

CHAPTER 14 – NON-CHORD TONES – 2ND PART

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion started in Chapter 8. It begins with a closer study of general issues that affect all non-chord tones. In addition, new types of non-chord tones are presented and described: the suspension, the escape tone and the pedal note.

1. CHORD TONES AND NON-CHORD TONES.

- In connection with Chapter 8, it is important to remember the importance of a proper handling of non-chord tones. A faulty use of them has the immediate effect of distorting the harmony. Why? Because any supposedly non-chord tone that is not properly used will be interpreted by the ear as a chord tone. Let's look at the following example:

The musical notation shows a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with four measures. Below the staff are four chord symbols: IV⁷, IV, VII⁺⁶/₅, and II. Case A is labeled 'passing tone' with a line through the word. Case B is labeled 'p p p'. Case C is labeled 'neighbour tone' with a line through the word. Case D is labeled 'n'.

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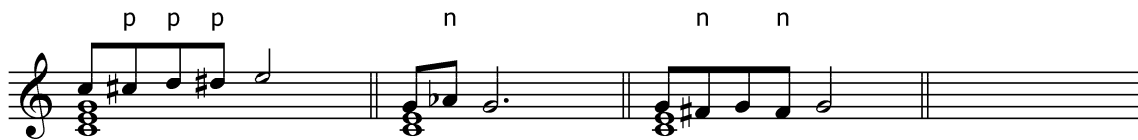
- In case A, we can pretend to consider the note E as a passing note, which is not the case as it does not move stepwise. The ear, therefore, considers it as belonging to the chord, hearing an F7 chord instead of an F triad. On the other hand, in case B, it is a real passing note, and the F chord is really clear.

- Even the harmonic function can be modified when using non-chord tones in an incorrect way. In case C, we could interpret the note B as a neighbour tone. Since it is not such, this note is perceived by the ear as a chord tone, meaning that we would have a VII⁷ instead of a II. In case D, we have a real neighbour tone, so the harmonic function is not altered.

- In short, the types of non-chord tones used in Classical Tonal Harmony are those which, after centuries of experimentation, were found not to distort the harmony. And, in all these types, the non-chord tones are always subordinated to the chord tones (e.g. the neighbour tone is approached by a previous chord tone and returns back to it).

2. DIATONIC AND CHROMATIC NON-CHORD TONES.

- The vast majority of non-chord tones that appear in music works are diatonic. That is, they belong to the scale of the current key at the time. Sometimes, however, to produce a rather special colouristic effect, chromatic non-chord tones are used. Here are some typical examples (assuming we are in C Major):



Im. 14-2

- Chromaticism is applicable to all types of non-chord tone, except for the suspension and the pedal tone. Sometimes it is simply an occasional "whim" to provide a different colour. Other times the reasons are more complex, and their full study is beyond the scope of these chapters. But, in a very general way, we will point out that they can evoke tonalities different from the one in the moment. For this reason, they are often used to "announce" modulations before they actually occur.

- As an example, in the previous example, the chromatic neighbour tone with the note **F#** can be very useful to get the ear ready if we are going to modulate to G Major soon.

3. SIMULTANEOUS NON-CHORD TONES.

- Sometimes simultaneous non-chord tones are used in different voices. When this happens, special care is taken with this simultaneity of notes, so that the resulting sound is adequate. The way to do this is usually to form a chord, as can be seen in the following examples.

Im. 14-3

- The resulting chords are somewhat "fictitious", as they actually appear as the result of non-chord tones, i.e. they are "second category" chords. This is why their chord degree, if we write it at all, is placed in brackets.

- Often, this resulting chord may not have harmonic function, that is, it may not "fit" in the Basic Harmonic System, as in case B. However, it frequently tends to have harmonic function, as in example C. A very common case, to which the latter example would belong, is that it adopts the form of a secondary dominant of the following chord.

- The main difficulty of chords generated by non-chord tones often lies in their analysis and detection in music works. We point out some "clues" that these chords can offer, some of which have already been mentioned above:

- Absence of harmonic function, i.e. the appearance of a degree that would not "fit" in the Basic Harmonic System.

- Short duration, shorter than the usual harmonic rhythm in that section.

- Unusual behaviour in certain notes. For example, a descending leading tone.

- Finally, a particular case of these chords, already studied in Chapter 10, is that of the chords in 2nd inversion. As explained there, all of them are the result of a combination of non-chord tones.

4. APPLICATION OF NON-CHORD TONES TO OTHER NON-CHORD TONES.

- This is a relatively exceptional situation, but it is sometimes used by composers. Let's look at an example:



Im. 14-4

- As you can see, an ascending scale, in which there are two passing notes, has been embellished with neighbour tones. This creates the paradox that the passing notes are also embellished with other non-chord tones.

5. THE SUSPENSION.

- Although it emerged historically much earlier than the latter, we may understand the suspension as an appoggiatura which has been tied to a previous chord tone (see Chapter 8, point 5). These are its characteristics:

- It is placed, at an interval of a 2nd, before the chord tone to which it will lead, which is called the "resolution" of the suspension.

- It is preceded by the very same note, often tied, which is known as the "preparation" of the suspension. This preparation is always a chord tone.

- It is placed on a strong metrical accent, at the beginning of a harmonic change.

- Suspensions are described as Ascending if they resolve upwards, and Descending if they resolve downwards.

The diagram shows a single melodic line on a treble clef staff in common time. It illustrates three types of suspensions:

- Ascending susp.**: A chord of II (F major) resolves to V (C major), and the note G (the 4th of II) is held over to become the 3rd of V, resolving upwards to A.
- Descending susp.**: A chord of V (C major) resolves to I (F major), and the note G (the 3rd of V) is held over to become the 4th of I, resolving downwards to F.
- Inner voice suspension**: A chord of V₆ (C major, 6/4) resolves to I₄ (F major, 4/2), and the note G (the 6th of V₆) is held over to become the 4th of I₄, resolving downwards to F.

