3.5 Neapolitan Chords

**Definition and Harmonic Function**

1. **Major triad** built on the lowered second scale step (♭2).
2. Often in **first inversion** (hence the common name "Neapolitan sixth chord").
3. **Usually resolves to V or cadential 6/4.**
4. More common in minor keys because it requires 2 accidentals in major keys, 1 in minor keys.
5. The N can be tonicized with its own secondary dominant; modulations to the Neapolitan are also possible.

In C major:

\[
\text{N} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{In C major:} \\
\text{N}
\end{array}
\]

In C minor:

\[
\text{N} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{In C minor:} \\
\text{N}
\end{array}
\]

**Part-writing First Inversion Neapolitan (N6 or ♭II6)**

1. The ♭2 note **resolves to the leading tone.**
2. In first inversion, **double the third** in the Neapolitan.

\[
\text{C: N6 V4}_2 \\
\text{LT} \\
\]

There are many more possibilities.

\[
\text{C: N6 V} \\
\text{LT} \\
\]

**Part-writing Root Position Neapolitan (N or ♭II)**

1. In root position, **double the root** of the Neapolitan.
2. The ♭2 note **still resolves to the leading tone.**
2. The bass will resolve down a diminished 5th to V or cadential 6/4.

\[
\text{C: N V} \\
\]

**Delaying the Dominant Harmony**

Sometimes the dominant harmony is delayed by a **cadential 6/4 chord.**
The ♭2 note **still resolves to the leading tone** eventually, but moves down by step first.

\[
\text{C: N6 V4}_2 \\
\text{LT} \\
\]

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