



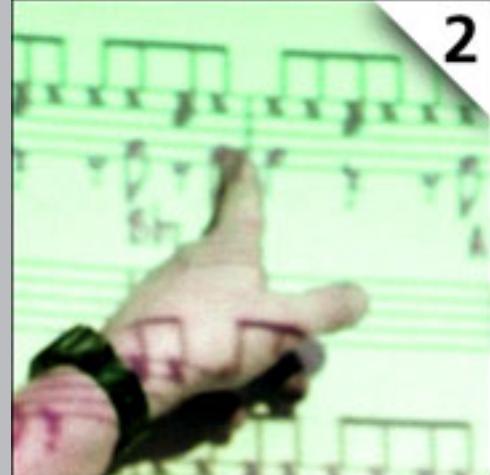
FREE music lessons from Berklee College of Music

Getting Inside Harmony 2

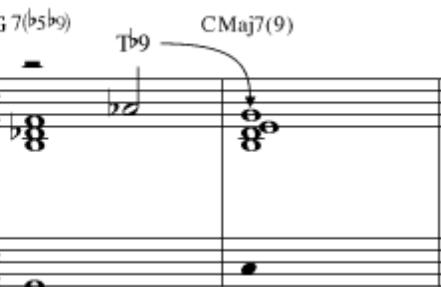
Lesson 1: Melodic and Harmonic Tensions

This lesson is excerpted from an online course. While the navigation links on each page are not active, all of the multimedia interactions are. Have fun!

Check out Berkleeshares.com for more lessons just like this one.



Lesson 1[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)[Topic 2](#)[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[Page 3](#)[Page 4](#)[Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)[Topic 3](#)[Activity 3](#)[Topic 4](#)[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)[Topic 5](#)**Course Contents**[Syllabus](#)[Grades](#)[Bookmark](#)**Communication**[Announcements](#)[Class list](#)[Discussion](#)[Chat](#)**Melodic and Harmonic Tensions**[Previous Activity Page](#)[Next Page](#)

Lesson 1[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)**Topic 2**[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[Page 3](#)[Page 4](#)[Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)**Topic 3**[Activity 3](#)**Topic 4**[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)[Topic 5](#)**Course Contents**[Syllabus](#)[Grades](#)[Bookmark](#)**Communication**[Announcements](#)[Class list](#)[Discussion](#)[Chat](#)**Melodic and Harmonic Tensions**[Previous Page](#)[Next Page](#)

Lesson 1[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)**Topic 2**[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[→ Page 3](#)[Page 4](#)[Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)[Topic 3](#)[Activity 3](#)[Topic 4](#)[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)[Topic 5](#)**Course Contents**[Syllabus](#)[Grades](#)[→ Bookmark](#)**Communication**[Announcements](#)[Class list](#)[Discussion](#)[Chat](#)**Melodic and Harmonic Tensions**

C6 C6(9)

or it may be a note that conflicts with the chord sound.

C6 C6(?!)

(In that case, the note—a valuable part of the scale—is used as an **approach note**, a note that wants to move by step into a chord tone.) Although used in melody, such a conflicting note is avoided in supporting harmony because it distorts the chord sound. With regard to the harmony, then, we call it an **avoid note**.

C6

Whether or not a non-basic chord tone is available as a tension is an important concern—one we'll look at closely.

[Previous Page](#)

[Next Page](#)

Lesson 1

[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)

Topic 2

[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[Page 3](#)[Page 4](#)[Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)[Topic 3](#)[Activity 3](#)

Topic 4

[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)[Topic 5](#)

Course Contents

[Syllabus](#)[Grades](#)[Bookmark](#)

Communication

[Announcements](#)[Class list](#)[Discussion](#)[Chat](#)

Melodic and Harmonic Tensions



D-7(9) D-7(9) D-7(9)

Is the richness fairly moderate?

D-7(11)

Or is the richness level minimal?

[Previous Page](#)
[Next Page](#)

Lesson 1[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)**Topic 2**[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[Page 3](#)[Page 4](#) [Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)[Topic 3](#)[Activity 3](#)[Topic 4](#)[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)[Topic 5](#)**Course Contents** [Syllabus](#) [Grades](#) [Bookmark](#)**Communication** [Announcements](#) [Class list](#) [Discussion](#) [Chat](#)

Melodic and Harmonic Tensions



Let's look at tension names, taking the chord scale for Fmaj7 in the key of C as an example. Instead of lining up the notes in intervals of seconds, we'll stack up the notes in intervals of thirds.



Notice that the lower four notes are the ribcage notes of Fmaj7: 1, 3, 5, 7. The upper three notes are tensions 9, #11 (i.e., "raised" 11), and 13. (As with the scale in linear position, accidentals in the stacked chord scale reflect alterations from the *parallel* major scale: scale degree #4 = tension #11, etc.)

