



**WORKBOOK**  
6.2

## Accented and Chromatic Dissonances

Tones of figuration enhance music's motion, grace, and drama. Their presence on the immediate surface of the music means that they are the first events to which the listener's attention is drawn. We group tones of figuration into two categories, based on their rhythmic placement. The first category includes **unaccented tones of figuration**, which include the chordal leap (CL), the passing tone (P), and the neighbor tone (N). We further categorize the unaccented tones of figuration into those that are consonant (chordal leaps) and those that are dissonant (most passing tones and neighbor tones). Consonant tones of figuration may appear without preparation or resolution; however, dissonant tones of figuration must be carefully controlled, nearly always occurring between consonances and moving by step.

**Accented tones of figuration**, by contrast, occur in metrically stressed contexts. Accented dissonances occur in many forms, but the most important are the accented passing tone ( $\tilde{p}$ ), accented neighbor tone ( $\tilde{n}$ ), suspension (S), pedal (PED), and appoggiatura (APP). Since tones of figuration often fill the space between chordal members, by extension, **chromatic tones of figuration** fill the smaller intervallic space that occurs between stepwise motions. We will also explore such unaccented and accented chromatic figures.

### *Accented Passing Tone ( $\tilde{p}$ )*

Just like a passing tone, an **accented passing tone** ( $\tilde{p}$ ) fills in a melodic third; however, the accented passing tone occurs on, rather than between, beats. Example 6.14A shows an unelaborated SATB progression; Example 6.14B elaborates the progression with unaccented Ps. Note that consonance is aligned with metrical stress and dissonance is reserved for the metrically weak offbeat. Example 6.14C demonstrates accented passing tones; dissonance is highlighted since it occurs on the beat while the consonance now occurs on the offbeat. Accented passing tones impart a new level of tension since consonance and metrical accents do not align. Accented passing tones most often occur in descending lines, and they usually are part of either a 7–6 or 4–3 contrapuntal motion against the bass voice.

## EXAMPLE 6.14

A. B. C.

C: I I<sup>6</sup> IV I I<sup>6</sup> IV I I<sup>6</sup> IV

### *Chromatic Passing Tone*

**Chromatic passing tones** fill the space between two diatonic pitches. Most often, the diatonic pitches are separated by a major second, creating a series of half-step motions. Like diatonic passing tones, chromatic passing tones occur in both unaccented and accented contexts (Example 6.15).

## EXAMPLE 6.15 Mozart, Piano Sonata in B<sup>b</sup> major, K. 570

Allegretto

B<sup>b</sup>: I V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> I<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup> I<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I V<sup>6</sup> I ii<sup>6</sup> V

I: (P) (P) (IN) (N) ii<sup>6</sup> V

T: (N) PD D (HC)

### *Accented Neighbor Tone ( $\overset{\sim}{N}$ )*

While not nearly as common as accented passing tones, the **accented neighbor tone** occurs with some frequency, especially in nineteenth-century music. Example 6.16A presents a neighboring expansion of the tonic without melodic embellishment. Example 6.16B contains unaccented neighbor and passing tones. In Example 6.16C, the neighbor and passing tones are accented, since they sound on the beat.

#### EXAMPLE 6.16

A.                      B.                      C.

figured bass:                      6                      5—6                      6—5                      7—6                      4—3

harmonic analysis C: I                      V<sup>6</sup>                      I                      I                      V<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>                      I                      I                      V<sup>6</sup>                      I

### *Chromatic Neighbor Tone*

The chromatic neighbor is highly dissonant yet very beautiful. Example 6.17 recasts the diatonic neighbors from Example 6.16 into chromatic neighbors.

#### EXAMPLE 6.17

A.                      B.                      C.

figured bass:                      6                      5— $\flat$ 6                      6—5                       $\flat$ 7—6                      4—3

harmonic analysis C: I                      V<sup>6</sup>                      I                      I                      V<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>                      I                      I                      V<sup>6</sup>                      I

### *Appoggiatura (APP)*

The appoggiatura is a striking type of figuration. Different than passing and complete neighboring tones (which are flanked by chord tones), appoggiaturas enter by leap, are dissonant, and are accented. They are related to other tones of figuration only in that they resolve by step to a chord tone (and usually in the direction opposite of their leap, in order to balance the melodic contour). Thus, the appoggiatura behaves very much like accented incomplete neighbor tones. We will tend to refer to accented incomplete neighbors as appoggiaturas. Example 6.18 illustrates appoggiaturas and their labeling.

## EXAMPLE 6.18

4 — 3 4 — 3 4 — 3 9 — 8 9 — 8 9 — 8

APP APP APP APP APP APP

c: V i V<sup>7</sup> VI iv V<sup>7</sup> i

*Suspension (S)*

Example 6.19A presents a two-voice example, which we'll consider to be the outer voices of the implied progression whose roman numeral analysis is given. Example 6.19B presents a modified version of Example 6.19A; in four instances the soprano voice is sustained, where it intrudes into the following implied chord change. The accented dissonant pitch creates a great deal of musical tension, which is then discharged, or resolved as it falls by step to a chord tone. We refer to such expressive nonchord tones as **suspensions**, and they are the most important type of accented tone of figuration.

