

This is less evident if the target is a major chord. Our ears are now completely adjusted to having a ♭9 in a dominant going to a major chord. It adds that third leading tone. The 13th likes to remain in the major key, so a secondary dominant toward a major chord will typically be OCT (see chapter 5).

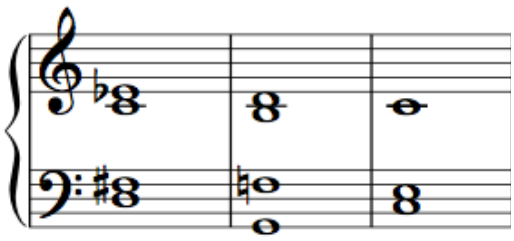
By flattening the 13th as well, we create extra tension. By not flattening the 9th, we take some tension away. Both are possible - but in practising situations I like to stick to the OCT (♭9 - 13).



I (V) IV

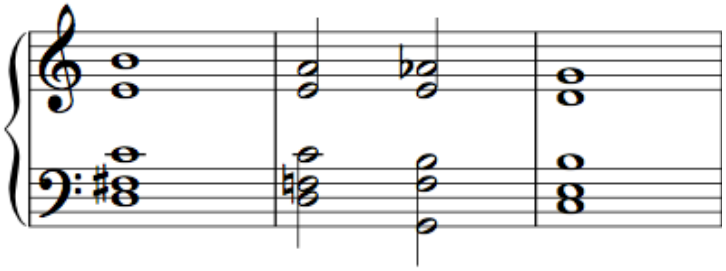
Another special dominant chord is the one on the 2nd note of the scale. It would be convenient to quickly say this is the V of V - a secondary dominant to V. When you really listen to the use of this chord in the jazz practice though, this analysis proves to be not correct.

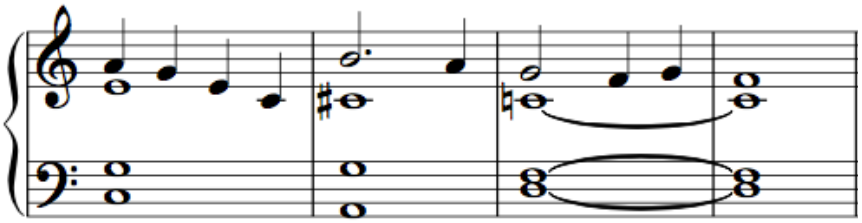
The situation of (V) V would imply that the first dominant chord could have a ♭9. And when you play it like that, you can clearly hear that this sounds good, and that the chord functions indeed as the dominant for the V-chord.

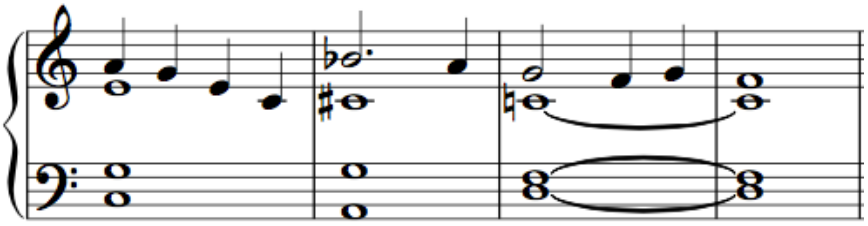


(V) V I

Experience though tells us that this chord is often followed by the II chord; a reason more to suspect there is something special about this chord. And in fact we must concluded that the chord is a static chord with no explicit tendencies towards V, built on the second note of the scale. I therefore name it: II-dominant (II*dom*). This chord is a static chord with a natural 9th and a natural 13th. It is ruled by the fundamental tonality, not by the 5th degree.

