GRADUATE THEORY ENTRANCE EXAM GUIDE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE THEORY ENTRANCE EXAM GUIDE

This guide is meant to help graduate students prepare for the Graduate Theory Entrance Exam. This evaluation is meant to ensure that students have competence in basic tonal harmony. There are two parts to the exam: written and aural.

PART ONE: WRITTEN

- Four voice part-writing to a given figured bass
- Harmonic analysis using Roman numerals
- Transpose a notated passage to a new key
- Harmonization of a simple diatonic melody

PART TWO: AURAL

- Sightsinging of a melody that contains some functional chromaticism

Students must achieve a 75% on both the aural and written components of the exam. If a passing score is not received on one or both sections of the exam, the student may be required to take remedial coursework.

Recommended review materials include most of the commonly used undergraduate music theory texts such as: *Tonal Harmony* by Koska, Payne, and Almén, *The Musician's Guide to Theory and Analysis* by Clendinning and Marvin, and *Harmony in Context* by Francoli.

THE EXAM IS GIVEN PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE FALL SEMESTER. PLEASE CHECK THE TWU MUSIC WEBSITE (WWW.TWU.EDU/MUSIC) FOR THE EXACT DATE AND TIME.

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pthomas12@twu.edu

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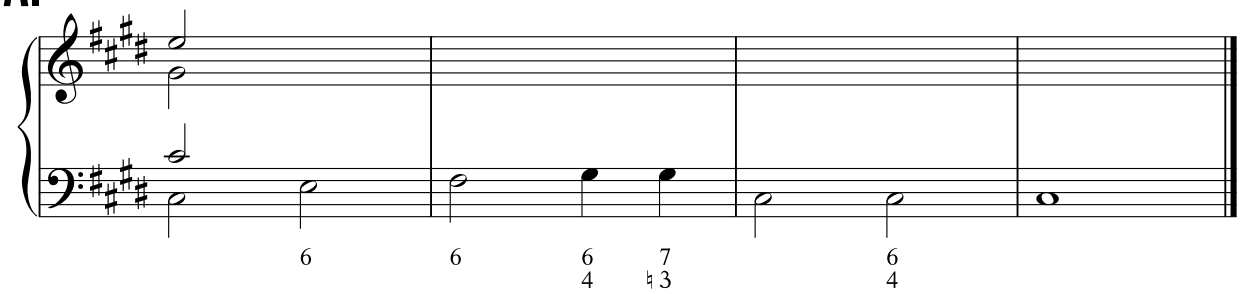
PART-WRITING

Realize the following figured bass in four voices. Provide Roman numerals for each chord.

A.



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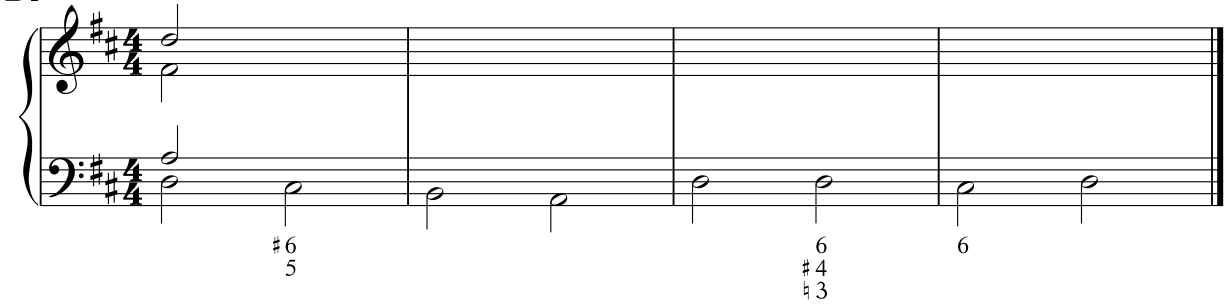

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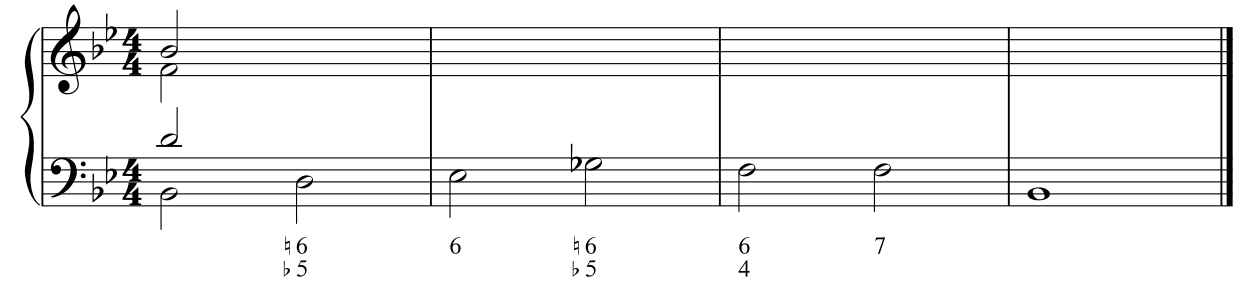

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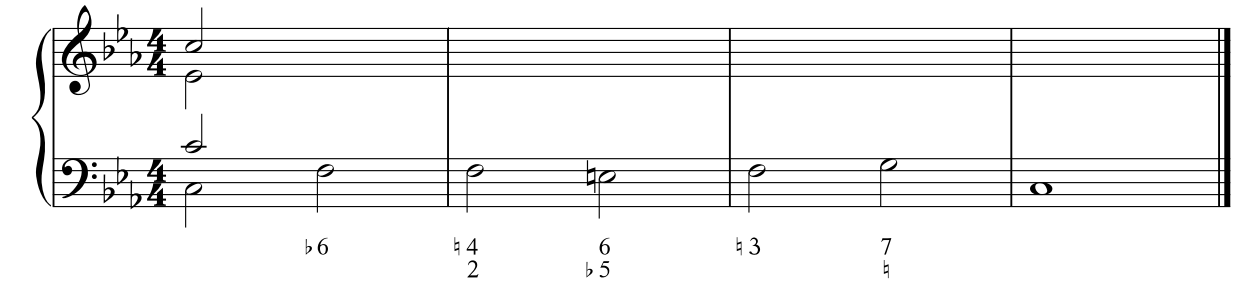
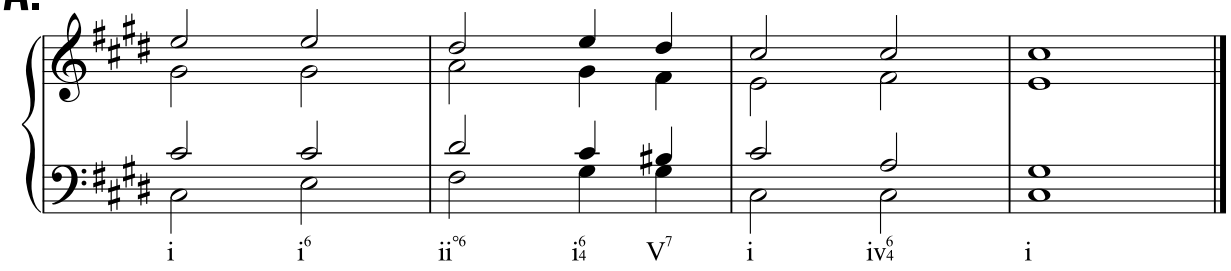


PART-WRITING | SOLUTIONS*

Realize the following figured bass in four voices. Provide Roman numerals for each chord.
*The solutions below are one way of part-writing the following passages.

A.



