Progressions Using 1st Inversions; Figured Bass
Ted Greene, 1974-12-27

You might wish to consult the voice-leading reference charts to extract ideas for use on these progressions. Try all progressions in lots of keys; add decoration and generally strive to make each one interesting, so that they are not a chore.

To understand the symbols, first it is necessary to talk about *Figured Bass*.

Figured Bass

Figured bass is a system of musical shorthand where chords are indicated by the relationship in close voicing, of all the notes to the bass note. Example: a closed triad in 1st inversion has (from the bass up) the following intervals: a 3rd, and a 6th (whether or not the 3rds and 6th's are major or minor depends on the type of triad). A 2nd inversion closed triad has the intervals of a 4th, and a 6th (from the bass up).

In musical shorthand *any* 1st inversion (close, open, 4-note) is referred to as a $^6_3$ or more commonly, just 6. For instance, a C in 1st inversion is written C_6 (not written as C6 because there is another chord that is written with this larger 6).

Similarly, any 2nd inversion is referred to as a $^6_4$. For instance, a C in 2nd inversion is written C^6_4 (no problem here about the size of the 6 or 4)

Progressions to Gain Familiarity with 1st Inversions
(Try reversing V and I when they appear as the last two chords of any progression)

1)   I - I_6 - IV - V - I
2)   I - IV - IV_6 - V - I
3)   I - IV - IV_6 - V_6 - I
4)   I - IV - V - V_6 - I
5)   I - I_6 (or iii) - IV - IV_6 - V - V_6 - I
6) I_6 - I - ii_6 - ii - V - V_6 - I
7)   I - vi - ii_6 - V - I
8)   I - vi - ii - V_6 - I
9) I_6 - vi - ii_6 - V - I
10)   I - I_6 - vi - vi_6 - ii - ii_6 - V - V_6 - I
11)   I - I_6 - vi - vi_6 - IV - IV_6 - V - V_6 - I
12) iii_6 - vi - ii_6 - V - I
13)   iii - vi_6 - ii - V_6 - I
14)   iii - iii_6 - vi - vi_6 - ii - ii_6 - V - (V_6 - I)
15)   vi - iii_6 - IV - I_6
16) vi_6 - iii - IV_6 - I
17) ii_6 - vi - IV_6 - I

18)   ii - vi_6 - IV - I_6
19)   vi - vi_6 - iii - iii_6 - IV - IV_6 - I
20)   ii - ii_6 - vi - vi_6 - IV - IV_6 - I
21)   I - vii^o_6 - I_6 - IV_6 - V - V - vi
22)   I - vii^o_6 - I_6 - V - vi - V_6 - I
23)   I - V_6 - I - vii^o_6 - I_6 - ii_6 - V
24)   I - V_6 - vi - iii_6 - IV - I_6 - (ii) - V - (I)
25) vii^o - IV_6 - V - ii_6 - iii - vii^o_6 - I
26)   ii - I_6 - IV - iii_6 - vi - V_6 - I
27)   IV - iii_6 - vi - V_6 - I - vii^o_6 - I_6
28) I_6 - vii^o_6 - vi_6 - V_6 etc. [IV_6 - iii_6 - ii_6 - I_6]
29) I_6 - vii^o_6 - vii^o_6 - vi_6 - vi_6 - V_6 - V_6 etc. [IV_6 - IV_6 - iii_6 - iii_6 - ii_6 - ii_6 - I_6]
30) I_6 - ii_6 - iii_6 - IV_6 etc. [V_6 - vi_6 - vii^o_6 - I_6]
31)   I - vi_6 - vii^o - V_6 - vi - IV_6 etc. [V - iii_6 - IV - ii_6 - iii - I_6]
32)   I - vi_6, - ii - vii^o_6, - iii - I_6, etc. [IV - ii_6, - V - iii_6, - vi - IV_6, - vii^o - V_6, - I]

