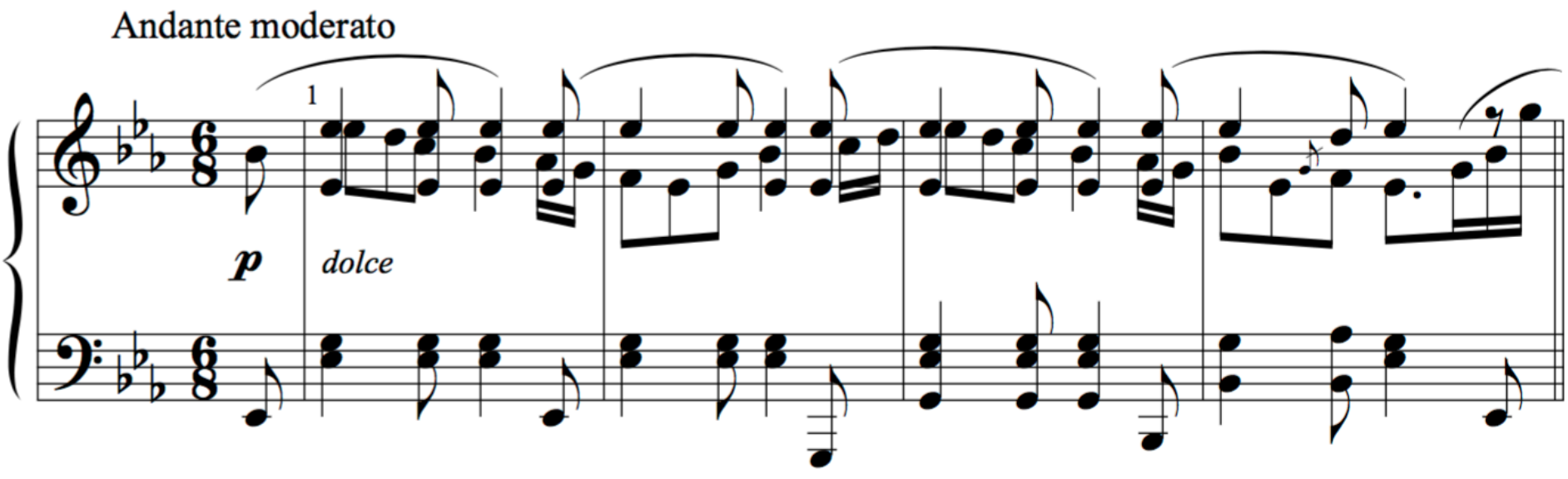
NONCHORD TONES 1

October 31, 2016

Nonchord Tones

- We have already seen many nonchord tones (NCT) so far this semester.
  - *We have been putting each NCT in parentheses, and leaving it at that.*
- Now we will take a closer look at NCTs
- **Nonchord Tone**: a tone, either diatonic or chromatic, that is not a member of the chord.
  - *can be an NCT for its entire duration*
  - *can be an NCT for only a portion of its duration, if the harmony changes before the tone does.*

Brahms, Intermezzo in E-flat Major, op. 117 no. 1

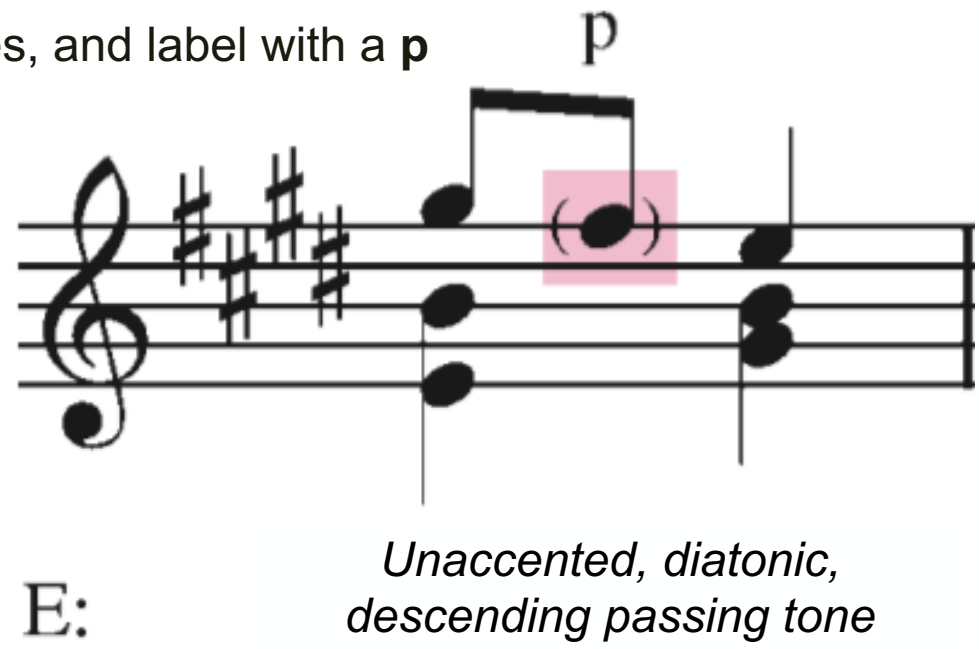


Classifying NCTs

- NCTs are classified by the way in which they are approached and left.
  - *Think melodically*
- What are the possible ways a note could be approached or left?
  - *Step*
  - *Leap*
  - *Same tone*
- This can be further extended:
  - *Step*
    - Up
    - Down
    - In the same direction as the approach
    - In the opposite directions as the approach.

