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2-3 Reharmonizing Approach Notes

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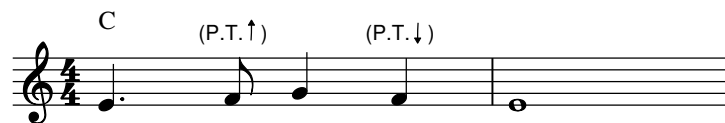
2-3 Reharmonizing Approach Notes

When analyzing a melody to determine how you are going to harmonize it in two, three, four, or more parts, you need to distinguish between target notes and approach notes. Target notes (long or accented notes in a passage) are chord tones and tensions that are harmonized using chord sound. Approach notes (short notes that lead in stepwise motion to target notes) are reharmonized in a variety of ways in order to give their “undervoices” lines that are compatible to the movement of the melody. Chords arising from the reharmonization of approach notes do not disturb the primary harmony of the passage because they resolve quickly back to the harmony of the target note. The standard reharmonization techniques discussed below are chromatic, diatonic, parallel, and dominant.

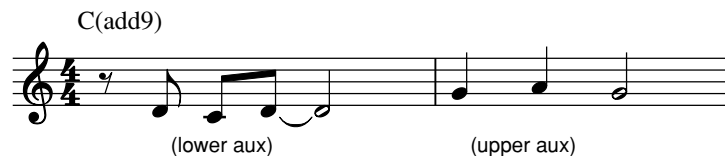
Be careful when analyzing melodies based on lead sheets. Lead sheets often have inaccuracies in both the melody and chord symbols. Play through the tune as notated and correct any obvious mistakes. When in doubt, listen to a recording or ask a pro.

Characteristics of Approach Notes

1. An approach note is usually a quarter note or less in duration.
2. An approach note resolves by step to a target note. Target notes can be chord tones or tensions.
3. Approach note patterns include:
 - Passing tones: These are approach notes that connect two notes of different pitch in stepwise motion.



Auxiliary tones (also called neighbor tones): An auxiliary tone moves away from and returns to the same pitch by stepwise motion.

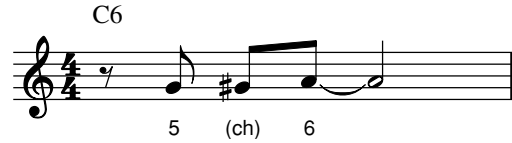


Unprepared approach notes: These are approach notes that are preceded by a leap, a rest, or the same pitch.

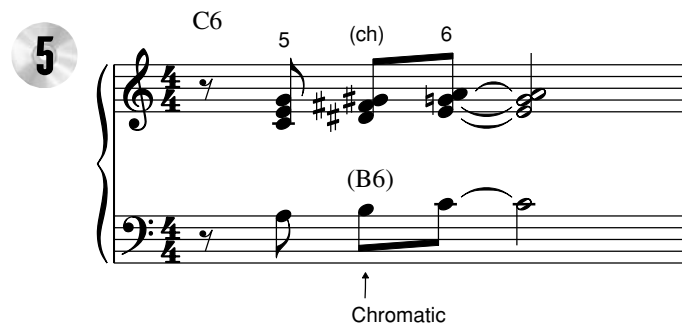


Reharmonizing Specific Approach Note Patterns

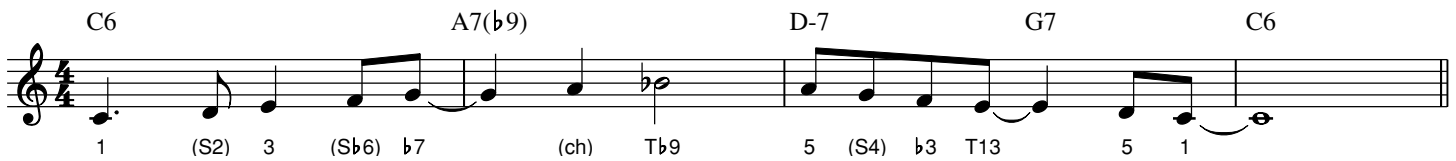
1. Chromatic Approach (ch): When an approach note moves by a half step to a chord tone or tension target note, it is known as a chromatic approach; chromatic approach notes are usually nondiatonic.