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In 3/4 Time

1)   I - vi - V_6 - I - I_6 - IV - V - IV_6 - V_6 - I
2)   I - I_6 - vi - ii - ii_6 - V - I - I - IV_6 - V
3)   I - I_6 - vi - IV - IV_6 - V_6 - I - ii_6 - V - I
4)   I - iii_6 - iii - IV - V - V_6 - I - IV - I_6 - V
5)   iii - iii_6 - vi - ii - ii_6 - V - I - IV_6 - V - I
6)   iii - vi - vi_6 - ii - V - V_6 - I - vii^o_6 - I_6 - V
7)   vi - vi_6 - iii - IV - IV_6 - I - ii_6 - ii - V - I
8)   ii - ii_6 - vi - IV - IV_6 - I - iii - vii^o_6 - V_6 - I

[3/4] In Minor Keys

1)   i - Rvi^o - V_6 - i - i_6 - iv - V - IV_6 - V_6 - i
2)   i - i_6 - VI - ii^o - ii^o_6 - V - i - i - iv_6 - V
3)   III - III_6 - VI - ii^o - ii^o_6 - V - i - iv_6 - V - i
4)   III - IV - VI_6 - ii$(^o)$ - V - V_6 - i - $Rvii^o_6$ - i_6 - V
5)   VI - VI_6 - III - iv - iv_6 - i - ii^o_6 - ii^o - V - i

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In Minor Keys

1)　　$i - i_6 - iv - V - i$

2)　　$i - iv - iv_6 - V - i$

3)　　$i - III_6$ (or V) $- IV_6 - V_6 - I$

4)　　$i - iv - V - V_6 - i$

5)　　$i - i_6 - iv - iv_6 - V - V_6 - i$

6)　　$i - i_6 - IV - IV_6 - V - V_6 - i$

7)　　$i - VI - ii^o{}_6 - V - i$

8)　　$i - i_6 - VI - VI_6 - ii^o - ii^o{}_6 - V - V_6 - i$

9)　　$i - i_6 - VI - VI_6 - iv - iv_6 - V - V_6 - i$

10)　$i - i_6 - VI - VI_6 - IV - IV_6 - V - V_6 - i$

11)　$III_6 - VI - ii^o{}_6 - V - i$

12)　$III - VI_6 - ii(^o) - V - i$

13)　$III - III_6 - VI - VI_6 - ii^o - ii^o{}_6 - V - (V_6 - i)$

14)　$VI - III - iv_6 - i$

15)　$VI_6 - III - iv_6 - i$

16)　$ii^o{}_6 - VI - iv_6 - i$

17)　$ii^o - VI_6 - iv - i_6$

18)　$VI - VI_6 - III - III_6 - iv - iv_6 - i$

19)　$i - Rvii^o{}_6 - i_6 - iv_6 - V - V - VI$

20)　$i - Rvii^o{}_6 - i_6 - V - Rvi^o - V_6 - i$

21)　$i - Rvii^o{}_6 - i_6 - v - VI - V - i$

22)　$i - V_6 - i - Rvii^o{}_6 - i_6 - ii_6 - V$

23)　$i - v_6 - VI - ii^o{}_6 - V - V_6 - i$

24)　$i - v_6 - VI - III_6 - iv - i_6 - (ii^o) - V - (I)$

25)　$ii^o - i_6 - iv - III_6 - Rvi^o - V_6 - i$

26)　$iv - III_6 - Rvi^o - V_6 - i - vii^o{}_6 - i_6$

27)　$i_6 - VII_6 - VI_6 - v_6 - iv_6 - III_6 - ii^o{}_6 - V - i$

28)　$i_6 - ii^o{}_6 - III_6 - IV_6 - V_6 - Rvi^o{}_6 - Rvii^o{}_6 - i$

29)　$i_6 - VII_6, - VII_6 - VI_6, - VI_6 - v_6$, etc. $[v_6 - iv_6, - iv_6 - iii_6, - iii_6 - ii^o{}_6, - ii^o{}_6 - I_6]$

30)　$i_6 - VI_6, - VII_6 - iv_6, - VII - iv_6$, etc.

