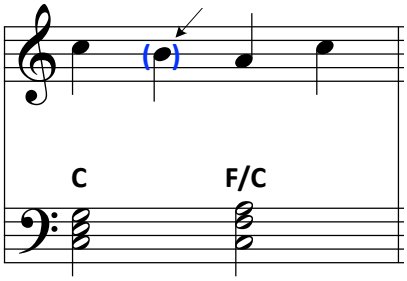
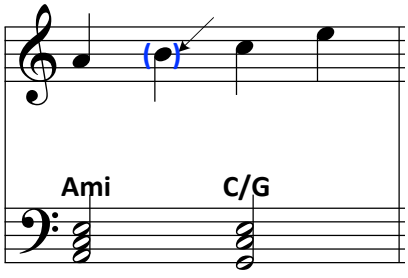
PASSING TONE

The passing tone is one of the most basic and common type of non-chord tone. It more often falls on a weaker beat (not the first beat of a measure) and is <u>always</u> approached and left by step in the same direction. This means that notes before and after the passing tone are usually chord tones. It also means that all the notes are moving in the same direction (either up or down).

This is a N.C.T. passing tone (the B on the second beat) because it does not belong in the C chord below it. Notice that the notes before and after it are chord tones in their respective chords. Also notice that the notes are connected by step (no leaps) and that all three are moving in the same direction.

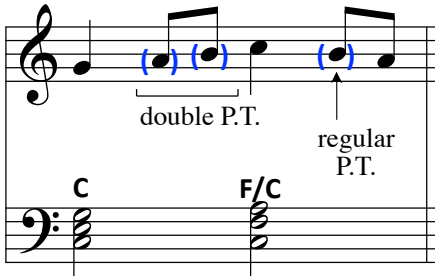




Here is an upward moving passing tone.

<u>The Double Passing Tone</u>

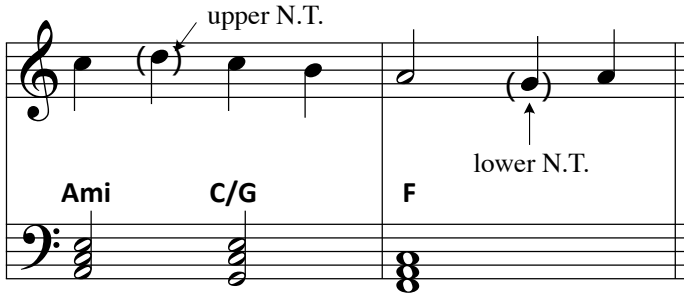
Depending on the rhythm, the particular chords, and the melody notes, there could be two non-chord tone passing tones in a row. They still follow the rules of being approached and left by step in the same direction.



NEIGHBOR TONE

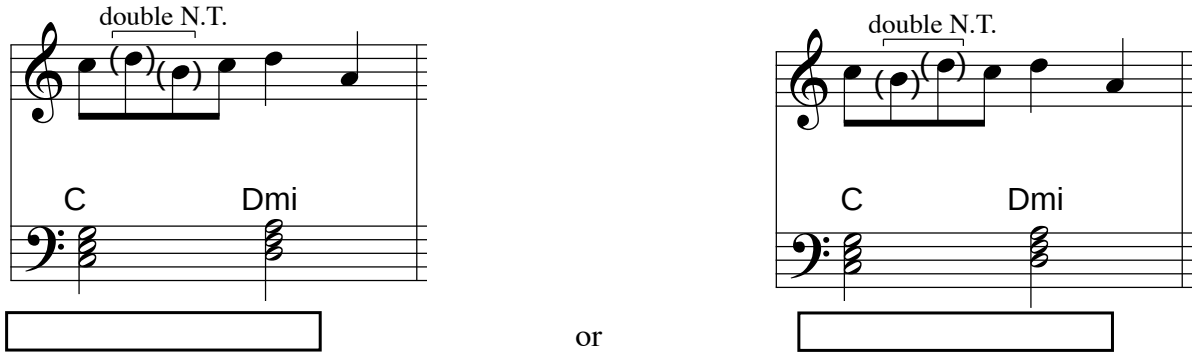
Very much like the passing tone (and as equally popular), the neighbor tone is approached and left by step, but this time in the opposite direction. The neighbor returns to the same note that preceded it.

In each case, the neighbor tone is a step above or below the tone that precedes and follows it. In this sense the neighbor tone acts as an <u>ornament</u> to the tone before and after it.