 The final chord is I₃ (F major, 3/4).

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- In the music literature, descending suspensions are much more frequent than ascending ones. This is largely due to the fact that for several centuries, in renaissance and baroque music, it was only used in this way.

- Unlike the rest of non-chord tones, which tend to be placed in the melody or bass, the suspension is very often found in inner voices. In any case, what is always interesting about the suspension, wherever it is, is the dissonance it creates against the actual notes of the chord.

- Finally, it is sometimes customary to indicate the presence of a suspension in the figured bass itself, as shown in the third case.

6. ESCAPE TONES.

- The escape tone is a rather uncommon non-chord tone. We could define it as a kind of "reversed appoggiatura". Let us look at its characteristics:

- It is placed on a metrically weak moment, following a chord tone at an interval of a second.

- It is followed by a leap, usually in the opposite direction to the previous stepwise motion.

The diagram shows a single melodic line on a treble clef staff in common time. It illustrates escape tones:

- Chord I (F major) has a G (4th) moving stepwise to A (5th), followed by an escape tone B (6th) on a weak moment, then a leap to C (1st).
- Chord V₊₄ (C major, 4/2) has an E (3rd) moving stepwise to F (4th), followed by an escape tone G (5th) on a weak moment, then a leap to A (6th).
- Chord I₆ (F major, 6/4) has an A (6th) moving stepwise to G (5th), followed by an escape tone F (4th) on a weak moment, then a leap to E (3rd).
- Chord V₊₆ (C major, 6/4) has a G (6th) moving stepwise to F (5th), followed by an escape tone E (4th) on a weak moment, then a leap to D (3rd).
- The final chord is I (F major).

 Arrows indicate the leaps: from G to C, E to A, F to E, and E to D. The text "Leaps (by contrary motion to the previous stepwise motion)" is written below the staff.

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7. THE PEDAL POINT.

- The pedal point is normally studied in the chapter on non-chord tones, but it is radically different in nature from all the others. Rather, it is the pedal note that is the real chord tone, with all the notes around it being the non-chord tones. Let's look at it step by step.

- We define the pedal point as a note that remains unchanged while the rest of the voices play different harmonies that could even be foreign to that note. Most often, the pedal point is located in the bass, and this is how we will show it in the example:

$I \quad IV_6 \quad V_6 \quad I \quad V \quad V+6 \quad VII+4/II \quad II_6 \quad VII+2/IV \quad V+4 \quad I_6 \quad IV \quad V_6/V \quad V \quad I \quad II_6 \quad V \quad I \quad II_6 \quad V+4$

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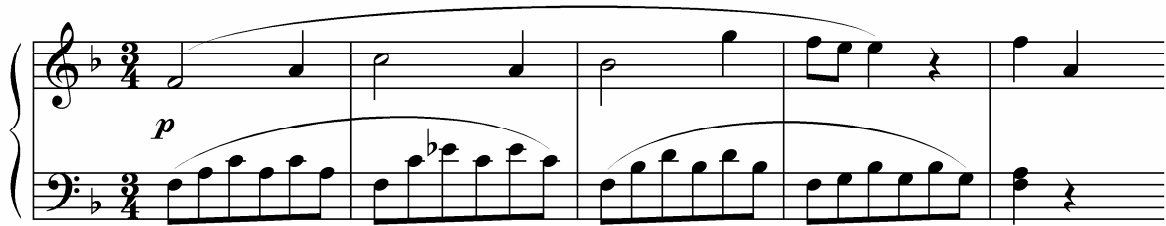
- The function of the pedal point is to retain the harmony of which it is the root note. Pedal points are performed almost exclusively with the root of the Dominant or the Tonic. These are their characteristics:

- Dominant pedal: It prolongs the tension of the Dominant. It is usually placed in the middle of a piece when one wishes to extend the tensional effect of the Dominant.

- Tonic Pedal: It prolongs the relaxation of the tonic. It is usually placed at the beginning or at the end of a piece or section, when one wishes to extend the stability of the tonic.

- As shown in the example, the pedal point always begins and ends with the chord of which the pedal note is the root.

- In the music literature, pedal points are often encountered in arpeggiation, especially on polyphonic instruments, as in the following example from the beginning of a Mozart sonata:



Im. 14-7b

Mozart, Piano Sonata no. 12, KV 332 – 1st movement

8. SUGGESTED EXERCISES.

1. Using the melodic fragment shown below, complete the following tasks:

- Analyse the non-chord tones that the melody contains.
- Add a 4-part harmonic structure, including 20 extra measures (24 measures in total). The form of the exercise has to be the following:
 - Phrase 1 (8 measures), ending on an imperfect cadence.
 - Phrase 2 (8 measures), with a modulation to F major at the beginning of the phrase and a return to Bb major at the end, concluding with a half cadence.
 - Phrase 3 (8 measures), staying in Bb major, concluded with a perfect cadence in the fifth measure, followed by a tonic pedal until the end.
- Write a continuation for the melody for the whole exercise, including escape tones and suspension, and keeping the motivic coherence with respect to the proposed beginning.



2. Write a 4-part harmonic structure with the following characteristics:

- Key: F minor, Time signature: 3/4, Harmonic rhythm: Quarter note
- The beginning should contain a tonic pedal including the following chords above it:

I, V7, I, VII/IV, IV, VII, I including, in addition,

- A tonicization of the relative major key and a modulation to another key, returning at some point back to the main key.
- A Dominant pedal in the main key, with a duration of at least 2 measures.
- Suspensions in the inner voices.
- Cadences which clarify the formal structure of the exercises.