31)　$i - VI_6, - ii^o - VII_6, - III - i_6$

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(TRY REVERSING V & I when they appear as the last 2 chords of any progression)

PROGRESSIONS to GAIN FAMILIARITY WITH 1ST INVERSIONS

1. I I₆ IV V I
2. I IV IV₆ V I
3. I IV IV₆ V₆ I
4. I IV V V₆ I
5. I I₆ IV IV₆ V V₆ I (↑ or iii)
6. I₆ I ii₆ ii V V₆ I
7. I vi ii₆ V I
8. I vi ii V₆ I
9. I₆ vi ii₆ V I
10. I I₆ vi vi₆ ii ii₆ V V₆ I
11. I I₆ vi vi₆ IV IV₆ V V₆ I
12. iii₆ vi ii₆ V I
13. iii vi₆ ii V₆ I
14. iii iii₆ vi vi₆ ii ii₆ V(V₆ I)
15. vi iii₆ IV I₆
16. vi₆ iii IV₆ I
17. ii₆ vi IV₆ I
18. ii vi₆ IV I₆
19. vi vi₆ iii iii₆ IV IV₆ I
20. ii ii₆ vi vi₆ IV IV₆ I
21. I vii°₆ I₆ IV₆ V V vi
22. I vii°₆ I₆ V vi V₆ I
23. I V₆ I vii°₆ I₆ ii₆ V
24. I V₆ vi iii₆ IV I₆ (ii) V(I)
25. vii° IV₆ I ii₆ iii vii°₆ I
26. ii I₆ IV iii₆ vi V₆ I
27. IV iii₆ vi V₆ I vii° I₆
28. I₆ vii° vi₆ I₆ etc
29. I₆ vii°₆ vii° vi₆ vi₆ I₆ etc
30. I₆ vii° iii₆ IV₆ etc
31. I vi₆ vii° V₆ vi IV₆ etc

IN 3/4 TIME:

1. I vi V₆ I I₆ IV V V₆ V₆ I
2. I I₆ vi ii ii₆ V I I IV₆ V
3. I I₆ vi IV IV₆ V₆ I ii₆ V I
4. I iii₆ iii IV V V₆ I IV I₆ V
5. iii iii₆ vi ii ii₆ V I IV₆ V I
6. iii vi V₆ ii V V₆ I vii°₆ I₆
7. vi vi₆ iii IV IV₆ I ii₆ ii V I
8. ii ii₆ vi IV IV₆ I iii vii°₆ I₆

IN MINOR KEYS:

1. i Rvi° V₆ i i₆ iv V IV₆ V₆ i
2. i i₆ VI ii° ii°₆ V i i iv₆ V
3. III III₆ VI ii° ii°₆ V i iv₆ V i
4. III VI VI₆ ii°(o) V V₆ i Rvii°₆ i₆ V
5. VI VI₆ III iv iv₆ i ii°₆ ii° V i

32. I vi₆, ii vii°₆, iii I₆ etc

IN MINOR KEYS:

1. i i₆ iv V i
2. i iv iv₆ V i (or V)
3. i III₆ IV₆ V₆ i
4. i iv V V₆ i
5. i i₆ iv iv₆ V V₆ i
6. i i₆ IV IV₆ V V₆ i
7. i VI ii°₆ V i
8. i i₆ VI VI₆ ii° ii°₆ V V₆ i
9. i i₆ VI VI₆ iv iv₆ V V₆ i
10. i i₆ VI VI₆ IV IV₆ V V₆ i
11. III₆ VI ii°₆ V i
12. III VI₆ ii°(o) V i
13. III III₆ VI VI₆ ii° ii°₆ V(V₆ i)
14. VI III iv₆ i
15. VI₆ III iv₆ i
16. ii°₆ VI iv₆ i
17. ii° VI₆ iv i₆
18. VI VI₆ III III₆ iv iv₆ i
19. i Rvii°₆ i₆ iv₆ V V VI
20. i Rvii°₆ i₆ V Rvi° V₆ i
21. Rvii°₆ i₆ v VI V i
22. i V₆ i Rvii°₆ i₆ ii₆ V
23. i V₆ VI ii°₆ V V₆ i
24. i V₆ VI III₆ iv i₆ (ii°) V(I)
25. ii° i₆ IV III₆ Rvi° V₆ i
26. iv III₆ Rvi° V₆ i vii°₆ i₆
27. i₆ VII₆ VI₆ V₆ iv₆ III₆ ii°₆ V
28. i₆ ii°₆ III₆ IV₆ V₆ Rvi° Rvii°₆ i
29. i₆ VII₆, VI₆ VI₆, VI₆ V₆, etc.
30. i VI₆, VII iv₆, VII iv₆, etc.
31. i IV₆, ii° VII₆, III i₆