<u>Double Neighbor Tone</u>

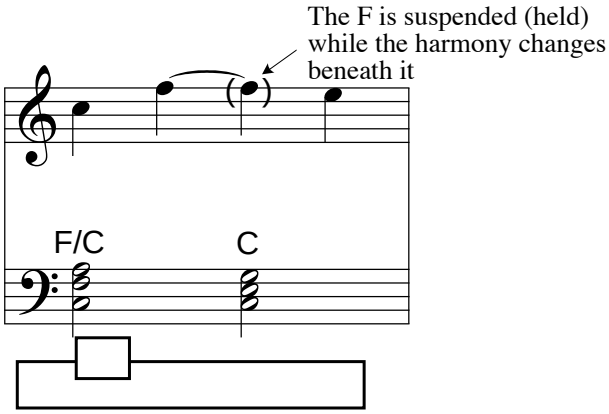
Also like the double passing tone, we have a double neighbor (two notes). This event puts tones both above and below the (or below and above) the tone that is being ornamented.



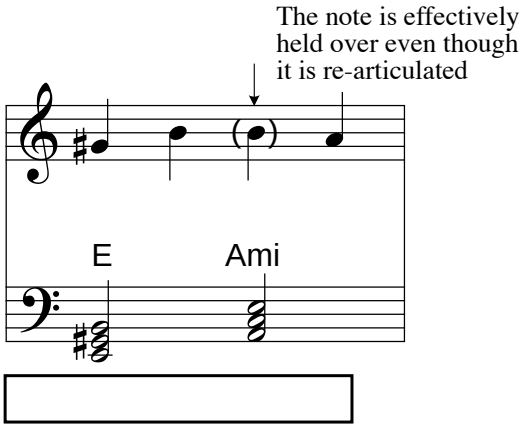
In each of these examples, the tone being ornamented is the C

SUSPENSION

The suspension is a more complex non-chord tone, but very beautiful. A suspended note is a chord tone within an initial harmony that lingers while the underlying harmony changes. This held-over note then resolves into a chord tone of the new chord by moving down by step. This can happen in many combinations.



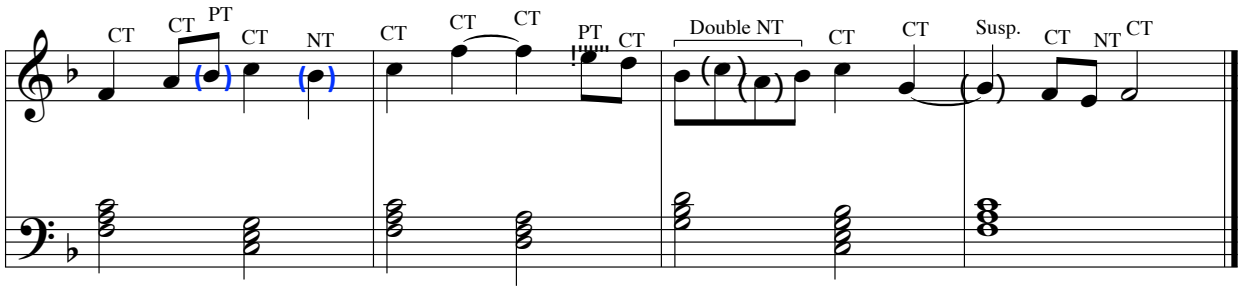
In less-frequent cases, the suspended note re-articulates:



COMBINING MELODY AND HARMONY – SUMMARY

- Basic melodies consist of chord tones (C.T.)
- The note values of the melody can be faster or slower than the note values of the changing harmonies
- Most melodies incorporate non-chord tones (N.C.T.)
- A non-chord tone creates some sense of dissonance against the harmony with which it is sounding; in order to alleviate this dissonance, the N.C.T. resolves into a subsequent C.T.
- While there are many N.C.T.s, the three we explored are:
  - Passing Tone/Double Passing Tone: approached by step, left by step in the same direction
  - Neighbor Tone/Double Neighbor Tone: approached by step, left by step in the opposite direction
  - Suspension: approached by the same tone, resolved by stepping down

Here is an example of a melody that incorporates all the chord tone and non-chord tone practices we have so far covered. Each note is analyzed in terms of one of these tones:



Notice that the more dissonant non-chord tones fall on either weak beats, or at least after the articulation (initial sounding) of a chord. To put it another way, the chord tone always articulates with a chord articulation (beats 1 or 3), if not more often. The single exception to this tendency is the suspension in the last measure; a suspension is always held over while a new chord articulates.