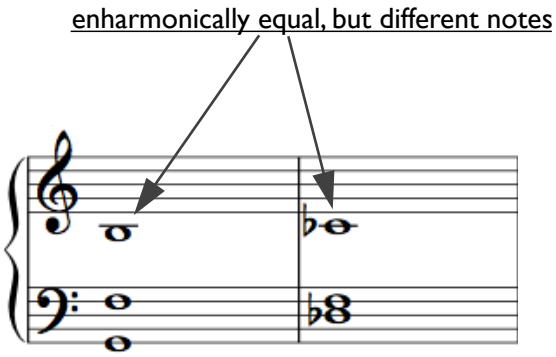


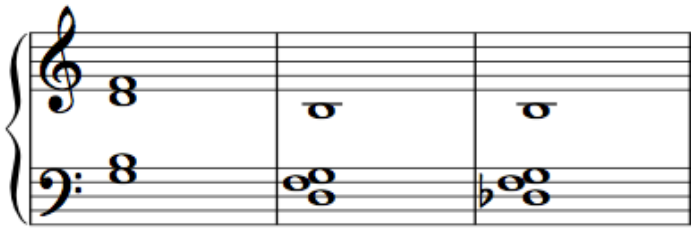


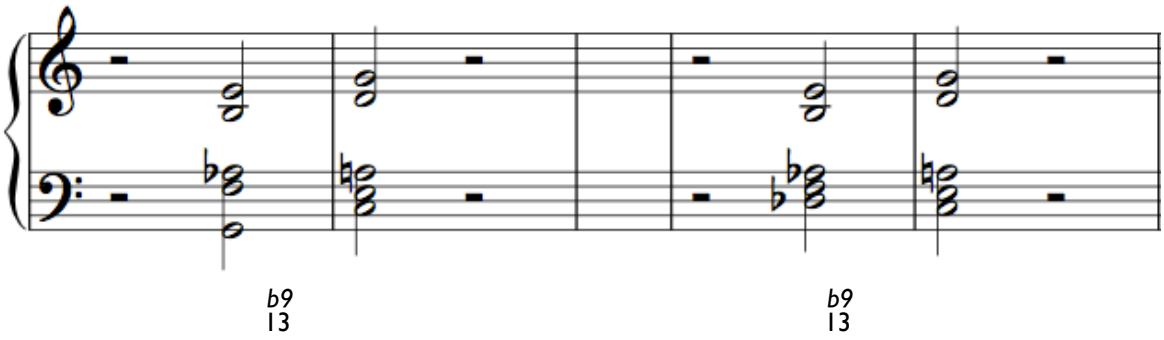


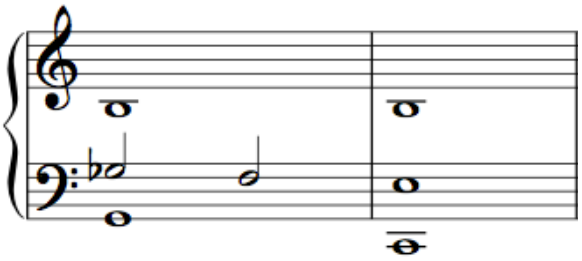
3

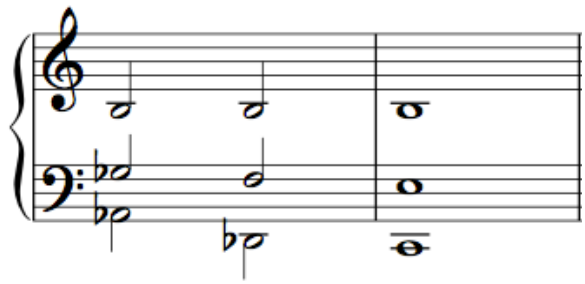
Tritone Substitutes

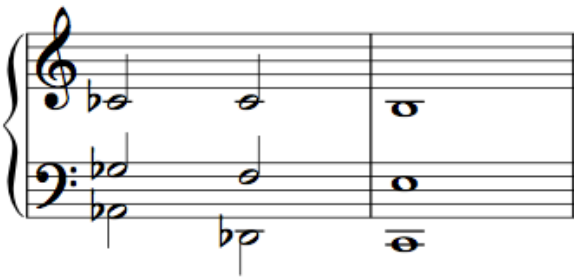


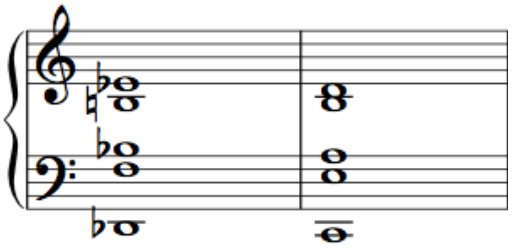


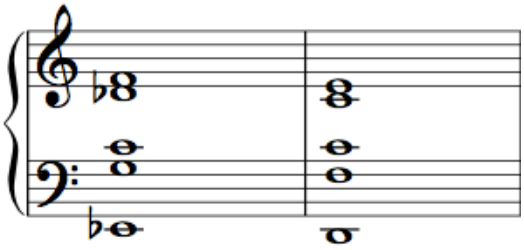

b9
13
b9
13

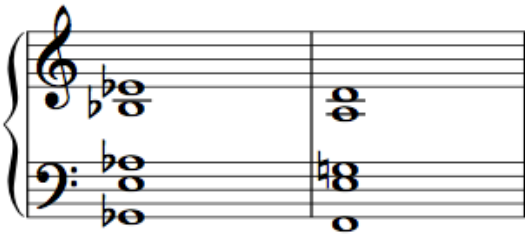


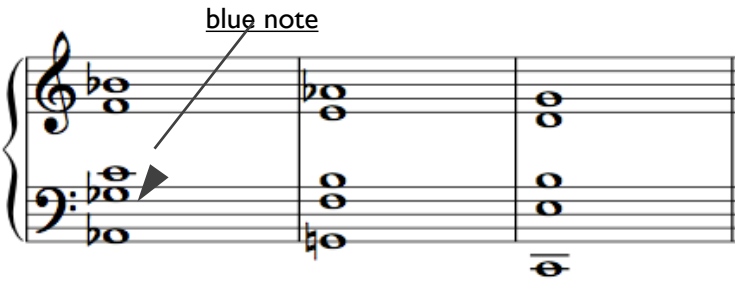


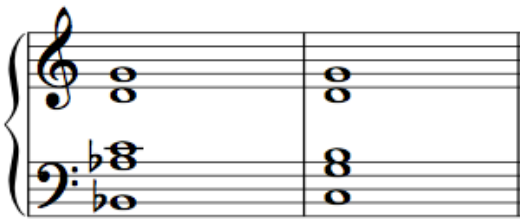


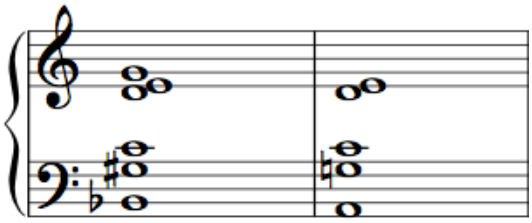


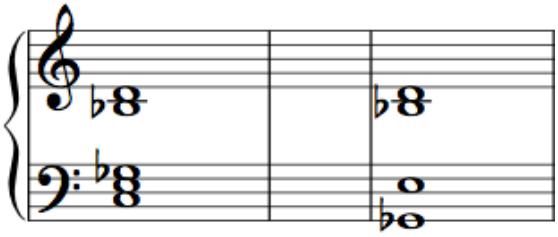





blue note

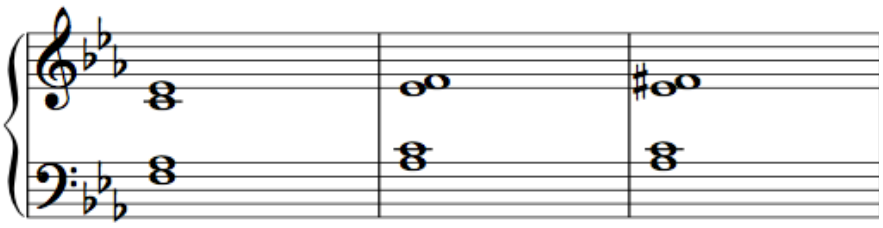


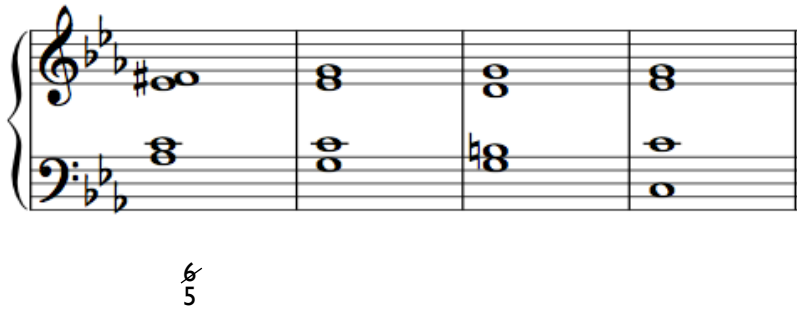


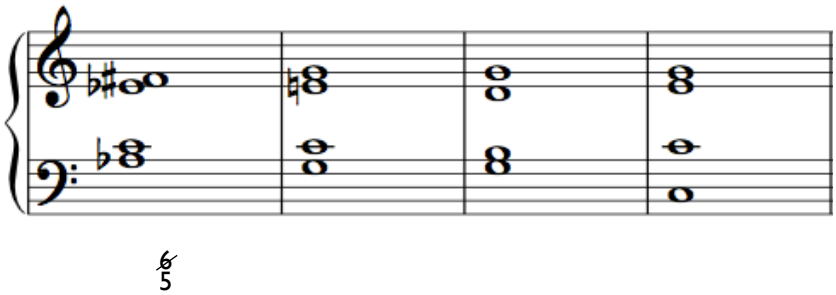


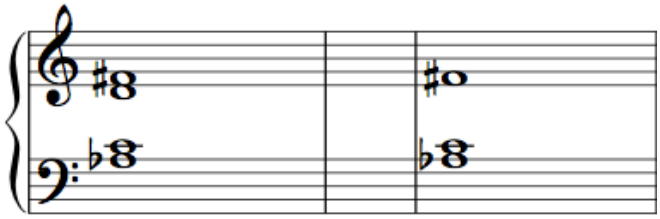
4

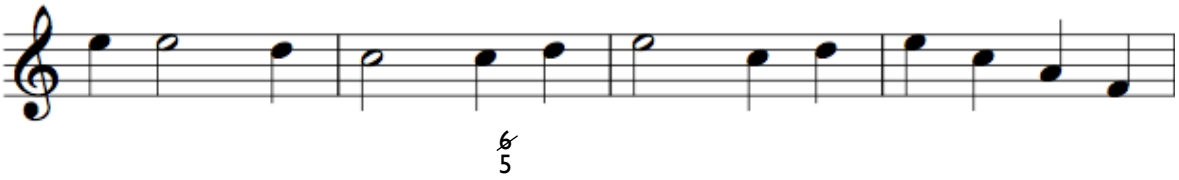
The augmented sixth

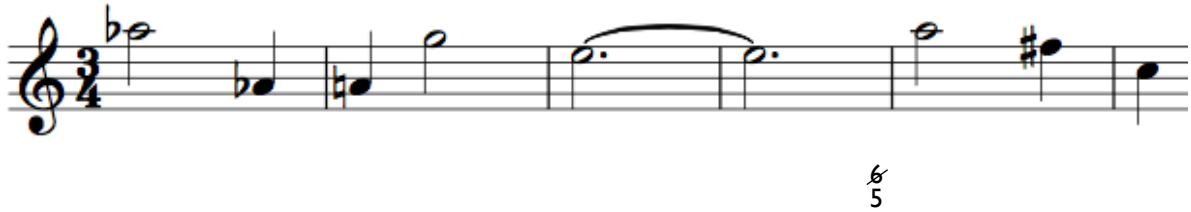






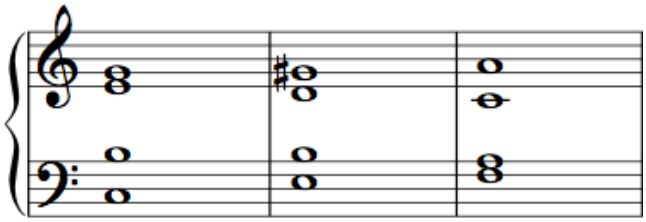


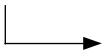




5

