

Diatonic Passing Tones

Creating Melodies with Chord Tones(CT) and Passing Tones (PT)

Diatonic Passing Tones are Non-Chord-Tones that come from the chord's *chord scale*. Passing tones move in a stepward fashion (M2 or m2) from-and-to a **chord tone**. When creating melodies with diatonic passing tones the important thing to do is to place the chord tones in a way that most clearly defines the harmonic rhythm.

When first writing passing tones I used 2 four-note formulas: CT PT CT CT or CT CT PT CT played as quarter-notes or 8th notes, much the same way a good bassist will play a walking bass line.

CHORD SCALES - 'A chord scale is a set of step wise pitches assigned to a chord symbol to provide a supply of notes compatible with that chord's sound and its tonal or modal function' Ted Pease

Below are melodies made up of Passing Tones and Chord Tones using the above mentioned four-note formulas

CMaj7

CMaj; CT Scale : 1 PT 2 CT 3 CT 5 CT 7 PT 6 CT 5 CT 3 CT 5

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CMaj; CT SD: 1 CT 7 PT 6 CT 5 CT 3 CT 5 PT 6 CT 7

Exercise - In the below 4 bar melody indicate CT or PT and the chord/scale degrees (ie-1, 2, 3, M7) for each pitch similar to the way demonstrated above. Note the melody is only made up of chord tones and passing tones.

CMaj7

CMaj; SD :

Below is a similar melody used at the top of the page but with new chords. Note the melody is still exclusively made up of chord tones and passing tones.

CMaj7 Amin AbMaj7 G13b9

C Maj: 1 2 3 5 Amin: 5 3 AbMaj:M7 G7: 7

Exercise - write CT or PT and chord/scale degrees below each pitch of the following melody

CTor PT:

CMaj: _____ Amin: _____ Dmin7: _____ G7: _____

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- 2 **Exercise** - Using the formulas CT-CT-PT-CT and CT-PT-CT-CT write melodies to the chord progressions below using Chord Tones and Passing Tones. Try to vary the contour of your melodies (melodic curve) and starting points (scale degree). You can start by using constant 8th notes. Then try leaving some space and consider motivic development. Refer to the chord scales on the following page if you do not already know the appropriate chord scales.

G Maj7 D7
G major *D mixolydian*

G min7 C7 F Maj7
G dorian *C mixolydian* *F Major*

D min Maj7 A 7b9 D min(Maj7)
D melodic minor *A mixolydian b9,b13*

This is a minor 7th chord with b5

B ∅ E 7b9 A min Maj7
B locrian *E mixolydian b9 b13* *A melodic minor*

B♭ Maj6 G min7 C min7 F 7 B♭ Maj7
G aeolian *C dorian*

CHORD SCALES

CT are whole note heads PT are quarternotes

24 G Major

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25 D mixolydian

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26 C mixolydian

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27 A mixolydian b9 b13

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28 D melodic minor

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29 B locrian

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30 G aeolian

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31 C dorian

CT PT CT PT CT PT CT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7