Michele Chiaramida

Organ Practice
Historical Models
of Keyboard Performance Practice

Module 1 – Fundamentals and Basic Harmony

EXCERPT



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Hystorical Models of Keyboard Performace Practice
Module 1 Fundamentals and basic harmony

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An overview

The present volume constitutes a propaedeutic module within a broader didactic programme devoted to the principal keyboard procedures that shaped musical practice between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Techniques such as *partimento*, *basso continuo*, counterpoint, intonation, fantasia, toccata, and fugue—which will be addressed in subsequent volumes—thus find their foundation in this first stage, devoted to initiation and fundamental principles. The programme as a whole therefore pursues the ambitious objective of reconstructing the conceptual and technical framework within which musicians were trained during the period under consideration, while at the same time providing contemporary pedagogy with tools and stimuli capable of forming musicians better equipped to approach their work as performers, composers, and practitioners within the liturgical-musical sphere.

The aim is not so much to transmit a body of theoretical knowledge as to guide the student towards the progressive acquisition of an essentially practical form of knowledge, founded upon the internalization of recurring procedures, formulaic models, and *loci topici*. Learning is thus conceived as a gradual process of assimilating recurring compositional patterns which, through practice and memorization, lead to the development of a spontaneous and immediate musical competence.

Such an approach entails a conception of the keyboard tradition not as a static repertory of works or as a collection of normative precepts, but rather as a dictionary of practices, models, and procedures capable of revealing the constitutive principles of a technical knowledge founded upon the transmission of skills rather than upon the systematic formulation of rules.

From this perspective, historical pedagogy—and, in particular, that which developed within the Italian tradition—may be understood as a genuine "cool medium," in Marshall McLuhan's sense: a communicative system that does not exhaust itself in the completeness of its exposition, but instead requires the student's active participation in integrating,

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completing, and reworking the material transmitted. Teaching thus assumes the form of an essentially demonstrative practice, constructed through examples, models, technical gestures, and procedural suggestions rather than through a systematic organization of knowledge.

An examination of the sources confirms this approach. Historical pedagogy in fact favours a mode of learning based on the principle of *imitatio* within the master–disciple relationship. In place of the predominantly "visual" approach familiar today, centred upon the manual as a prescriptive and binding instrument, it establishes an "oral/aural" mode of transmission founded upon listening and repetition. The training of the young musician thus rested upon the progressive assimilation of "good progressions," contrapuntal models, and compositional procedures internalized through listening, imitation, and daily practice. A relatively limited body of rules, transmitted predominantly through oral instruction and only occasionally fixed in short printed collections or modest manuscript booklets intended for didactic use, was generally sufficient to initiate the student into the first practices of the profession. Artistic maturation then depended upon experience, professional and musical associations, continuity of practice, and individual abilities, while deeper theoretical and speculative study constituted, in most cases, a subsequent stage of formation rather than its prerequisite.

Consistent with these premises, the methodology adopted here deliberately avoids establishing a direct comparison with the categories of modern music theory. This choice does not arise from a rejection of contemporary theoretical reflection, but from the need, as far as possible, to suspend those interpretative categories that risk retrospectively projecting conceptual models developed in later periods onto the past. Only such an exercise in contextualization makes it possible to restore to the sources their historical specificity and to understand musical practices according to the principles that actually governed their transmission and acquisition.

This orientation also seeks to provide a necessary counterbalance to the now widely established notion of *performance practice*, which, when understood exclusively in prescriptive terms, risks absolutizing interpretative solutions whose significance instead emerges only within the pedagogical, cultural, and professional systems that generated them. Before transmitting works, the tradition transmitted ways of thinking musically, shared procedures, and criteria for action, without which the very production of the historical repertory remains difficult to understand.

The present work therefore proceeds from the conviction that the recovery of historical pedagogical practice—in the sense outlined above—still represents a particularly fruitful methodological perspective. It is hoped that this methodology may offer a useful contribution to the teaching of

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harpsichord and organ practice, demonstrating how much of the repertory preserved today, together with the technical and musical competencies upon which it rests, emerged from a shared pedagogical tradition transmitted as authoritative knowledge. Reconstructing this system means not only gaining a deeper understanding of the genesis of that repertory, but also recovering a different conception of musical training, in which theory and practice find their unity through the daily exercise of the craft.

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General framework

This chapter does not provide a systematic or exhaustive account of the theoretical premises underlying musical practice during the period under consideration. Rather, it offers a concise overview of their principal features and recalls the essential terminology through which they were historically articulated and transmitted. Its purpose is not to encompass the full complexity of the subject, but to establish the conceptual framework necessary for the discussion that follows, allowing the argument to develop with historical, terminological, and methodological coherence.

The role of the organist

Defining the professional sphere within which the organist exercised their duties between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries constitutes an essential methodological premise for the study of performance practice in the early keyboard repertoire. Any approach to this repertory — whether interpretative or pedagogical — remains necessarily incomplete if it disregards the functions, responsibilities, and institutional contexts that shaped its production, use and transmission.

Historical organ practice did not constitute an autonomous activity detached from its context; rather, it formed an integral part of the liturgical action and its ritual structure. The presence of the organ in worship was governed by a complex body of customs, prescriptions, and professional competencies, which determined both the nature of its interventions and the manner in which these were musically realized. The liturgy, therefore, was not merely an external context within which the organist operated, but the governing framework of that activity: the matrix from which its forms, functions, and compositional principles emerged.

For this reason, the early organ repertoire cannot be fully understood apart from the history of the liturgy. The two domains together define the cultural horizon within which music acquired its original significance, not simply as an artistic expression, but above all as a functional element embedded within a ritual, theological, and communal framework.

On this basis, it is necessary to consider the duties that ordinarily fell to the organist in the exercise of their *munus*. The sources demonstrate that these responsibilities extended well beyond the mere technical mastery of the instrument. The organist was expected to possess a broad and integrated formation, encompassing knowledge of counterpoint, proficiency in improvisation, the ability to elaborate the *canto fermo* according to different local traditions, familiarity with the liturgical order, and

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Among the principal normative sources for identifying those portions of the liturgy in which organ intervention was prescribed, as well as for establishing the corresponding modes of performance, is the *Caerimoniale Episcoporum* of 1600 [CE 82–84]. Although this document constitutes a fundamental reference for official liturgical practice, it should not be understood as establishing an absolute or universally uniform norm. The history of liturgical organ practice instead reveals the persistent importance of local traditions, established customs, and particular adaptations, which produced significant regional differences among ecclesiastical institutions.

In this regard, several theoretical and practical sources of the period are of particular significance, including Girolamo Diruta's *Il Transilvano* (1593) and Adriano Banchieri's *L'Organo suonarino* (1605). The latter, through its well-known table outlining organ interventions during the Mass, provides particularly valuable evidence for the concrete organization of liturgical organ practice, illustrating the close relationship between the structure of the rite, musical function, and the organist's improvisatory expertise [BANCHIERI 38]:

Introitus	choir
Kyrie	Alternate organo/choir
Gloria	Alternate organo/choir
before *Epustula*	A brief *ripieno* or a *fugue*
Alleluja	Alternate organo/choir
Credo	Alternate organo/choir
before '*Oremus*'	A motet or a ricercare
Sactus	Alternate organo/choir
Elevation	A *toccata*
Agnus Dei	Alternate organo/choir
before *Agnus Dei*	A *capriccio* or *Aria alla francese*
Ite Missa est	A brief *ripieno*
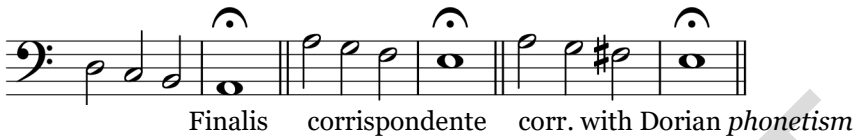
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Tones, modes and species

The essential characteristics of the harmonic-modal framework that provides the conceptual basis for the present study will be outlined below. The purpose of this discussion is not to offer a systematic reconstruction

With regard to the tones belonging to the *Re–Mi–Fa* family, in their ordinary Aeolian configuration, the quality of the cadence on the corresponding degree differs from that of the cadence on the *finalis*. The degree immediately above the corresponding *finalis* is, in fact, a semitone away, resulting in an intervallic configuration different from that of the final cadence.

When, by contrast, the minor-third tone assumes a Dorian *phonetism*, the two cadences coincide perfectly in their intervallic structure, since the arrangement of whole tones and semitones around the two fundamental degrees is reproduced in the same proportion:



In addition to the *finalis* and the *corrispondente*, other strong degrees exist that contribute to determining the modal identity of the musical *sententia*, conferring upon it a recognizable and coherent physiognomy.

Progressive experience and familiarity with additional standardized melodic structures—such as psalm tones and intonation formulas proper to *canto fermo* — will guide the student in identifying their function and recognizing their presence within the repertoire encountered over the course of their years of study.

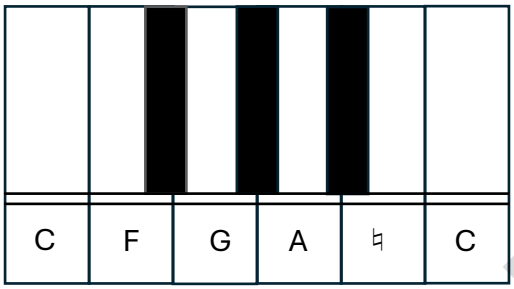
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What is a chord?

It is appropriate at this point to clarify the conceptual framework underlying the definition of a chord adopted in this method. There are, in fact, two different and, in many respects, contrasting conceptions of this musical entity, corresponding to two substantially different views of the phenomenon: the modal conception and the tonal-functional conception.

According to the latter, the chord is generated by a theoretical structure known as the *fundamental bass*, from which the individual components of the chord derive their meaning and within which that meaning is established. The fundamental bass therefore constitutes an abstract principle, a note that need not necessarily be perceptible to the ear, but whose effects are decisive in defining the harmonic structure. The chord thus generated is placed within a syntactic-linear context in which, according to the hierarchical degree it occupies, it assumes specific functions and determines precise directions of motion.

This arrangement responds to precise practical requirements. On the one hand, it facilitates the doubling of the bass in the performance of numerous cadential formulas and other procedures characteristic of keyboard practice; on the other, it provides a significant saving in construction, since it eliminates the need to construct pipes and keys corresponding to the lowest pitches, which were employed only exceptionally in the repertoire for which these instruments were intended:



Meantone and splitted keys

It is necessary only to briefly mention here the complex subject of historical temperaments. The tuning system that divides the octave into twelve semitones of equal size was in fact very rarely practiced during the periods that serve as our models, since it made the fifths and thirds considerably removed from the purity of their intonation. The tuning system most commonly employed was therefore the so-called "mean-tone temperament," characterized by the presence of many pure thirds at the expense of the fifths. When playing on a tempered keyboard, it is therefore necessary to pay the utmost attention to the intonation of the chromatic keys, which in most cases is as follows:

1° key	C♯	pure 3rd with A
2° key	E♭	pure 3rd with G
3° key	F♯	pure 3rd with D
4° key	G♯	pure 3rd with E
5° key	B	pure 3rd with D

In practice, on a mean-tone keyboard, certain altered notes that are entirely ordinary in modern practice—such as D♯, D♭, G♭, A♭, and A♯—do not exist. Consequently, major thirds such as ♮–D♯, for example, cannot be played, because the upper note would instead be at the pitch of a very narrow fourth (indeed, E♭). To make it possible to play such otherwise unavailable consonances, keyboards with "split" chromatic keys came into use, allowing the two alternatives to be played on the front and rear portions of the same key:

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Chapter 1

Cadence

A cadence is a harmonic and contrapuntal structure that serves to bring a musical phrase to an appropriate point of closure. It may occur at various points within a composition, articulating its internal sections. Its formal function is defined by the convergence of the individual voices towards the *finalis*, through which the dynamic tension generated by their melodic motion is resolved, thereby establishing a sense of repose and closure.

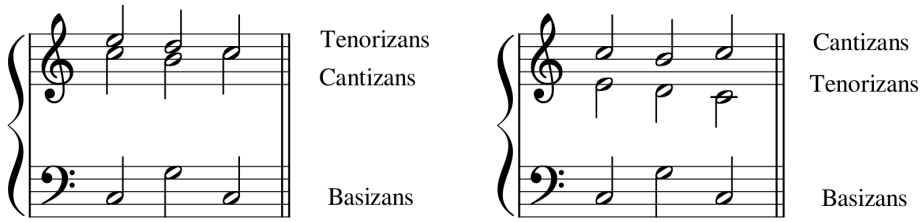
This cadential effect is achieved through the simultaneous convergence of conventional melodic formulas known as *clausulae* (from the Latin *claudĕre*, meaning "to close"), which have been developed and codified within the theoretical and compositional tradition since at least the Middle Ages. A cadence thus emerges from the coordinated interaction of several melodic lines, whose motion collectively establishes a sense of closure within a musical phrase. The following sections examine the principal types of cadence, together with specific exercises designed to be practised at the keyboard.

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SIMPLE CADENCE

The simple cadence results from the simultaneous combination of three fundamental *clausulae*. In the bass, the *clausula basizans* is characterized by a motion from the fifth degree to the first degree of the mode, articulated either by a descending fifth or by an ascending fourth.

