

Non-Chord Tones

This handout is designed to illustrate how non-chord tones (NCTs) transform basic harmonic structures into fluid, linear musical textures. Below, you will find chorale presented in two distinct formats.

Chorale A displays the period in a strict block chord format, isolating the core harmonic progression and fundamental voice-leading framework. Directly underneath, Chorale B introduces the exact same chorale, but with non-chord tones added to create rhythmic momentum, decorate the melody, and smooth out the transitions between harmonies. Study the example and observe how structural chords remain intact even as the embellishments animate the individual voices. Beware, cross-relations can present a problem.

A

HC

I IV⁶₄ I vi IV ii⁶₅ V

PAC

I IV I V⁶₄ I⁶ iv V I

8-----7
6-----5
4-----4

Same Chorale with Non-Chord Tones Added

B

HC

APP ac.NT ANT

NT c.PT sync. DN

sync. PT PT PT

Ped. _____

I IV⁶₄ I c.PT vi IV ii⁶₅ V

PAC

ET NT c.NT Ret 7-8

c.APP DPT (restruck or rearticulated Sus) Sus 4-3 Sus 9-8 (double Sus)

I IV PT ac.PT I V⁶₄ I⁶ iv V I

8-----7
6-----5
4-----4