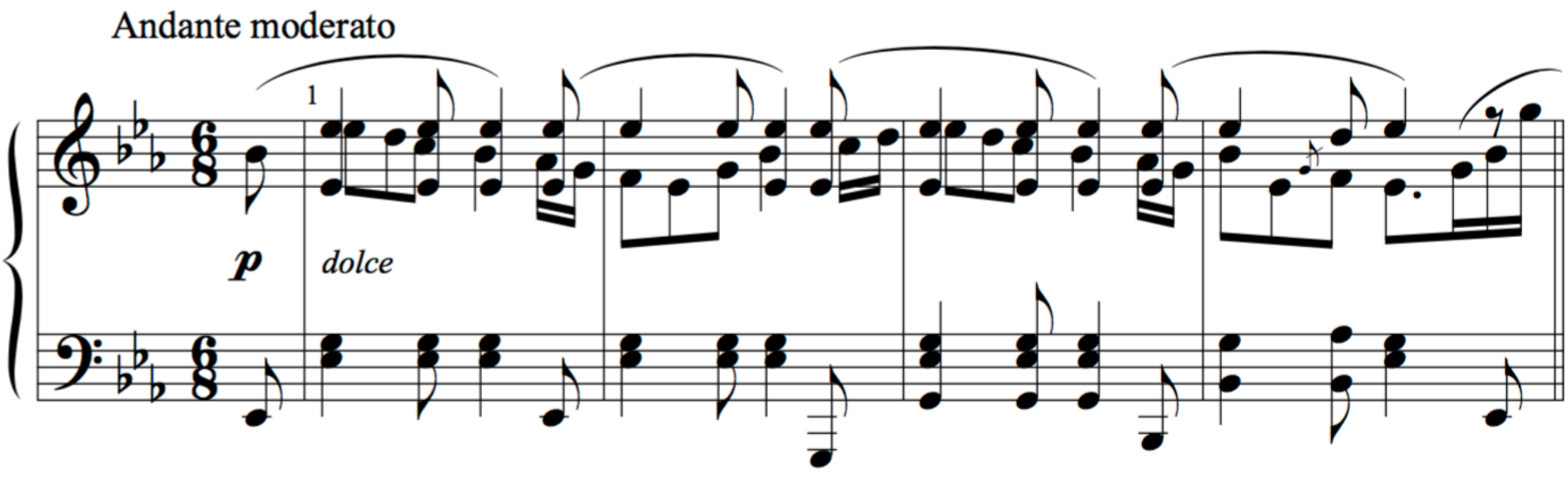
Passing Tones

- The **passing tone** is used to fill in the space between two other tones.
- A passing tone is approached by step and left by step in the ***same*** direction
  - *Often fills in a major or minor third with whatever scale degree is in between.*
- Put the note in parentheses, and label with a **p**
- Further descriptors:
  - *Ascending/descending*
  - *Diatonic/chromatic*
  - *Accented/unaccented*

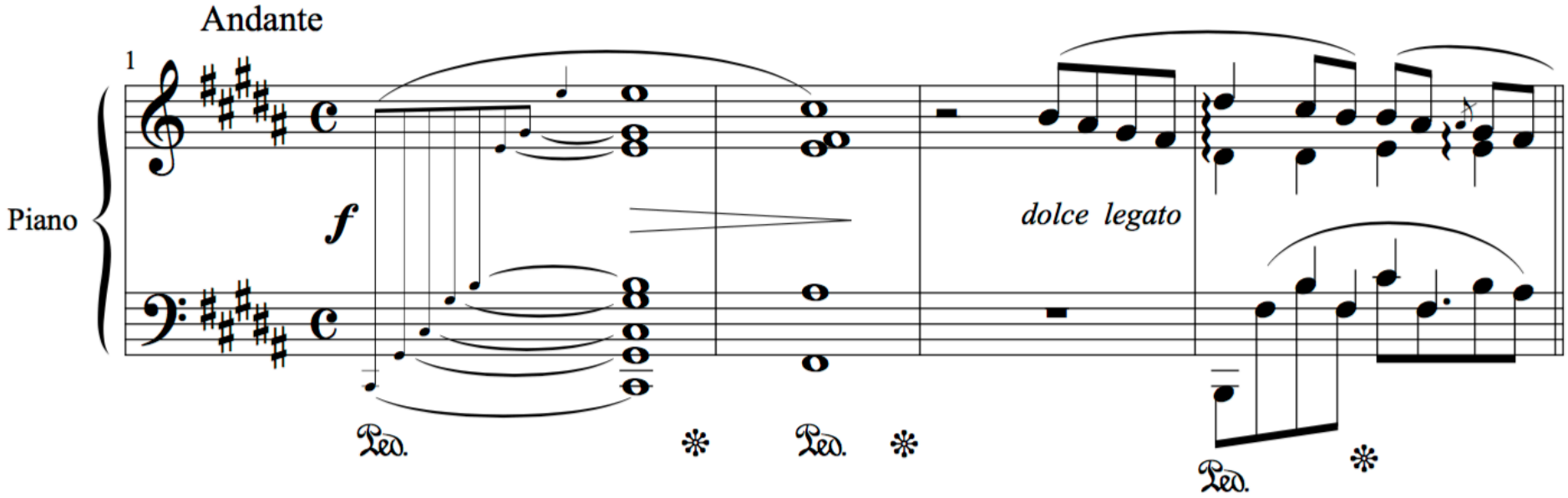


Unaccented, diatonic, descending passing tone

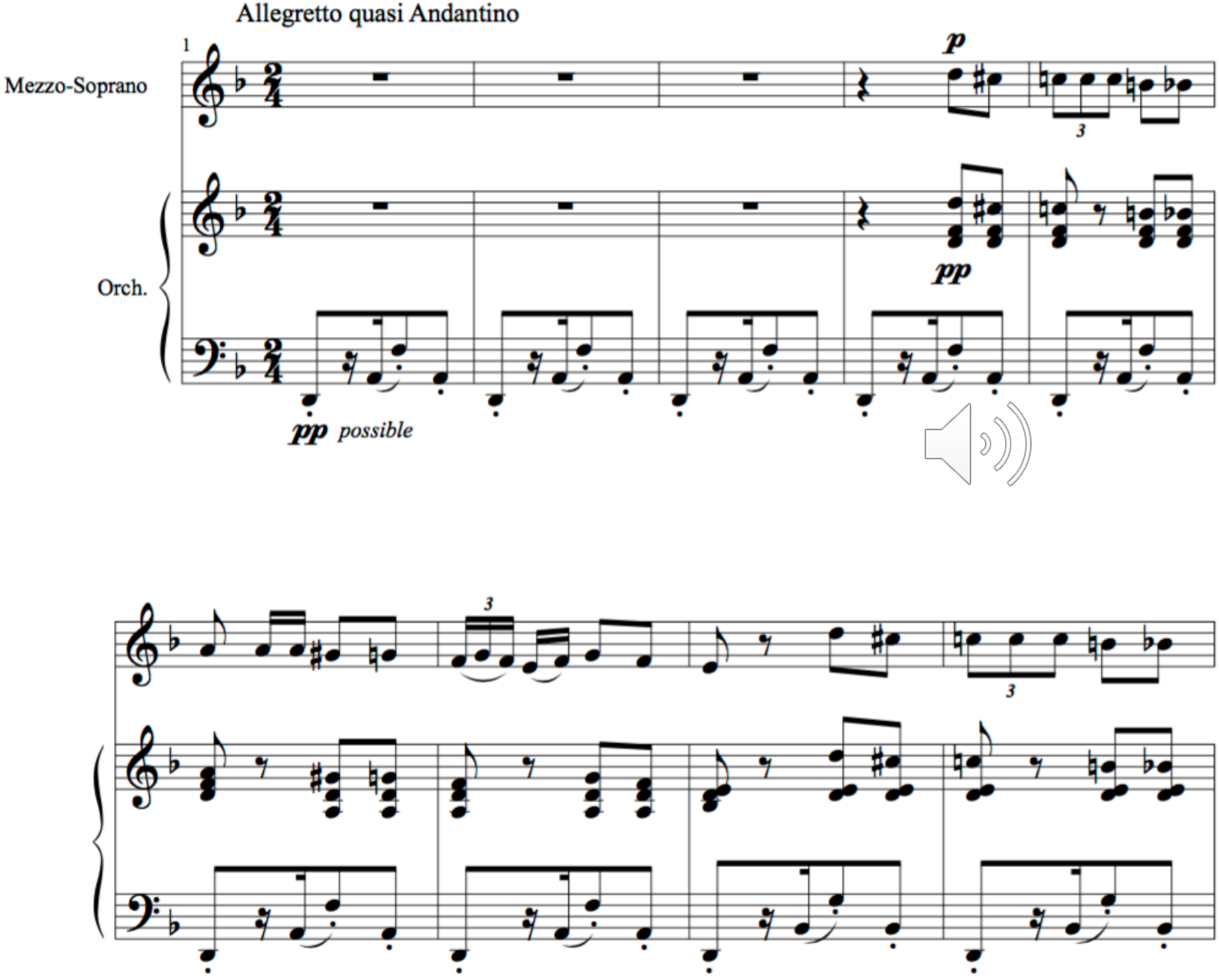
Brahms, Intermezzo in E-flat Major, op. 117 no. 1