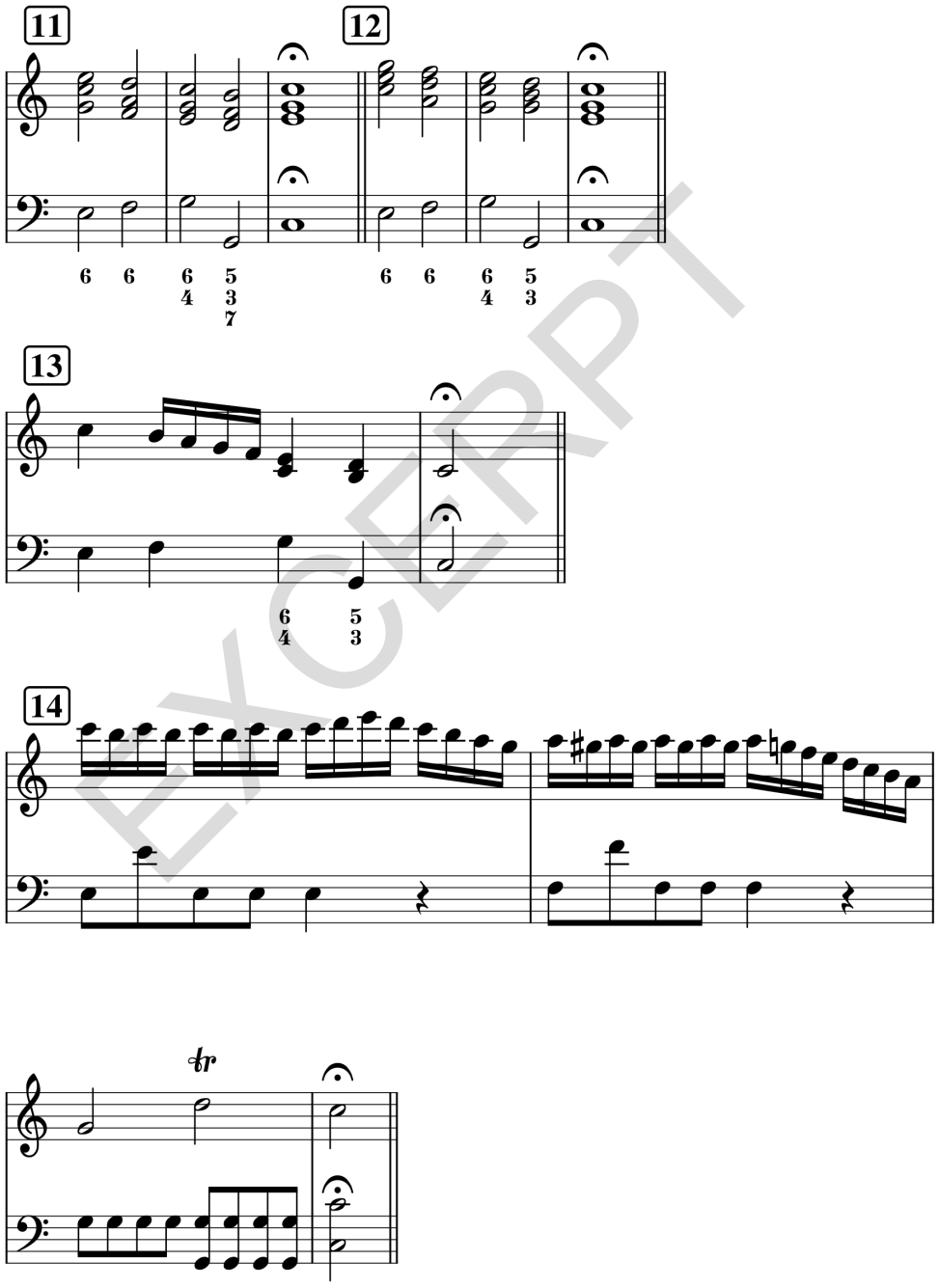
These bass motions are accompanied by two melodic formulas in the upper voices. The first, the *clausula tenorizans*, consists of a descending motion from the upper degree to the *finalis*. The second, the *clausula cantizans*, consists of an ascending motion from the lower degree to the same *finalis*, approached by semitone [cf. WALTHER, 170–171; MEJER, 91]:



PRACTICE: CADENCE IN THE GALANT STYLE

Transpose the following two galant-cadence models, applying them successively to the sequence of tones with major and minor thirds:

C – d – e – F - G – a – b	ascendending *finales*
Bb – A – g – f – E – Eb – D - c	descending *finales*



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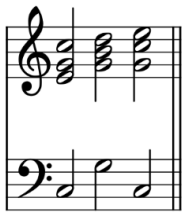
Chapter 2

Entrance
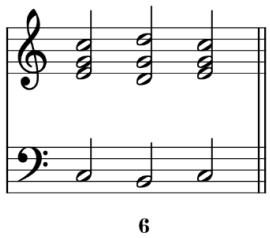
This chapter is devoted to the analysis and practical application of some of the most recurrent *loci topici* employed to introduce a piece or a musical *sententia*. These are introductory formulas widely attested in historical keyboard practice, the assimilation of which constitutes one of the fundamental prerequisites for acquiring a musical language consistent with the stylistic conventions of the period.

One such model involves the execution of the *clausula basizans* in the bass, while the upper part presents the first three ascending degrees of the governing tone. The inner voices complete the texture through the use of the consonances of the third, fifth, and octave, thereby producing a simple and balanced harmonic disposition, well suited to establishing the *finalis* and the modal character of the musical discourse from the outset.

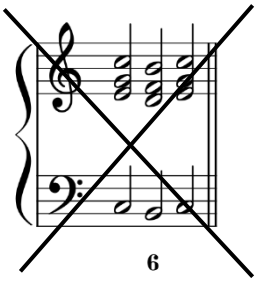
In the C mode with a major third, the model takes the following form:



A second *locus topicus* is represented by the bass executing the *clausula cantizans*, while the upper part executes the *clausula tenorizans*. This scheme calls for a harmony on the seventh degree which, instead of the fifth, requires a doubled sixth at the outer parts of the right hand, with the third in the central position.



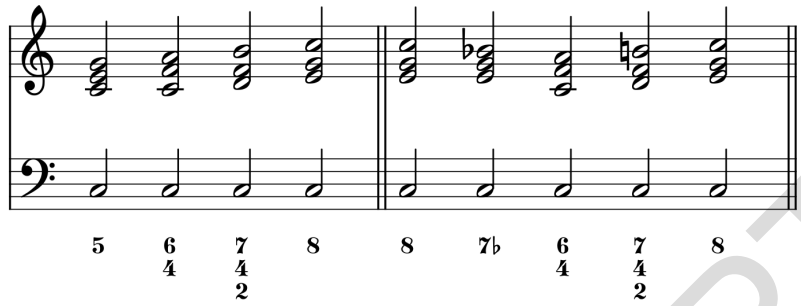
We shall see later how the chord containing the sixth may also be voiced on the keyboard with a doubling of the bass. In the case of the formula under consideration, however, where the bass executes the *cantizans*, this should be avoided altogether, owing to the resulting formation of parallel octaves, as should the doubling of the *cantizans* in any of the upper parts.



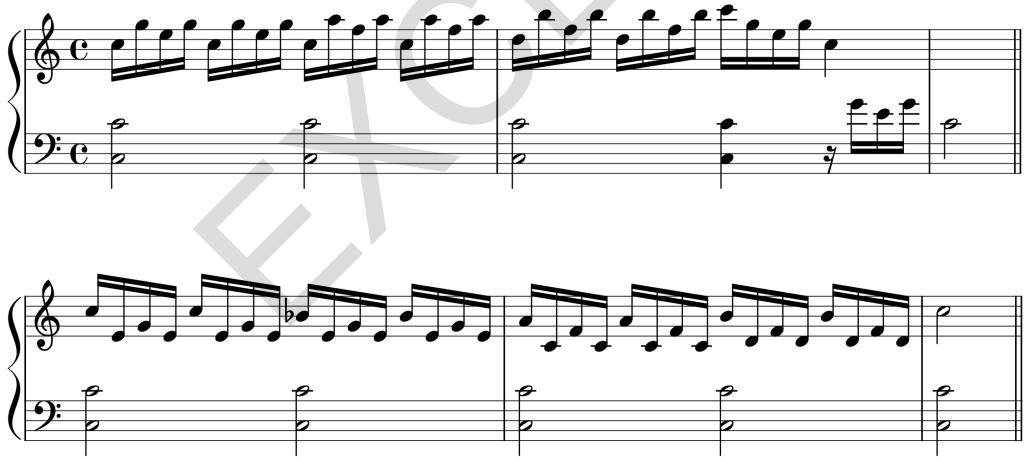
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Quiescenza

The musicologist Robert Gjerdingen has proposed the term *quiescenza* to refer to a kind of pedal over which four or more harmonies are realized [181–195]. In the first example, the ascending succession of scale degrees V–VI–VII–I is prominent in the upper part; in the second, the minor seventh is used in the descending motion and the major seventh in the ascending motion, with the succession of scale degrees VIII - VII ♭ -VI - 7♮- VIII:



This scheme applies only to tones with majopr third and lends itself to numerous types of diminution, which can be found extensively throughout the baroque repertoire:

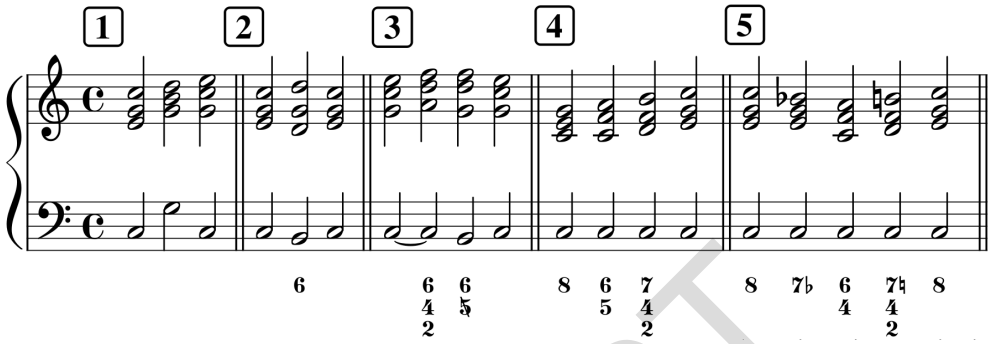


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PRACTICE 1

Transpose the following opening formulas, presented in chordal form, into major and minor keys. Use the following map:

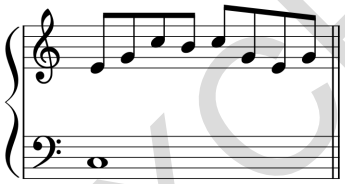
C – d – e – F - G – a – b	ascendending finales
Bb – A – g – f – E – Eb – D - c	descending finales



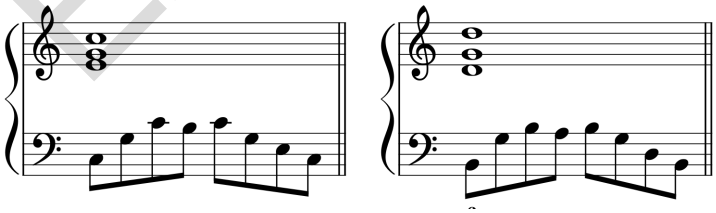
PRACTICE 2

Realize the same harmonic schemes—transposed into major and minor keys—by applying the following formulas of diminution and variation:
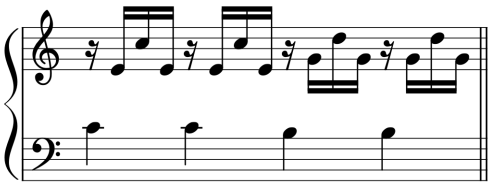
1.



2.



3.



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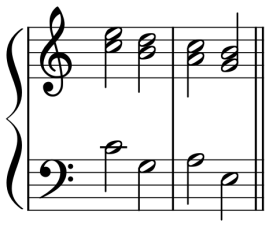
Chapter 3

Romanesca

The Romanesca is one of the best-known and most variously employed *loci topici*, particularly in tones with a major third. It may be used both at the beginning of a piece as an opening formula and in the course of a composition as a means of articulating and developing the musical discourse [cfr. GJERDINGEN 25].

In its most elementary configuration, it consists of a succession of four notes in the bass: a descending fourth—or, equivalently, an ascending fifth—followed by ascending stepwise motion and a further descending fourth. This melodic profile, characterized by considerable balance and naturalness, provides the foundation for numerous contrapuntal elaborations and diminutions, extensively documented in keyboard practice from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

There are numerous possibilities for realizing this scheme in the right hand; the simplest consists of a succession of descending thirds by step:



This harmonic configuration presents at least two variants that are widely employed in historical practice. The first involves an alternation of suspensions of the third and the octave, a configuration represented in figured bass notation by the succession of the figures 4/3–9/8, which do not merely indicate the presence of vertical intervals, but describe the contrapuntal motion of the two upper voices.