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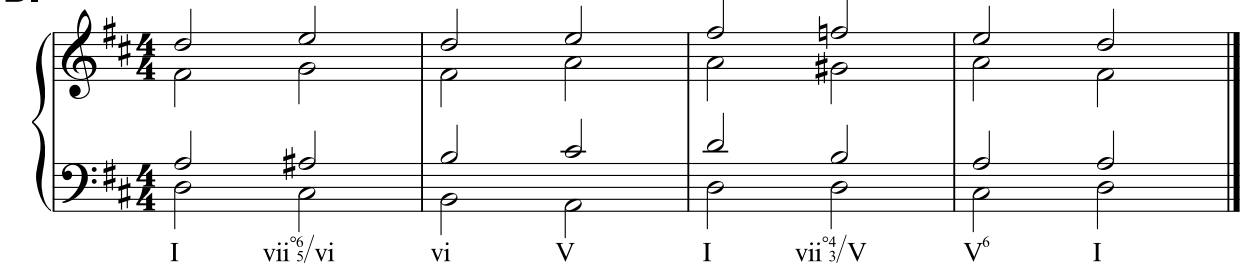
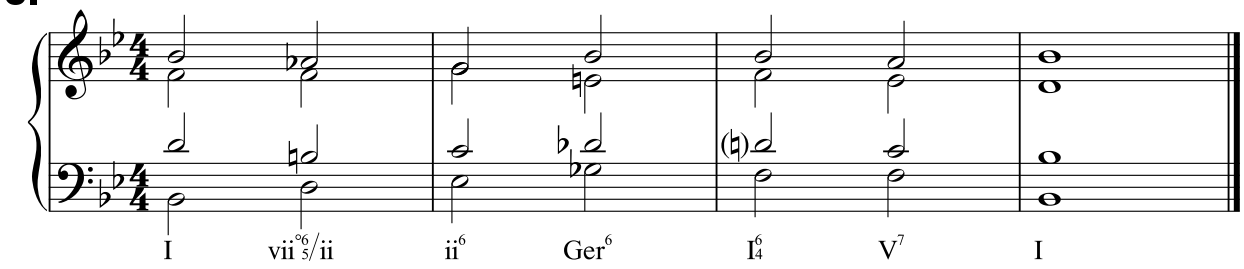
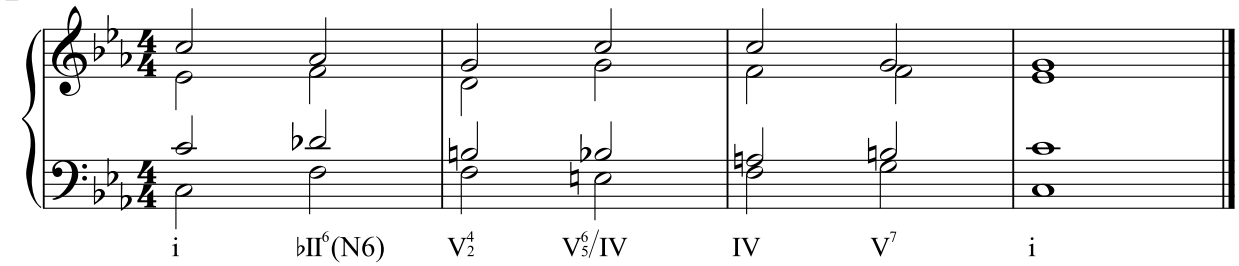


C.



D.



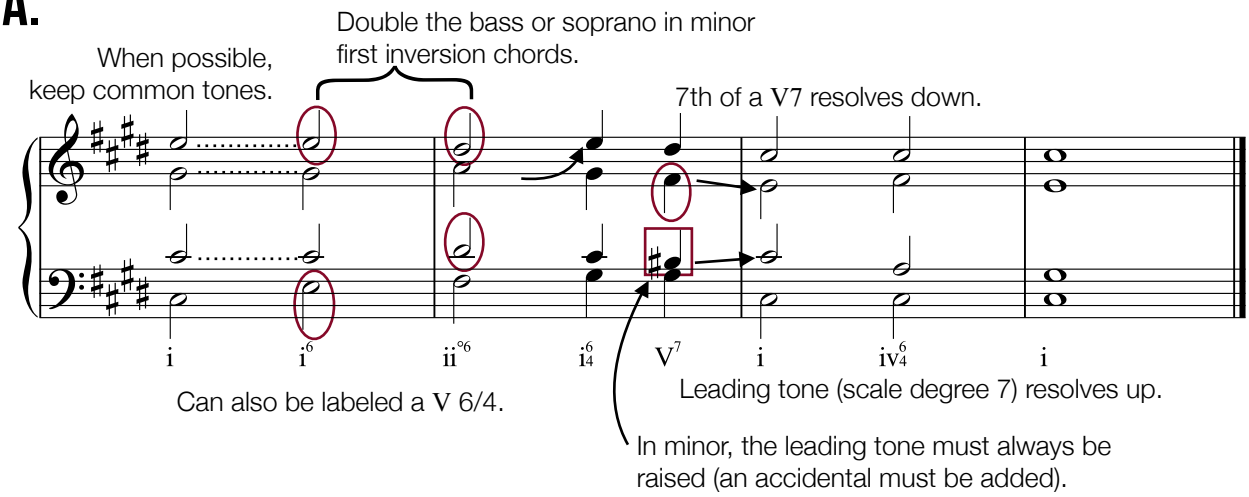
PART-WRITING | IN-DEPTH

An in-depth look at the part-writing solutions, this includes tips and best practices for avoiding part-writing errors.

A few basics:

- Voices can move in parallel, contrary, and oblique (one voice moves while the other stays the same) motion. In a four-voice texture, contrary and oblique motion are most common.
- Parallel fifths and octaves are always bad.
- When in doubt, double the root of the chord.
- Never double the leading-tone.

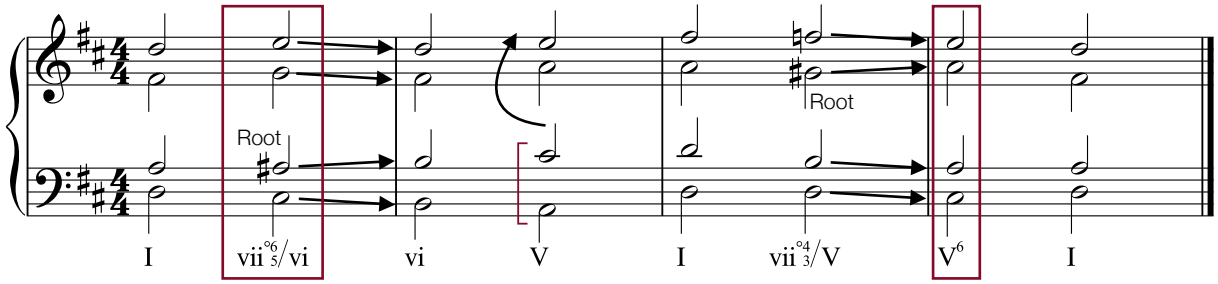
A.



B.

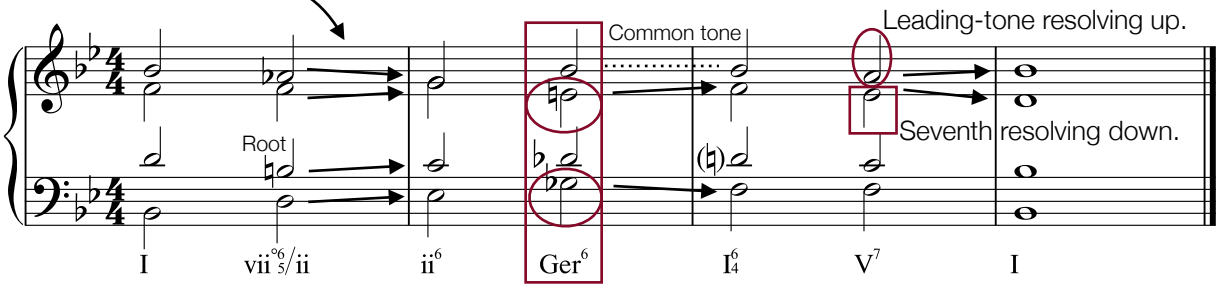
Always resolve the root of a fully-diminished seventh chord, regardless of what voice it is in, up a half-step. All other voices will most often move down.

Do not double the bass in major first inversion chords. If the bass was doubled in the boxed chord below, we would get a doubled leading-tone - *which is very bad.*



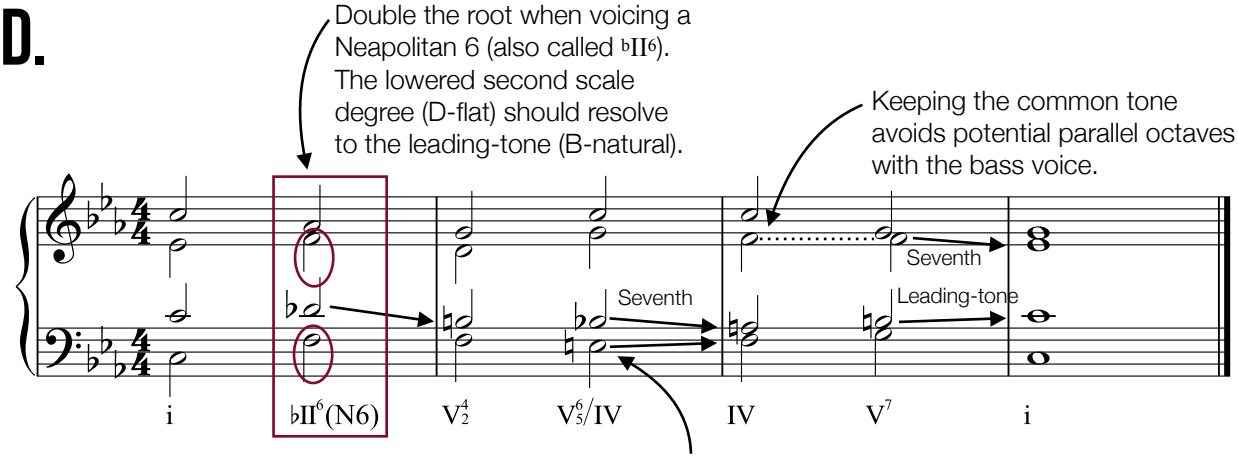
Between the bass and tenor is the only admissible place to have larger than an octave space between voices. The space between soprano/alto and alto/tenor voices must always be an octave or less. *And while on the topic of voicing, avoid voice-crossings as much as possible.* Basic examples like these should not require the crossing of voices.

