

hey, it's
kids!

SPARKY THE MUSIC THEORY DOG!

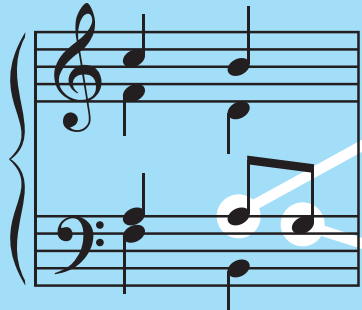


Q: Dear Sparky:
Can you elaborate on why suspensions are identified by numbers? Also, what should one watch out for when writing suspensions in four-part harmony?

--S.S., Detroit, MI

A: WOOF!*

***TRANSLATION:** WHEN ANALYZING SUSPENSIONS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY BOTH THE **NOTE OF SUSPENSION** (THE NON-HARMONIC TONE ITSELF) AND THE **NOTE OF RESOLUTION** (THE NOTE THAT COMES RIGHT AFTER THE NON-HARMONIC TONE IN THE SAME VOICE).

C: IV V⁶

THIS A IS THE
NOTE OF SUSPENSION...
IT DOESN'T BELONG IN
THIS G MAJOR TRIAD.

IT RESOLVES TO
THIS G, WHICH **DOES**
FIT IN THE CHORD.
IT'S THE **NOTE OF**
RESOLUTION!

IN ALMOST EVERY CASE,
THE SUSPENSION IS
THEN LABELED USING
TWO INTERVALS: THE
INTERVAL BETWEEN THE
NOTE OF SUSPENSION
AND THE **BASS**, AND THE
INTERVAL BETWEEN THE
NOTE OF RESOLUTION
AND THE **BASS**.

THIS IS
A 7TH!THIS IS
A 6TH!C: IV V⁶...SO IT'S A
7-6 SUSPENSION!

WHEN **WRITING** AN EXAMPLE WHICH
INCLUDES A SUSPENSION, IT IS VERY
OFTEN USEFUL TO **BEGIN** BY WRITING
THE CHORD THAT IS GOING TO CONTAIN
THE SUSPENSION, **THEN** ADDING THE
SUSPENSION, AND FINISHING BY WRITING
THE **CHORD OF APPROACH**.



C: vi V

...SO IT'S A
2-3 SUSPENSION!

THE ONLY EXCEPTION TO THIS
IS THE **2-3 SUSPENSION**, WHERE
THE SUSPENSION OCCURS IN THE
BASS. FOR THIS ONE, WE LOOK
AT THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE
NOTES OF SUSPENSION AND
RESOLUTION AND THE **NEAREST**
CHORD TONE, WHICHEVER VOICE
IT MAY BE IN.

THE REAL TRICK, THOUGH, IS TO **PLAN AHEAD...** IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO WRITE A PARTICULAR TYPE OF SUSPENSION, YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT THE **INTERVAL THAT NEEDS TO BE PRESENT** IN THE CHORD THAT INCLUDES YOUR SUSPENSION.

FOR THE **9-8 SUSPENSION**,
THE SUSPENSION RESOLVES
TO AN **OCTAVE** ABOVE THE
BASS... THAT'S **EASY**, SINCE
ANY CHORD CAN INCLUDE
AN OCTAVE.

FOR THE **7-6 SUSPENSION**,
THE SUSPENSION RESOLVES
TO A **SIXTH** ABOVE THE
BASS. THAT MEANS YOU
CAN'T USE A CHORD IN
ROOT POSITION, BECAUSE
THEY HAVE A FIFTH AND A
THIRD ABOVE THE BASS.
YOU NEED A **FIRST** OR
SECOND INVERSION TRIAD!

FOR THE **4-3 SUSPENSION**
AND **2-3 SUSPENSION**, YOU
NEED A CHORD WITH A
THIRD ABOVE THE BASS...
WHICH MEANS YOU CAN
USE ANYTHING **EXCEPT** A
SECOND INVERSION TRIAD.

DOING STUFF THE SPARKY WAY IS ALWAYS FUN!