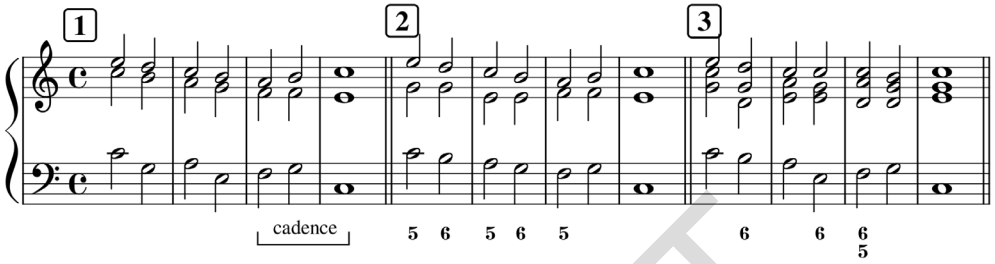
The second variant, by contrast, involves the simultaneous suspension of the two upper parts, represented graphically by the succession 6/4–5/3. Here too, the figured bass notation reflects the progressive transformation of the intervals produced by the motion of the parts:

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PRACTICE 1
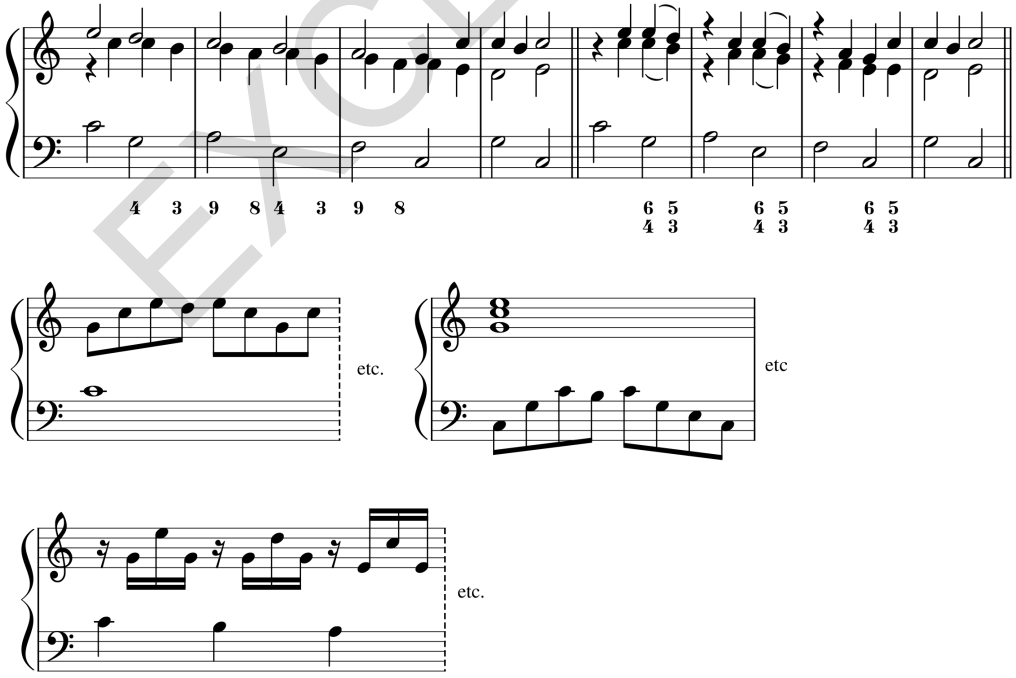
Practise the three different types of Romanesca in the following tones whith a major third:

C –F – G – Bb –A – E



PRACTICE 2

Practice the following diminution patterns to the tones whith major third:
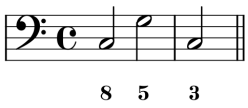


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Interlude 1
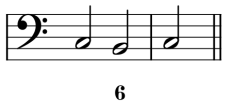
Before proceeding further, it is advisable to consolidate the material covered thus far.

The formulas presented in the first three chapters are briefly summarized below, represented by the bass line alone and without diminution or variation:
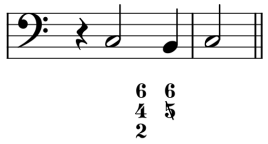
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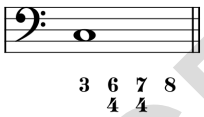


basizans

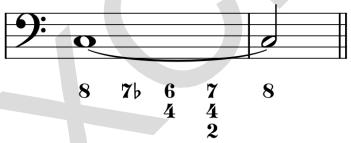


cantizans in the bass
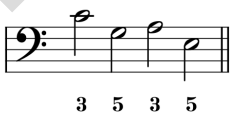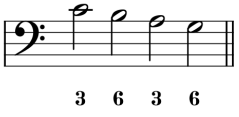




quiescenza



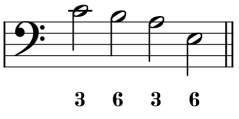
ROMANESCA



by leaps



by steps



in galant style

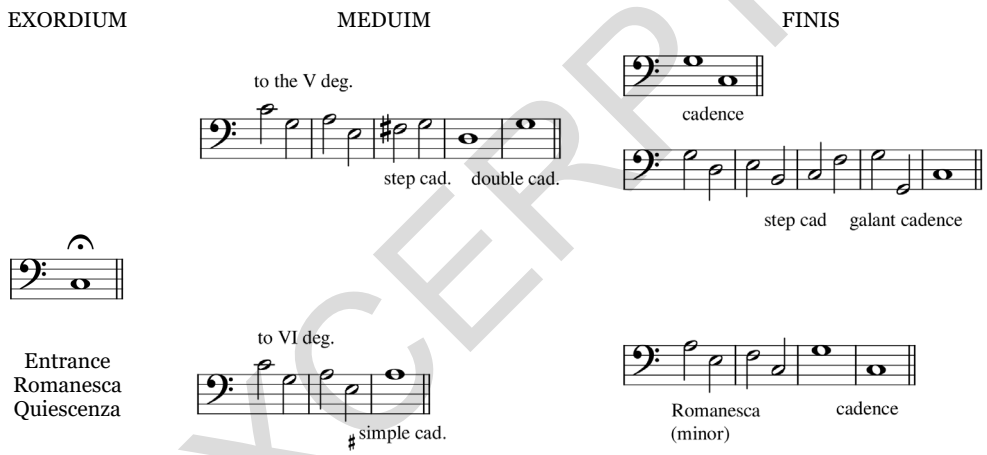
EXCERPT

polarization, toward which the logical-syntactic direction of the musical discourse is oriented.

In tones with a major third, the closest relationships are established with the *finales* on the fifth and sixth degrees; in modes with a minor third, these relationships are instead established with the *finales* on the fifth and third degrees.

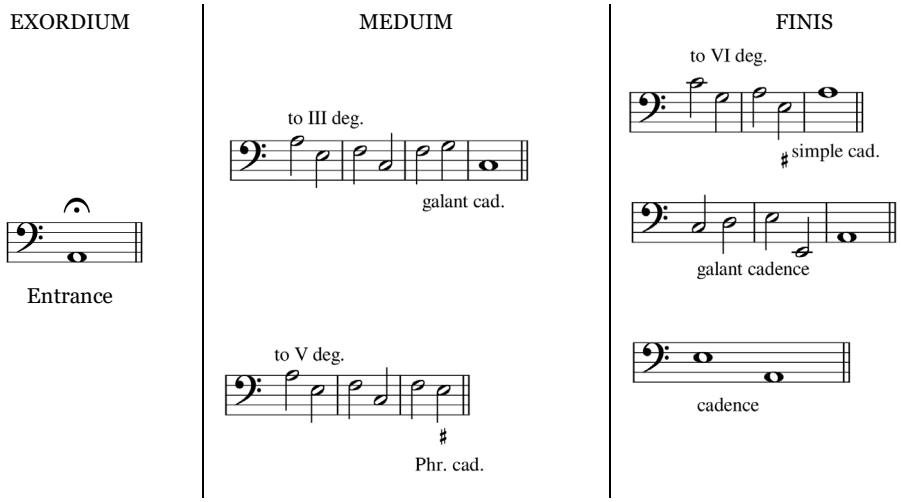
The two 'maps' presented below make it possible to visualize and systematize this progression, providing a means of understanding the relationships among *exordium*, *medium*, and *finis* and, more generally, the logic governing the organization of the *loci topici* within the musical *sententia* (*dispositio*):

TONES WITH MAJOR THIRD



EXCERPT

TONES WITH MINOR THIRD



A further level of articulation and understanding of the musical discourse is constituted by the choice and application of variation procedures, as they have been illustrated and practised in relation to each *locus topicus*. This level may be related to the *elocutio* of the discourse, that is, to the concrete manner in which the *loci topici*, once selected and organized according to the *dispositio*, are translated into a specific musical realization at the keyboard. *Elocutio* thus concerns the concrete shaping of the sonic surface of the discourse and determines, through the choice of variation procedures, the manner in which the underlying rhetorical-musical structure is actually rendered in performance.

PRACTICE 1

Play short musical phrases in chordal form, in tones with a major and minor third, using the two maps presented above (*dispositio*) and applying the variants illustrated in the preceding three chapters (*elocutio*). The aim is to achieve increasingly fluent command of the procedures studied, so as to make their spontaneous and natural concatenation possible in performance.
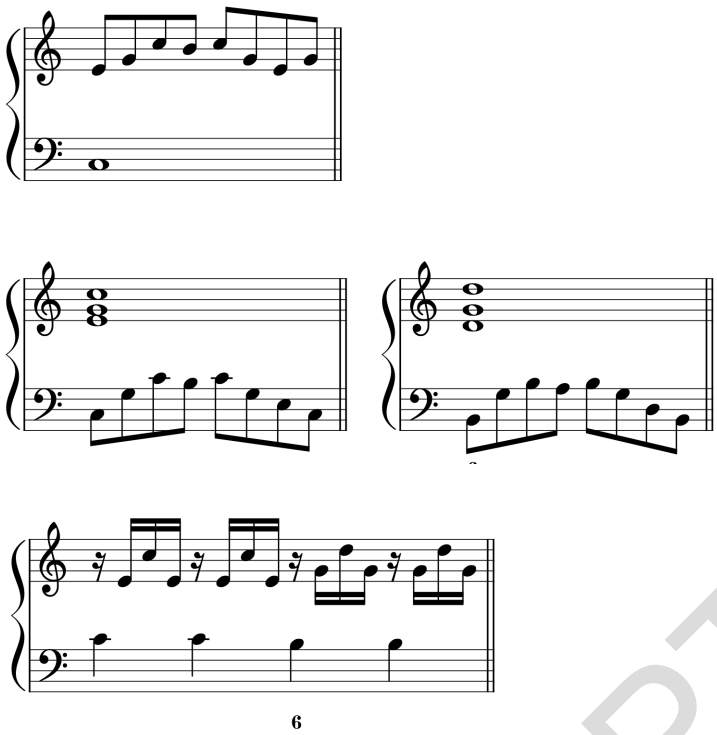
EXCERPT

PRACTICE 2

On the basis of the *dispositio* and *elocutio*, the musical discourse reaches its completion in the final part of rhetoric, the *actio*, understood as the moment of declamation and concrete expressive realization. This stage concerns the use of *figures* and specific stylistic conventions intended to ornament the *locus topicus*, thereby giving it a more pronounced stylistic character and an individual identity. The expert use of *figures* and their rhetorical characterization will be addressed in specific modules. At this stage, we shall limit ourselves to a few simple ideas, which will be developed further as the work progresses, and above all through the study of repertoire pieces.

From this perspective, the student is invited to rework the musical phrases developed in the first exercise, replacing the chordal formulation with the various modes of variation presented in the preceding chapters and summarized here.

Once a particular type of diminution has been selected, it should be maintained consistently throughout the entire course of the *sententia*, up to the final cadence:



The instructor may propose further examples and variations in real time, demonstrating how many expressive and combinatorial possibilities can arise even from the use of these first three *loci topici* alone.

EXCERPT
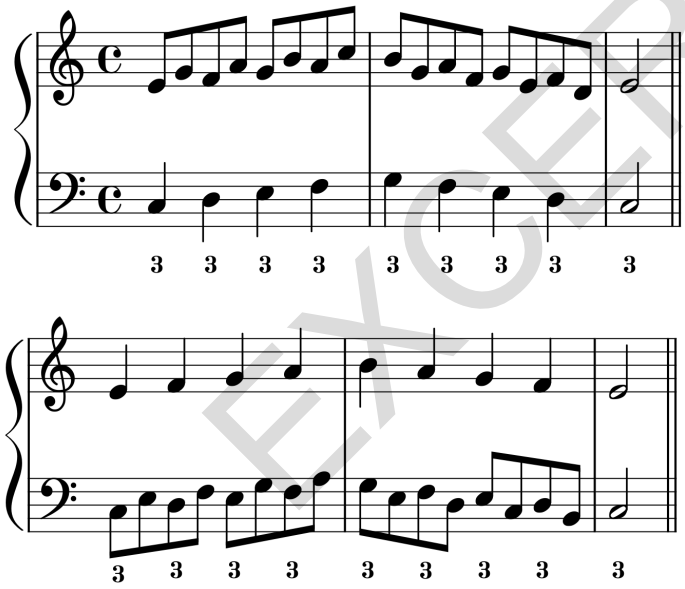
Chapter 4

Stepwise motion
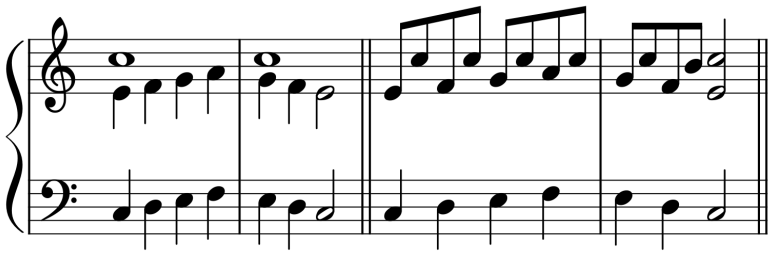
Stepwise motion constitutes a widely used standard figure, particularly well suited both to reaching different points on the keyboard and to connecting distinct patterns. It occurs in numerous forms, variants, and diminutions, which are extensively attested in the sources.

The present section examines the most recurrent and best-documented types; students are nevertheless encouraged to identify and experiment with further variants through the observation and direct study of the repertoire.