C. Here is an example of a fully-diminished chord resolving differently. Notice that while the alto and tenor voices appear to move in parallel fifths, upon closer inspection it is seen that they are actually unequal fifths - the B and F is a diminished fifth and the C and E is a perfect fifth. *This is a-okay!*



The primary voice-leading rule for augmented-sixth chords is the same regardless of the type (Italian, French, German): *the augmented sixth interval always resolves in contrary motion out to an octave.* In the example above, the G-flat and E-natural create the augmented-sixth interval. The G-flat moves a half-step down to F and the E-natural moves a half-step up to F. All other voices of the augmented-sixth chord resolve by step or common tone.

D.

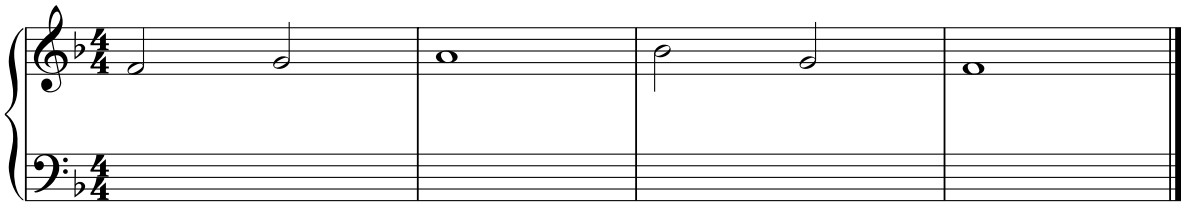


The third of a secondary dominant always resolves up by half-step since it functions as the leading-tone of the following tonicized chord (E-natural is the leading-tone of F major).

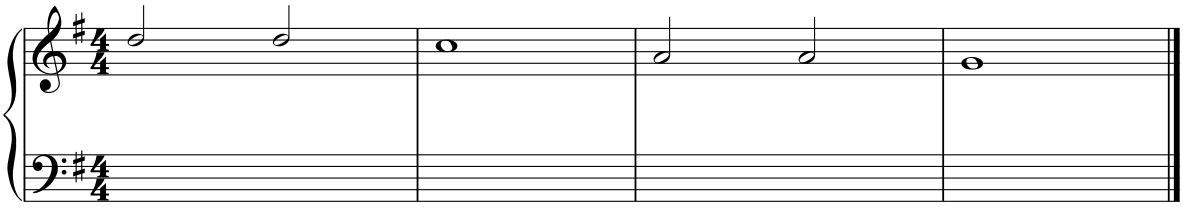
MELODY HARMONIZATION

Harmonize the following melodies in four voices. Every pitch of the melody should have an assigned harmony.

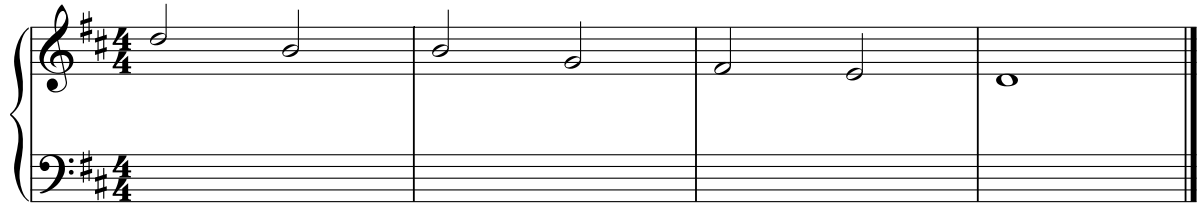
A. Include a deceptive cadence in the following harmonization.



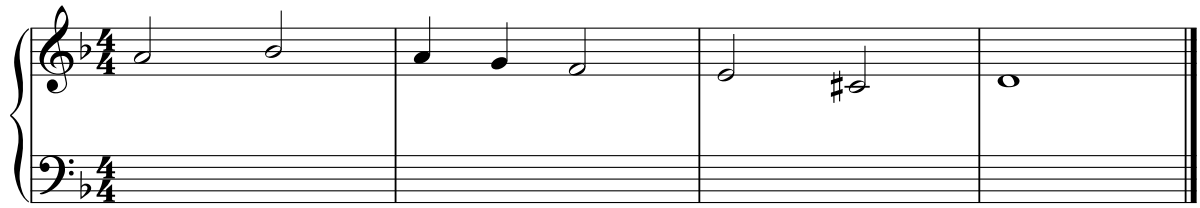
B. Include at least one secondary dominant in the following harmonization.



C. Include a Neapolitan 6 chord in the following harmonization.



D. Include a perfect authentic cadence in the following harmonization.

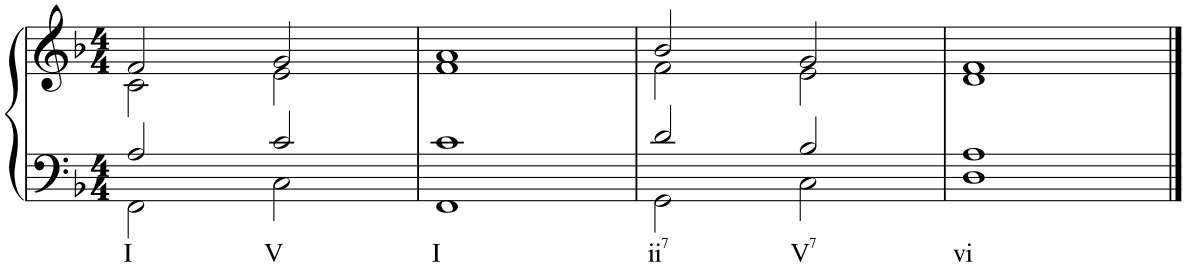


MELODY HARMONIZATION | SOLUTIONS*

Harmonize the following melodies in four voices. Every pitch of the melody should have an assigned harmony.

*The solutions below are but one of many ways to harmonize the following melodies.

A. Include a deceptive cadence in the following harmonization.



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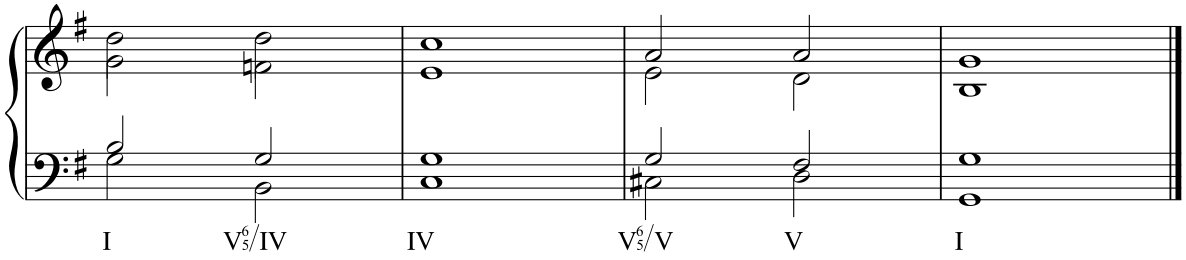

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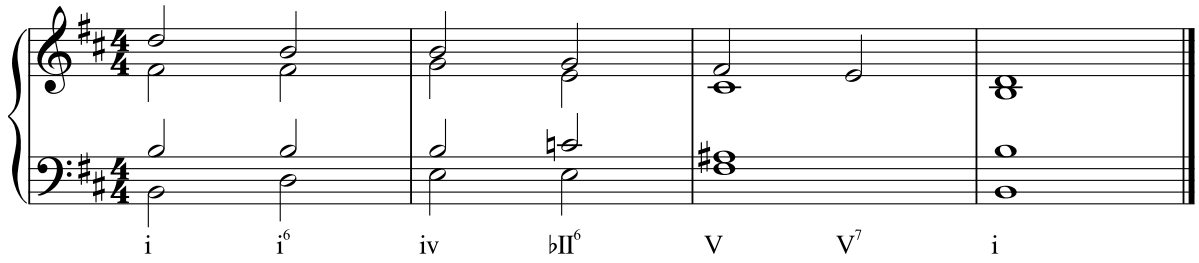
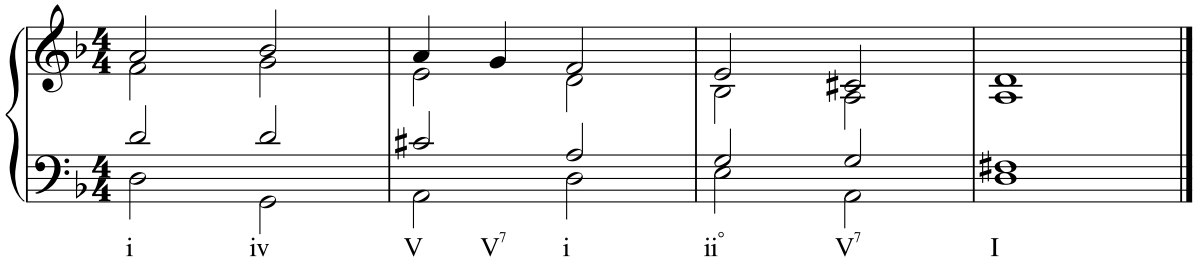


D. Include a perfect authentic cadence in the following harmonization.



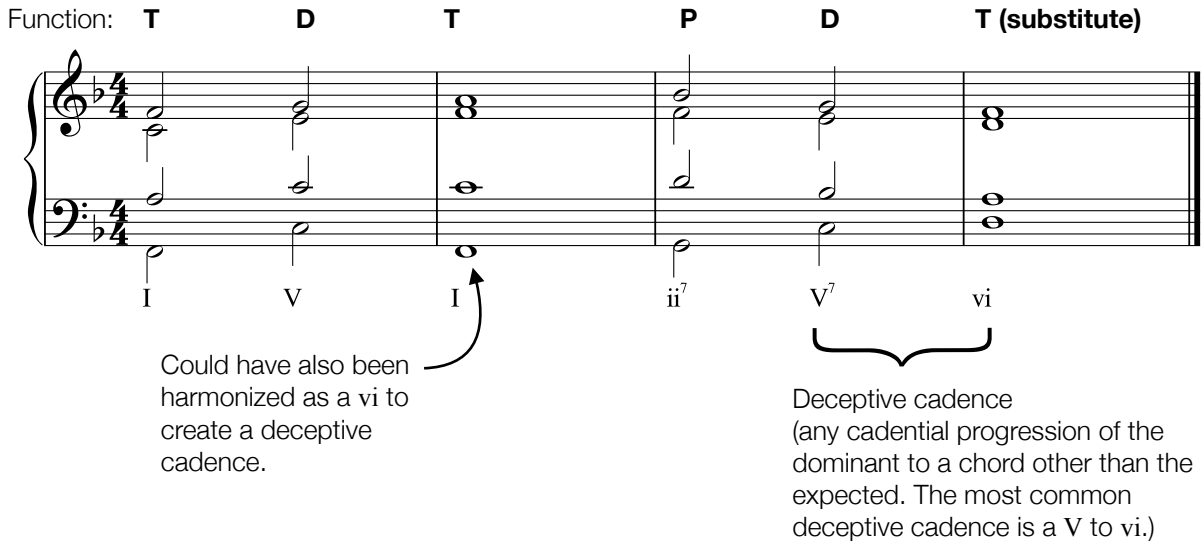
MELODY HARMONIZATION | IN-DEPTH

When harmonizing a melody, it is important to remember the three types of chord functions: Tonic (T), Dominant (D), and Pre-dominant (P).

- The I chord is the primary tonic functioning chord though a vi can substitute for a I (a deceptive cadence is a good example of this). A tonic functioning chord may move to either a dominant or pre-dominant chord.
- Dominant chords lead to the tonic and the most common are V or vii^{o} chords.
- Pre-dominant chords precede the dominant but are not the tonic. Most common pre-dominant chords include IV, ii, and vi.

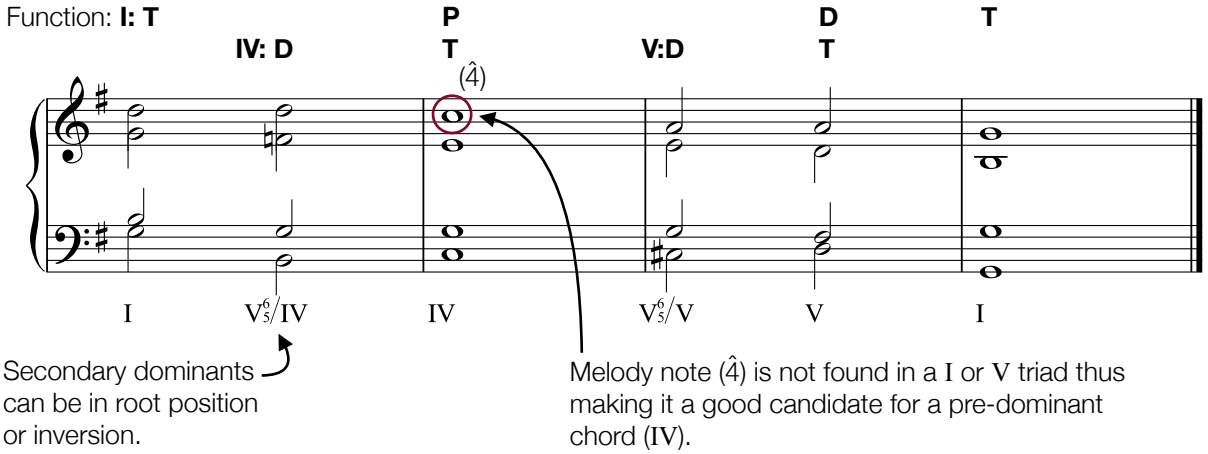
Since the tonic and dominant functions are the most important, first identify the key and determine the chord tones for the I and V in that key. Next, identify those pitches in the melody and determine which function those pitches imply. As a general rule, the last two pitches of a phrase will be supported by a dominant to tonic chord progression. For pitches that do not fit within a tonic or dominant functioning chord, such as scale degree six (la), consider a pre-dominant chord like IV. A progression can include a series of consecutive pre-dominant chords before arriving to the dominant. Note that a pre-dominant chord bridges the gap between the tonic and dominant but not the other way around - a *dominant chord will rarely be followed by a pre-dominant functioning chord.*

A. Include a deceptive cadence in the following harmonization.



B. Include at least one secondary dominant in the following harmonization.

A secondary dominant tonicizes (makes tonic) a chord that does not have a tonic function. In the example below, the IV and V are preceded by their respective dominants.



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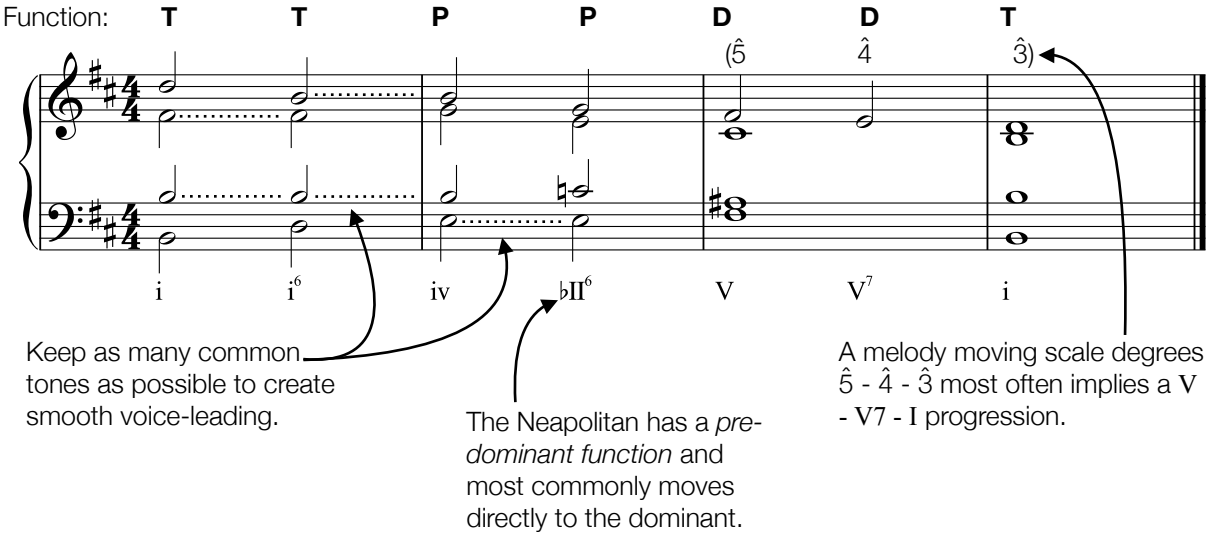
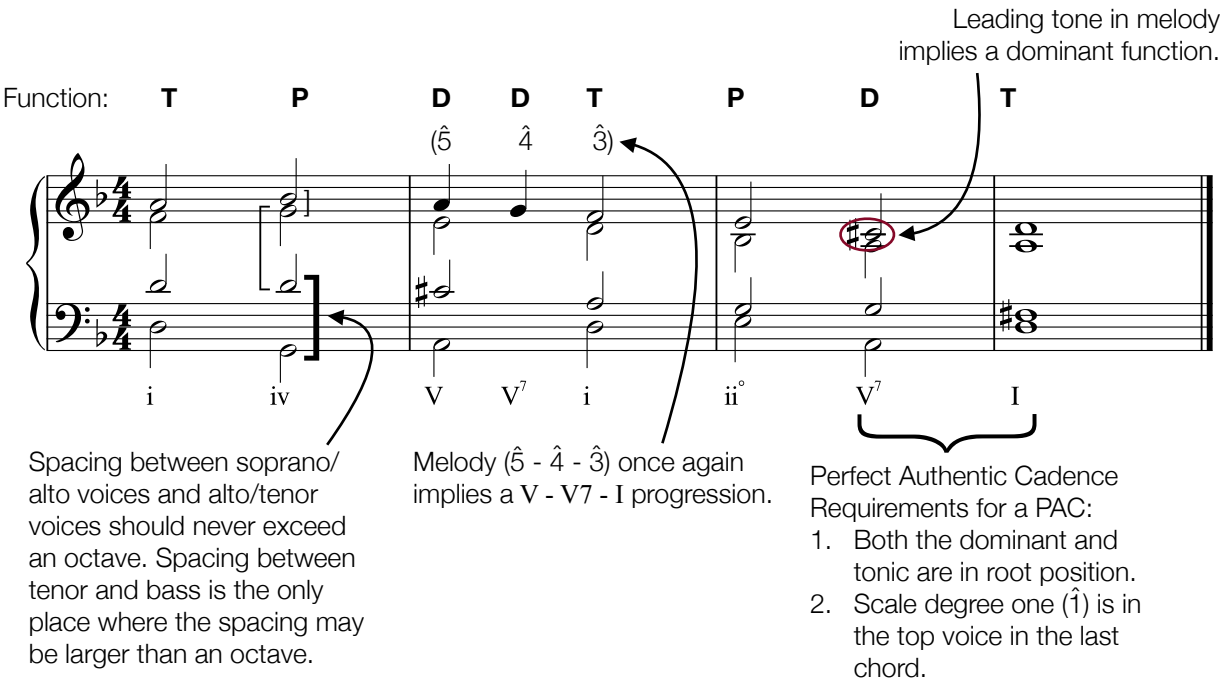


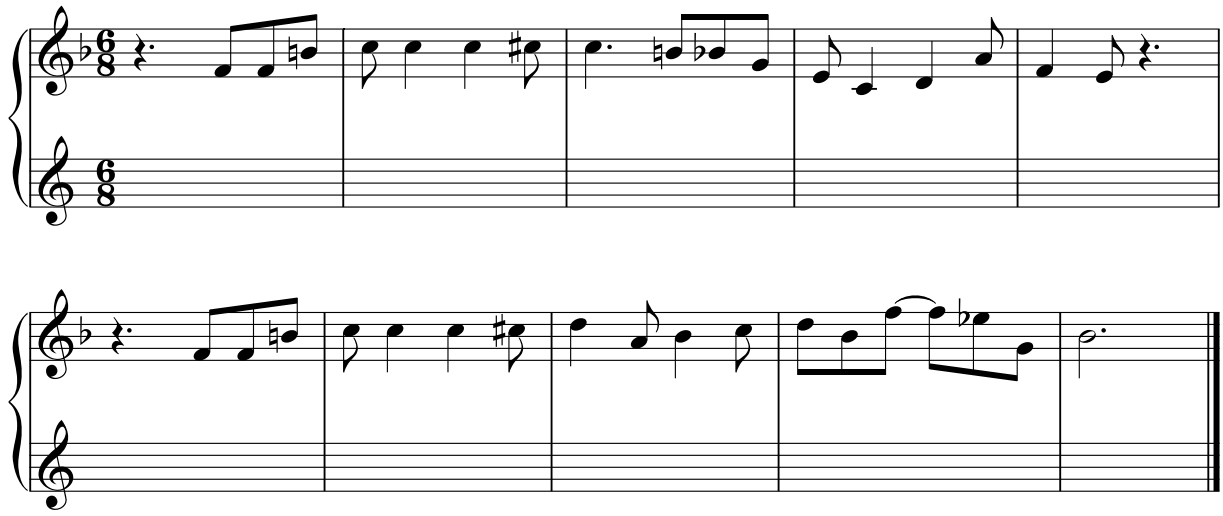
D. Include a perfect authentic cadence in the following harmonization.



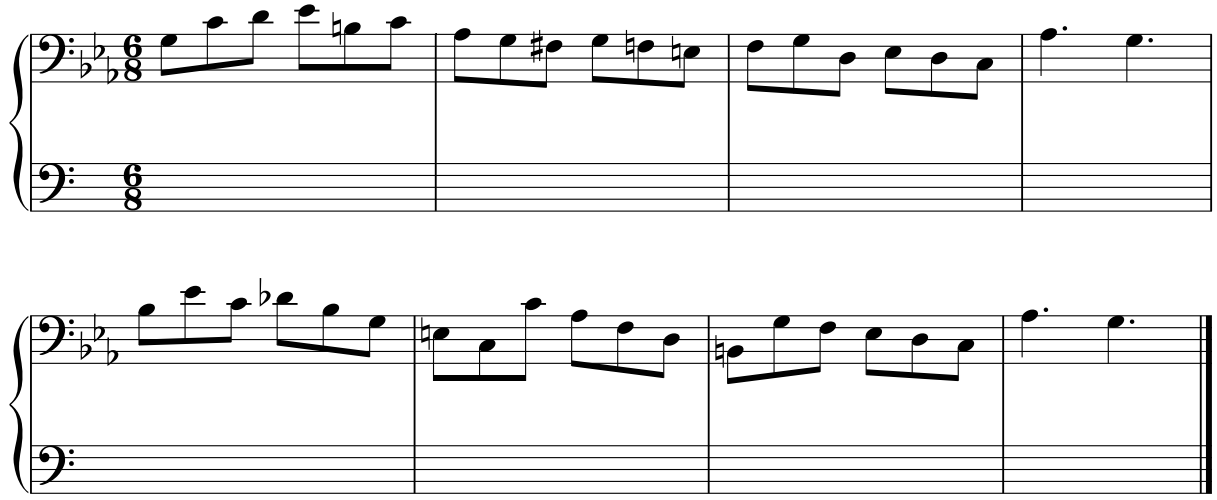
TRANSPOSITION

Transpose the following melodies on the blank staves below.

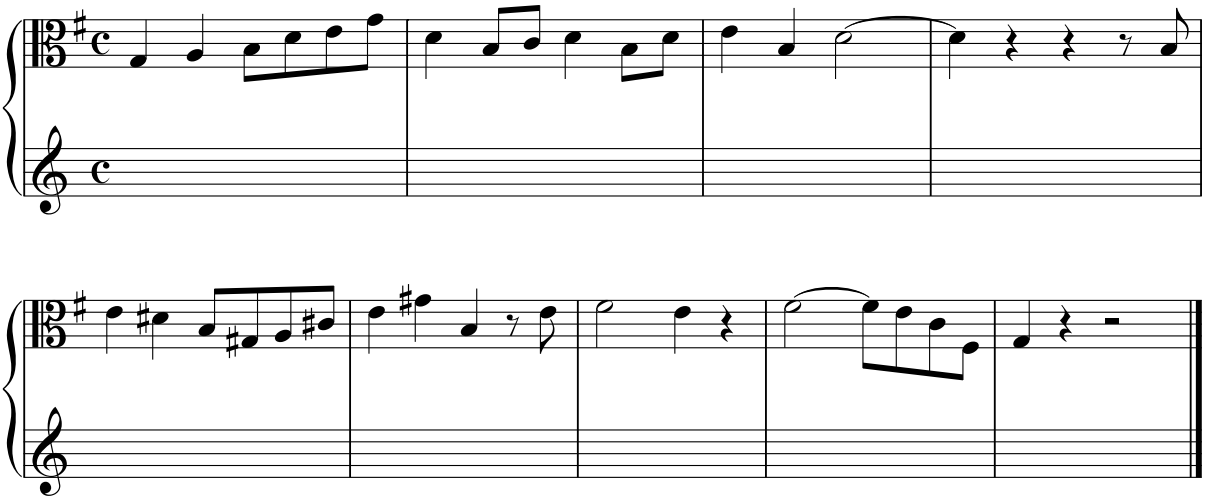
A. Transpose the melody to the key a *major third below.* Add the new key signature.



B. Transpose the melody to the key a *major second below.* Add the new key signature.



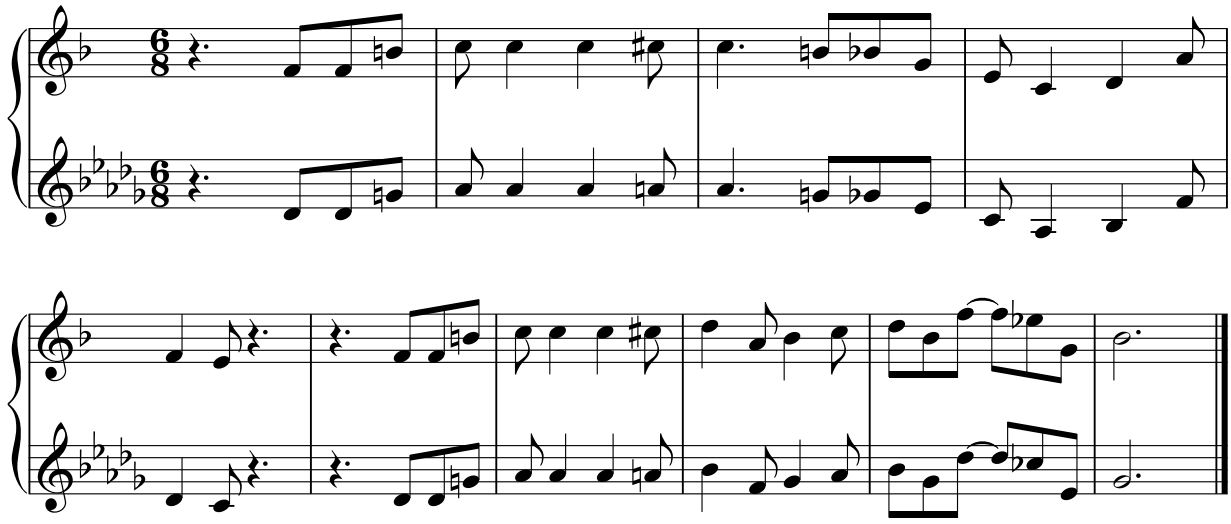
C. Transpose the melody to the key a *perfect fifth above.* Add the new key signature.