Throughout our study, we'll label tensions using a capital T, as in T9, T#11, T13, etc. When these intercostals are melodic approach notes, we'll call them S2, S#4, S6, etc., meaning "Scale note 2, Scale note raised 4, Scale note 6."

[Previous Page](#)[Next Page](#)

Lesson 1[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)**Topic 2**[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[Page 3](#)[Page 4](#)[Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)[Topic 3](#)[Activity 3](#)[Topic 4](#)[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)[Topic 5](#)**Course Contents**[Syllabus](#)[Grades](#)[Bookmark](#)**Communication**[Announcements](#)[Class list](#)[Discussion](#)[Chat](#)**Melodic and Harmonic Tensions****Melodic Tensions**

A melodic tension is one that appears in the melody, in such situations as these:

Non-chord tones longer than a beat's duration.

Non-chord tones followed by a leap.

Non-chord tones on strong beats moving down to chord tones on weak beats.

Note in the examples above that the melodic tension is *not* identified in the chord symbol. This implies that it's not expected to appear elsewhere in the harmonic accompaniment, although many rhythm section players, following their ear and musical judgment, might choose to include it anyway.

[Previous Page](#)[Next Page](#)

Lesson 1[Topic 1](#)[Activity 1](#)**Topic 2**[Page 1](#)[Page 2](#)[Page 3](#)[Page 4](#)[Page 5](#)[Page 6](#)[Page 7](#)[Activity 2](#)**Topic 3**[Activity 3](#)**Topic 4**[Activity 4](#)[Activity 5](#)[Activity 6](#)**Topic 5****Course Contents**[Syllabus](#)[Grades](#)[Bookmark](#)**Communication**[Announcements](#)[Class list](#)[Discussion](#)[Chat](#)

Melodic and Harmonic Tensions



Harmonic Tensions

A harmonic tension is one that appears in the accompaniment, i.e., the voicings played by supporting instruments and by rhythm section players. Here are a few points about harmonic tensions:

- They may sound just as long as chord tones do.
- If they are part of the chord symbol, e.g., $B\flat 7(13, \#11)$, they need to be included in the accompaniment voicings.
- When including altered tensions in the accompaniment, *include them in the chord symbol*. This will help the rhythm section conform to the arrangement!

Notice that the first eight bars in this example contain two chords that are not diatonic to the key. How do we get the right chord scales for them? That will be coming up in a few pages.

Also, please don't be concerned about how the supporting harmony voicings were built. That's a subject we'll tackle in the next two lessons. For now, you must examine—by playing on your keyboard, of course—what the voicing for each chord *looks* like (in notation), *sounds* like, and *feels* like. (Remember the six input activities we reviewed earlier?)

[Previous Page](#)
[Next Activity: Exercise](#)

Want more?

Guitar.
Performance.
Production.
Songwriting & Arranging.
Music Business.

Theory, Harmony & Ear Training.

Study with the world-renowned professors of Berklee College of Music,
on your own time, from anywhere in the world.

Online Courses and Certificates from Berkleemusic



Music Theory 101

Get the musical foundation you need to take your skills to a higher level. Learn to read, write, really listen ... and put theory into practice every day!



Getting Inside Harmony 2005 UCEA Continuing Education Award Winner

Use harmony creatively in your playing and writing. Learn to hear and modify chord progressions, improvise effectively from chord to chord and deepen your understanding of music's inner workings.



Basic Ear Training

This practical approach to ear training will help you build your confidence as a performer by teaching you how to notate basic rhythms and better identify the different parts of a song.



Theory, Harmony & Ear Training Master Certificate Program

Maximize your performance, writing, arranging, improvisation, and music comprehension skills by developing your fundamental knowledge in the areas of music theory, harmony, and ear training.

[Learn More](#)

Books and DVDs from Berklee Press



Harmonic Ear Training

A vital introduction for songwriters and performers looking to improve their listening skills and become better musicians. Learn how to break down the hearing process, internalize the music, and then identify the elements of the progression.



Berklee Music Theory: Book 1

Learn music theory based on over 40 years of music theory instruction at Berklee. Explore the inner workings of music, presenting notes, scales and rhythms as they are heard in today's music styles.



Jazz Composition: Theory and Practice

Based on Professor Ted Pease's 25 years of teaching jazz composition at Berklee. Students will develop writing skills and apply melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic concepts to the blues, song form, episodic composition, and multi-movement jazz works.



Modern Jazz Voicings: Arranging for Small and Medium Ensembles

This is the definitive text used for the time-honored Chord Scales course at Berklee College of Music. Add color, character, and sophistication to your chord voicings. Learn advanced arranging and performing techniques for three to six parts.

[Learn More](#)