The simplest and most widespread way of accompanying stepwise motion consists in adding a part moving in parallel thirds or tenths, with one of the two parts being diminished by means of an ascending third followed by a descending second:



A similar procedure can be employed in three parts, with one voice held stationary while the other part proceeds in parallel thirds or tenths. The same procedure can also be carried out in two parts, using the solution shown in the second example:
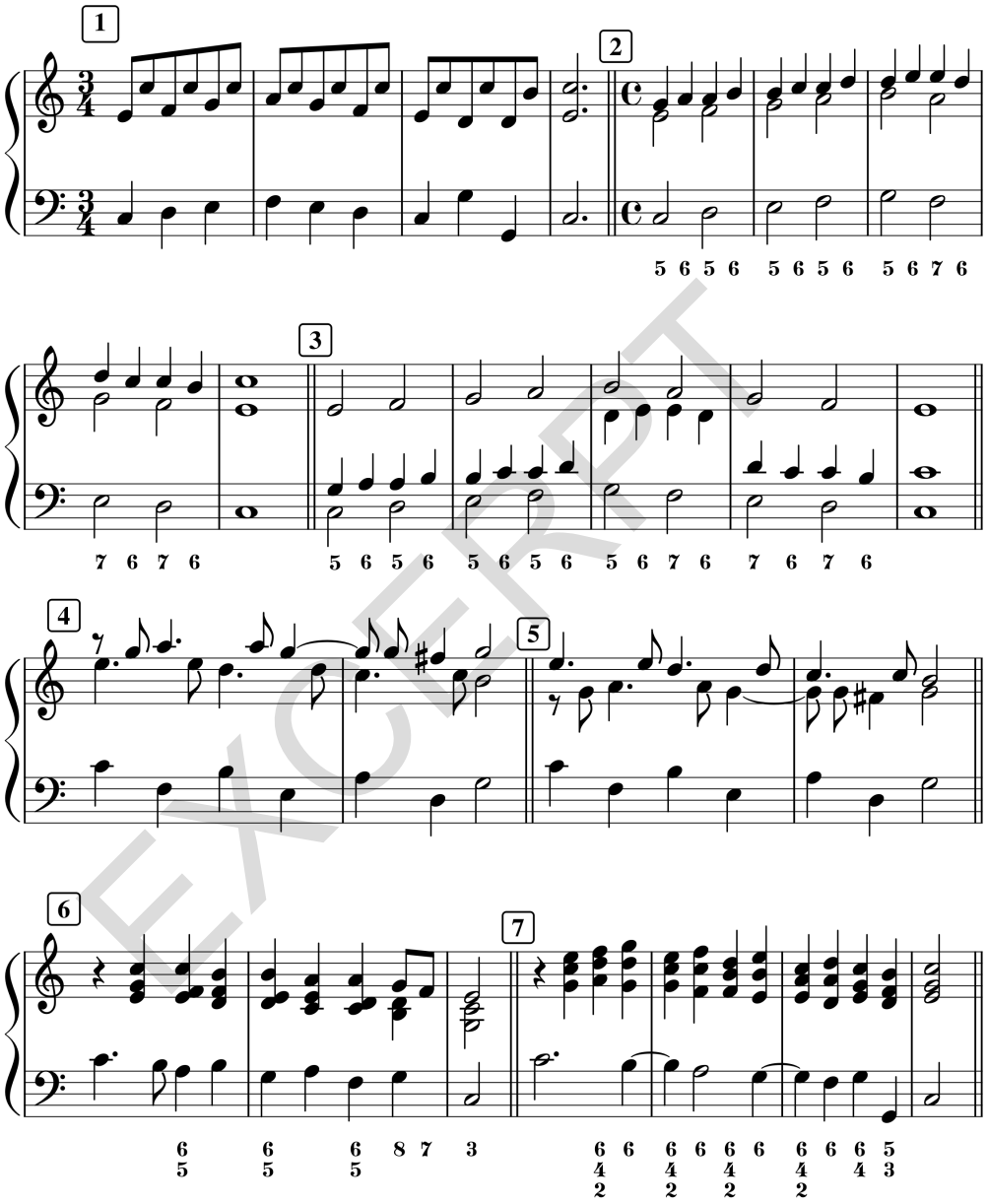


EXCERPT

PRACTICE

Practice these patterns in the tones used thus far:

C – d – e – F - G – a – b	ascendending *finales*
Bb – A – g – f – E – Eb – D - c	descending *finales*
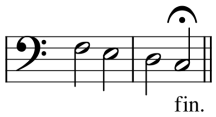


EXCERPT

Chapter 5
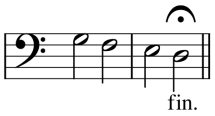
Diatessaron

In this chapter, we will examine several ways of realizing at the keyboard the descending *diatessaron* situated above the *finalis*.

In tones with a major third, the *diatessaron* has the semitone in the uppermost position and is classified in historical music theory as a third species *diatessaron*:

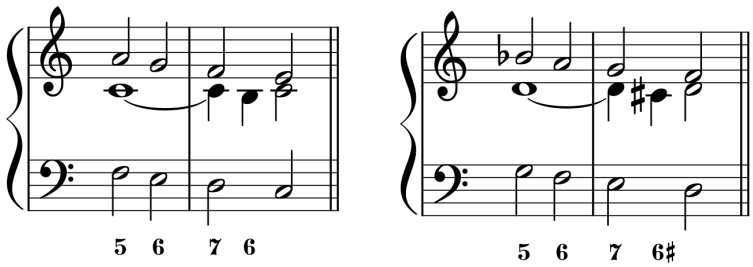


In tones with a minor third, the *diatessaron* has the semitone in the middle position and is classified as a first species *diatessaron*:



The harmonic realization of this fundamental structure offers numerous and varied possibilities. The most straightforward solution involves one part proceeding in parallel thirds (or tenths), while another sustains the fifth of the initial note throughout the bass's descent, until a seventh is formed; this seventh is then resolved to a sixth as a preparation for the final step cadence.
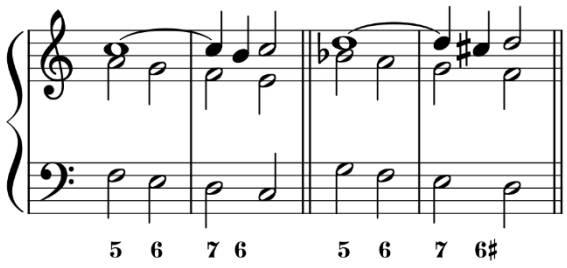
The following figure illustrates this voice-leading pattern as applied to the two species of *diatessaron* discussed above:



third species *first species*

EXCERPT
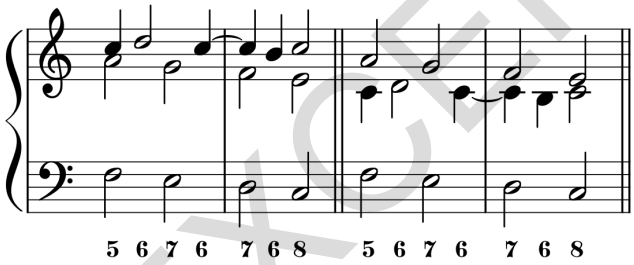
The two upper parts may be interchanged; the part proceeding in parallel thirds may therefore also be placed in the middle position:



Having understood the contrapuntal nature of this structure, we can now proceed to examine some of its most frequently employed variants (*elocutio*).

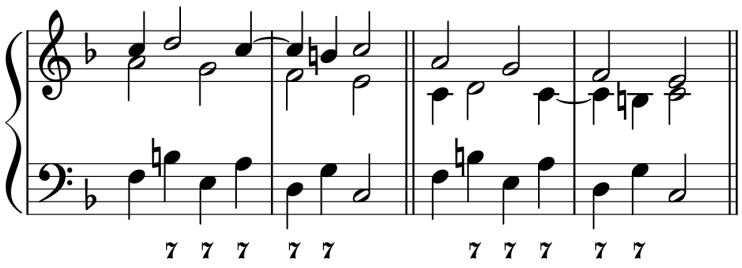
First variant

The four descending notes are accompanied by the characteristic 7–6 formula:



Second variant

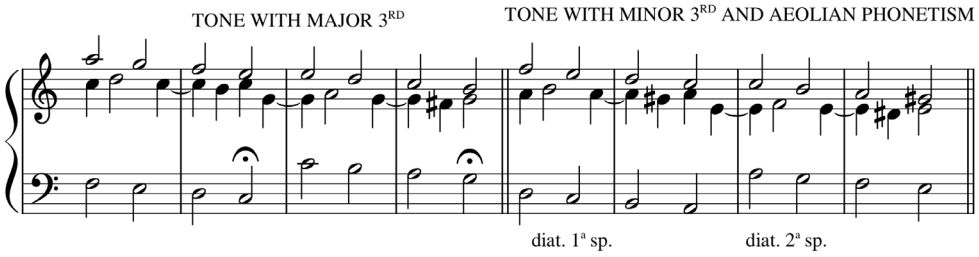
This may be regarded as a kind of diminished *diatessaron*, since the bass notes leap to the upper fourth (or lower fifth) before proceeding to the next note, while the right hand proceeds as in the first variant. The result is a succession of alternating sevenths over each of the bass notes, a solution already highlighted in the preceding chapter, devoted to the stepwises degrees:



EXCERPT

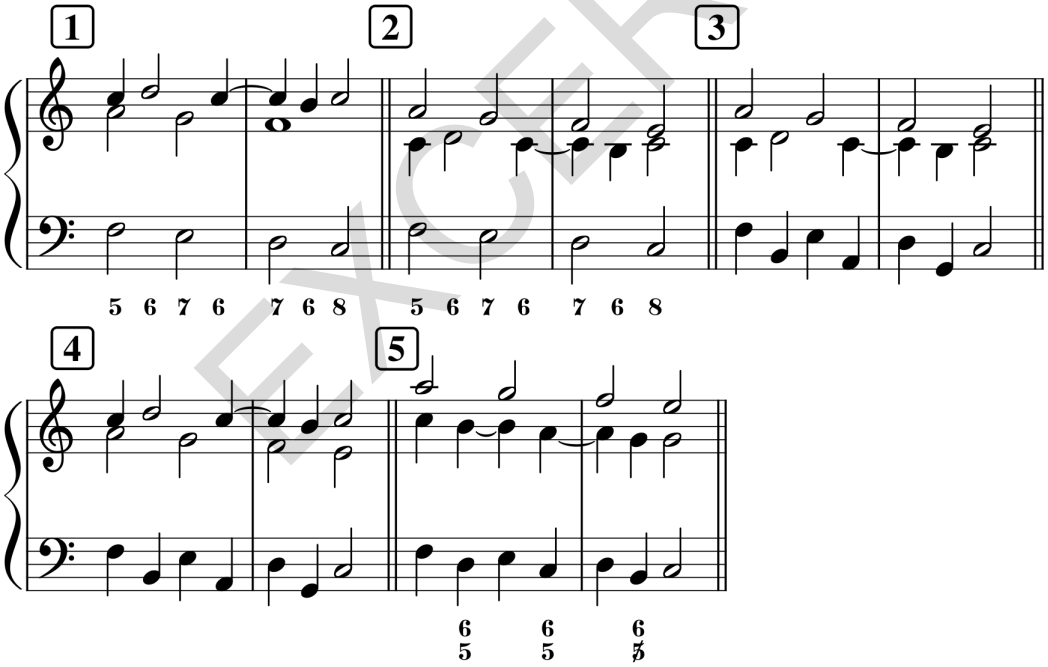
PRACTICE

Practice and transpose the suggestions presented below, taking care to follow the *diatessaron* on the *finalis* with the one built on its fifth degree, as shown in the example:



Practice the sequence of tones used thus far, namely:

C – d – e – F - G – a – b	ascendending *finales*
Bb – A – g – f – E – Eb – D - c	descending *finales*
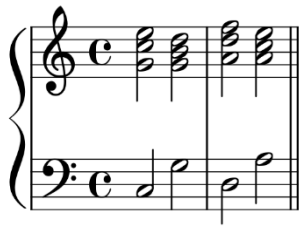


EXCERPT

Chapter 6
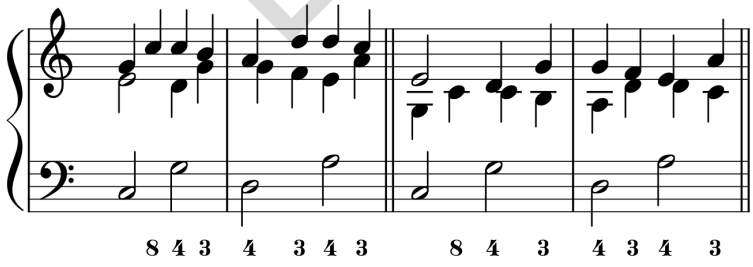
Romanesca *per ascensum*

The term Romanesca *per ascensum* refers to a widely used *locus* that lends itself to numerous and varied keyboard realizations. It consists of two ascending fifths—or, equivalently, two descending fourths—with the second beginning one tone above the first. This harmonic pattern occurs on the first degree in tones with major third or on the third degree in tones with minor third. Its realization calls for chords comprising the third, fifth, and octave, with contrary motion between the upper voices and the bass being recommended:



In the case of a tone with major third, the succession of degrees will be I, V, II, VI; in the case of a tone with minor third, the degrees will be III, VII, IV, VIII.

There are countless keyboard realizations of this common pattern. A particularly frequent example is the three-part setting in invertible counterpoint, which allows the two upper parts to be inverted. This solution is useful for practising the suspension of the third, and thus the use of the fourth prepared by the octave:



The bass may be further diminished according to standardized procedures:

EXCERPT

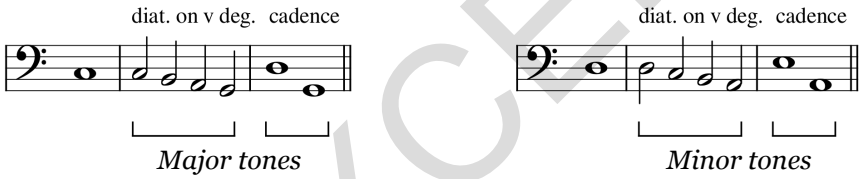
Interlude 2

The new *loci communes* illustrated and practised thus far make it possible to construct more elaborate and articulated musical sentences. This second interlude is therefore devoted to consolidating these procedures, with the aim of developing the ability to connect and articulate the musical discourse in relation to the strong degrees of the tone. In the first interlude, we described the essential components of musical discourse from the perspective of musical rhetoric, dividing the *dispositio* into its three parts: *exordium*, *medium*, and *finis*. We shall continue in the same direction.

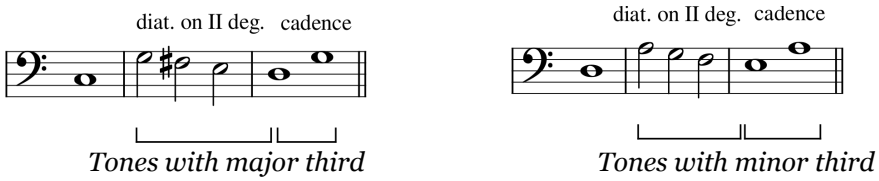
From I to V degree

We already know how the Romanesca can be used to lead the musical discourse to the fifth degree of the tone. We can now add the use of the *diatessaron* and stepwise degrees by means of three principal pathways.