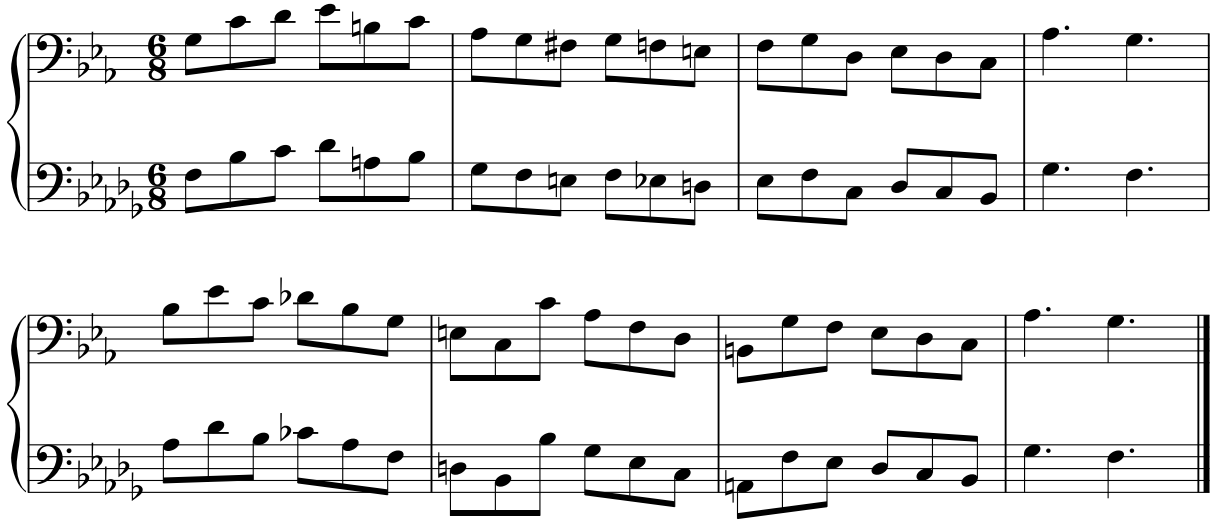
TRANSPOSITION | SOLUTIONS

Transpose the following melodies on the blank staves below.

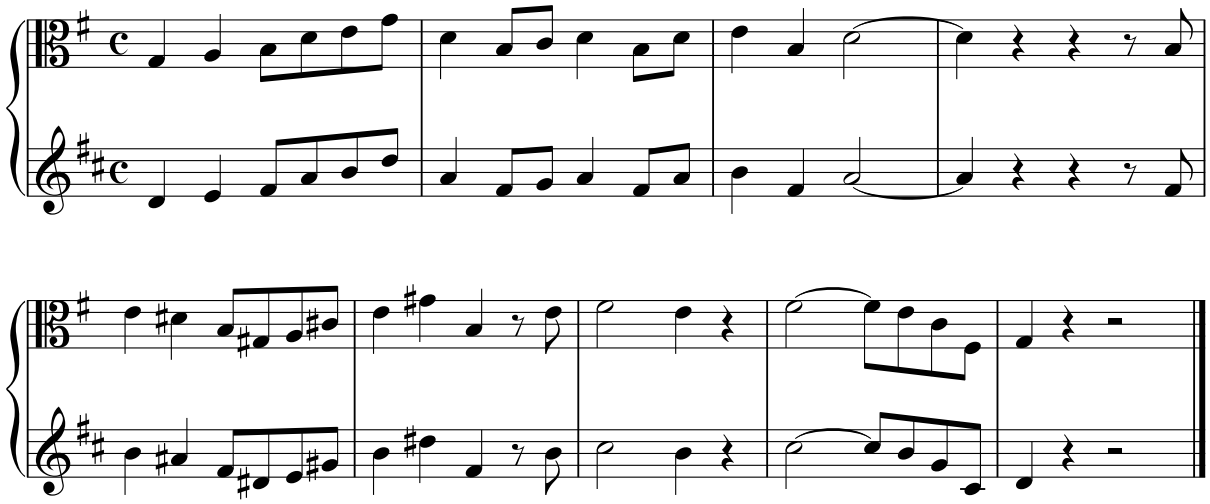
A. Transpose the melody to the key a *major third below.* Add the new key signature.



B. Transpose the melody to the key a *major second below.* Add the new key signature.



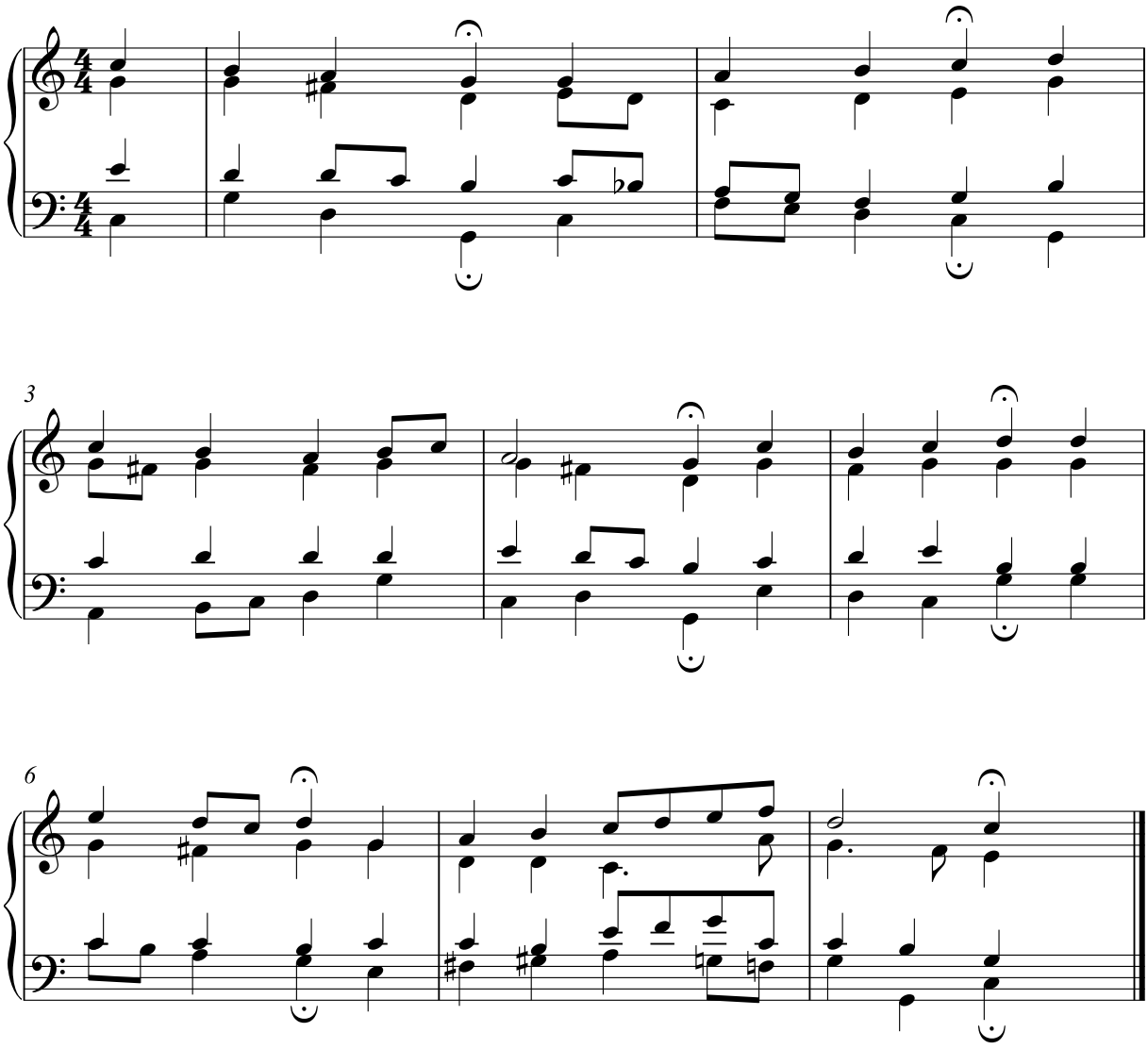
C. Transpose the melody to the key a *perfect fifth above.* Add the new key signature.



ANALYSIS 1

Use Roman numerals to analyze the following chorale. Label all chords, non-chord tones, cadences, and modulations.

