

Negative Harmony Handout

Melody: To find the negative mirror of a melody, use a visual aid such as the circle of 5ths to create the axis point between tonic and dominant. Then flip all the notes across the axis.

C:
c:

Triads: Establish the tonic–dominant axis on the circle of fifths, reflect each pitch across it, and build the resulting chord downward from the fifth to the root.

root becomes 5th 3rd becomes 3rd 5th becomes root

C: I I I → i or -I

Tetrads: Apply the same procedure as for triads, except that a V7 reflects to an add6 chord by raising the new negative root an octave to preserve root identity.

C: V⁷ V⁷ V⁷ iv^{-V} V⁷ ii⁷ iv^{add 6}
-V⁷ -V⁷

4-Part Progressions: Root-position chords invert directly: a minor triad built of a minor third and major third (3 + 4 semitones) reflects to a major triad built of a major third and minor third (4 + 3)

3+4 5+3 4+5 3+6 negative reflection 4+3 3+5 5+4 6+3 5+3

up 4th down 5th up 4th down 5th down 4th up 5th down 4th up 5th

C: iii vi ii V⁷ I c: VI iii VII iv^{add 6} i
T ----- S ----- D ----- T T ----- D ----- S ----- T

Inverted Chords: Reflection preserves chordal inversion. For example, V6 ---> iv6

5+3 4+3 3+6 2+4+3 negative reflection 3+5 3+4 6+3 3+4+2 5+4

c: i VI ii^{o6} V₅⁶ i C: I iii vii^{o6} iv₆^{add 6} I
T ----- S ----- D ----- T T ----- D ----- S ----- T