Chopin, Nocturne in B Major, op. 62 no. 1

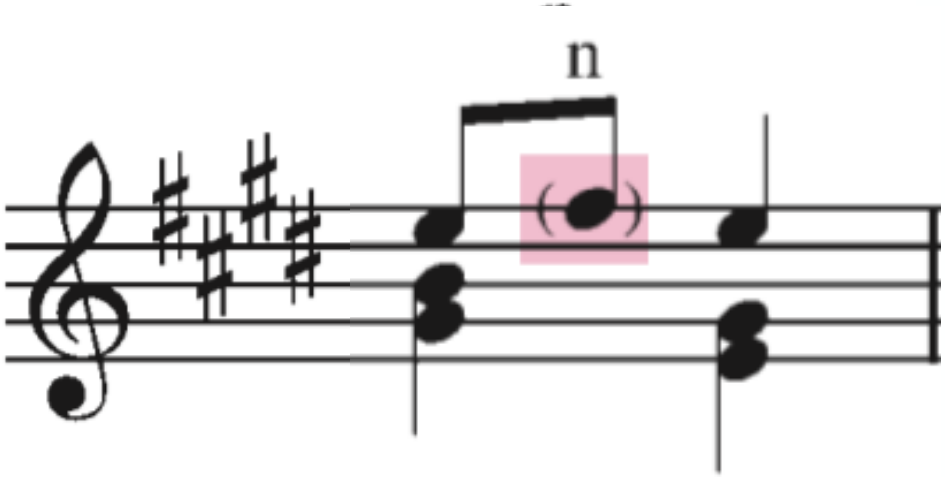


Bizet, Carmen, Act I no. 5, Habañera



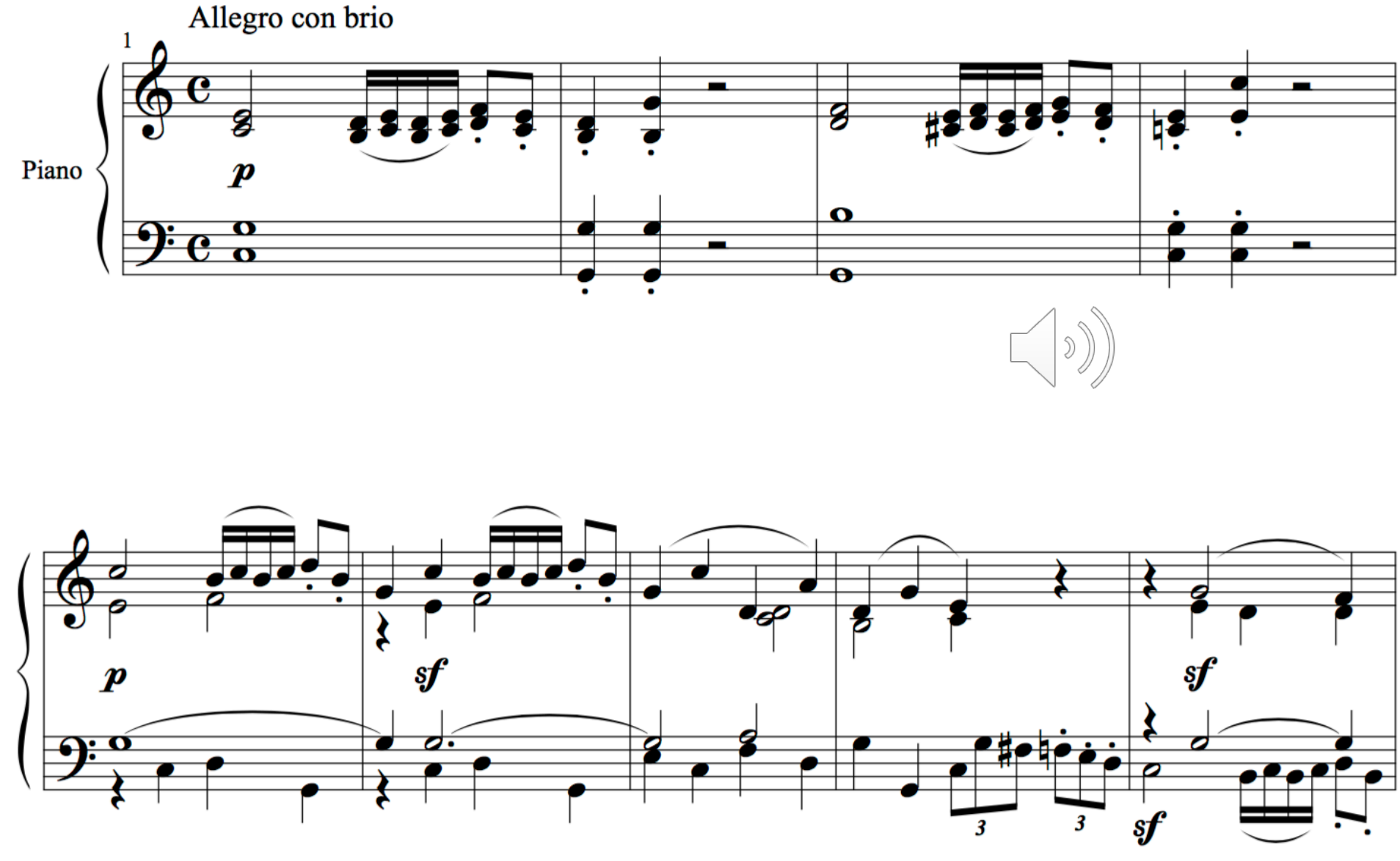
Neighboring Tones

- The **neighboring tone** is used to embellish a single tone, which is heard both before and after the neighbor.
- A neighboring tone is approached by step and left by step in the ***opposite*** direction
- Put the note in parentheses, and label with a **n**
- Further descriptors:
  - *Upper/lower*
  - *Diatonic/chromatic*
  - *Accented/unaccented*

