STANDALONE INFOGRAPHIC I3

CHORD TONES VS NON-CHORD TONES

A detailed poster reference — the full 7-note breakdown over a C major chord, with zone implications and the core insight explained

CHORD TONE (CT)

IN THE CHORD

A note that **belongs to the currently playing chord** — the root, major 3rd, perfect 5th, or 7th. The chord supports and "catches" this note. It sounds harmonically expected.

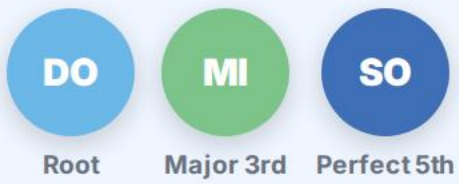
VS

NON-CHORD TONE (NCT)

OUTSIDE THE CHORD

A note that **does NOT belong to the chord**. The chord doesn't catch it. Depending on key stability, this creates floating color, grounded tension, or dissonant edge.

✓ CHORD TONES — C MAJOR (DO · MI · SO)



These notes are **harmonically supported**. Stable key degrees + chord tones = Zone 1 (Sweet/Grounded). Melody and harmony fully agree. The ear hears arrival, warmth, and confidence.

✗ NON-CHORD TONES — OUTSIDE C MAJOR

These notes **float above C major**. RE, FA, TI = Zone 4 (Bitter/Edgy — unstable + non-chord). LA = Zone 3 (Floating/Modern — stable enough to add color without harsh friction). Change the chord to claim these notes.

ZONE RESULT — ALL 7 NOTES OVER C MAJOR

Solid outline = chord tone
Dashed outline = non-chord tone

THE CORE PRINCIPLE

The chord under the melody determines which notes feel grounded and which create tension.

Change the chord to C → F, and the same FA that was Zone 4 (Bitter) over C becomes Zone 2 (Tense/Supported) over F — because FA is now the root. The pitch doesn't change. The context transforms everything.