In practice



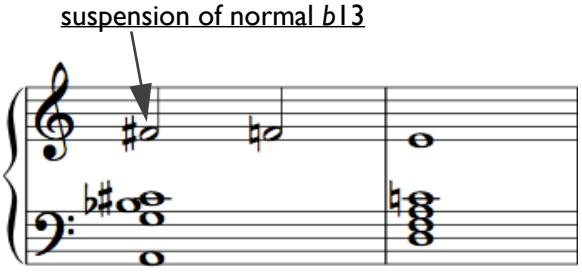


9
13

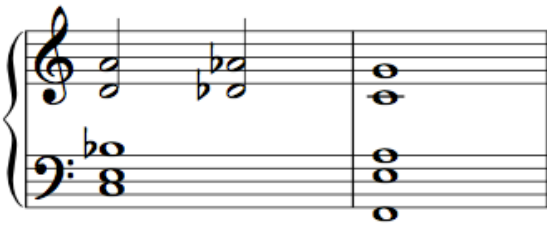
*b*9
13

*b*9
*b*13

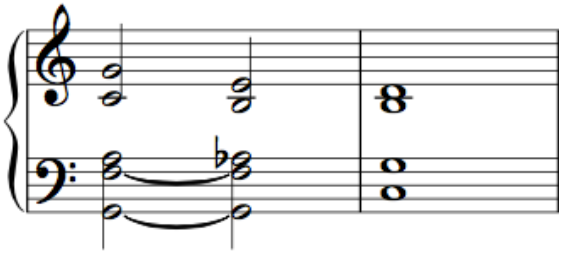
* This chord might be the most fascinating chord in harmony - in all its simpleness. It is a dominant chord on a subdominant degree with a tonic function. Yes, this chord has a tonic function in a minor key. Just alternate Cmi - F7 and you will feel it. So very different than repeating Cmi - Fmi. which is a real tonic-subdominant movement.


suspension of normal b13

moving from WHT to ALT

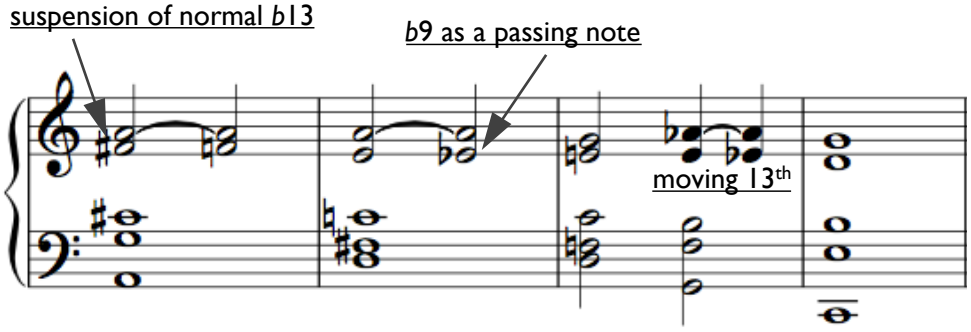


moving from sus-9 to OCT



suspension of normal *b*13

*b*9 as a passing note



about the author:

HEIN VAN DE GEYN (The Netherlands - 1956) has played Jazz professionally ever since he finished his studies at the conservatories of Tilburg and Rotterdam. He lived in the US for several years, working with John Abercrombie, Larry Schneider, Tony Bennett, Larry Vuckovich and many others.