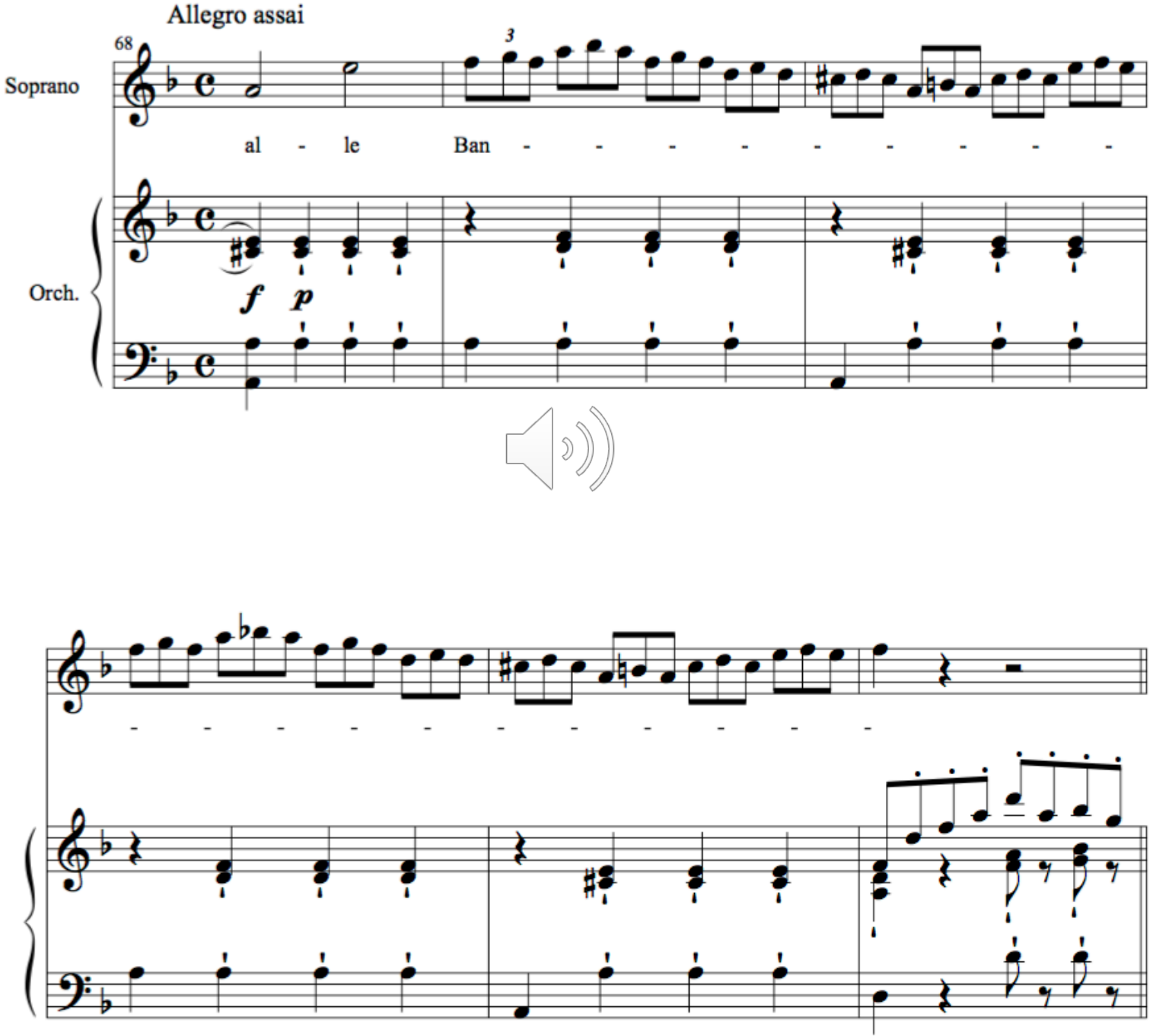


Unaccented, diatonic, upper neighboring tone

Beethoven, Piano Sonata in C Major, op. 2 no.3, mvt. 1

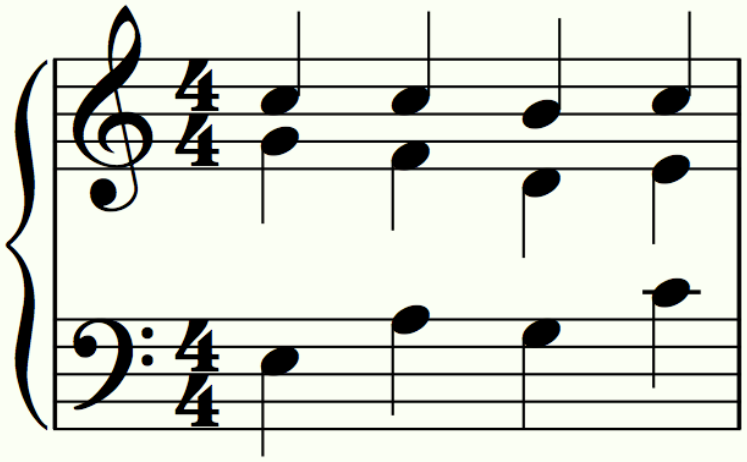


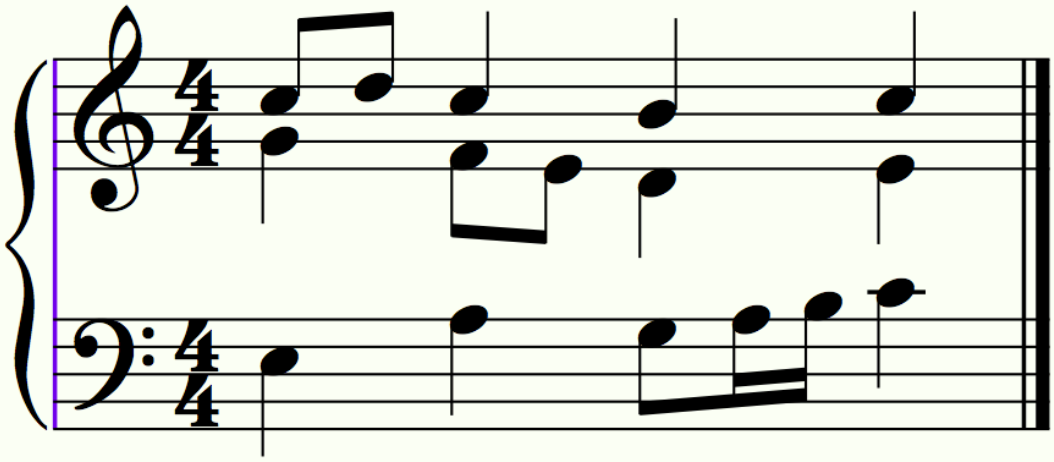
Mozart, The Magic Flute, K. 620, Act II, "Queen of the Night Aria"



Part writing w/ NCTs

- We can use NCTs to embellish simple textures.
- But we must be careful to avoid objectionable parallels



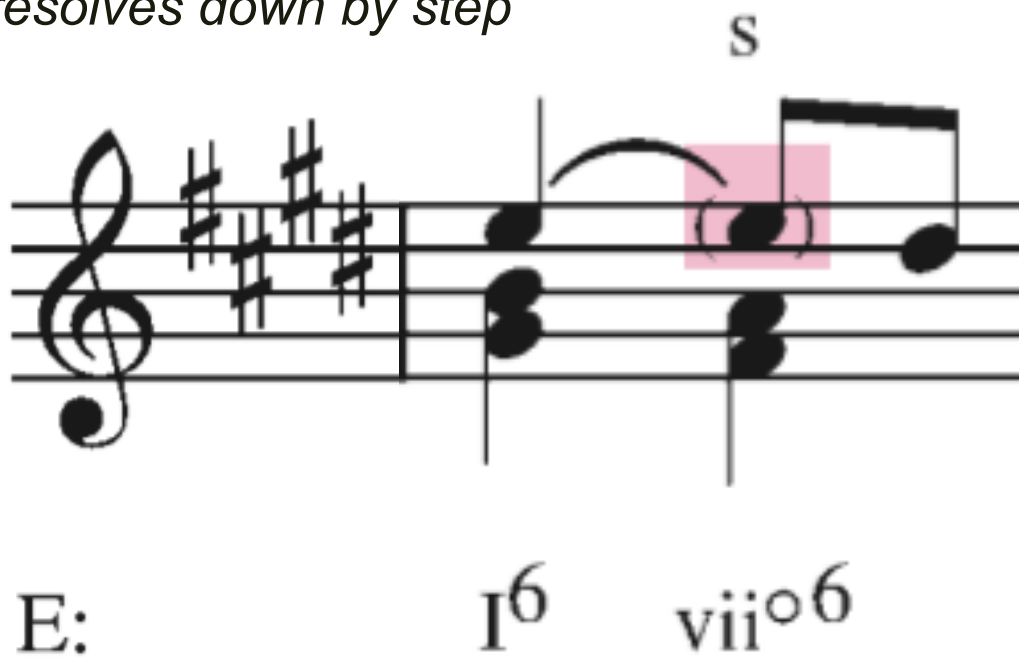


NCT Review

- Passing Tones
