HARMONY 6 - SECONDARY 7THS/ 9THS / OTHER DEVICES

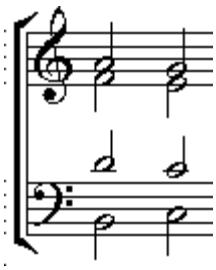
Only the Dominant 7th has the unique combination of intervals that make it ideal for suggesting/defining/confirming the key. But 7ths on all the remaining degrees of the scale, called secondary 7ths, are useful and interesting in their own right. Modern composers use them a great deal (I do, as they give spice to otherwise bland progressions.)

One could give a list of rules, but it is perhaps better to give you carte-blanche to experiment and see how you like them. They can have 3 inversions just as V7 does. The "standard" resolution of the 7th is down a step, just as in V7, but the 3rd need not rise since it will not be the leading note. In fact in many situations the 7th also can rise a step without sounding too bizarre, but you are recommended to let it fall until you are used to it. And in most cases the chord you resolve on to will be best if the root is a 4th higher than the 7th chord.

Uses:
I7: Not used much in traditional harmony; favoured by 20th cent. composers.
II7: Used a great deal, especially II7b, which makes an excellent approach chord to V - I. In the minor key, II7b has a nice bite and is highly recommended.
III7: Hmmm....take care.
IV7: goes nicely into V rather than to VII, though this is just possible.
VI7: Good. will most likely go to II(7) then on to V.
VII7: see section on Dominant 9th, below.

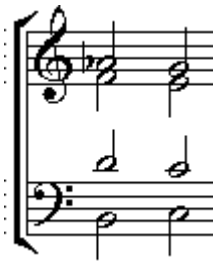
"THE ADDED SIXTH"
In 19th century terminology, "THE" chord of the added 6th was II7b, because it looked like IV with an added 6th. Strictly, it only merits that title if it is followed by Ia, forming a kind of Plagal Cadence.
When you look at ANY secondary 7th chord in 1st inversion, it could be regarded as a different root, with added 6th. No need to wonder about the terminology; it depends how you follow the chord. A lot of people, myself included, like Ia with added 6th. As far as I am concerned, this is a concord! It never enters my head to think of it as VI7b.
What all this amounts to is that a liberally minded composer will freely use secondary 7ths in all positions, added 6ths or whatever, simply to get away from the too-bland effect of constant triads. Thus the "7th" does not always get resolved. (I'm a fool to tell you that...)

CHORDS OF THE 9th
First, the dominant 9th. The origin of the 9th is doubtless as a passing note. But it is now used freely as a harmony note. Since the chord now has 5 components, we leave out the 5th in V9a, and leave out the ROOT in all the inversions (the 9th stands in for the root, as it were.) Normal resolution is: 9th down, 7th down, 3rd up. E.g. (in C:)



The above tenor C would cause consecs! Use G or double the 3rd E (another exception)

Notice that the 9th is best ABOVE the 3rd, unless the 9th appears in the actual bass. Notice also that in the minor key the 9th is a minor 9th. No problem, same resolutions, but 9th can now be below the 3rd. And a nice bonus is that we can borrow the flat 9th into the major key, producing a permitted chromatic chord thus:



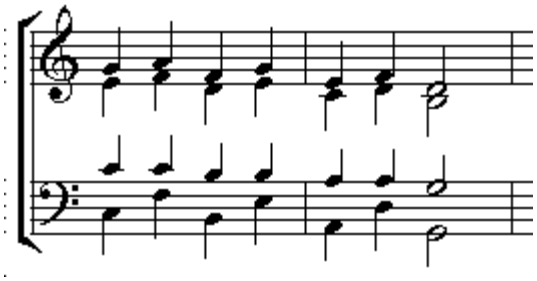
Tenor C OK now because you can have a perf 5th next to a dim 5th.

Now you see the origin of the so-called "Diminished 7th" chord. It is actually the Dominant minor 9th with root omitted. [You can call it VII7 if it makes you happy, but it's still really dominant harmony.]

By the way, you know about the Tierce de Picardie, don't you? (Sharpened 3rd of final tonic chord when in minor key. The Elizabethans used it at the end of every PHRASE!) So the above example, taken out of context, could be in either C major or C minor.

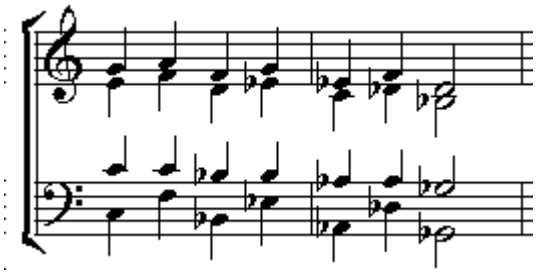
SECONDARY 9ths
Much rarer than Domt 9th, or Sec 7ths. Best employed when the next chord has its root a 4th higher than the present root. Overuse of such chords can create a little bit of confusion, where it seems any chord can consist of any combination of notes, if we are not careful. But by all means use one now and then.

SEQUENCES
One of the most useful and common devices in music is the Sequence, defined as a repetition at a different pitch. We can have a melodic sequence at any time, perhaps with different harmonies at each repetition. But it is normally better to make it a harmonic sequence as well. The beauty of this is that you can break virtually any rule in carrying out a sequence, provided you started correctly. Example:



Note 3rd chord, with doubled leading note and rising F, and harmless use of IIIa after it!

If a sequence slots itself into the key as the above, it is called a tonal sequence. If however it maintains the exact intervals, it is called a real sequence:

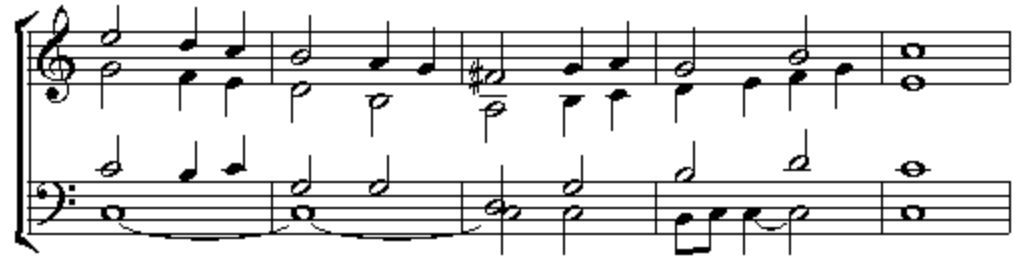


Which of course makes it modulate.

Whenever you detect a sequence, however short, in the given melody, consider making a harmonic sequence. But you don't have to. Particularly don't maintain the sequence if it leads you into trouble. One solution sometimes is to maintain the sequence between treble and bass, but change the inner parts.

PEDALS

A pedal, in harmony terminology, is a note sustained or repeated for several beats or bars in the bass, whilst not necessarily harmonising with the above parts. (Obviously derived from organ pedal sound.) Here's an example:



And the rules:

1) The bass note must be concordant at its beginning and end.
2) When the upper parts do not agree with the bass, the tenor is regarded as the bass for the time being and should obey any bass rules.
3) The pedal note can be decorated, with auxiliary notes etc. All adds to the fun.
4) A pedal in the Soprano, called an Inverted Pedal, is possible, but will not stand much harmony of which it is not a part.

In a large piece, a long pedal on the dominant is commonly used near the end, to build up tension and expectation. Per contra, a tonic pedal establishes repose and finality, and may well follow the dominant pedal.

A fairly common "pedal" (though it hardly merits the term) is the progression I - V - I, keeping the bass still thus: