

STANDARD HARMONY

**A Set of Harmony Exercises for
SMMS/RSAMD**

Tom David Wilson

Supplement

This Supplement has been compiled in order to help the student who has found the 15 Sets of Exercises in Standard Harmony a useful resource into which they have “dipped” but has not worked steadily through from one Set to the next. It contains extracts of notes from different Sets but does not contain any exercises. It provides a pamphlet containing useful information which can be kept on hand whilst harmonising various exercises from various Sets.

- 1: Principles of Chord Choice (Set 1)
- 2: Recommended Method (Set 10)
- 3: Stock Progressions a) (Set 5)
- 4: Stock Progressions b) (Set 5)
- 5: Stock Progressions c) (Set 5)
- 6: Stock Progressions in Extra Keys (Set 6)
- 7: Chromatic Adjustments to Standard Cadences a) (Set 8)
- 8: Chromatic Adjustments to Standard Cadences b) (Set 8)
- 9: Use of the Passing Six-Three (Set 9)
- 10: Use of the Circle of Fifths (Set 9)
- 11: Use of the Chromatic Circle of Fifths (Set 9)
- 12: Use of Secondary Dominants (Set 9)
- 13: Use of the Neapolitan Sixth (Set 10)
- 14: Use of the Augmented Sixth (Set 10)
- 15: Use of the German Sixth (Set 12)
- 16: Use of the French Sixth (Set 12)
- 17: Features Idiosyncratic of Bach a) (Set 12)
- 18: Features Idiosyncratic of Bach b) (Set 12)

1. Principles of Chord Choice. (Set 1)

If you play through the above examples (see Set 1) on a piano using the right hand to play the tunes and the left hand to play the chords you will very quickly realise that some chords sound much better than others depending on their context. Selecting which chord to follow which is a skill that makes the difference between good harmony and bad. There is no substitute for experience or musical instinct, however the following may help.

By far the strongest harmonic progression is when the Root of the second Chord is a 4th higher than the Root of the first. (Remember this only describes the relationship between the Roots of the two chords and not how the Bass may move. This idea is really quite simple but can be confusing at first. You would do well to take time to discuss this carefully with your teacher) This relationship is, of course, the Perfect Cadence, and the Circle of Fifths (see Set 2 and Set 9) but it works well out-with those standard progressions. Therefore the following chain of chords would be strong:
I-IV-vii-iii-vi-ii-V.

A useful short hand to describe this relationship is “Root up a 4th” or R⁴.

Not quite as strong as R⁴ but still good are the R⁶ and the R² relationships:

I-vi-IV-ii-vii-V-iii. and:

I-ii-iii-IV-V-vi-vii.

Likewise, R⁵ is quite weak but still a most useful progression. It is the Imperfect Cadence (see Set 2):

I-V-ii-vi-iii-vii-IV.

The R³ and the R⁷ relationships are very weak and cause most of the problems encountered with Chord Choice. With care they can be used, the R³ can be very beautiful, but you would be well advised to avoid these progressions when possible.

The addition of Sevenths to Triads has certainly expanded the harmonic choices available but they can not be used without care. A Seventh should only be used if it can fall by step onto the Third of the next Chord. This is a most useful rule and is broken only rarely.

2. Recommended Method (Set 10)

This is a good time to make note of a step-by-step method of harmonising a hymn tune, a method which is generally considered to be universally applicable.

Step 0; write out the Triad Chart(s).

I have called this step “Step 0” as you might consider it to be an optional step. By this stage you may not need to write out a Triad Chart but some students will find it helps to focus their thoughts. You may wish to write out more than one in order to cover related keys.

Step 1; phrase it.

Phrasing is most important. The cadences will be placed at the end of the phrases and will articulate the structure of the tune. The exercises you have completed so far have all been phrased for you and you may assume the same for any future exercises. Sometimes the ends of the phrases will be indicated by a pause or fermata but occasionally you will have no indication of the phrasing in which case you will have to think carefully about, and write in, the phrases.

Step 2; decide on the key of each phrase.

Remember the importance of modulation in the articulation of the structure. Some modulations will be obvious but some phrases will present the possibility of harmonisations in different keys. You must exercise your best musical judgment.

Step 3; write in, in full, the cadences at the end of each phrase.

Step 4; examine the tune carefully for any opportunities to apply stock progressions and write them in.

At this stage you will have the cadence points fully harmonised and some stock progressions fully harmonised presenting, as it were, “islands” of completed harmony with gaps in-between. If you are harmonising the tune in exam conditions and you run out of time at this point you will still receive credit for what you have done so far. This is better exam-technique than attempting to harmonise each note in sequence starting with the first chord. If you are lucky, the stock progressions will run into each other and the gaps in-between will be very short.

Step 5; decide on which chords to use in the gaps in-between sections of completed harmony.

Step 6; construct a proto-bass line using the roots of those chords.

Step 7; make this bass line more melodic and eliminate any consecutives by using inversions, passing notes etc.

Step 8; complete the inner parts using notes missing from the chord.

You may wish to complete the Tenor part first as it is often a little more florid than the Alto. In any case you must make sure each line moves as melodically as possible, moving into and out of stock progressions seamlessly. Alto and Tenor parts may cross easily and try to keep your tenor line high with a large gap between Tenor and Bass.

3. Stock Progressions a) (Set 5)

A “Stock Progression” is a pre-constructed harmonic progression which will harmonise a given pattern in the Soprano part. If you recognise such a pattern occurring in the tune, you can simply apply the appropriate Stock Progression and be assured that the harmony will be strong and good. The following are different forms of Perfect Cadences where the tune descends by step from the Mediant to the Tonic (as in the tune “Three Blind Mice”):

Eg 72

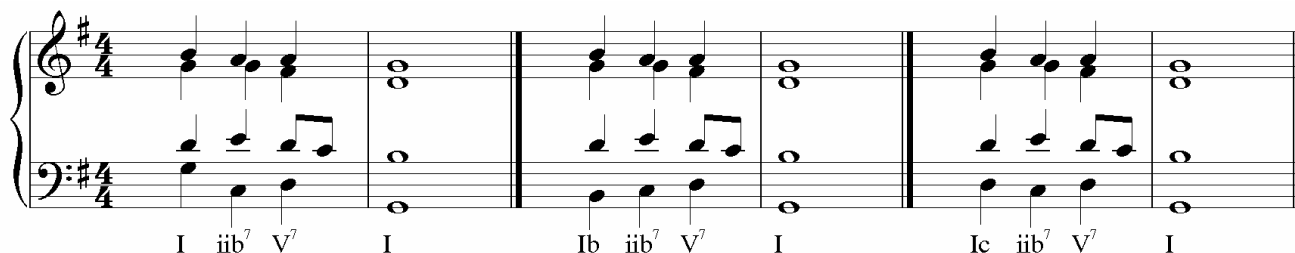


I V⁷ I I_b V⁷ I I_c V⁷ I

You will notice that in the second example the Third has been doubled. This is an instance where a doubled third works well. In the third example the first chord is in second inversion. This is one of the few instances where a second inversion (without a Seventh) works well. It is referred to as a “Cadential Six-Four”. “Cadential” as it is at a cadence and “Six-Four” from the Figured Bass nomenclature for second inversion.

The following are different form of Perfect Cadences where the tune descends by step from the mediant but sounds the super-tonic twice (or holds it for two beats):

Eg 73



I ii^{b7} V⁷ I I_b ii^{b7} V⁷ I I_c ii^{b7} V⁷ I

You will notice that in all these examples the Alto leaps off the leading-note onto the Fifth. This often occurs at perfect cadences in order to provide a full tonic chord at the resolution and is considered to be good part writing. Do not be tempted, though to put a Passing Note between them as this will render the cadence weak.

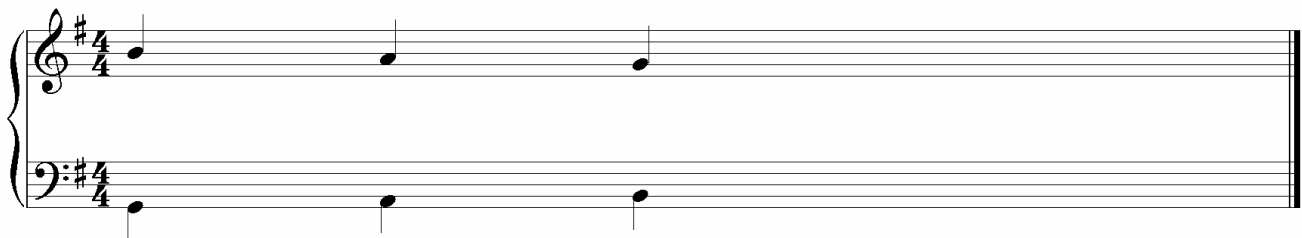
All these cadences will convert to Interrupted Cadences by substituting Chord vi for Chord I at their conclusions, or to Imperfect Cadences by not resolving Chord V.

4. Stock Progressions b) (Set 5)

A most useful Stock Progression is the “Passing Six-Four”. This is really the only other instance, after a Cadential Six-Four, where a second inversion (without a Seventh) can be used. In this case a second inversion can be used between two positions of the same chord.

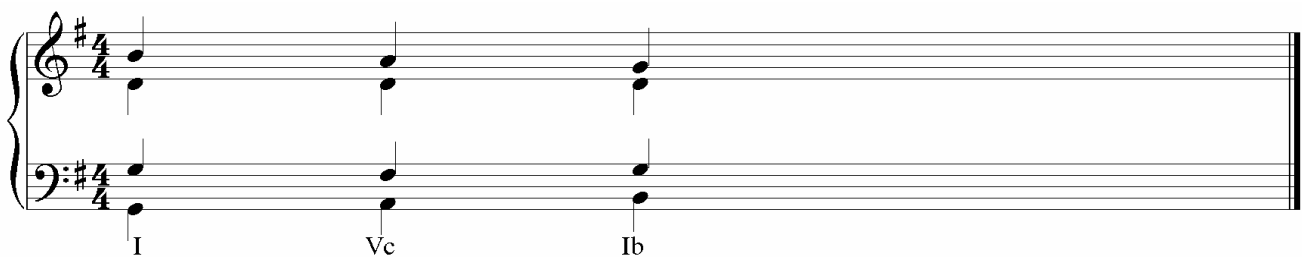
You will be looking for a pattern in the tune where it descends from the mediant to the tonic in the same way as the first Perfect Cadence mentioned above. However, in this case the pattern will be at the start or in the middle of the phrase and not at the cadence. So, the tune will go “Three Blind Mice”, the Bass will do the same in reverse and go “Mice Blind Three” in this manner:

Eg 75



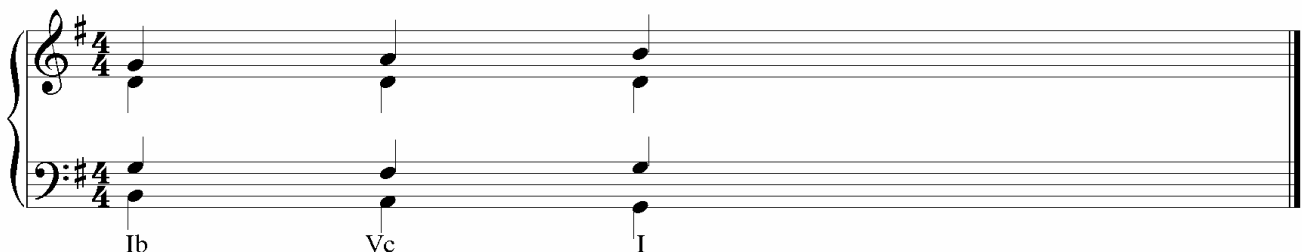
One of the inner parts will repeat the dominant whereas the other part will move from the tonic to the leading note and back in this way:

Eg 76



The chords produced, then are I, Vc and Ib. The Stock Progression is reversible and works just as well backwards, Ib, Vc and I:

Eg 77



This progression also works very well for chords IV, Ic, IVb, or IVb, Ic, IV:

Eg 78

The image shows a musical score for a piano in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The progression is as follows:

- Measure 1: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Bass clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Labeled "IV".
- Measure 2: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Bass clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Labeled "Ic".
- Measure 3: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Bass clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Labeled "IVb".
- Measure 4: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Bass clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Labeled "IVb".
- Measure 5: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Bass clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Labeled "Ic".
- Measure 6: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Bass clef has a half note chord (F#, A, C) and a half note chord (F#, A, C). Labeled "IV".

5. Stock Progressions c) (Set 5)

The following stock progressions are very useful:

- a) V7d – Ib. This progression is very useful for patterns in the tune which describes a Dominant to Tonic movement. Here are the most common permutations:

Eg 80

Example 80 shows a musical progression in 4/4 time, key of D major. The progression consists of three measures, each containing a V7d chord in the right hand and an Ib chord in the left hand. The V7d chord is D7 (F#, A, C, E) and the Ib chord is Bb (Bb, D, F). The notes are: Measure 1: Right hand (D4, F#4, A4), Left hand (Bb3, D4, F4); Measure 2: Right hand (D4, F#4, A4), Left hand (Bb3, D4, F4); Measure 3: Right hand (D4, F#4, A4), Left hand (Bb3, D4, F4). The labels 'V7d' and 'Ib' are placed below the bass line for each measure.

This is a very strong progression and is a good starter for a phrase but for the very opening of a hymn (should you be required to harmonise the very opening) you would need to use Chord I twice in root position thus:

Eg 81

Example 81 shows a musical progression in 4/4 time, key of D major. The progression consists of two measures, each containing a Chord I in the right hand and a Chord I in the left hand. The Chord I is D (D, F#, A). The notes are: Measure 1: Right hand (D4, F#4, A4), Left hand (D3, F#3, A3); Measure 2: Right hand (D4, F#4, A4), Left hand (D3, F#3, A3). The label 'I' is placed below the bass line for each measure.

- b) iib – I. It is not uncommon for a tune, especially one of folk origins, to end with a movement from the Mediant to the Tonic thus:

Eg 82

Example 82 shows a musical progression in 3/4 time, key of D major. The progression consists of three measures. The first two measures contain a iib chord (F#m, D, F#) in the right hand and a Chord I (D, F#, A) in the left hand. The third measure contains a Chord I (D, F#, A) in the right hand and a Chord I (D, F#, A) in the left hand. The notes are: Measure 1: Right hand (F#4, D5, F#5), Left hand (D4, F#4, A4); Measure 2: Right hand (F#4, D5, F#5), Left hand (D4, F#4, A4); Measure 3: Right hand (D4, F#4, A4), Left hand (D4, F#4, A4).

In this case no standard cadence will harmonise the last two notes. A solution could be to substitute Chord *iii*b for chord *V* thus:

Eg 83

- c) *I* – *V*b – *I*. If the tune outlines the Tonic arpeggio then it can be deceptively difficult to harmonise. The solution is quite simple:

Eg 84

- d) Having explained that the *R*⁷ progression (see Set 1) is very weak the following Stock Progression allows you to use it to good effect. If the tune describes a descending scale then a series of descending first inversion chords will work well:

Eg 85

The descending scale could be very short (two notes) or a full scale, in any case, this Stock Progression will work. Notice that the Soprano note will usually be the Root of the chord required.

There are many more Stock Progressions which other teachers and text books may mention. (Indeed, there are more which will be dealt with in Level Four and Level Five.) The examples above should give you a good working repertoire but you may add to your list any others you may discover on the staves below. Of course, one of the best ways of learning and understanding harmony is to invent your own Stock Progressions but do make sure you share any Stock Progressions you invent with your teacher. That way you can be assured that your Stock Progressions work will well and could be used in your harmony.

6. Stock Progression in Extra Keys (Set 6).

The modulations studied in the last two lessons have all been important articulators of structure. That is, they have helped to emphasise the phrasing. Full modulations do this, on a large scale as in a Sonata Movement, as well as on a small scale as in a hymn tune. For this reason such modulations are often called “Structural Modulations”. However, it is quite common for other keys to be suggested in a phrase without the music modulating to those keys. Such moments are often called “Passing Modulations” although they are not full modulations as such. Examine the following example:

Eg 96

The musical score for Example 96 is written for piano in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The first phrase (bars 1-3) is in D major. The second phrase (bars 4-7) features passing modulations to B minor and F# minor. The piece ends with a final cadence in D major.

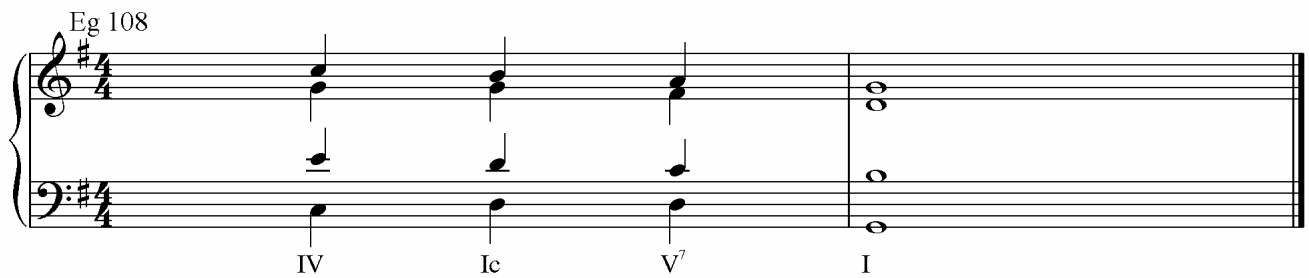
You will notice an abundance of accidentals but there is only one proper modulation at the end of the first phrase. The other keys are only hinted at and so are Passing Modulations. An easy way to achieve this level of sophistication is to apply standard Stock Progressions (see Set 5) in keys other than the tonic when you have identified appropriate patterns in the tune. (The correct identification is essential and mistakes are often made here.) In the above example after the Passing Six-Four in the first bar there is another in B minor in the second bar. The second phrase consists of a series of V7d-Ib progressions in the keys of D major, B minor and F sharp minor.

Some adjustment to the Stock Progression is sometimes needed in order to avoid consecutives, as with the last note in the Alto in bar one, and you must apply these stock progressions only in related keys; Dominant, Sub-Dominant, Relative Minor, Super-Tonic Minor and Mediant Minor.

7. Chromatic Adjustments to Standard Cadences a) (Set 8)

Consider the following perfect cadence:

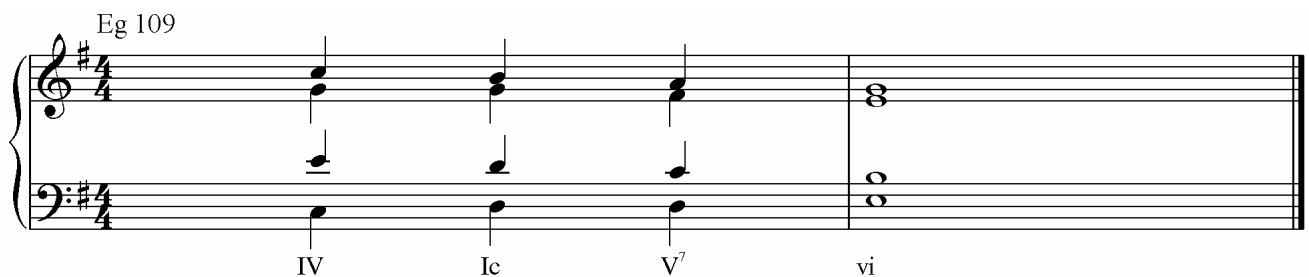
Eg 108



IV Ic V⁷ I

Now consider its conversion to an interrupted cadence:

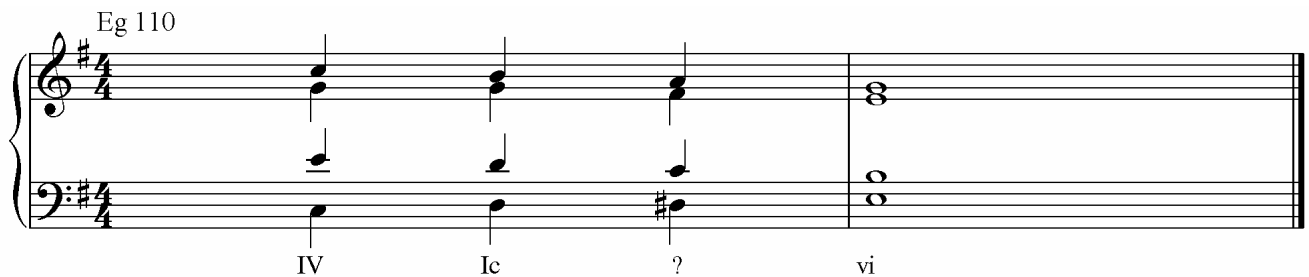
Eg 109



IV Ic V⁷ vi

The repeated “D” in the Bass may, at times be considered as static voice leading and the interrupted cadence may benefit from being strengthened thus:

Eg 110



IV Ic ? vi

The introduction of the D sharp has produced a new chord in place of the V7, at this stage we need not worry about what it may be called but only be aware that it has come about because of a melodic adjustment to the Bass.

8. Chromatic Adjustments to Standard Cadences b) (Set 8)

Consider the following perfect cadence:

Eg 112

I iiib⁷ V I

The following chromatic adjustment to the “C” in the Bass is quite common and most useful:

Eg 113

I ? V I

This also is a chromatic adjustment of a note for melodic purposes and to strengthen Chord V. We need not worry about what to call the chord at this stage but it is most useful for Hymns that are very self assured in their sentiments. Notice how the “S” shape of the Bass line is emphasised, this progression really only works if the Bass can leap on to the chromatically adjusted note from above.

Here is another chromatic adjustment of the same cadence:

Eg 114

I ? V I

In this case the E flat in the Tenor is used for colouristic purposes. It is much more “soft” and less self assured than Eg 113. Once again, we need not worry about the new chord’s name at this stage. This progression will work very well with the Bass describing the “S” shape as in Eg 114 above or with a rising Bass as follows:

Eg 115

Chord progression: I b - ? - V - I

Both these progression will work with Chord Ic at the start; Ic-?-V-I. However, they must not be used simultaneously:

Eg 116

Chord progression: I - ?! - V - I

9. Use of the Passing Six-Three (Set 9)

In Set 5 you learned about the Passing Six-Four. The “Passing Six-Three” is very similar but with one subtle difference; in this case both inner parts dip down by step in the following manner:

Eg 124

The musical notation for Example 124 is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three measures. The first measure shows the tonic chord (I) with notes G4, B4, and D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass clef. The second measure shows the viib chord with notes G4, B4, and D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass clef. The third measure shows the subdominant chord (Ib) with notes G4, B4, and D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass clef. The notes in the bass clef are labeled with their respective chord symbols: I, viib, and Ib.

The middle chord is now Chord viib as opposed to Chord Vc, hence the name. (Six-Three is the nomenclature for first inversion in Figured Bass.) Do not be alarmed at the supposed consecutive fifths as the middle fifth is a diminished fifth and the outer fifths are perfect fifths. This progression is permissible but it does not work so easily on the Sub-Dominant because of this propensity for consecutives and is best left for the Tonic.

It has a richer sound than the Passing Six-Four and its use would be indicative of the student’s wide harmonic technique. Furthermore, this progression, and its sister the Passing Six-Four, can be used with any part taking any line. Consider these various versions:

Eg 125

The musical notation for Example 125 is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of six measures, each showing a different version of the Passing Six-Three progression. The notes in the bass clef are labeled with their respective chord symbols: I viib Ib, Ib viib I, I vii I, I viib I, I vii I, and I viib I.

10. Use of the Circle of Fifths (Set 9)

The “Circle of Fifths” is a very strong progression, being a series of R^4 progressions (see Set 1). Its strength has led to its ubiquity throughout a wide range of styles and aesthetics. If you can apply it successfully you will be assured of a good passage of harmony of great strength.

You will need to look for a series of repeated notes in the Soprano:

Eg 127



Each note in the Soprano will become, alternately the Third and the Seventh of the chord thus:

Eg 128



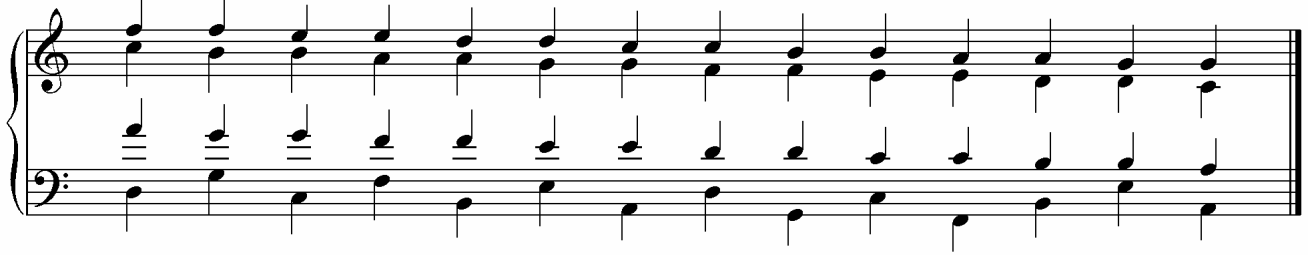
The Alto will do the same as the Soprano but in phase so that it will sound the Third when the Soprano has the Seventh and will sound the Seventh when the Soprano has the Third:

Eg 129



You will notice also that the Alto falls when the Soprano repeats its note and the Alto repeats its note as the Soprano falls. For the Tenor you must be careful not to produce consecutive fifths with the Bass so an easy method for generating its line is to place it a third under the Alto describing a similar line:

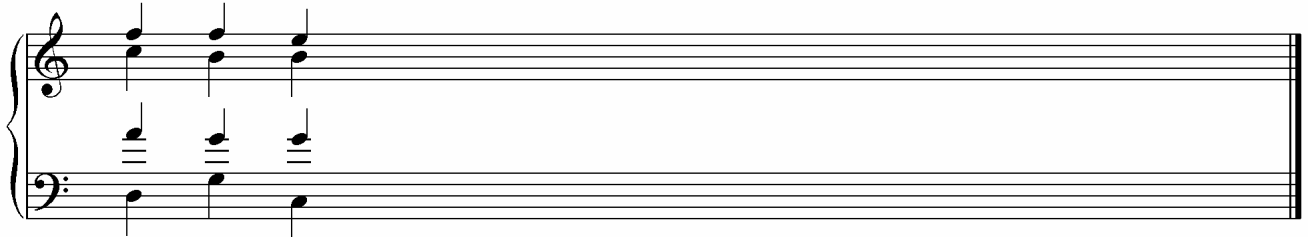
Eg 130



For Eg 127 to Eg 130 you will notice that there are no key signatures or time signatures. This is because this progression will work on any beat and, to a certain extent, the sense of Tonic is suspended during its progress. For this reason it has often been used as an aid to modulation and in classical development sections of sonata movements. This is also the reason why these examples have not been figured with Roman Numerals.

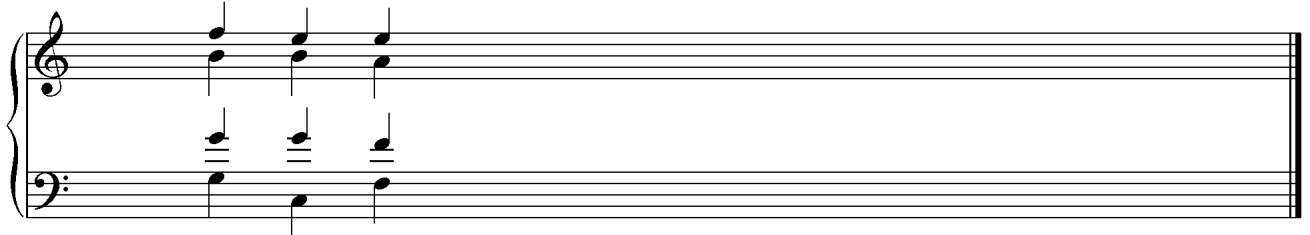
Of course you will not find a pattern in the Soprano as extensive as these examples but you are likely to find small sections of this pattern like this:

Eg 131



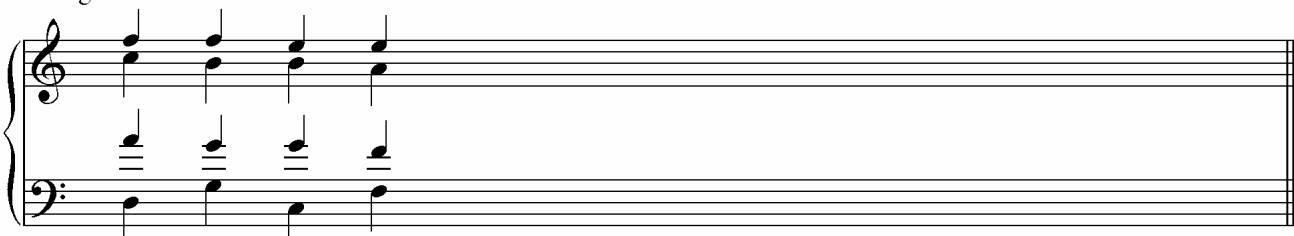
Or this:

Eg 132



Or this:

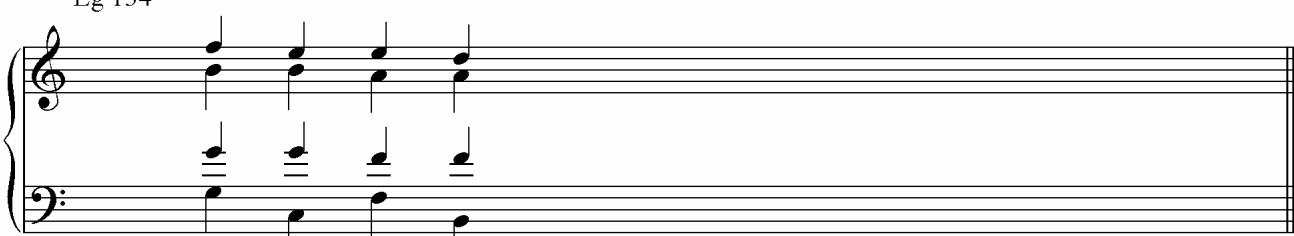
Eg 133



Musical notation for Example 133, showing a sequence of four chords in a grand staff. The treble clef contains a sequence of four chords, each with a half note on the top line (F4) and a half note on the second space (C5). The bass clef contains a sequence of four chords, each with a half note on the second space (C3) and a half note on the bottom line (F2). The chords are: F4-C5-C3-F2, F4-C5-D3-F2, F4-C5-E3-F2, and F4-C5-F3-F2.

Or this:

Eg 134



Musical notation for Example 134, showing a sequence of four chords in a grand staff. The treble clef contains a sequence of four chords, each with a half note on the second space (C5) and a half note on the top line (F4). The bass clef contains a sequence of four chords, each with a half note on the bottom line (F2) and a half note on the second space (C3). The chords are: C5-F4-F2-C3, C5-F4-D3-F2, C5-F4-E3-F2, and C5-F4-F3-F2.

Because each of these chords is a Seventh, they can be used in any inversion. This means that any voice can sound any line but before you try interchanging these lines you would do well to practise the above configuration many times until you are fully familiar with it.

11. Use of the Chromatic Circle of Fifths (Set 9)

From time to time the Soprano line may describe a short, descending chromatic scale. Such moments can be very difficult to harmonise but a chromatic adjustment to the Circle of Fifths provides a very strong solution:

Eg 136

The musical notation consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a descending chromatic scale of eighth notes: G4, F#4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. The lower staff is in bass clef and provides a piano accompaniment of chords. The chords are: G major (G-B-D), F# major (F#-A-C), F major (F-A-C), E major (E-G-B), D major (D-F-A), C major (C-E-G), B minor (B-D-F), A minor (A-C-E), G minor (G-Bb-D), F minor (F-Ab-C), E minor (E-G-Bb), D minor (D-F-A), C minor (C-Eb-G), B major (B-D-F#), A major (A-C-E), G major (G-B-D), and F major (F-A-C). The bass line consists of a descending chromatic scale of eighth notes: G3, F#3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1.

However, great care must be taken over the correct spelling of the enharmonics and it works best if the Sevenths are all minor sevenths. Mozart was very fond of this progression and you will find good examples of it in his 40th and 41st Symphonies.

12. Use of Secondary Dominants (Set 9)

It is unfortunate that the Circle of Fifths and especially the Chromatic Circle of Fifths does not work so well in reverse, a Circle of Fourths if you will. This leaves us with the problem of how to harmonise patterns of ascending chromatic notes in the Soprano:

Eg 138

A good solution is to treat the G sharp as a leading note in a V-I progression out-with the Tonic:

Eg 139

In this case the Chord ii on the third beat has been preceded by its own Chord V. The figuration would be as follows:

Eg 140

I V/ii ii ii

So the second chord is described as Chord V of Chord ii or V/ii. (This can prove to be rather confusing and it would be worth your while to take your time, discuss it with your teacher and grasp fully this idea.)

Any chord can be strengthened by preceding it with its own dominant in this way and it is applicable in many situations not just a rising chromatic figure in the Soprano. These strengthening chords are called “Secondary Dominants” and they give us a name for the chromatically adjusted cadences described in Set 8:

Eg 141

Musical notation for Example 141, showing a harmonic progression in 4/4 time. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The progression consists of three chords: Ic, Vb⁷/vi, and vi. The notation is presented in a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

And:

Eg 142

Musical notation for Example 142, showing a harmonic progression in 4/4 time. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The progression consists of four chords: I, Vb⁷/V, V, and I. The notation is presented in a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

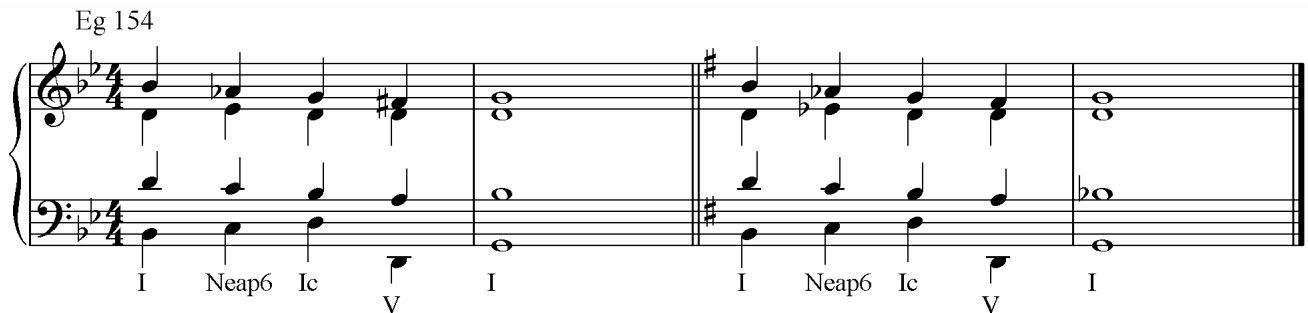
Secondary Dominants, Chromatic Adjustments to Cadences, Stock Progressions and Chromatic Passing Notes are all closely related. Their differences are subtle and largely depend on their context. You will want to use these devices extensively if your harmony is to be unencumbered and expressive. It will help you also to appreciate their use by the composers of the music you play.

13. Use of the Neapolitan Sixth (Set 10)

The Neapolitan Sixth is so called because it is redolent of the folk music of the old Kingdom of Naples and, as indicated by the word “Sixth”, is used in first inversion. It is a chromatically adjusted form of Chord iib in its approach to Chord Ic at a cadence. That is, it is the major chord of the flattened super-tonic in first inversion used as the approach to a cadence. This is a rather long-winded way of describing a very beautiful chord which you have already seen in Eg 148. You may wish to ask your teacher to discuss this further.

This chord is most natural in the minor key and with the flattened super-tonic in the tune. This means that if you spot a flattened super-tonic in the tune approaching a cadence it is most likely to be a Neapolitan Sixth. Consider the following:

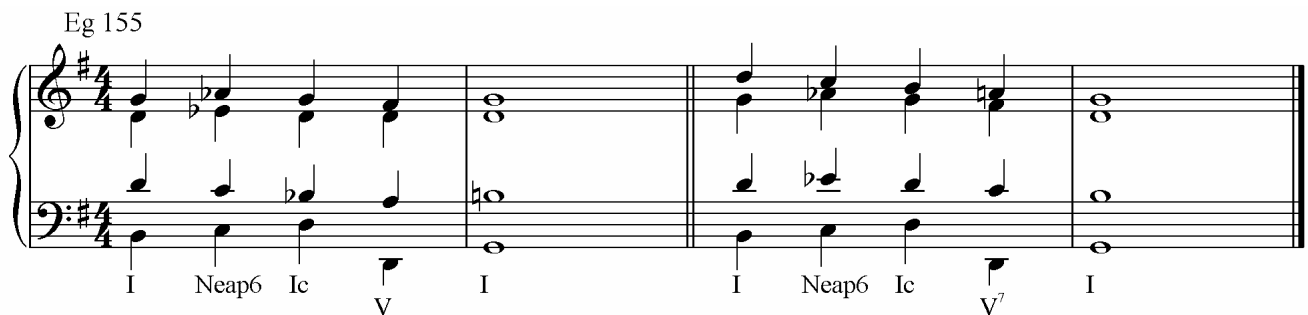
Eg 154



I Neap6 Ic V I I Neap6 Ic V I

You will notice how easily the Neapolitan Sixth has been produced in the minor mode whereas in the major mode there is an awkward augmented second in the tune. Of course it can be very expressive in the major key but care must be taken to avoid the augmented second as a melodic interval and you may also use it even if the flattened Super-Tonic is not in the tune. Consider the following:

Eg 155



I Neap6 Ic V I I Neap6 Ic V⁷ I

The Neapolitan Sixth is a very distinctive sound and good taste would preclude its over use.

14. Use of the Augmented Sixth (Set 10)

The Augmented Sixth Chord is similar to the Neapolitan Sixth in as much as it is essentially a cadential device. It is used as an approach chord to Chord V or Chord Ic. However, it is built on the flattened Sub-Mediant rather than the flattened Super-Tonic and it is used in root position rather than first inversion. The name “Augmented Sixth” refers to the interval between the root and the extra note added to the triad (which will always be the fourth degree of the scale, the Sub-Dominant):

Eg 157

The musical notation for Example 157 is in 4/4 time and G major. It shows two measures. The first measure contains an Augmented Sixth chord (Aug6) in root position, with notes G2, Bb3, D#4, and F#5. The second measure contains a Dominant chord (V) in root position, with notes G2, B3, D4, and F#5. The bass line shows the root G moving up by step to B, and the augmented sixth F# moving down by step to F.

Aug6

V

Listen carefully to how the Augmented Sixth resolves onto Chord V. You will notice that the Fifth of the triad has been omitted and the Third has been doubled. This particular form of the Augmented Sixth Chord is called the “Italian Sixth” and is by far the most common. (There are two other forms, the German and the French which will be dealt with in Set 12.) The doubling of the Third enables the move on to Chord V without producing consecutives. It is essential that the Root and the Augmented Sixth itself move outwards in contrary motion by step. Consider the following examples of its resolution:

Eg 158

The musical notation for Example 158 is in 4/4 time and G major. It shows three measures. The first measure contains an Augmented Sixth chord (Aug6) in root position, with notes G2, Bb3, D#4, and F#5. The second measure contains a Dominant chord (V) in root position, with notes G2, B3, D4, and F#5. The third measure contains an Augmented Sixth chord (Aug6) in root position, with notes G2, Bb3, D#4, and F#5. The bass line shows the root G moving up by step to B, and the augmented sixth F# moving down by step to F.

Like the Neapolitan Sixth good taste would preclude it's over use.

15. Use of the German Sixth (Set 12)

In Set 10 you were introduced to the Augmented Sixth and its most common incarnation; the Italian Sixth. In the Italian Sixth the Third of the chord is doubled in order to avoid consecutive fifths when moving on to Chord V. In the German Sixth all notes of the chord are sounded thus obliging the harmony to move onto Chord Ic in order to avoid the same consecutives. Consider the following:

Eg 169

The musical score for Example 169 is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system starts with an Augmented Sixth chord (Aug6) in the treble clef, with notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5. The bass clef has notes G2, B2, and D3. This resolves to a German Sixth chord (Ger6) with notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass. The second system shows the resolution of the German Sixth to the first inversion of the tonic triad (Ic), with notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass. This is followed by a V7 chord (notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass) and finally the tonic triad (I) (notes G4, B4, and D5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass).

Aug6 Ger6 Ic V7 I Ger6 Ic V7 I

Like the Italian Sixth, the upper parts are interchangeable but the Bass must present the German Sixth in root position resolving onto chord Ic.

You will notice that the German Sixth sounds exactly like a Dominant Seventh Chord of the key a semi-tone above the tonic. It is not until the chord resolves that you know it is a German Sixth and not a Dominant Seventh in the flattened Super-Tonic. It is this ambiguity which so intrigued Schubert who might employ it as follows:

Eg 170

The musical score for Example 170 is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows a chromatic resolution of the German Sixth chord. The treble clef has notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5. The bass clef has notes G3, B2, and D3. The second system shows the resolution of the German Sixth to the first inversion of the tonic triad (Ic), with notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass. The third system shows the resolution of the German Sixth to the V7 chord, with notes G4, B4, D5, and F#5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass. The fourth system shows the resolution of the V7 chord to the tonic triad (I), with notes G4, B4, and D5 in the treble, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass.

You must be very careful to spell the note an augmented sixth above the Bass correctly. In the above example the G flat resolves onto an F natural but the F sharp resolves onto a G natural. The correct enharmonic is essential.

16. Use of the French Sixth (Set 12)

The French Sixth is very similar to its Italian and German sisters but the subtle change to the chord makes it acoustically complex and exotic sounding. Its notes are found in the whole-tone scale and maybe this is why it is considered to be particularly Gallic:

Eg 172

The musical notation consists of two systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system shows a French Sixth chord (Fr6) in the treble clef, which is a whole-tone triad (F#, G, A) with a major sixth (C) and a minor second (Bb) below it. The second system shows two resolutions: the first resolution goes from Fr6 to Chord V (F#), Chord V7 (F# G# A), and Chord I (F#); the second resolution goes from Fr6 to Chord Ic (F# G# A), Chord V7 (F# G# A), and Chord I (F#).

French6

Fr6 V V7 I

Fr6 Ic V7 I

You will notice that the French Sixth can resolve onto Chord V or Chord Ic. The problem of the potential consecutive fifths between the Root and the Fifth both needing to resolve downwards by a semi-tone has been solved here by, as it were, “pre-resolving” the Fifth in the Augmented Sixth Chord itself. The strange beauty of this chord means it is only used on special occasions and so it is by far the rarest of the Augmented Sixth Trio.

17. Features Idiosyncratic of Bach a) (Set 12)

In Sets 13, 14 and 15 you will be asked to harmonise hymn tunes in the style of J S Bach (1685-1750). In preparation for this here are some adjustments to some stock progressions you studied in Sets 5 and 6.

Here is a standard two-beat super-tonic cadence followed by the same cadence with extra decoration in the Tenor:

Eg 174

The musical score for Eg 174 is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system shows a two-beat super-tonic cadence: the first beat contains chords I (C major) and ii^b7 (D minor 7), and the second beat contains chords V (G major) and I (C major). The second system repeats this progression but adds a decorative melodic line in the Tenor voice (the middle voice between the Treble and Bass clefs) during the ii^b7 and V chords. Below the grand staff, the chord symbols I, ii^b7, V, and I are written under the corresponding chords in both systems.

This decoration is typical of the florid nature of Bach's Tenor lines and using it will add a Bach-like flavour to your harmony.

Here is the same cadence in C major followed by an alternative layout for the inner parts:

Eg 175

The musical score for Eg 175 is presented in two systems, similar to Eg 174. It uses a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, and the key signature is C major. The chord progression is I, ii^b7, V, I. The first system shows the standard layout. The second system shows an alternative layout for the inner parts: the Tenor voice (middle voice) is swapped with the Alto voice (the voice between the Treble and Bass clefs). In this layout, the Tenor voice has a wide interval leap from the leading-note of the ii^b7 chord to the tonic of the V chord. Below the grand staff, the chord symbols I, ii^b7, V, and I are written under the corresponding chords in both systems.

You will notice that in the standard layout the inner parts are rather high and this can be a problem in keys like D, C or B flat. The solution is to swap the inner parts over so that the Alto takes the Tenors notes and the Tenor takes the Altos notes an octave down. However, notice how the Tenor leaps off the leading-note, over the tonic and onto the mediant. This results in a tenth between the Tenor and Bass and this spread of chord was particularly attractive to Bach. You notice that the Seventh can not be used in Chord V as it cannot be resolved and so the Tenor decoration of Eg 174 is not used in the Alto.

18. Features Idiosyncratic of Bach b) (Set 12)

Although there are many examples of Bach using both cadential and passing six-fours he often prefers the richer sound of the passing six-three and would often prefer the cadence Ib-V-I to Ic-V-I even if this means doubling the Third. (Bach did not consider this to be problematic.) Furthermore, he used a particular layout for the passing-six-three as follows:

Eg 177

I viib Ib I viib Ib

You will notice there are two possible lines for the Tenor. Which one is chosen will depend on the context. This progression will work in reverse like the standard passing six-four or six-three but Bach uses it almost exclusively in this direction.

Consider this iib-I cadence and the alternative which follows:

Eg 178

I V iib iiib I I iib viib I IV

Bach rarely, if ever, uses the iib-I cadence for tunes which end with a fall from the mediant to the tonic. But then very few, if any, of the hymn tunes Bach knew end in this way. However, there are a significant number of tunes in which an inner phrase will end in this way and in these cases Bach will use the second harmonisation of Eg 178. That is with a cadence of I-IV. This is not one of the four standard cadences unless one sees it as a perfect cadence in the Sub-Dominant. This, though, is not always a convincing argument. There are many instances where a flattened leading-note is not present and even if it is used as a passing note (in the Alto) the music rarely feels as if it has modulated. In any case, the use of this cadence, regardless of how you figure it, is really the only option for a convincing imitation of Bach at such moments.