  - *Approached and left by step in the same direction*
  - *Often fills in a major or minor third with whatever scale degree is in between.*
- Neighboring Tones
  - *Approached and left be step in opposite directions*
  - *Embellishment of a single tone*

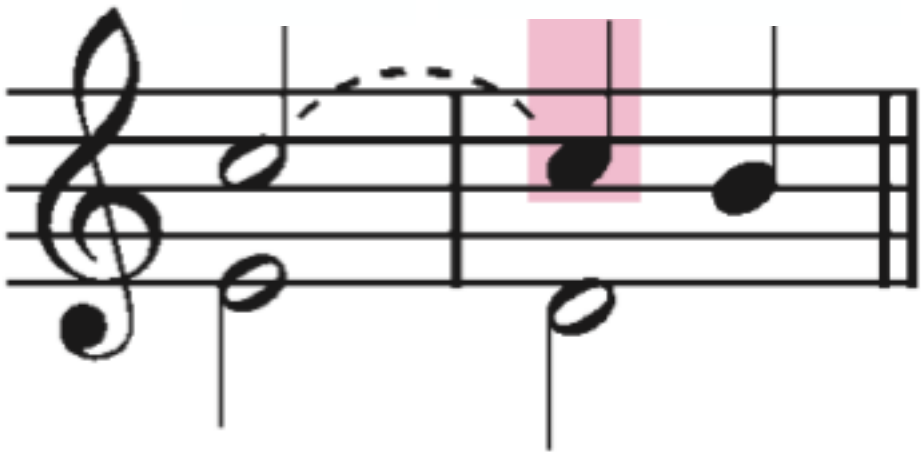
Suspensions

- "*to hang something from somewhere*"
- **Suspension**: holds on to, or suspends, a chord tone after other parts have moved on to the next chord.
  - *The suspension always resolves down by step*
- Labeled with an "**s**"