Chromatic Reharmonization: Each voice moves a half step into the corresponding note of the target voicing, in the same direction as the melody, as shown below.



2. Scale Approach (S2, S4, S \flat 6, etc.): When an approach note moves by a diatonic whole or half step to a chord tone or tension target note, it is known as a scale approach. (The “S” labeling relates to the chord of the target note.)



The voicings in the following example were created using all the standard techniques for reharmonizing approach notes. In addition to chromatic reharmonization, these are:

- **Dominant Reharmonization:** The approach note is voiced with a dominant seventh chord, either pure or altered, serving as the V7 of the target chord. The approach note must be a chord tone of that V7 or one of its tensions.
- **Parallel Reharmonization:** This method matches the precise motion of the lead to that of each voice below it. In other words, each undervoice moves the same number of semi-tones into its note in the target voicing. This technique may be used to voice any kind of approach note—including chromatic approaches, as discussed above.
- **Diatonic Reharmonization:** Each voice moves one diatonic step into the corresponding note in the target voicing. This works best when both melody and harmony are diatonic to the key or to the current harmonic situation as outlined by the chord progression.

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The musical score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows a C6 chord (1) moving to an A7(b9) chord (3). The second system shows a D-7 chord (5) moving to a G7 chord (5 1), which then resolves to a C6 chord (1). The score includes various reharmonization techniques: Dominant, Parallel, Chromatic, and Diatonic.

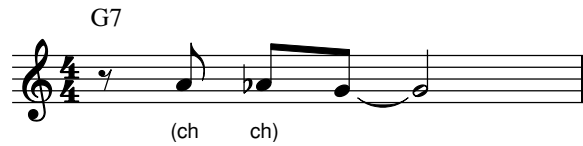
Chord progressions and voicings:

- System 1: C6 (1) → G7(b9) → G7(b9) → A7(b9) (ch) → G#7(b9) → Tb9
- System 2: D-7 (5) → E-7 → G7 (5 1) → C6 (1)

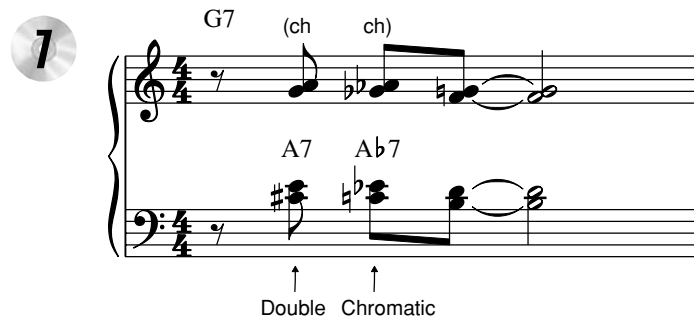
Reharmonization techniques indicated by arrows:

- Dominant: G7(b9) under C6
- Parallel: G7(b9) under G7(b9)
- Chromatic: G#7(b9) under A7(b9)
- Diatonic: E-7 under D-7

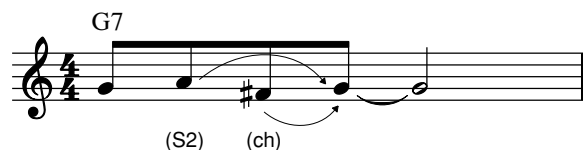
3. Double Chromatic Approach: When two notes of short and equal duration approach a chord tone or tension target note by consecutive half steps in the same direction, they form a double chromatic approach pattern.



To voice double chromatic approach notes, use chromatic reharmonization with voices following the same direction as the melody.



4. Indirect Resolution ((S S), (ch ch), (S ch), or (ch S)): When two notes of short and equal duration approach a chord tone or tension target note by stepwise motion from opposite directions, they form an indirect resolution pattern.



When handling indirect approach notes, reharmonize each approach note independently. The two notes may be reharmonized using different methods, as in this example.

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G7 (S2) (ch)

A-7 F#7 *

↑ ↑

Diatonic Chromatic
(to G7) (to G7) * (G7 is the target note chord)

Independent Lead

The independent lead technique is an alternative to reharmonizing approach notes. In this method, the voices below the approach note simply maintain the prevailing harmony; or, in some cases, the lower voices may rest. Independent lead works well where a less driving feel is acceptable, and for pickups.

A-7 G-7 Fmaj7

