

Chapter 1: Harmonic/Melodic Embellishment

For the sake of harmonic interest, the chord voicings of a chord progression can be embellished (i.e. approached and left) from above or below using exact and/or diatonic constant structure voicings. The *original* chord voicings are often given stronger accents, more prominent rhythmic placement, and longer durations than the embellishment voicings, but the reverse can also be desirable and extremely effective, i.e. embellishment voicings can be emphasized more than the original voicings. In such cases, however, the extra tension created by exaggerating a non-harmonic (or passing) embellishment voicing draws even greater attention to its resolution, making it crucial that the resolution sound musical and appealing.

■ Exercise No. 1

Select a chord and assign an appropriate chord scale. Construct one voicing using three or more available notes and write it on a 1 or 2-stave system – accompanied by the chord symbol and chord scale used. (See upcoming example.)

Play the chord voicing in tempo (for unlimited duration) while reading the written voicing/chord symbol and improvising the rhythms. Apply *exact* constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing *by 1/2 step only*, i.e. chromatic embellishments or approaches. [Note: It may also be desirable to write out the two(chromatic) embellishment voicings next to the original voicing.] (See upcoming example.)

Begin by emphasizing the original chord voicings through rhythmic placement, accents and duration, then experiment with emphasizing the (chromatic) embellishment voicings similarly. [Note: The succession of *lead notes* from the voicings (and the rhythms applied to them) must create lyrical, well-phrased melodies as well.] (See upcoming example.)

Record practice for transcription, analysis and critique. [Optional variation: Change to a *different* voicing of the same chord after playing for several measures or so and repeat the exercise.]

EXAMPLE IV:1A

Selected chord and voicings:

D-7 Dorian $\uparrow 1/2$ $\downarrow 1/2$



EXAMPLE IV:1B (TRACK 20)

D-7 Dorian

■ Exercise No. 2

Repeat the instructions of exercise number 1 but apply *diatonic* (instead of exact) constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing by step at first, then by *any* diatonic interval.

EXAMPLE IV:2A

Selected chord and voicings:



EXAMPLE IV:2B (TRACK 21)

■ Exercise No. 3

Repeat the instructions of exercise number 1 but apply *exact* constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing by *any* interval.

EXAMPLE IV:3A

Selected chord and voicings:

D-7 Dorian

The first system of music shows six chords in a row, each with a unique voicing. The second system shows seven chords, including some with more complex voicings and some with double flats.



EXAMPLE IV:3B (TRACK 22)

D-7 Dorian

The notation for Example IV:3B is more complex than Example IV:3A, featuring moving lines in both the treble and bass staves. It includes various chord voicings and rhythmic patterns, with some chords marked with a '7' in the bass line.

■ Exercise No. 4

Select two (or more) different chords, e.g. G7 altered and C major 7 Ionian. Construct one voicing for each chord and write it on a 1 or 2-stave system – accompanied by the chord symbol and scale used. Assign one of the following durations: (in 4/4 time) 16, 8, 4 or 2 beats each; (in 3/4 time) 12 or 6 beats each.

Play the original voicings at a medium or medium slow tempo while applying chromatic voicings as embellishments (from above and below by 1/2 step) and improvising the rhythms. Practice each chord separately first, then in sequence.

EXAMPLE IV:4A

Selected chord and voicings:

Musical notation for Example IV:4A showing selected chord voicings. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. The first section shows G7 Altered with two voicings: one with a sharp 11th (F#) and one with a natural 11th (F). The second section shows CΔ Ionian with two voicings: one with a sharp 9th (G#) and one with a natural 9th (G).



EXAMPLE IV:4B (TRACK 23)

Musical notation for Example IV:4B showing chord progressions and embellishments. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. The first line shows G7 Altered, CΔ Ionian, G7 Altered, and CΔ Ionian. The second line shows G7 Altered, CΔ Ionian, G7 Altered, and CΔ. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and chromatic embellishments.

■ Exercise No. 5

Repeat the instructions of exercise number 4 but apply *diatonic* (instead of exact) constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing by step at first, then by *any* diatonic interval. Practice each chord separately first, then in sequence.