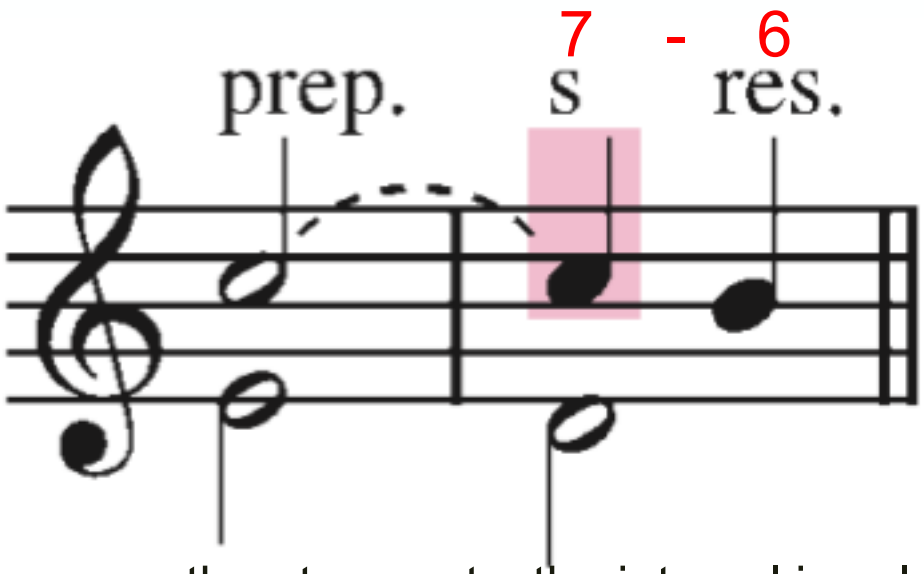
Parts of a Suspension

- Each suspension has three parts:
  - ***Preparation***
  - *the tone preceding the suspension, and it is the same pitch as the suspension*
  - ***Suspension***
  - *May or may not be tied to the prep.*
  - ***Resolution***
  - *the tone following the suspension and lying a 2nd below it*



Classification of Suspensions

- We categorize suspensions by the harmonic intervals created by the suspended tone and the resolution

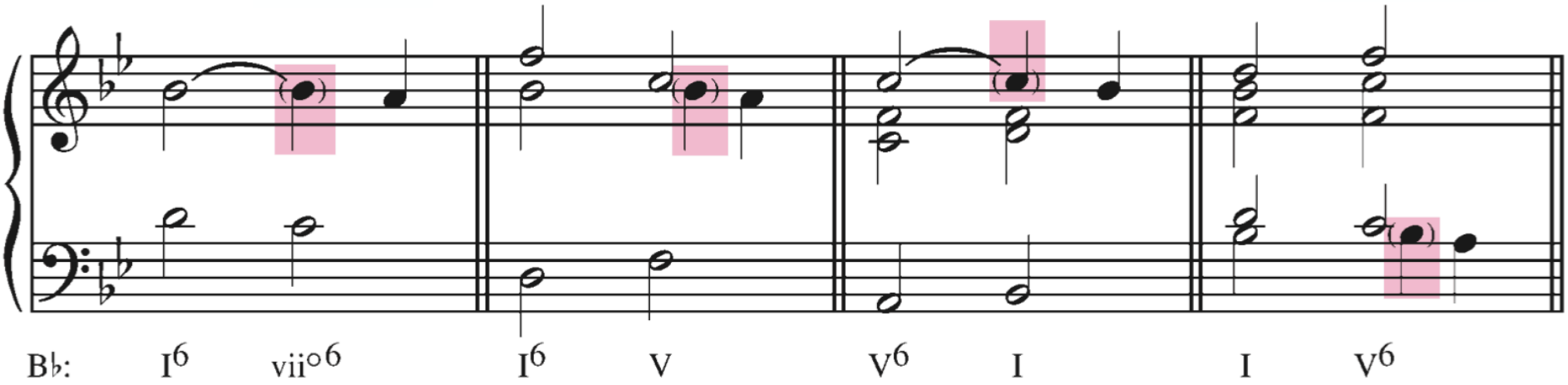


- If there are more than two parts, the interval is calculated between the suspension and the bass voice.
  - *If the suspension occurs in the bass, we calculate the interval between the bass voice and the part with which it is most dissonant*

Common Suspensions

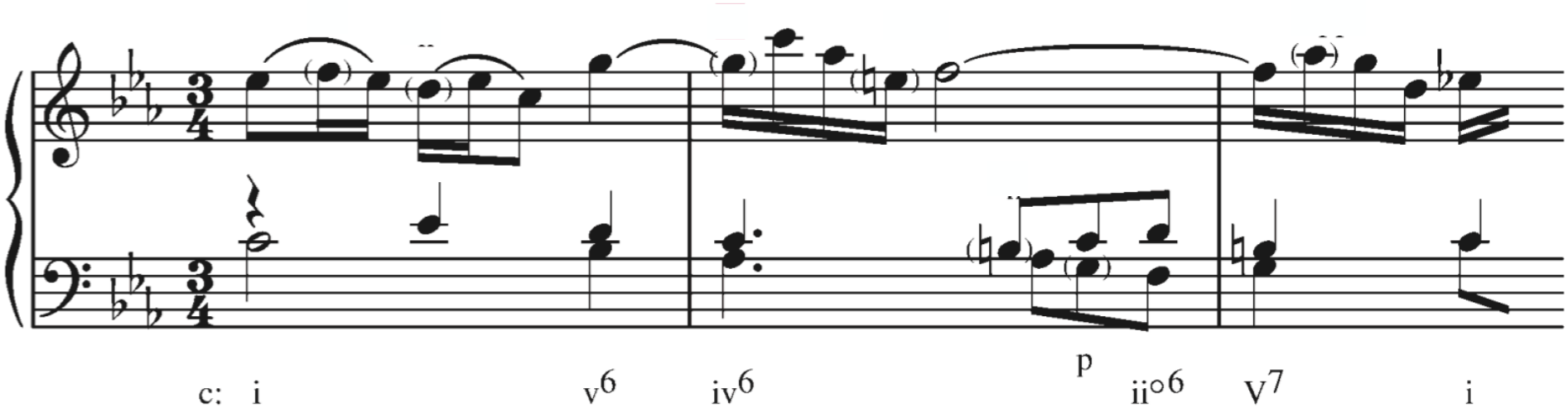
The number of the suspension is always decreasing, unless…...