The first consists of a third species *diatessaron* on the fifth degree in tones with a major third, or of a first species *diatessaron* in tones with a minor third, followed by a confirmatory cadence:



The second pathway is slightly more complex and may consist of a third species *diatessaron* in major tones or a second species *diatessaron* in minor tones, built on the second degree, considered as the fifth degree of the complementary *finalis*. The last note of this *diatessaron* already constitutes the first element of the confirmatory cadence.



The third pathway consists of an ascending stepwise progression — the descending progression, on the other hand, coincides with the one based on the *diatessaron*, as already illustrated:

EXCERPT

Chapter 7

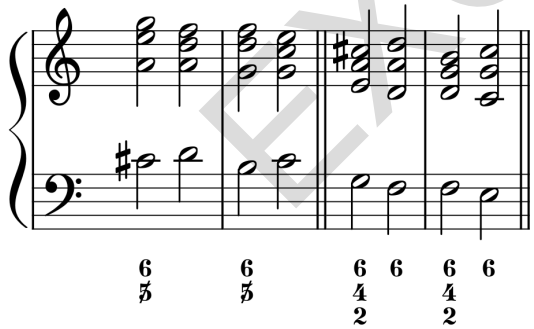
Fonte

We owe the use of the technical term *Fonte*, as well as the description of this conventional *locus communis*, to the Bavarian theorist Joseph Riepel (1709–1782), who served as Kapellmeister in Regensburg. The *Fonte* is a widely employed pattern, particularly prominent in the late Baroque repertoire and in the galant style [EMMERIG 44].

The *Fonte* is associated with major tones and consists of two units positioned a whole step apart in descending succession, each of which exhibits a cadential structure. It may be used to expand the *medium* of a sentence or to prolong a formal trajectory governed by a specific rhetorical principle.

The fundamental form consists of two stepwise cadences, in which the *cantizans* and *altizans* alternate between the two outer voices.

When the *cantizans* occurs in the bass, the first chord consists of a sixth, a third, and a diminished fifth, the latter corresponding to the opening note of the *altizans*. Conversely, when the *altizans* occurs in the bass, the first chord consists of a sixth, a second, and an augmented fourth, the latter corresponding to the opening note of the *cantizans*. In the latter configuration, the bass does not proceed to the *finalis* but instead comes to rest on its third, while the concluding sonority contains a sixth in place of the fifth:



The *Fonte* is employed exclusively with the stepeise-degree progressions II–I or V–IV in tones with a major third. Thus, for example, if the musical discourse arrives at a cadence in G (*medium* of a sentence), the *Fonte* may be realized in either of the following two ways:

G	g#-a || f#-g	It remains in the initial key
(arrival key)	c#-re || b-c	It arrives at the 4th scale degree

EXCERPT

Chapter 8

Monte

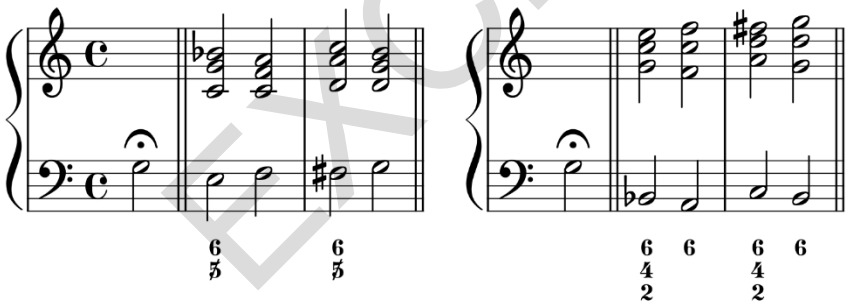
As with the *Fonte*, the term *Monte* derives from the theorist Joseph Riepel, who described both its basic operation and the variety of ways in which it may be realized [EMMERIG, 44]. The pattern consists of two or more stages unfolding on progressively ascending scale degrees, beginning on the fourth degree of the tonic key. Each stage may employ the same range of cadential patterns and expansions discussed above in connection with the *Fonte*. The two schemata, however, differ in several significant respects:

1. The *Monte* unfolds in an ascending direction
2. The *Monte* may also employ tones with a minor third
3. The *Monte* may unfold through as many as five successive ascending stages

EXCERPT

TWO-PART MONTE

The most common harmonic realizations of the two-part *Monte* consist of cadences featuring reciprocally placed *cantizans* and *altizans*, realized over the scale-degree succession IV–V:



The section preceding the *Monte* ends on the dominant of the tonic key (G). The *Monte* then proceeds through the subdominant and dominant (scale degrees IV-V).

THREE-PART MONTE
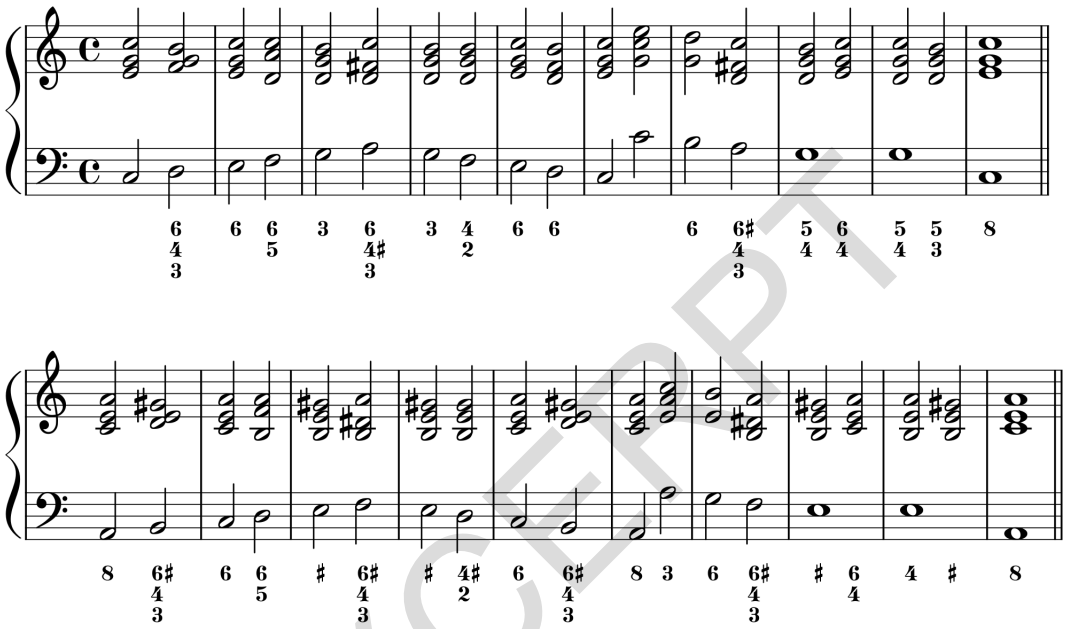
Two forms of the three-part *Monte* can be distinguished according to the mode of the tonic key:

1. Subdominant, dominant, and relative minor (scale degrees IV, V, and VI of the tonic key). This succession occurs only in tones with major third and serves to lead to the relative minor

Chapter 9

Harmonizing the scale degrees

The different scale degrees of the tone can be realized through a standardized harmonization, reproduced here for both major and minor third tones. In the Italian pedagogical tradition, this procedure is referred to as *modulazione del tono*:



EXCERPT

By examining the bass line, students will readily identify the principal common patterns, including the cadence, the *diatessaron*, the Romanesca, and stepwise motion. For each *locus topicus* identified, students are encouraged to draw freely on the harmonic-contrapuntal realizations studied thus far, thereby broadening and effectively varying the pattern.

The *Monte* and *Fonte* patterns may also be inserted at the student's discretion in the appropriate places.

PRACTICE

Practice the tones according to the procedure followed thus far:

C – d – e – F - G – a – b	ascendending *finales*
Bb – A – g – f – E – Eb – D - c	descending *finales*

Chapter10
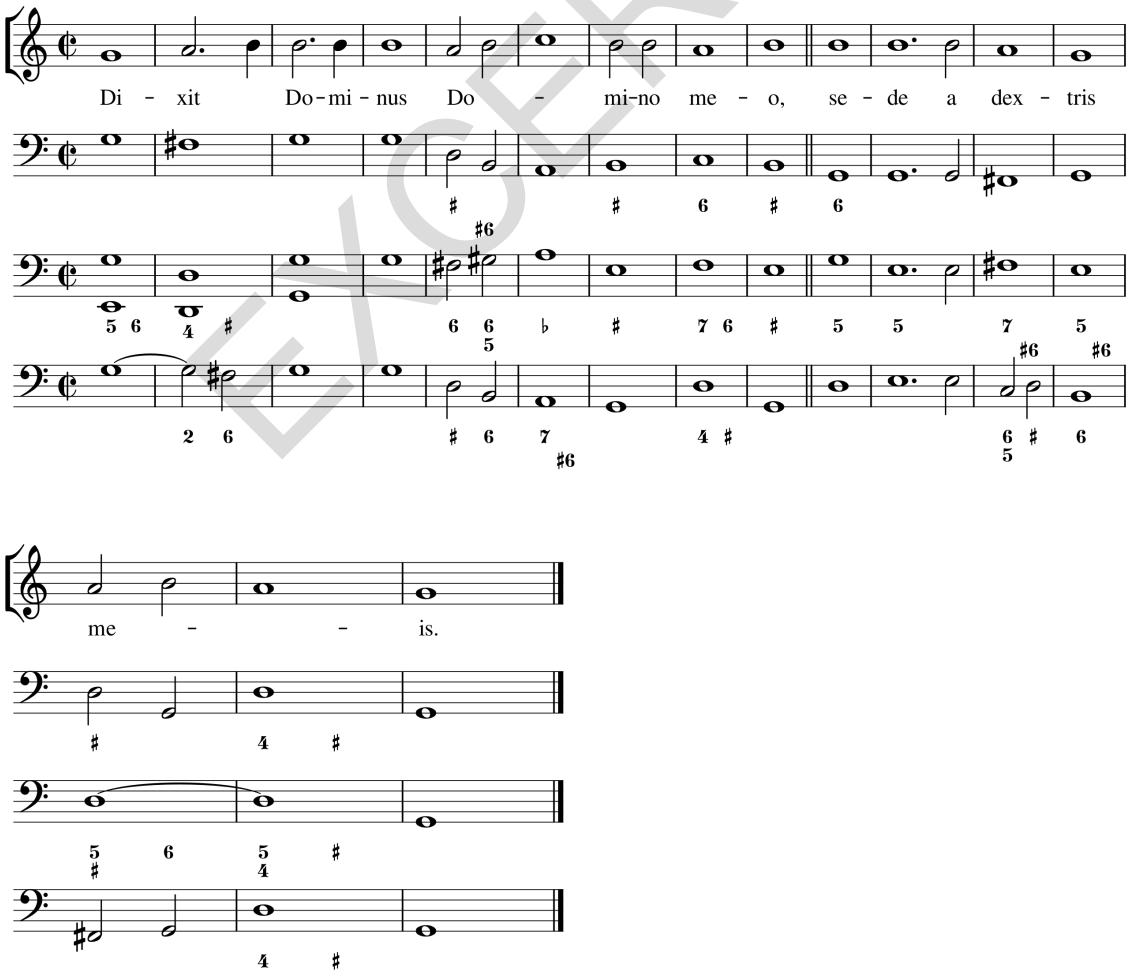
Psalm Tones

In this section, students become acquainted with the melodies of the eight psam tones and their possible harmonizations. These tones may be regarded as additional common patterns that contribute to the keyboard player's personal musical vocabulary. Students should therefore devote particular attention to their study and memorization, realizing the different alternatives proposed for each melodic line in order to appreciate the resulting harmonic nuances. We provide here a transcription based on the manuscript copy of Gaetano Greco's *Tuoni ecclesiastici con li loro versetti*, preserved in the library of the Naples Conservatory [cf. GRECO, n.d.].

The right hand need not double the vocal line; rather, students are encouraged to sing the accompanying part.

EXCERPT

Psalm tone 1

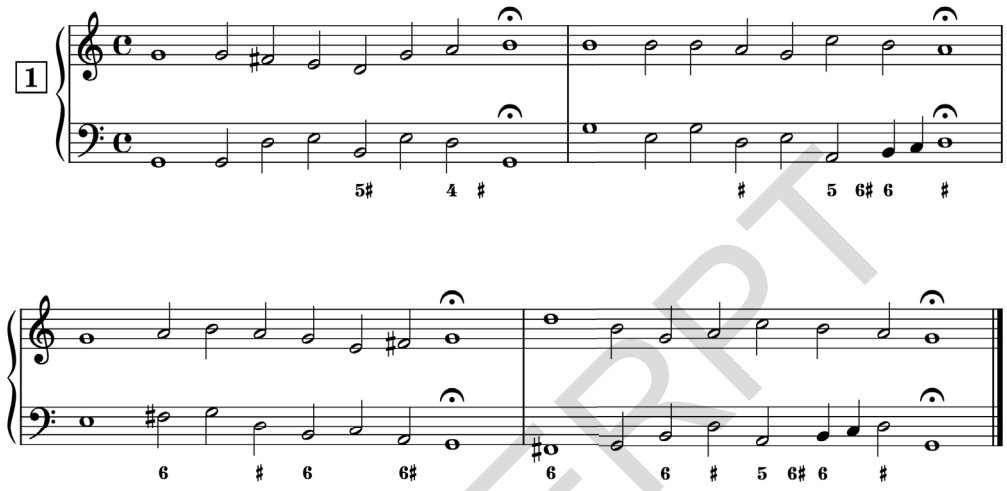


Chapter 11

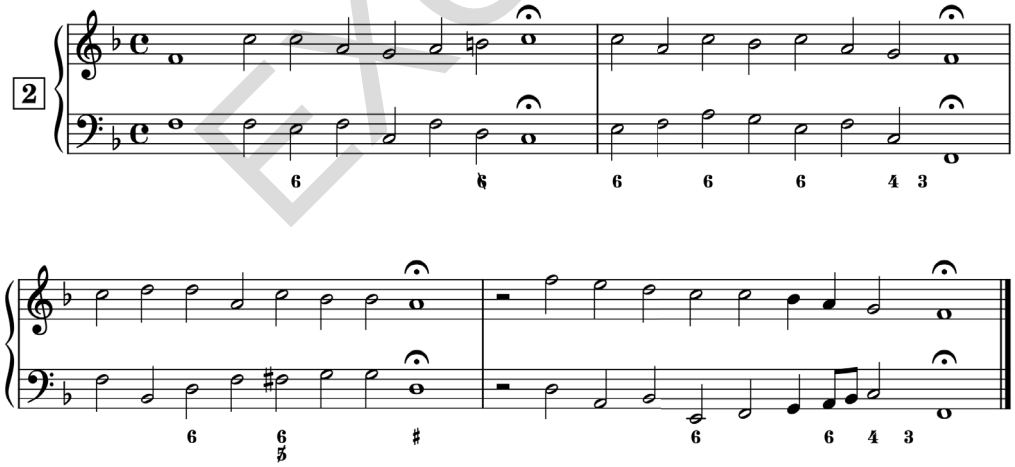
Chorals with figured bass

Several chorals with figured bass are provided for practice in the harmonic-contrapuntal procedures studied thus far. The principal source is the important 1704 manuscript known as the *Weimar Tablature* by Johann Pachelbel [cf. PACHELBEL 1993].

Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir



Wo Gott zum Haus nicht gibt sein Gunst



EXCERPT

Chapter 11

Tradizional patterns and ostinato basses

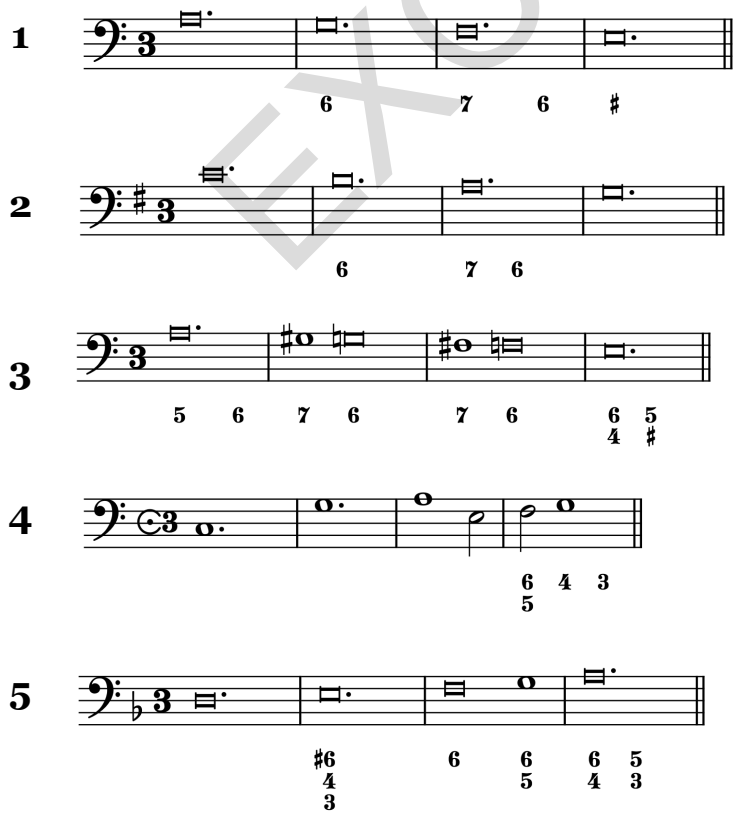
Presented here, in concise and essential form, are several traditional harmonic schemata that were widely used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These are standardized bass patterns that, in keyboard practice, served as the basis for divisions, variations, and improvisations, including the use of the ostinato bass.

CIACCONA AND PASSACAGLI

Both originated as dances of popular origin. During the seventeenth century, they gradually developed into keyboard forms based on variation over an ostinato bass or on the continuous repetition of the same harmonic pattern. Among the foremost composers of keyboard ciacconas and passacaglias are G. Frescobaldi and G. F. Handel.

The two forms overlap to such an extent that no clear dividing line can be established between them. In general, the ciaccona presents a pattern that moves from the tonic to the dominant; nevertheless, passacaglias following the same directional pattern are also documented.
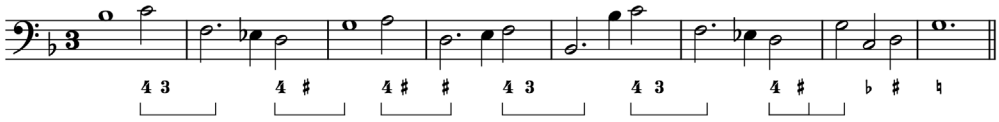
Both are strictly in triple meter..



EXCERPT

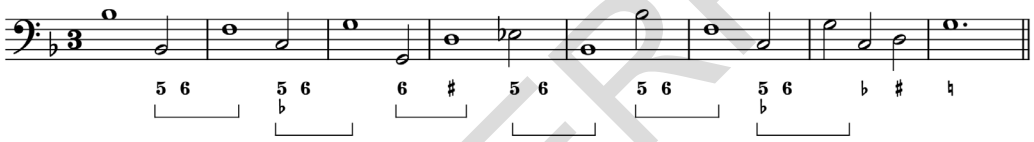
Example of variation 2

It consists of simple cadences, with the *basizans* in the bass, on each note of the sequence:



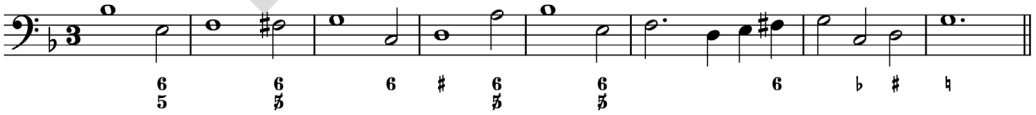
Example of variation 3

On each note of the sequence, a cadence known as a *minor cadence* or *counter-cadence* is constructed, in which the bass descends by a fourth or ascends by a fifth:



Example of variation 4

Each note of the sequence is treated as a *finalis* approached by a *cantizans*:



EXCERPT

Chapter 13

The organ verse

The skills acquired thus far are sufficient to undertake the present section, devoted to the realization of short organ verses composed for didactic purposes by Bernardo Pasquini and now preserved in manuscript at the British Library in London (Ms. Add. 31501, III). These constitute a portion of the more than three hundred verses in basso continuo conceived as an ideal introduction to the celebrated continuo sonatas preserved in the same composite manuscript [CARIDEO 2006].

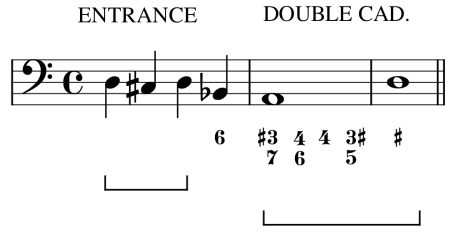
This repertory is particularly useful for gradually refining the keyboard skills developed during the course. The verses are organized according to the different *finales* of the tones and present increasingly elaborate and imaginative compositional procedures. Students acquire not only considerable experience in both chordal and contrapuntal realization, but, above all, internalize typical models and recurring schemata that become useful resources for their own improvisational practice. The use of the different *finales* serves not only as an exercise at the keyboard, but also provides a comprehensive compendium of the modal possibilities employed in *alternatim* practice and of the short pieces appropriate to the tone of the chant in use. This, indeed, is the essential function of the organ verse: within historical pedagogical practice, it served both as a practical repertory for performance and as a particularly effective means of imprinting the most appropriate solutions in the student's musical memory.

I have accompanied some of the verses with brief comments and practical instructions intended to guide students and help them develop an appropriate approach. These comments gradually become more concise until they disappear altogether, as students acquire the ability to recognize the characteristic elements, schemata, and stylistic features practised in the preceding sections.

EXCERPT

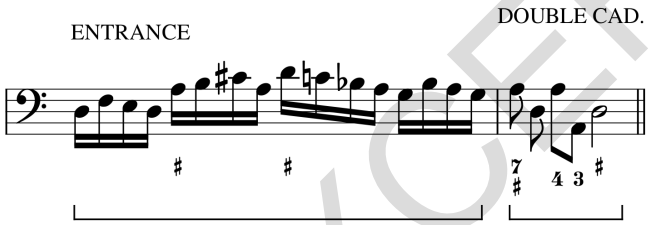
VERSETS in D, minor third

1)



It should be recalled that the figured notation does not represent chordal structures, but rather provides a concise notation of contrapuntal motions to be set against the bass; it should therefore be read horizontally. Accordingly, the simultaneous figures over the whole note A —#3 4 4 #3 and 7 6 5—should be understood as indicating two melodic lines, C♯ D D C♯ and G F E, respectively, which are interconnected. Students should explore all possible combinations, seeking to develop increasingly varied solutions.

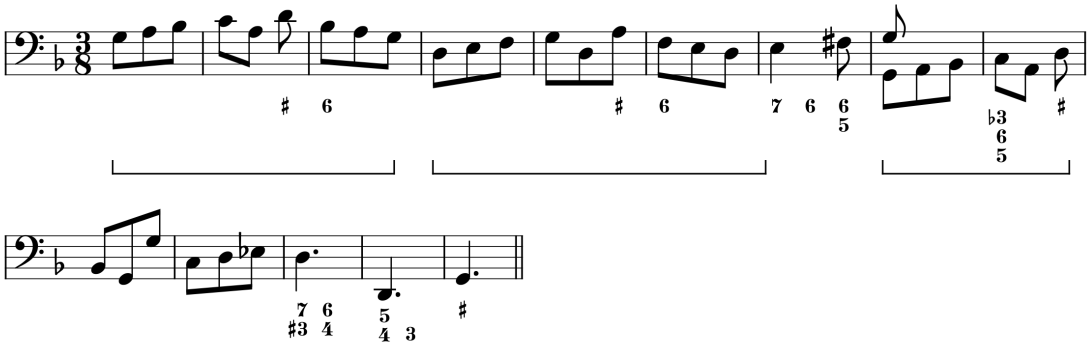
2)



The structure is identical to that of the preceding verse (opening + cadence), but with a diminuted bass. The first note of each group of four sixteenth notes should therefore be harmonized, while the remaining notes proceed under the same chord. The first three groups of four sixteenth notes form an opening formula on degrees I–V–I, to be realized according to the rules learned in chapter 2 (with the melodic part moving through the notes D E F, etc.). An interesting solution would be to develop the *diatessaron* placed in the first bar in ascending motion (D E F G) and in descending motion in the second bar (G F E D), bearing in mind that G corresponds to the seventh of the bass, as indicated by the figured bass.

EXCERPT
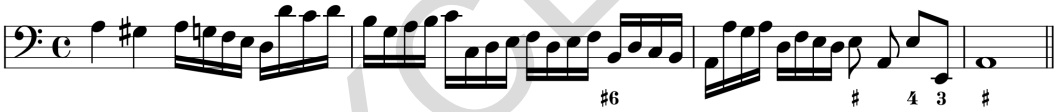
28)
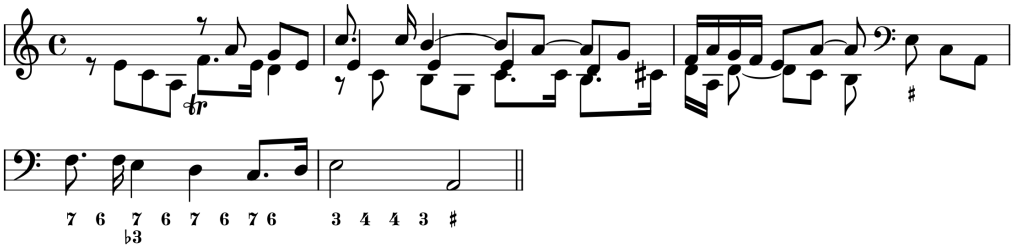


The subject is stated within the diatessaron, and the answer begins on the fifth degree. No mutation is required.

VERSES in A, minor third

29)



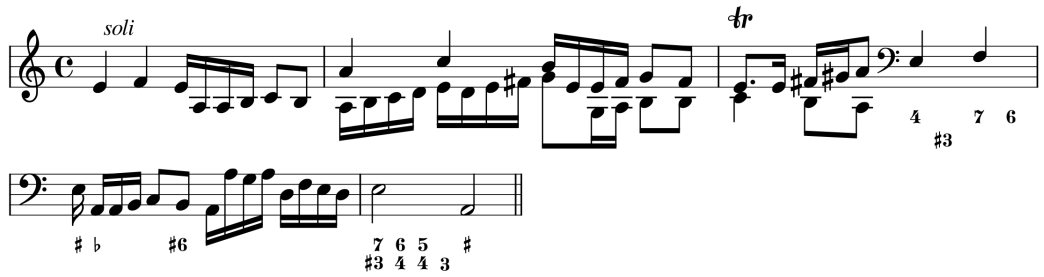
30)



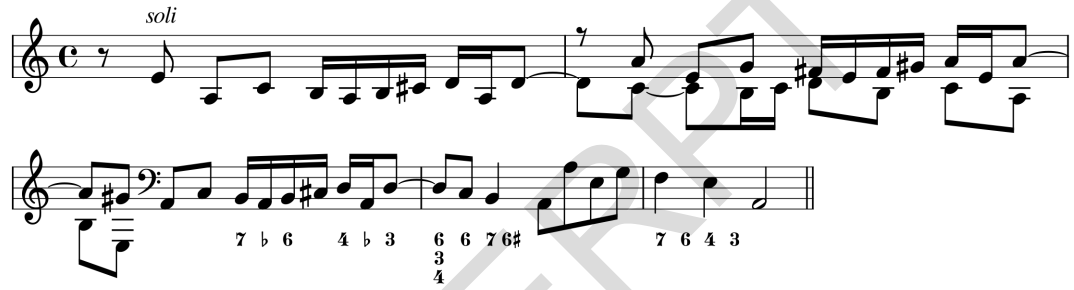
The answer requires a mutation, in accordance with the principle that everything stated within the *diapente* is also stated, with appropriate modifications, within the diatessaron.