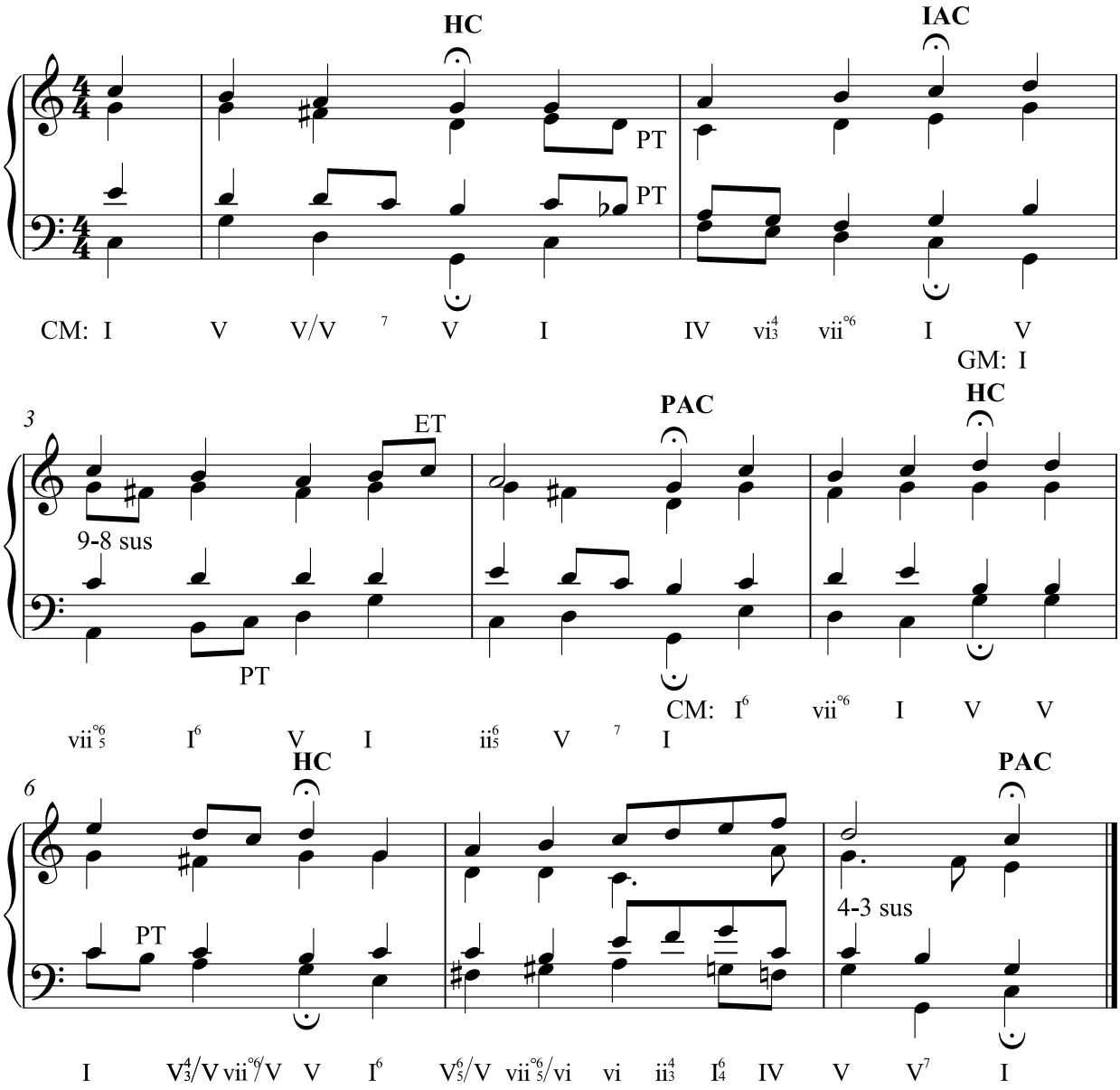
J.S. Bach | Ach Gott und Herr | BWV 255



ANALYSIS 1 | SOLUTION

Use Roman numerals to analyze the following chorale. Label all chords, non-chord tones, cadences, and modulations.

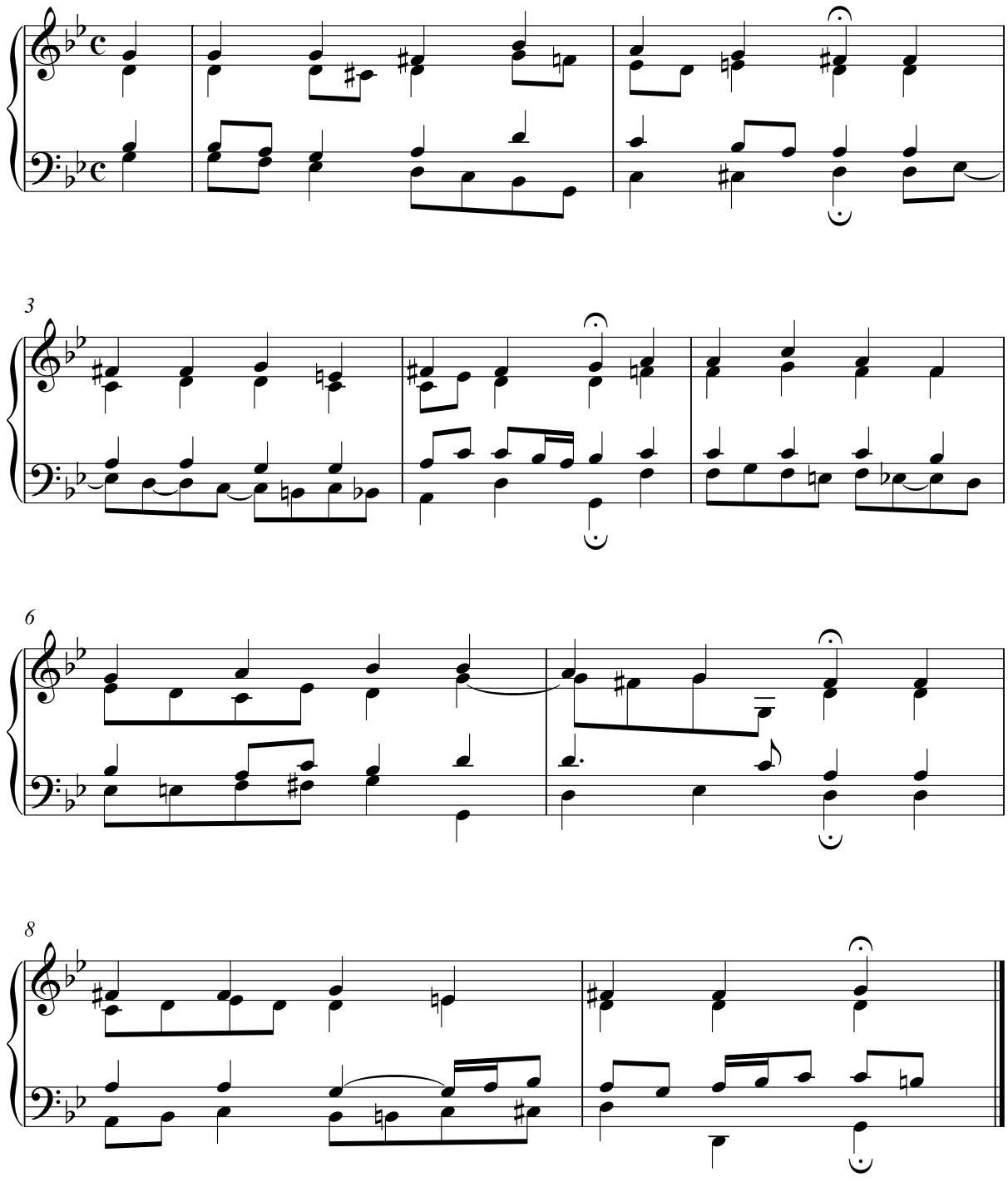
J.S. Bach | Ach Gott und Herr | BWV 255



ANALYSIS 2

Use Roman numerals to analyze the following chorale. Label all chords, non-chord tones, cadences, and modulations.