The suspension
in the bass voice



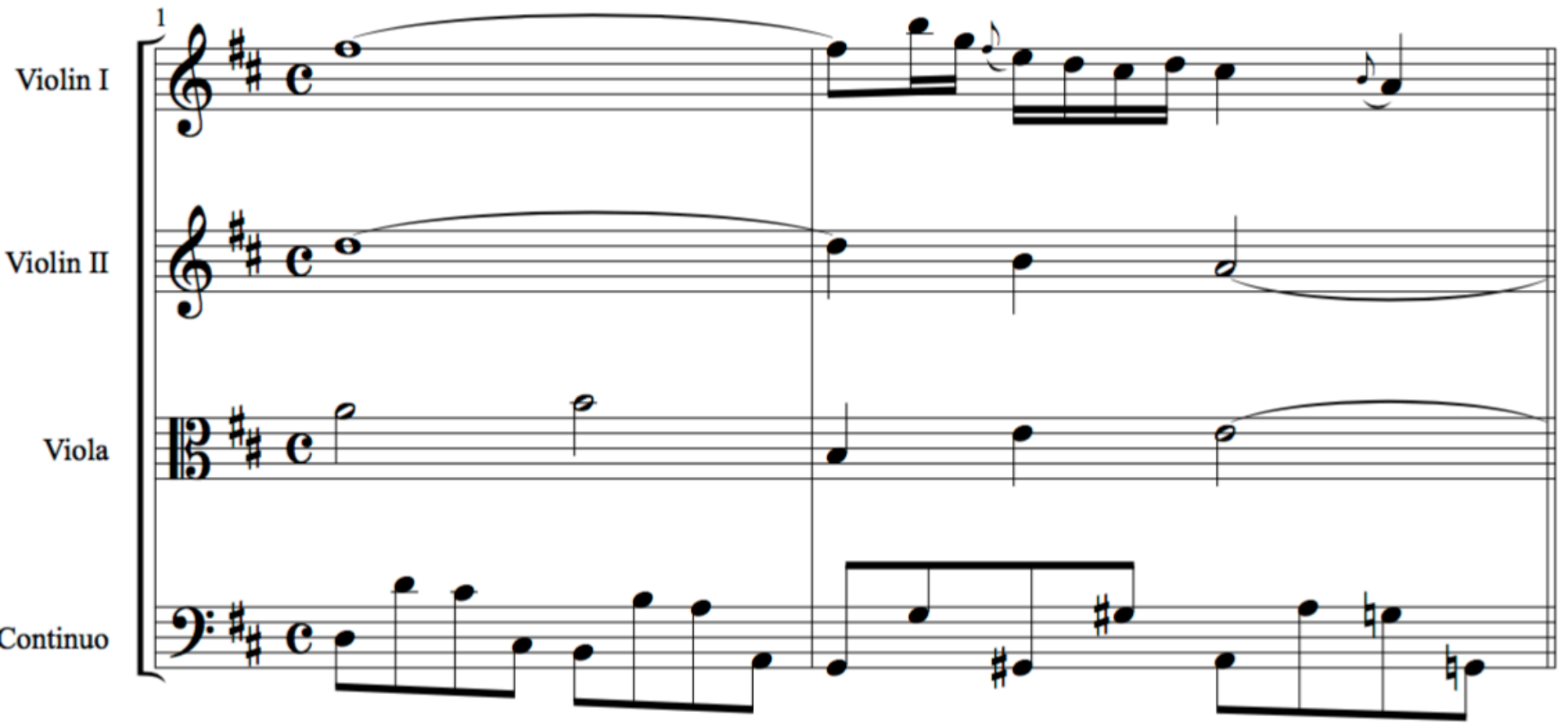
More on Suspensions

- Suspensions are often embellished.
  - *Other tones may appear after the suspended tone but before the true resolution*
  - *These are called **suspension figures***



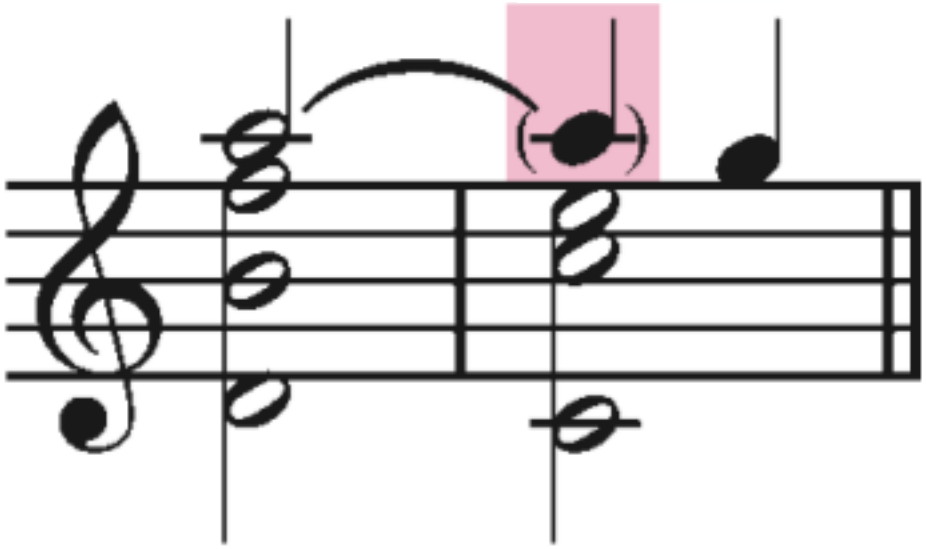
- **suspension with change of bass**: When a suspension occurs in one of the upper voices, the bass will sometimes move on to another chord tone at the same time as the suspension resolves.

Bach, *Orchestral Suite No. 3*



Consonant Suspensions

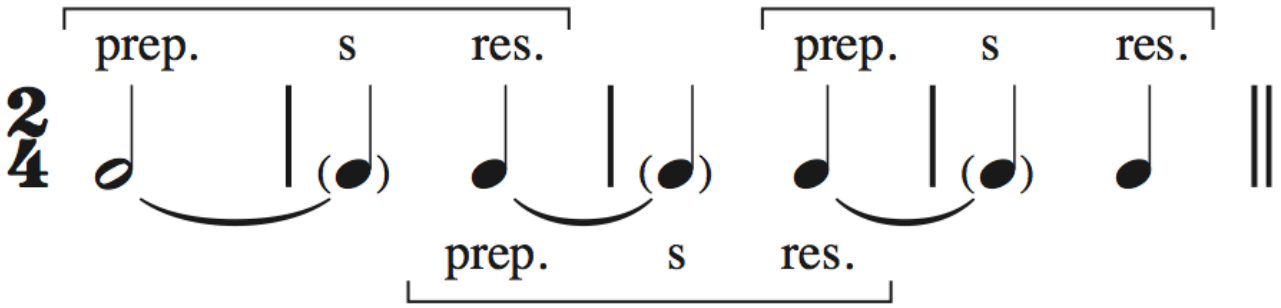
- A suspension does not always have to be with a dissonant note.
- For example:



C:

Chain of Suspensions

- A resolution of a suspension can serve as the preparation for a following suspension.