After his return to Europe he has been establishing himself as one of the most sought after bass players in Europe. Hein's playing can be heard on some 100 recordings. He has been the bass player with Philip Catherine since 1985 and recorded 9 CD's with him. In 1987 he toured and recorded in Japan with Chet Baker. Hein was also the bassist on the last concert of Chet Baker in Rotterdam in 1988. This was also the year Hein started to play with, and arrange for Dee Dee Bridgewater, with whom he has been performing at most of the important festivals and stages in Europe (Montreux, Antibes, Vienne, Berlin, Northsea, London ....) as well as in the USA (Carnegie Hall, Village Vanguard, Montreal, Newport Festival...) and Japan (Keystone Corner, Blue Note). After three albums and numerous tours and performances Hein and Dee Dee's paths separated in 1996 since Hein wanted to pursue his own career as a leader and producer.

In July 1990 Hein made the first album under his own name, a duo with Lee Konitz. Several tours followed. In 1994 he created his group BASELINE with John Abercrombie and Joe LaBarbara. This group recorded several albums and toured all over Europe.

1994 was also the year in which Hein co-founded the jazz label Challenge Records, for which he produced a number of successful recordings. Four of them received an Edison (Dutch Grammy) for best Jazz recording of the year.

In 1996 Hein became the head of the bass section in the Jazz department of the royal conservatory in The Hague. In this year he also was awarded the prestigious Prins Bernhard Foundation Music Prize. He received this prize for his importance in the development of European Jazz as well as for his stimulating role as mentor and producer of many young musicians in Holland.

In 1998 Hein received the Bird Award of the Northsea Jazz Festival. In this year he was also elected as "Best European Acoustic Bass Player" by a referendum of the Belgian radios RTBF and VRT.