## EXAMPLE 6.19

A.

a: i V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>°6</sup> i V i

B.

figured bass: 7 — 6 6 7 — 6 4 #

harmonic analysis: a: i V<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup> i<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>°6</sup> i V i

The contrapuntal setting and metric placement of suspensions is prescribed and should not be altered. Suspensions are composed of two pitches: The first pitch begins as a weak-beat *preparation* (P) and becomes a strong-beat *suspension* (S). The second pitch is a weak-beat *resolution* (R), one step lower than the first pitch. Each suspension in Example 6.19B illustrates the two-note figure and the three stages.

*Labeling Suspensions*

We use figured bass numbers to label the melodic motion of the suspension and resolution stages of the suspension figures: The four common suspensions are

7-6, 9-8, 4-3, and the bass suspension 2-3. The figured bass indications for the suspensions in Example 6.20 are 7-6, 9-8, 2-3, 7-6, and 4-3, respectively. Note that in bass suspensions, the numbers increase in size (2-3, sometimes accompanied by the figure 5-6) because the upper voices remain stationary while the bass, in its descending resolution, naturally increases the size of the interval.

### EXAMPLE 6.20

The musical score for Example 6.20 consists of five measures. Above the staff, the measures are grouped into five sections labeled #1 through #5. Each section has a bracket above it with the letters P, S, and R, indicating the preparation, suspension, and resolution of the suspension. The figured bass is written below the staff, and the harmonic analysis is written below the figured bass.

figured bass: 7-6 6 7 9-8 5-6 7 6 7 4-3

harmonic analysis: c: i vii<sup>o</sup>6 i<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> i V<sup>6</sup> i ii<sup>o</sup>6 V<sup>7</sup> i

(P) (N)

T PD D T PAC

We show the melodic motion of the suspension by using the dash, so as not to confuse suspensions with inversions of chords. For example, a "7" appearing by itself indicates a root-position seventh chord; thus the "7" is a chord member. However, a "7-6" indicates a 7-6 suspension (such as in m. 1 of Example 6.20) in which the seventh above the bass displaces the sixth above the bass of a first-inversion chord.

### Writing Suspensions

The only available upper-voice suspensions are the 9-8, 7-6, and 4-3. The only bass suspension is the 2-3. The following guidelines will help to write suspensions.

1. Suspension figures logically work best with chords whose intervals contain the interval of resolution. For example, 7-6 suspensions work well with first-inversion chords, given that chords with a sixth above the bass are most often first-inversion chords (e.g., vii<sup>o</sup>6, V<sup>6</sup>, and I<sup>6</sup>). Similarly, 4-3 and 9-8 suspensions work best with root-position chords. The bass suspension (2-3) works best with a first-inversion chord (especially in the progression I-V<sup>6</sup>).
2. Suspensions may occur in any voice at any time as long as the voice is moving down by step to the next chord tone. For example, in the chord

progression in Example 6.21A, the three upper voices in the first chord all lie a second above the corresponding voice in the second chord, which means that the resolution is already set up. Now we consider the second chord in order to find an appropriate voice to suspend. Given that the second chord is a first-inversion sonority, the 7–6 suspension would work best (see Example 6.21B).

### EXAMPLE 6.21

A. look for descending steps (shown by arrows)

G: I vii°8 I<sup>6</sup> IV V- $\frac{4}{2}$  I<sup>6</sup> V<sup>6</sup> I

B.

7-6 7-6 9-8 4-3 5-6 2-3 9-8

3. Make sure that the resolution pitch is not doubled in any other voice, for if it were, it would be sounding against the dissonant suspension and thus would anticipate the suspension's tone of resolution and ruin its intended effect. The one exception to this rule is the 9–8 suspension, which falls to the octave, because the dissonance is far enough away from the sounding note of resolution. Finally, the duration of the dissonant suspended note should be at least as long as or longer than the preparation and the resolution.

### *Anticipation (ANT)*

The *anticipation* is an unaccented nonchord tone. But given that it may be considered the “mirror opposite” of the suspension, it is included at this point. The anticipation appears before the chord to which it belongs actually sounds, usually creating a dissonance with the already-sounding chord. Because it occurs on a weak beat and is premature, it can be viewed as a tone of figuration that functions in the exact opposite manner of the suspension, which is an accented tone that delays a chord tone's resolution. It is most effective at cadences, when the final chord is strongly expected. Example 6.22 presents an example of a double anticipation.



## Dissonant Embellishing Tones

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## Tonal Theory I

Mon., Mar. 16, 2015

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