EXCERPT

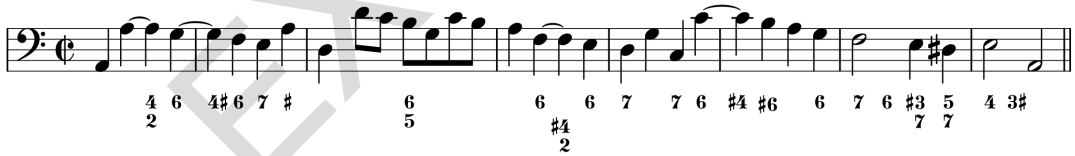
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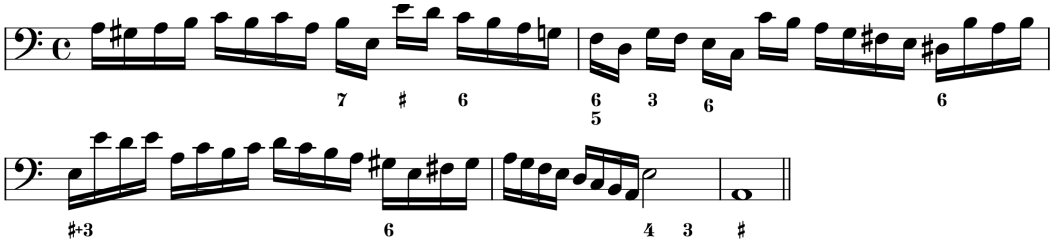


32)



33)
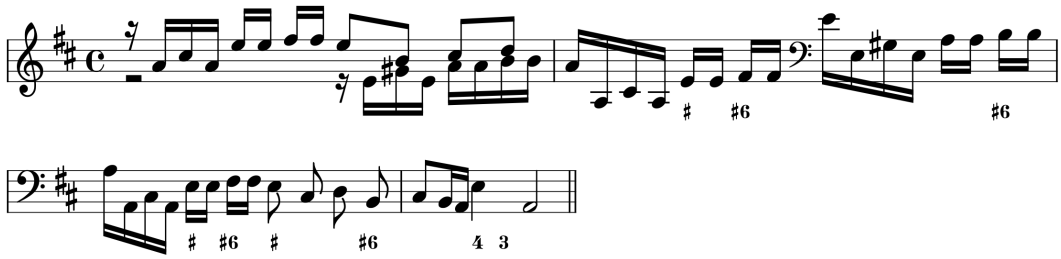


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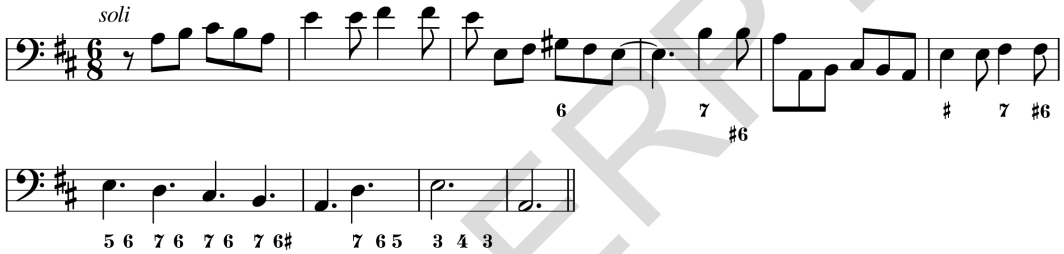
EXCERPT

VERSES in A, major third

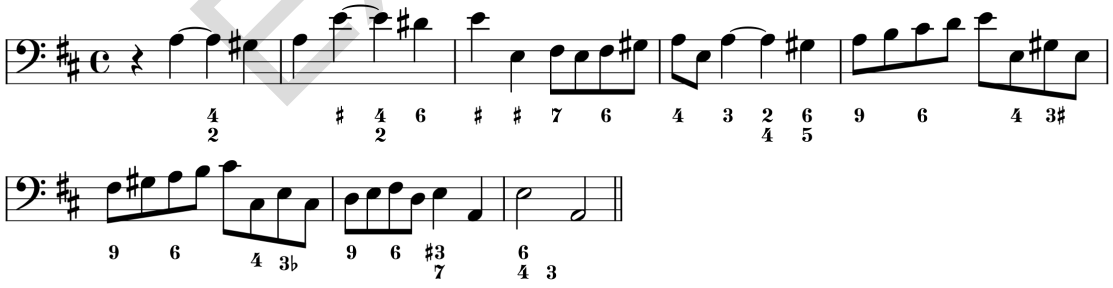
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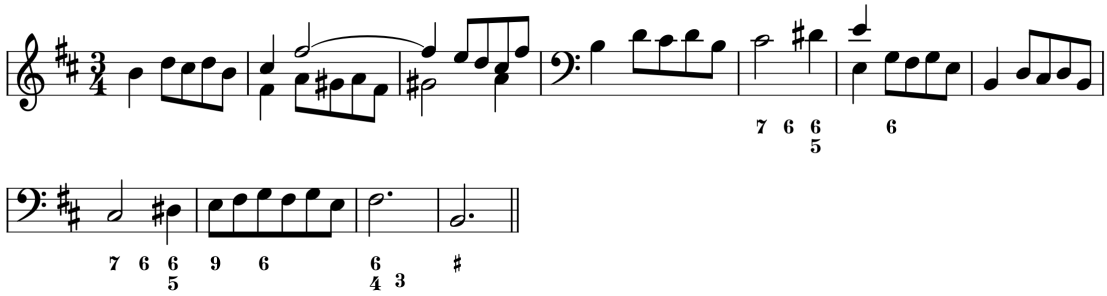


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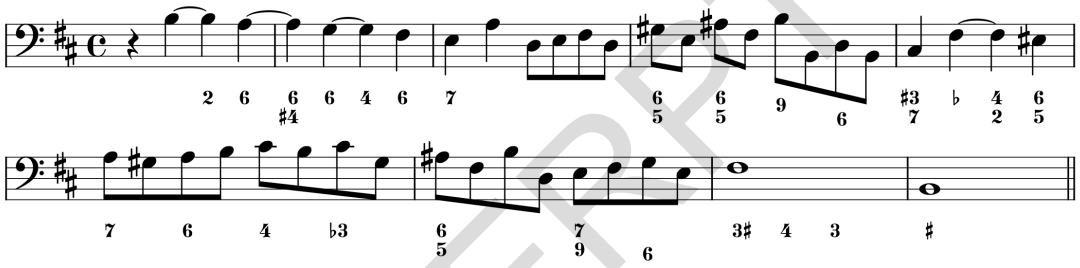
EXCERPT

VERSES in B, minor third

38)



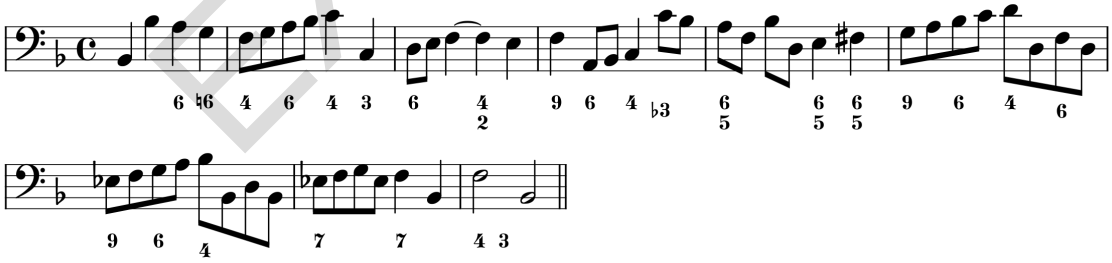
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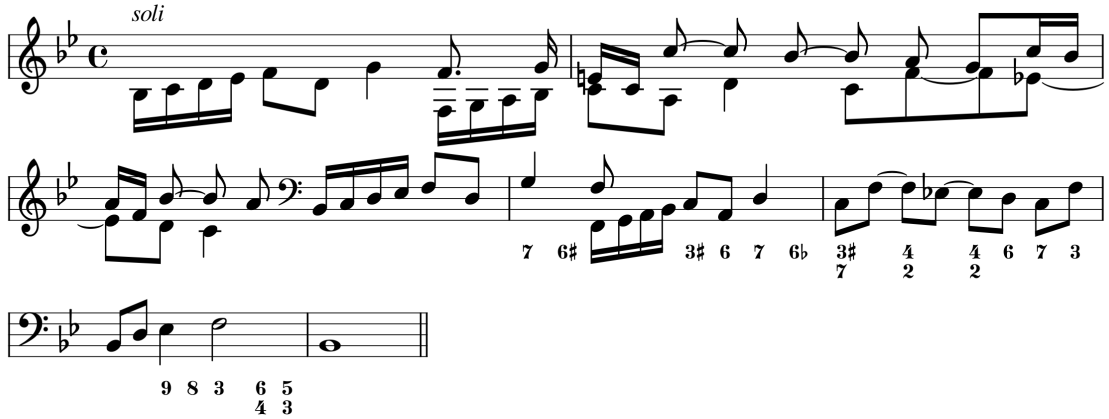
EXCERPT

VERSES in Bb, major third

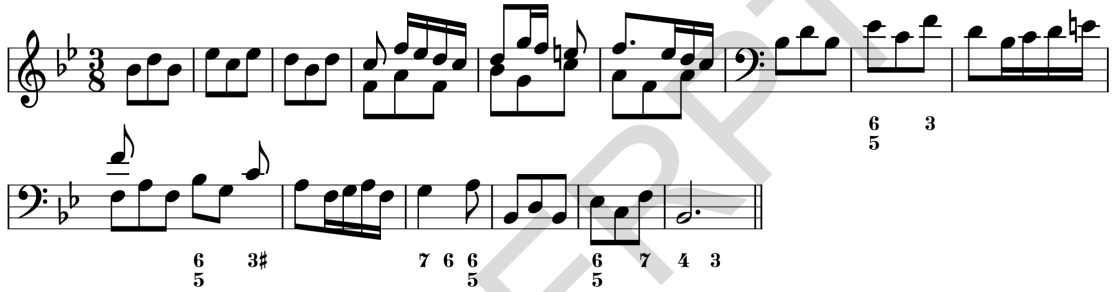
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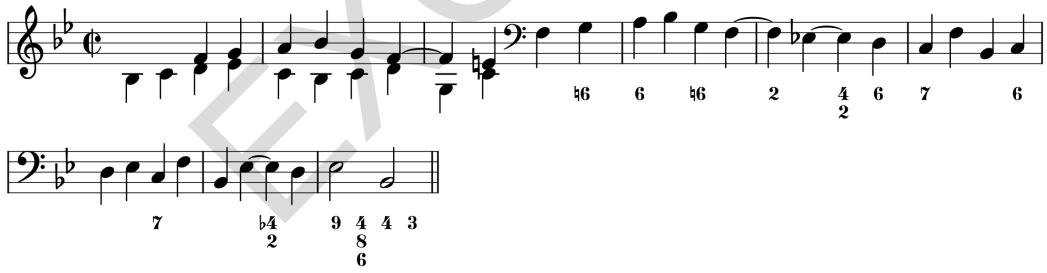
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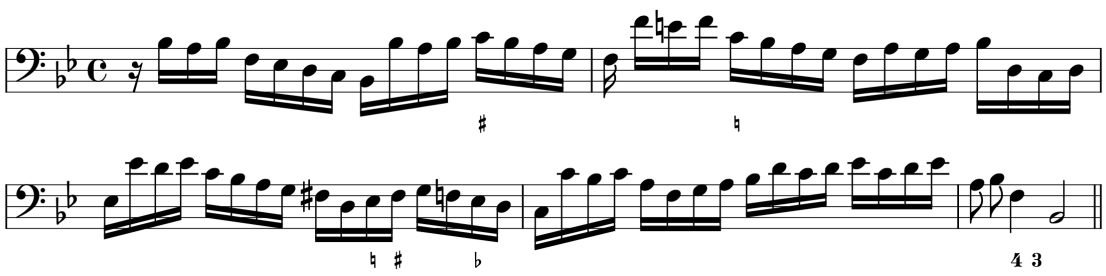
42)



43)



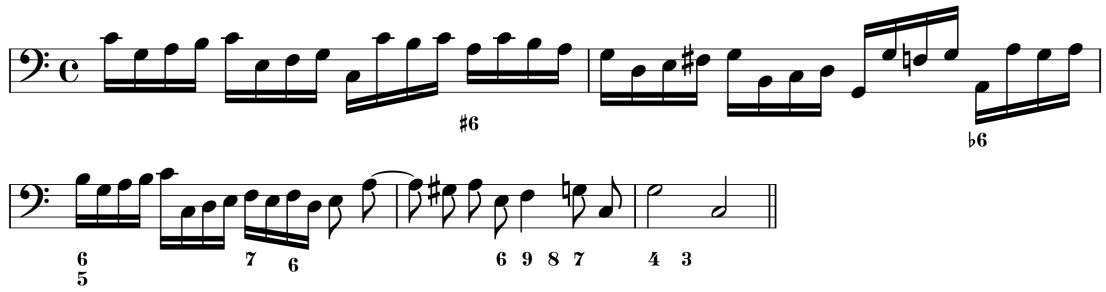
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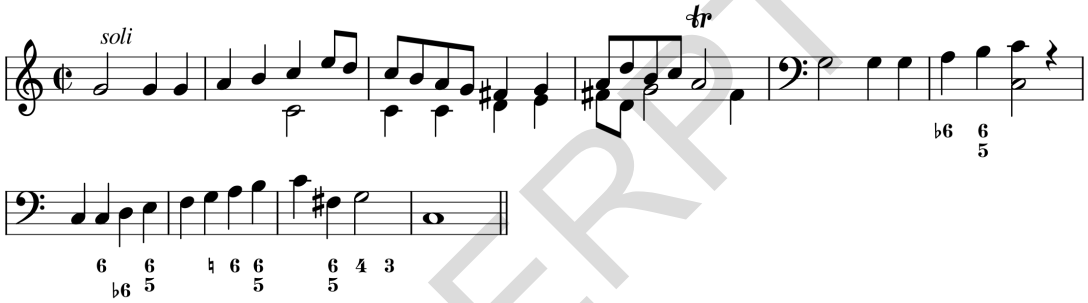
EXCERPT

