Sub-dominant Harmonies
Ted Greene – 1973, October 24

There are many colorful chords that can be classified as subdominants (a subdominant harmony could be said to be a harmony that can smoothly lead to the dominant harmony or the tonic).

Here is a list of triads and 7th chords that are sub-dominant in their function (of course, extensions can be used):

**Major Key:**
1) ii, II, ii°, ii7, II7, iiº7
2) IV, iv, IVº7, IV7 (“blues”), iv7
3) bVI, bVIº7, bVI7
4) #ivº, #ivº7

5) bII, bIIº7 bII7
6) iº, iº7
7) bIII, bIIIº7, bIII7
8) bVII (bvi), bVIIº7, bVII7, (bvi7)
9) viº, viº7

Less important

In **Minor Keys** all chords are the same except:
1) omit IVº7, #ivº, #ivº7, bvi, bvi7
2) viº, viº7 are bviº, bviº7

Diminished 7th chords are not listed, as they can be interpreted as 7b9 chords.

Practice connecting all the sub-dominant harmonies to dominant 7ths and tonics. Try all basic inversion of each chord – plan on this taking a few months, at least, to learn in all major and minor keys.

Examples:
Key of A (Am where applicable)
There are many colorful chords that can be classified as subdominants (a sub-dominant harmony could be said to be a harmony that can smoothly lead to the dominant harmonies of the tonic).

Here is a list of triads and 7th chords (of course, extensions can be used in their function):

1. ii, ii°, ii°7, ii7, ii7°
2. IV, IV, IV7, IV7 ("blues") IV
3. bVI, bVI7, bVI7°
4. #IV, #IV7, #IV7°
5. bII, bII7, bII7°
6. i, i7
7. bIII, bIII7, bIII7°
8. bVII, bVII7, bVII7°
9. VI, VI7

Less important.

DIMINISHED 7th chords are not listed as they can be interpreted as 7-6-9 chords.

Practice connecting all the subdom, harmonies to dominants. Try all basic inversions of each chord and tones. Try all major and minor keys.

Examples:

Key of A

Bm7 | Bm | E7 | A7 |
D7 | E7 |
A7 |

Bb7 | E7 | D |
A |
Bm7 |
Bm7 | E7 | A7 |
A7 |

E7 | D7 |
A7 |

F7 | A |
E7 | F |
A |

Sub-Dominant Harmonies