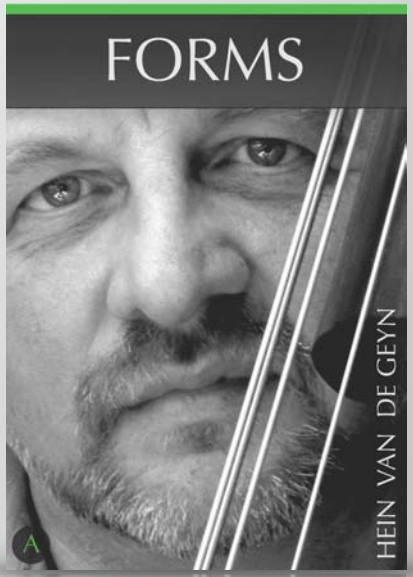
During a sabbatical period spent in South Africa in 2001/2002 Hein started writing his "Comprehensive Bass Method". This extensive method on bass playing (950 pages) became available in 2007 and is slowly becoming the standard work for the double bass worldwide.

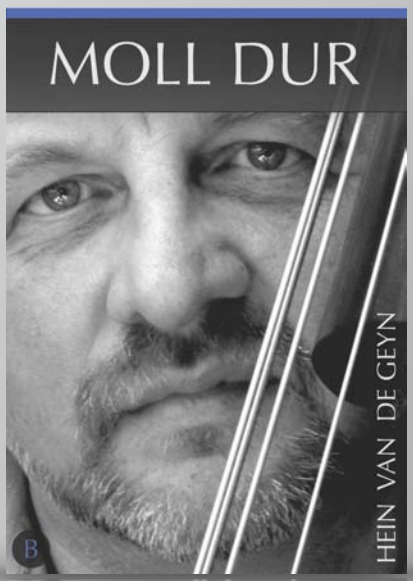
From 2008 to 2010 Hein was the artistic manager of the Rotterdam Jazz Academy and was leading this internationally orientated school with great flair and enthusiasm.

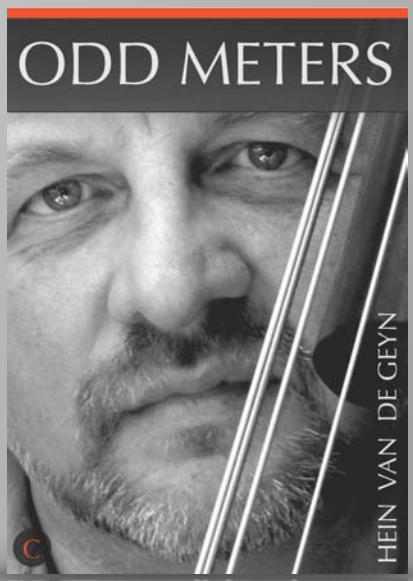
In 2010 Hein decided to basically stop his travelling career as a performing bassist and moved with his family to South Africa to run a guest house, and dedicate his life to writing and education. He is a lecturer at the university of Cape Town (UCT).

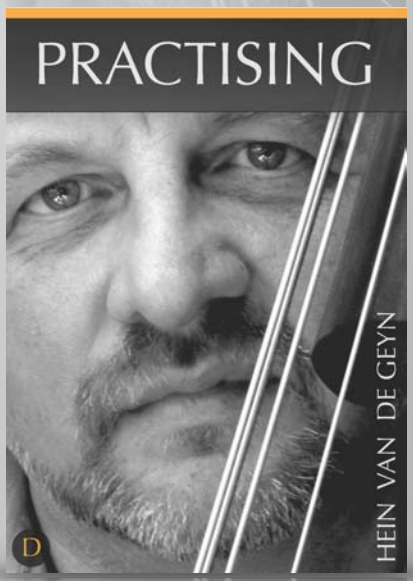
Hein has performed with many artists over the years. To name a few: Chet Baker - Freddie Hubbard - Roy Hargrove - Woody Shaw - Kenny Wheeler - Tom Harrell - Nat Adderley - Abbey Lincoln - Meredith d'Ambrosio - Marlena Shaw - Tony Bennett - Mark Murphy - Jack DeJohnette - Ed Thigpen - Joe Labarbera - Elliot Zigmund - Peter Erskine - Idris Muhammad - Billy Hart - John Abercrombie - Tal Farlow - Larry Coryell - Dave Pike - Toots Thielemans - Hank Jones - Tommy Flanagan - Michel Petrucciani - Enrico Pieranunzi - Barry Harris - Horace Silver - Junior Mance - Walter Davis Jr. - Tete Montoliu - Horace Parlan - Jacki Byard - Slide Hampton - Bob Brookmeyer - Joe Lovano - Lee Konitz - Johnny Griffin - Benny Golson - Red Holloway - Charlie Rouse - Bobby Watson - Lew Tabackin - Gary Bartz - Archie Shepp - Rick Margitza - Charlie Mariano...