EXAMPLE IV:5

Selected chord and voicings:

Musical notation for Example IV:5 showing selected chord voicings. The notation is in treble and bass clefs. The first section shows G7 Altered with two voicings: one with a sharp 11th (F#) and one with a natural 11th (F). The second section shows CΔ Ionian with two voicings: one with a sharp 9th (G#) and one with a natural 9th (G).

■ Exercise No. 6

Repeat the instructions of exercise number 4 but apply *exact* constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing by *any* interval.

EXAMPLE IV:6A

Selected chord and voicings:

Example IV:6A displays two staves of musical notation. The first staff is labeled "G7 Altered" and shows a sequence of 12 chords, each with a unique voicing. The second staff is labeled "CΔ Ionian" and shows a sequence of 12 chords, each with a unique voicing. The chords are arranged in a sequence that demonstrates various voicings for each chord type.



EXAMPLE IV:6B (TRACK 24)

Example IV:6B displays four staves of musical notation. The first staff shows a sequence of chords labeled "G7 Altered" and "CΔ Ionian". The second staff shows a sequence of chords labeled "G7 Altered" and "CΔ Ionian". The third staff shows a sequence of chords labeled "G7 Altered" and "CΔ Ionian". The fourth staff shows a sequence of chords labeled "G7 Altered" and "CΔ". The chords are arranged in a sequence that demonstrates various voicings and rhythmic patterns.

■ Exercise No. 7

Select a familiar tune progression, preferably one with chords of long duration (e.g. two or more measures). Construct one voicing for each chord and write it on a 1 or 2-stave system accompanied by the chord symbol and scale used.

Play the original voicings in tempo applying chromatic voicings as embellishments (from above and below by 1/2 step) in appropriate places (i.e. with chords of longer duration) while improvising the rhythms.

EXAMPLE IV:7 (TRACK 25)



GA G-7

A-7 D7 B-7 E7

A-7 D7 GA C-7 F7

BbΔ G7 C-7 F7 BbΔ

A-7 D7 GA

F#-7 B7 EA A-7 D7 GA etc.

■ Exercise No. 8

Repeat the instructions of exercise number 7 but apply *diatonic* (instead of exact) constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing by step at first, then by *any* diatonic interval.



EXAMPLE IV:8 (TRACK 26)

A-7 Dorian

C-7 Dorian

F7

B \flat Δ

B \flat -7 Eb7

Ab Δ

Ab-7

Db7

G \flat Δ

G-7

C7

F Δ

E7

A-

* Previously unavailable $\flat 9$ intervals are okay when used in a constant structure context.

■ Exercise No. 9

Repeat the instructions of exercise number 7 but apply *exact* constant structure embellishment voicings from above and below the original voicing by *any* interval.



EXAMPLE IV:9 (TRACK 27)

A-7

C-7

C-7

7

13



Important

See the comping transcriptions in Section X for the following additional examples of constant structure. [Note: The placement of each example is indicated below by the song title, chorus letter and measure number in which it appears, e.g. *Easy To Love*: B 6, means the example occurs in the sixth measure of the B (or second) chorus of the *Easy To Love* transcription.]:

All The Things You Are: C 6-8, 31-35; D 19-22; E 14-17, 26,27; F 2-5, 7, 8, 24.

Easy To Love: A 1-4, 15-17, 28-30; B 6-9, 12-20; D 10-14; E 17-24; F 19, 20; G 9-20.

Stella By Starlight: A 23-27; B 19, 20, 30-32; C 17-24; D 13-23; E 23-32; F 13, 14, 17-20.

DAILY PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Harmonic/Melodic Embellishment [No. 1]

1. Exercise number 1. 20 minutes.
2. Exercise number 2. 20 minutes.
3. Exercise number 3. 20 minutes.
4. Exercise number 4. 20 minutes.
5. Exercise number 5. 20 minutes.
6. Exercise number 6. 20 minutes.

Harmonic/Melodic Embellishment [No. 2]

1. Exercise number 7. 30 minutes.
2. Exercise number 8. 30 minutes.
3. Exercise number 9. 60 minutes.