

Krumbholz, Theory IV

Harmonizing Melody Notes Outside the Prevailing Harmony.¹

More than one solution may work with a particular “nonchord” note. Experiment with different harmonizations. Note: several of the chords below may be enharmonically spelled, for ease of reading (for the performer).

- Use a seventh chord whose root lies a P5 above/below the prevailing harmony:

Musical score for "I love you" in 3/4 time, key of E major. The melody is: E4 (circled), G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4. The bass line is: E3, G3, A3, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3. Chords above the staff are: E7 (over E4), E7 (over E4), Bm7 (over B3), E7 (over E4), A (over A4), A (over A4), D7 (over D4), A (over A4). Arrows indicate the P5 relationship between E7 and A.

- Use a barbershop seventh chord (BS⁷) whose root is a m2 below/above the prevailing harmony. Works especially well when the prevailing harmony is a BS⁷.

Musical score for "Won't you please" in 3/4 time, key of Bb major. The melody is: Bb4 (circled), D5, Eb5, F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4. The bass line is: Bb3, D4, Eb4, F4, Eb4, D4, C4, Bb3. Chords above the staff are: Bb (over Bb4), Bb (over Bb4), A7 (over A4), Bb (over Bb4), G7 (over G4), G7 (over G4), Ab7 (over Ab4), G7 (over G4). Arrows indicate the m2 relationship between Bb and G7.

- Use a BS⁷ chord whose root lies a M3 below the prevailing chord:

Musical score for "Won't you please" in 3/4 time, key of Bb major. The melody is: Bb4 (circled), D5, Eb5, F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4. The bass line is: Bb3, D4, Eb4, F4, Eb4, D4, C4, Bb3. Chords above the staff are: Bb (over Bb4), Bb (over Bb4), Gb7 (over Gb4), Bb (over Bb4). The text "compare with example above" is written to the right of the score.

¹ Based on handouts from Burt Szabo and Dave Stevens.

- Use a **BS⁷** chord that lies a tritone away (“across the clock”) from the prevailing harmony.

Musical score for the phrase "All the world." in 3/4 time, key of A major. The melody is on a treble clef staff with a soprano clef (8). The accompaniment is on a bass clef staff. The first measure has a circled A7 chord. An arrow points from this chord to the second measure, which contains an Eb7 chord. The third measure contains an A7 chord. The lyrics are "All the world." under the first measure and "All the world" under the second and third measures.

- Use a chord that has the same root as the prevailing harmony
 - The added 9th chord, major triads only (I or IV chord only)
 - The incomplete (or barbershop) 9th chord; use when the prevailing harmony is a BS⁷ chord.

Musical score for the phrase "Evening" in 3/4 time, key of Bb major. The melody is on a treble clef staff with a soprano clef (8). The accompaniment is on a bass clef staff. The first measure has a circled Bb chord. An arrow points to the second measure, which contains Bb, Bb^{add9}, and Bb chords. The third measure has a circled C7 chord. An arrow points to the fourth measure, which contains C7, C9, and C7 chords. The lyrics are "Ev - en po -" under the first two measures and "Night and day" under the last two measures.

- The barbershop (or “substitute”) 6th chord; use when the prevailing harmony is a triad (I or IV chord only).
- The barbershop (or “substitute”) 13th chord; use when the prevailing harmony is a BS⁷ chord.

Musical score for the phrase "Oh, say you'll" in 3/4 time, key of Eb major. The melody is on a treble clef staff with a soprano clef (8). The accompaniment is on a bass clef staff. The first measure has a circled Eb chord. An arrow points to the second measure, which contains Eb, Eb⁶, and Eb chords. The third measure has a circled Bb7 chord. An arrow points to the fourth measure, which contains Bb7, Bb¹³, and Bb7 chords. The lyrics are "Oh, say you'll" under the first two measures and "I wish that" under the last two measures.

- Use a diminished chord with the same root as the prevailing chord. Works especially well when the prevailing harmony is a BS⁷ chord.

The image shows a musical score in 3/4 time, 3 flats key signature. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "How can I Life would be Life would be". The score is divided into four measures. Above the melody, chord symbols are written: A^b (with an arrow pointing to the second measure), A^b, A^b^{o7}, A^b, E^b⁷ (with an arrow pointing to the third measure), E^b⁷, E^b^{o7}, and E^b⁷. The first measure has a circled note (B^b) in the melody. The second measure has a circled note (A^b) in the melody. The third measure has a circled note (B^b) in the melody. The fourth measure has a circled note (A^b) in the melody. The bass line consists of whole notes in the first two measures and half notes in the last two measures.

When a “nonchord tone” falls between two harmonies (such as, say, the last note of a measure), the note will be easier to harmonize if you use the above approaches as applied to the upcoming chord rather than the current one.

You will benefit a great deal from studying current arrangements to see how they handle nonchord tones.