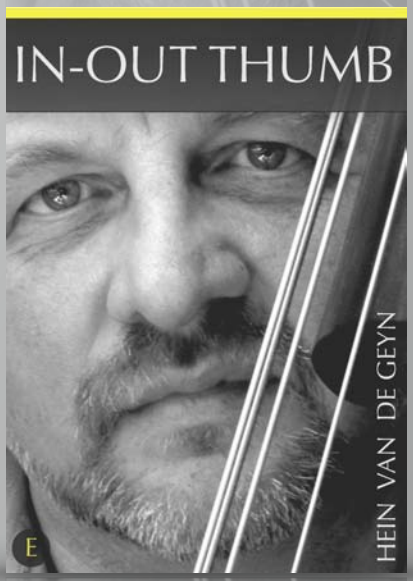
all the subjects in this series are covered in "Comprehensive Bass Method"
available - world wide - through: www.comprehensivebassmethod.com

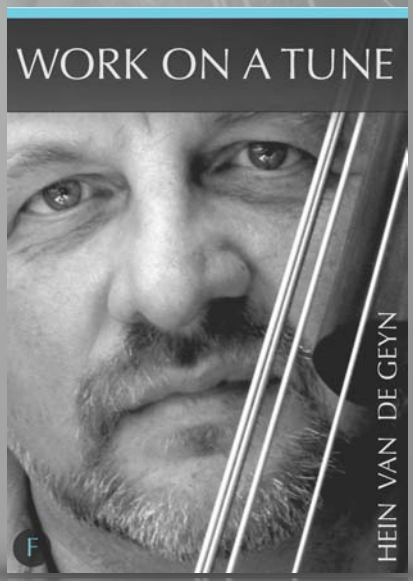


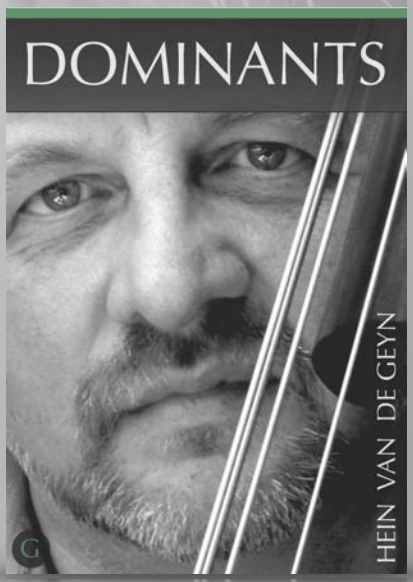


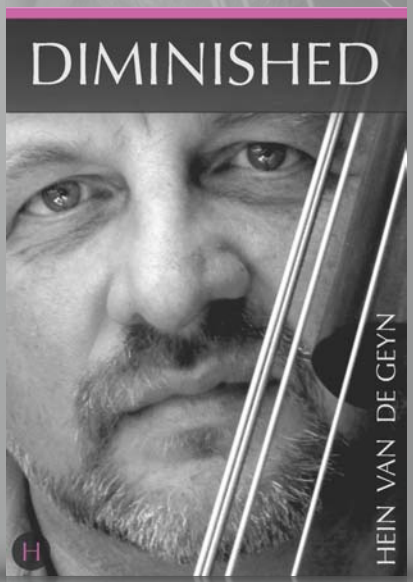


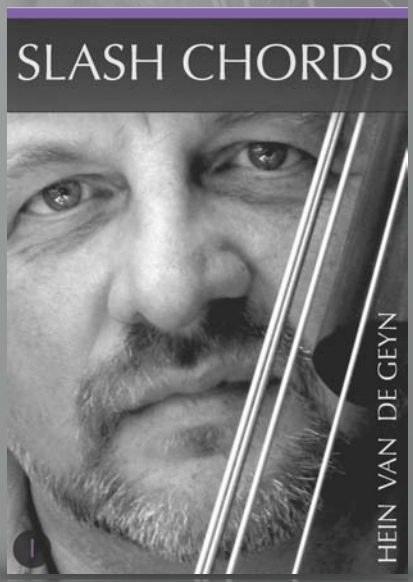












9 781855 683006