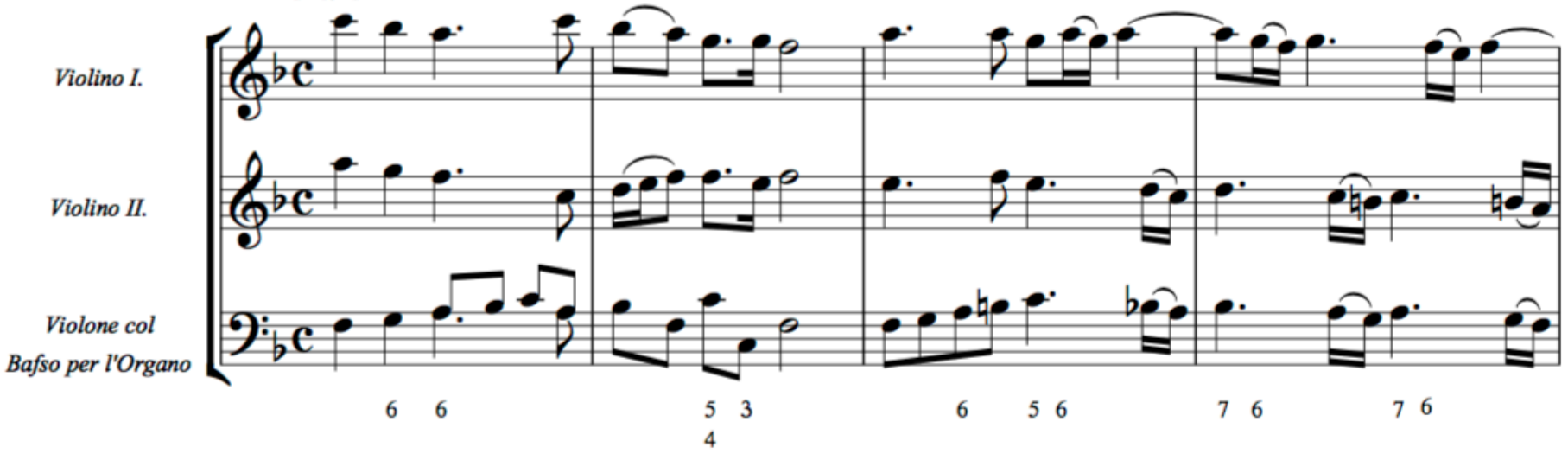
O P E R A I. Sonate da Chiesa a trè

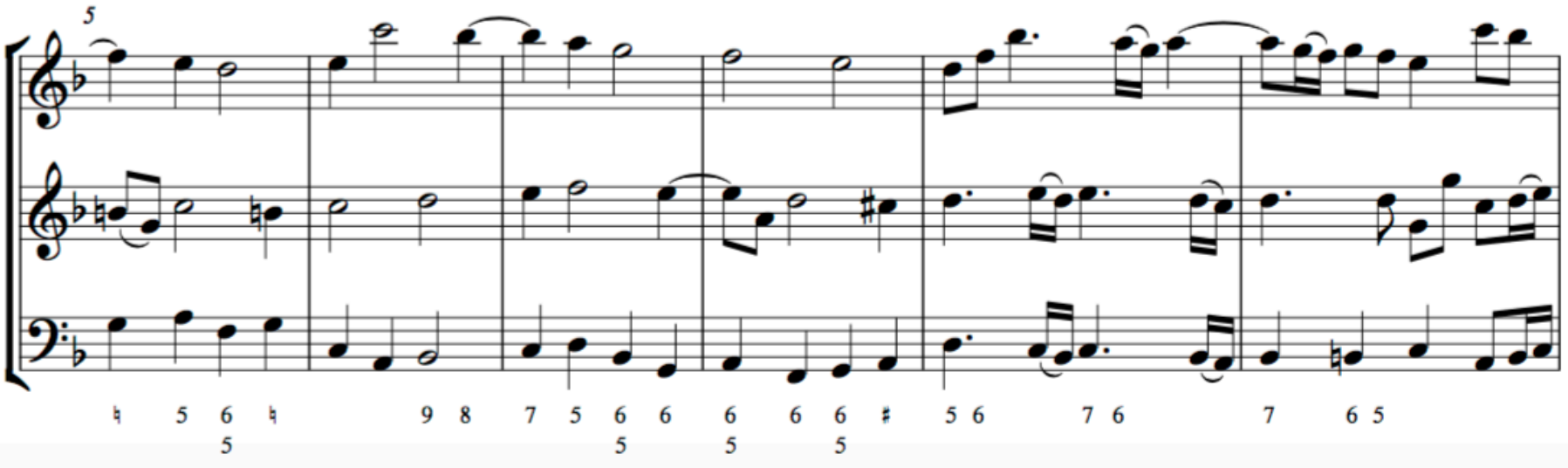
Sonata Prima.

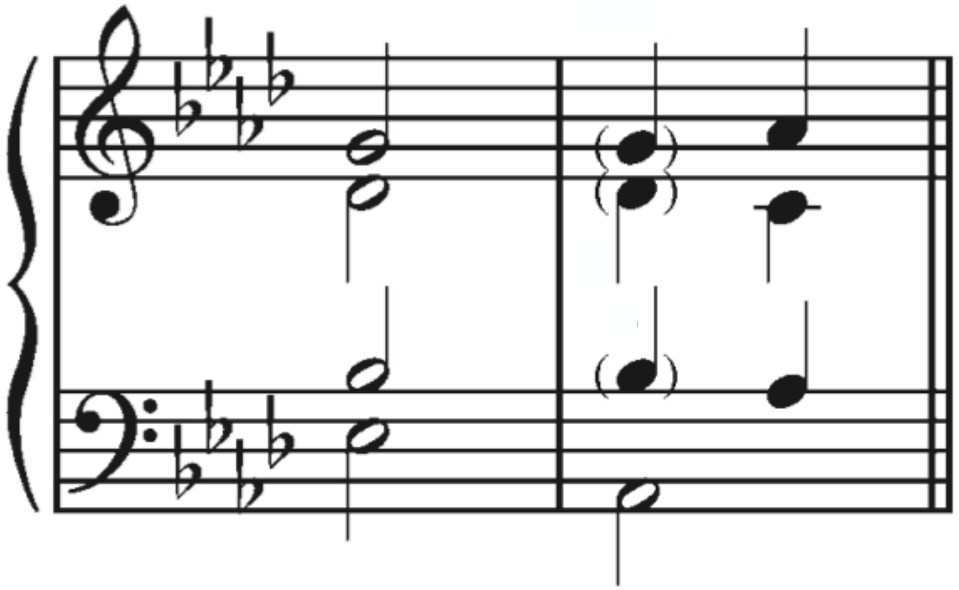
1. Sonata

Grave

Roma, 1681





Retardations

- **Retardation:** holds on to, or retards, a chord tone after other parts have moved on to the next chord.
  - *A retardation always resolves upward by step.*
  - *This is simply a suspension with an upward resolution.*
- Commonly appears with suspensions in cadences in the Classical Style: