

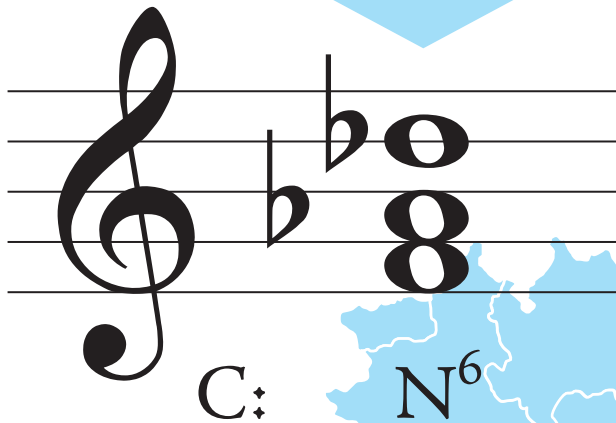
# The Neapolitan Six

IN ADDITION TO THE **ALTERED ROOT BORROWED CHORDS**, THERE IS ANOTHER **ALTERED ROOT CHORD** THAT FITS WELL WITH THE **BORROWED CHORDS**, EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOT ACTUALLY BORROWED FROM THE **PARALLEL MINOR**.

SINCE IT'S NOT A **BORROWED CHORD**, THIS CHORD CAN BE USED IN BOTH **MAJOR** AND **MINOR**.

THAT CHORD IS A **MAJOR TRIAD** BUILT ON THE **LOWERED SECOND SCALE DEGREE**.

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT THIS CHORD. ONE IS THE FACT THAT IT IS **ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY** USED IN **FIRST INVERSION**.



**SERIOUSLY!** ALTHOUGH THIS CHORD IS **EXTREMELY COMMON** IN THE **COMMON PRACTICE PERIOD**, THERE ARE **VERY FEW** EXAMPLES OF IT USED IN **ROOT POSITION**. **SECOND INVERSION** IS EVEN **RARER**.

THE SECOND INTERESTING THING ABOUT THE CHORD IS ITS **NAME**: YOU MIGHT EXPECT IT TO BE CALLED A **"FLAT TWO,"** IN KEEPING WITH THE OTHER **ALTERED ROOT CHORDS**.

THE **NEAPOLITAN SIX CHORD**, SINCE IT IS BUILT ON A FORM OF THE **SUPERTONIC**, HAS SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A **SUBDOMINANT FUNCTION CHORD** IN THAT IT OFTEN RESOLVES TOWARD A **DOMINANT FUNCTION**. IN FACT, IT IS VERY COMMON TO SEE THE **NEAPOLITAN CHORD** RESOLVE TO A **DOMINANT SEVENTH** IN **THIRD INVERSION**, OR TO A **CADENTIAL SIX-FOUR CHORD**.

BUT, IN FACT, THIS IS THE FIRST OF A FEW CHORDS THAT HAVE SPECIAL NAMES. THIS PARTICULAR ONE IS CALLED THE **NEAPOLITAN CHORD**.

"NEAPOLITAN" MEANS **"FROM NAPLES,"** REFERRING TO THE CITY OF **NAPLES, ITALY**. THE CHORD ISN'T ACTUALLY **FROM NAPLES**, THOUGH; IT WAS JUST ASSOCIATED WITH THE OPERAS WRITTEN BY **NEAPOLITAN COMPOSERS** LIKE **ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI**.



C: N<sup>6</sup> → V<sup>7</sup>/<sub>4</sub>      N<sup>6</sup> → I<sup>6</sup>

(EVEN THOUGH THE **NEAPOLITAN CHORD** HAS A LOT IN COMMON WITH OTHER **SUBDOMINANT FUNCTION CHORDS**, IT IS MOST OFTEN REFERRED TO AS PART OF A LARGER GROUP OF CHORDS CALLED **PREDOMINANTS**, AND THE LABEL OF "SUBDOMINANT FUNCTION" IS GENERALLY LIMITED TO THE **SUBDOMINANT** AND **SUPERTONIC** CHORDS AND THEIR VARIANTS.)

FUNNY THING IS, THIS CHORD WAS USED PRETTY COMMONLY **BEFORE** **SCARLATTI'S** TIME, IN COMPOSITIONS FAR FROM THE COURTS OF **ITALY**.

IT'S ALSO WORTH NOTING THAT ALTHOUGH NEARLY EVERY THEORIST AND THEORY TEXTBOOK CALLS THE CHORD A "NEAPOLITAN **SIXTH** CHORD," IT IS MORE PROPERLY CALLED A "NEAPOLITAN **SIX** CHORD." THAT'S BECAUSE IN THE RARE SITUATIONS WHERE IT IS USED IN **ROOT POSITION**, IT IS SIMPLY CALLED THE **NEAPOLITAN CHORD**, AND WHEN IT IS FOUND IN **SECOND INVERSION**, IT'S CALLED THE **NEAPOLITAN SIX-FOUR**.

SINCE WE DON'T PRONOUNCE **I<sup>6</sup>** AS "ONE SIXTH," WE SHOULDN'T SAY "NEAPOLITAN **SIXTH**" FOR **N<sup>6</sup>**!