VERSES in C, major third
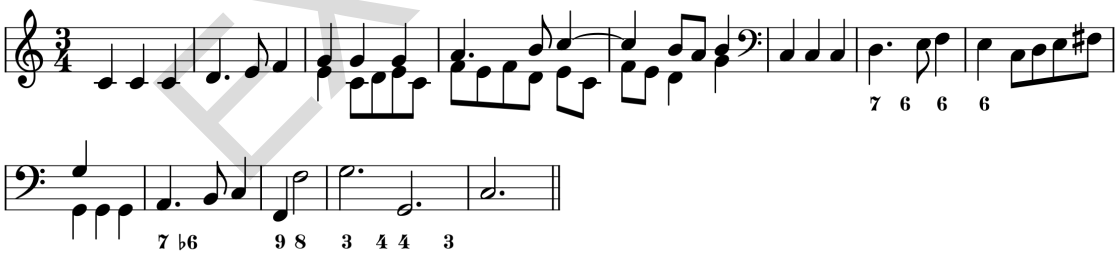
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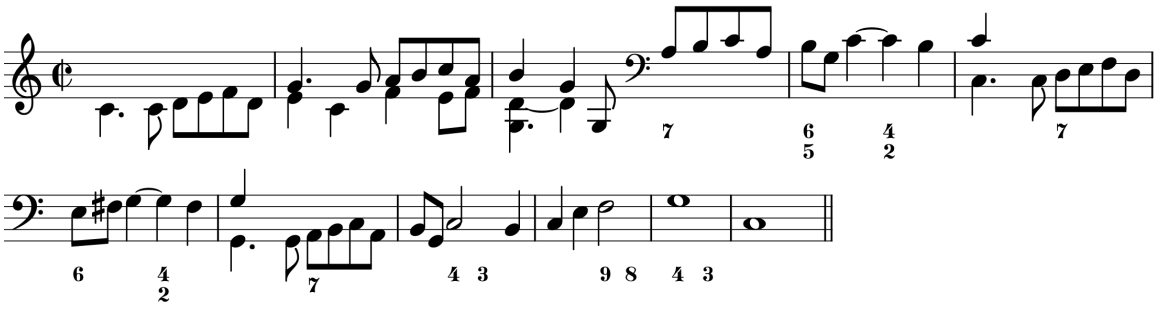


46)



47)

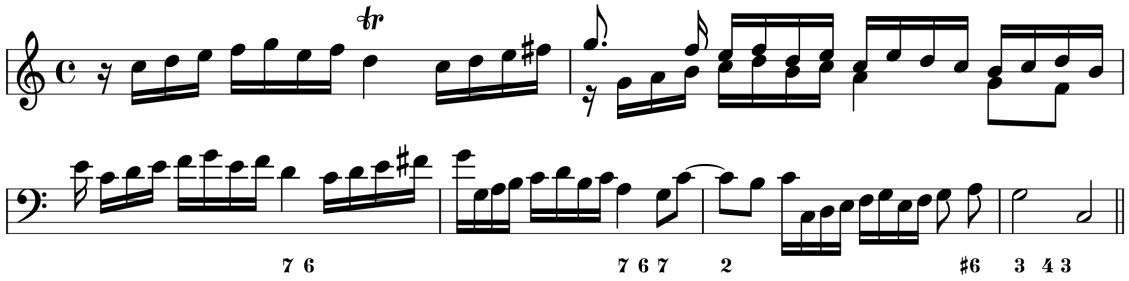


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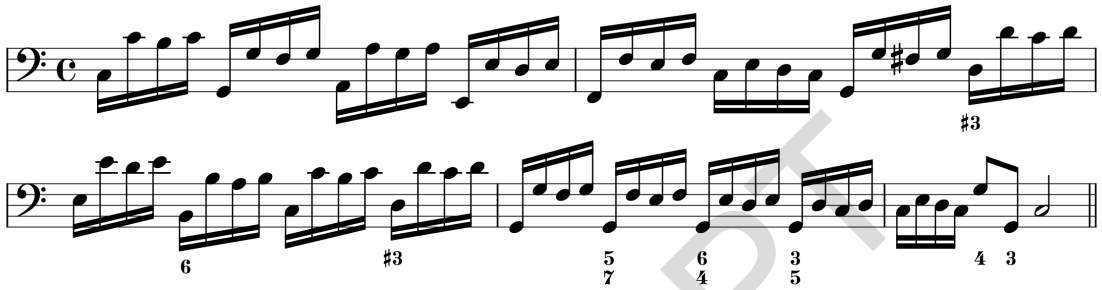


EXCERPT

49)

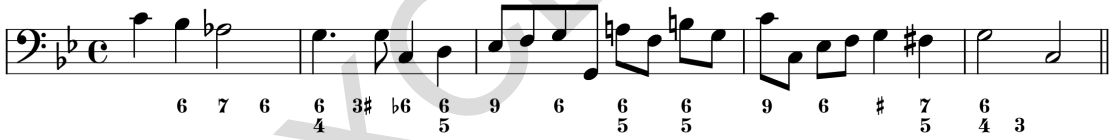


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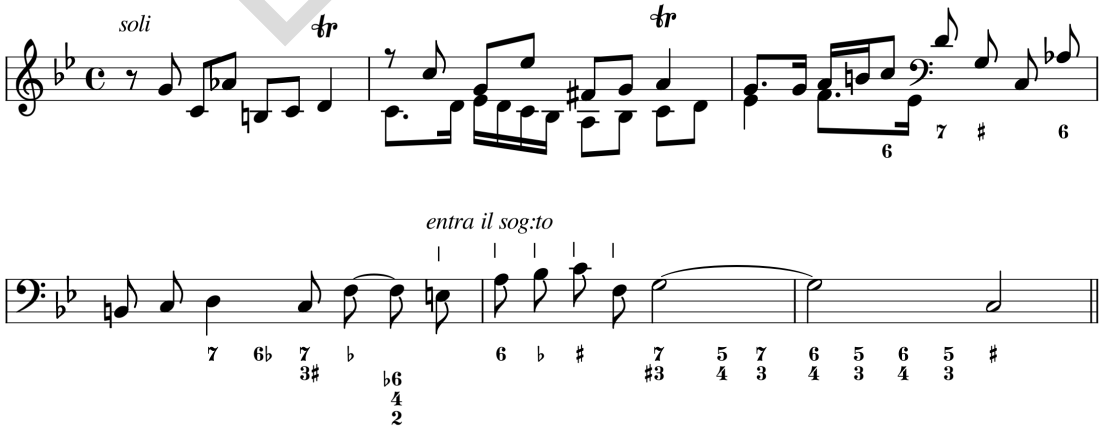


VERSEs in C, minor third

51)

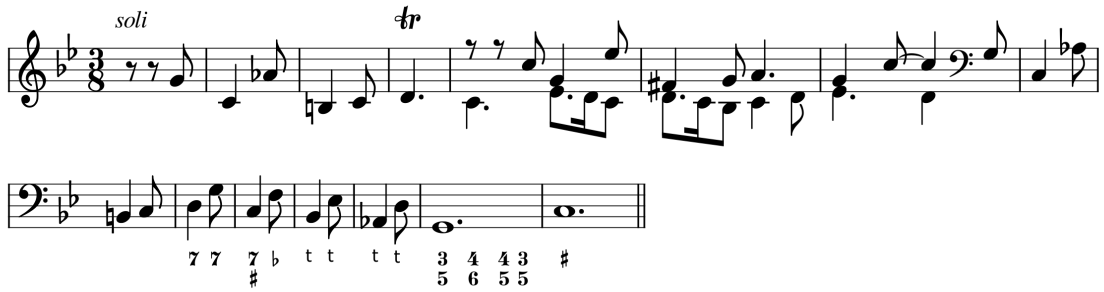


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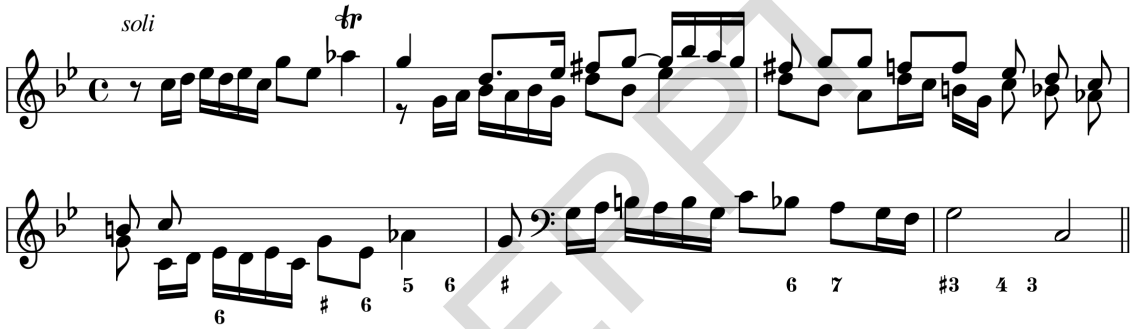


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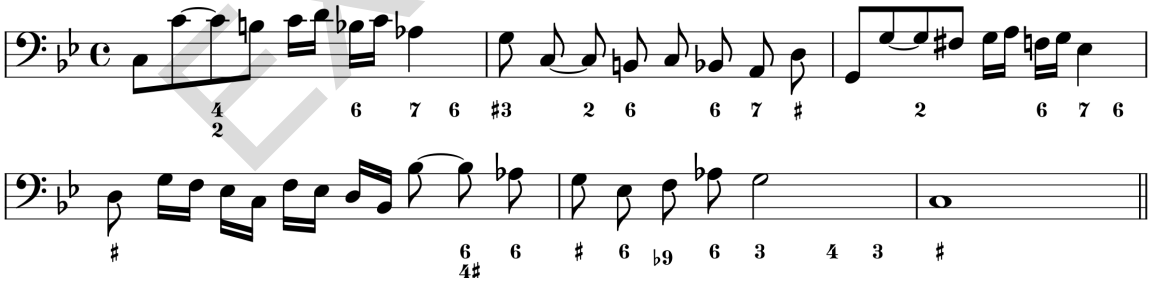
53)



54)



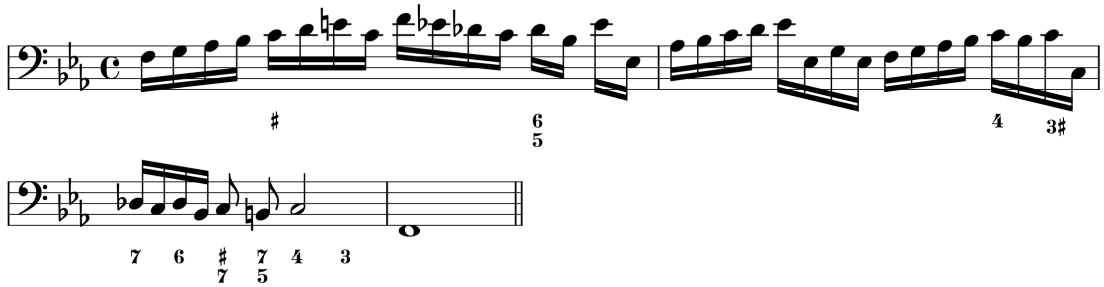
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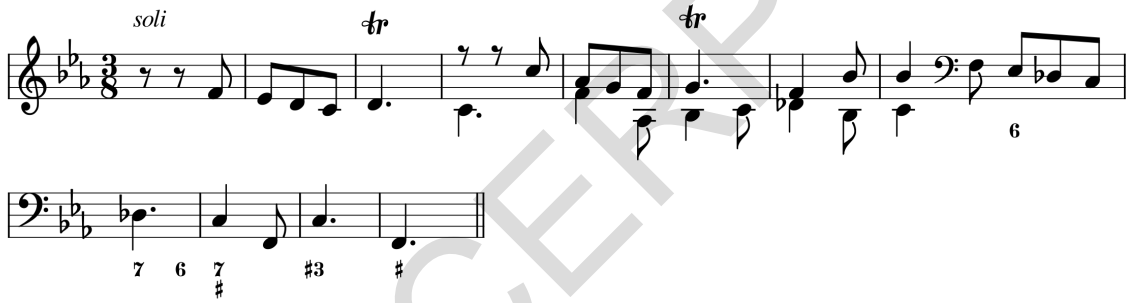


EXCERPT

VERSES in F, minor third

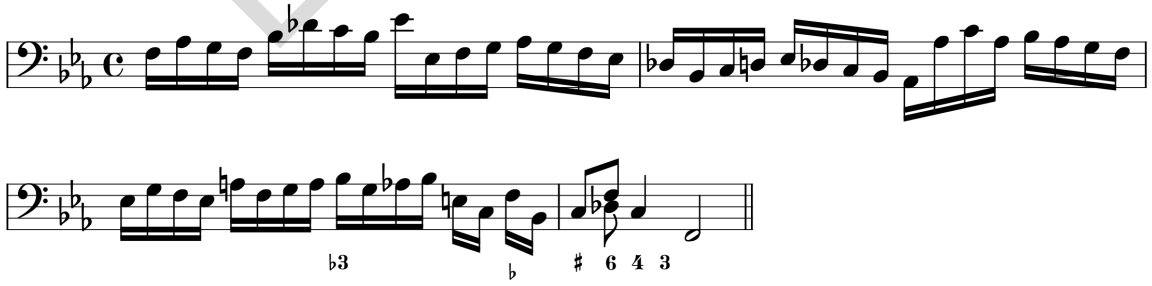
56)



57)



58)



EXCERPT

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