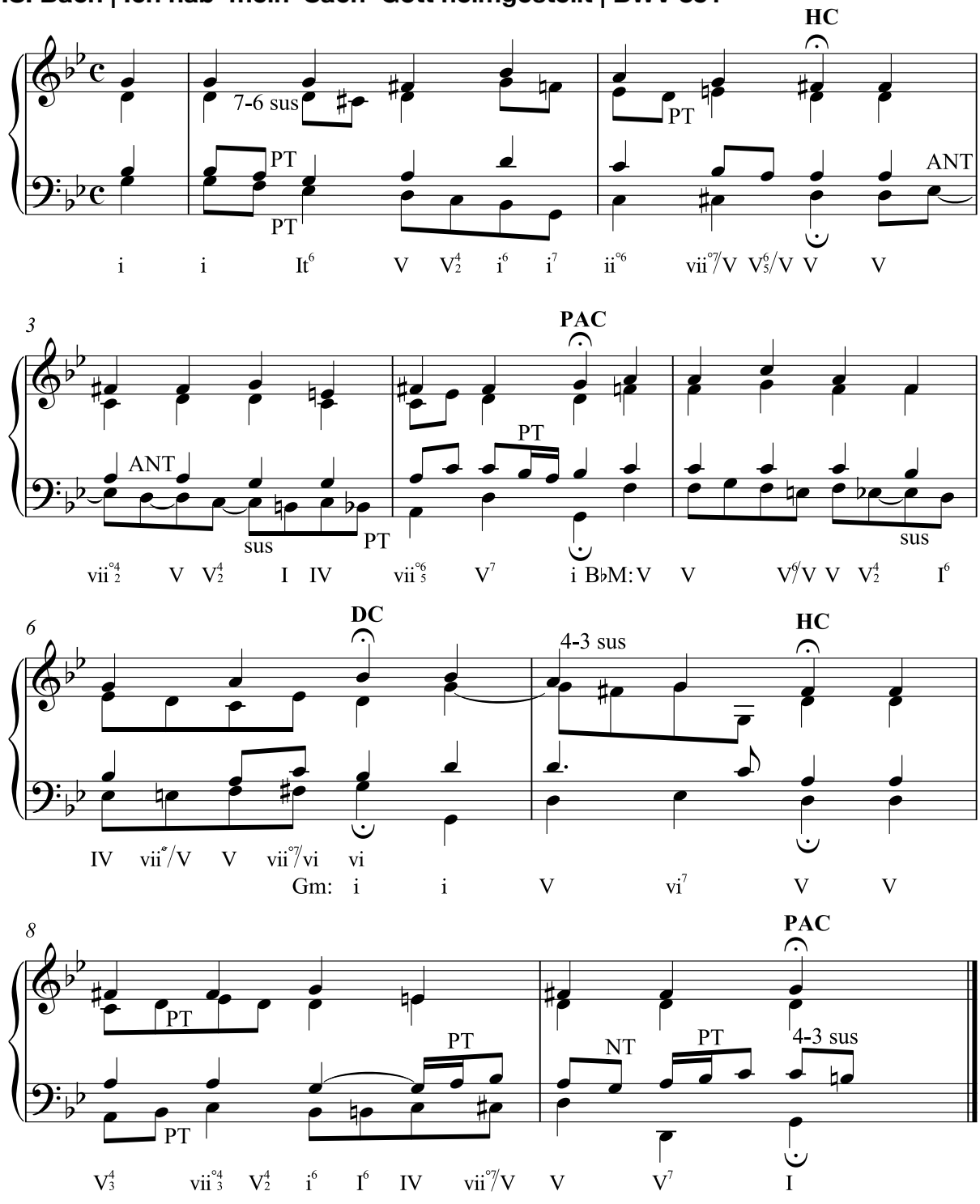
J.S. Bach | Ich hab' mein' Sach' Gott heimgestellt | BWV 351



ANALYSIS 2 | SOLUTIONS

Use Roman numerals to analyze the following chorale. Label all chords, non-chord tones, cadences, and modulations.

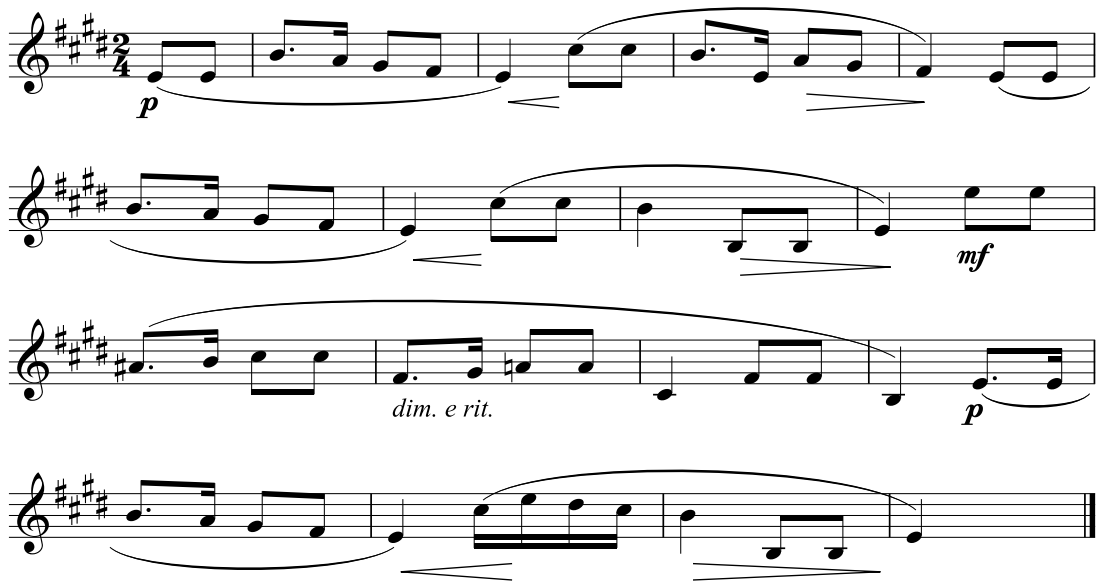
J.S. Bach | Ich hab' mein' Sach' Gott heimgestellt | BWV 351



SIGHTSINGING EXAMPLES

Below are representative melodies from the entrance exam. Melodies may be transposed to accommodate one's vocal range and should be sung using a syllable system (i.e. solfege - minor la, minor do, or fixed do - or numbers).

A.



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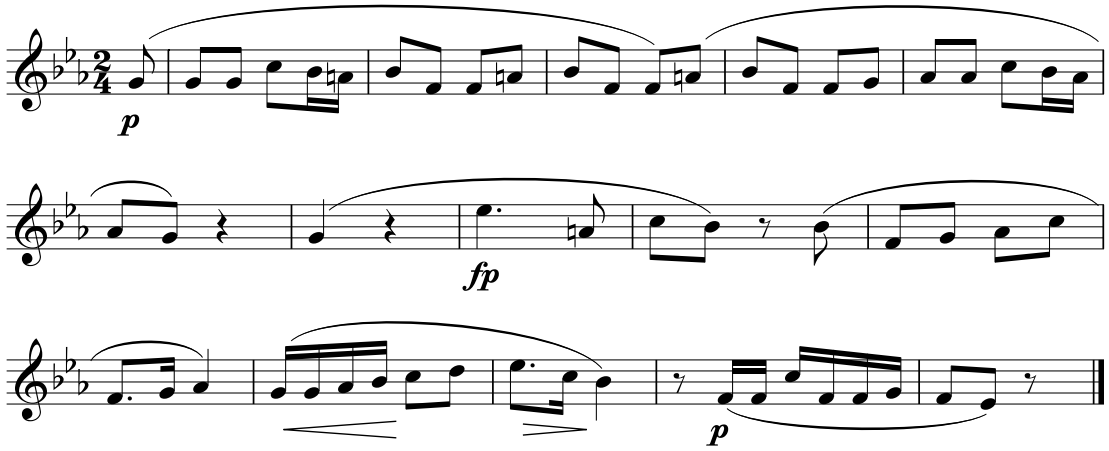
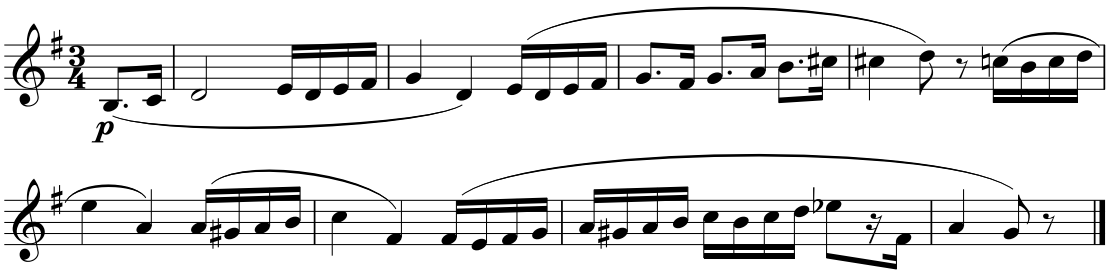
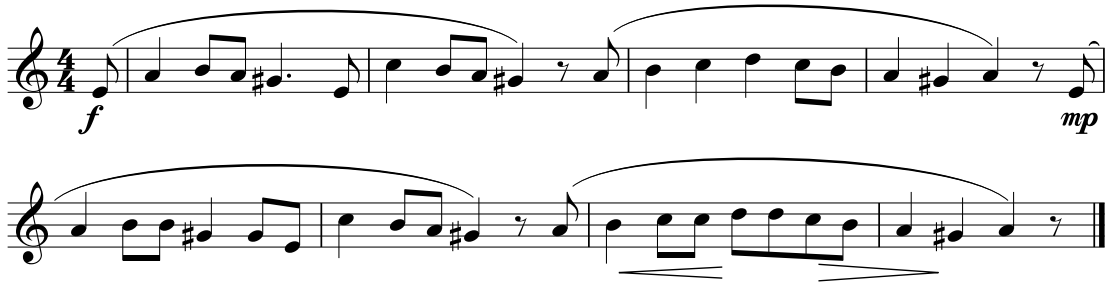


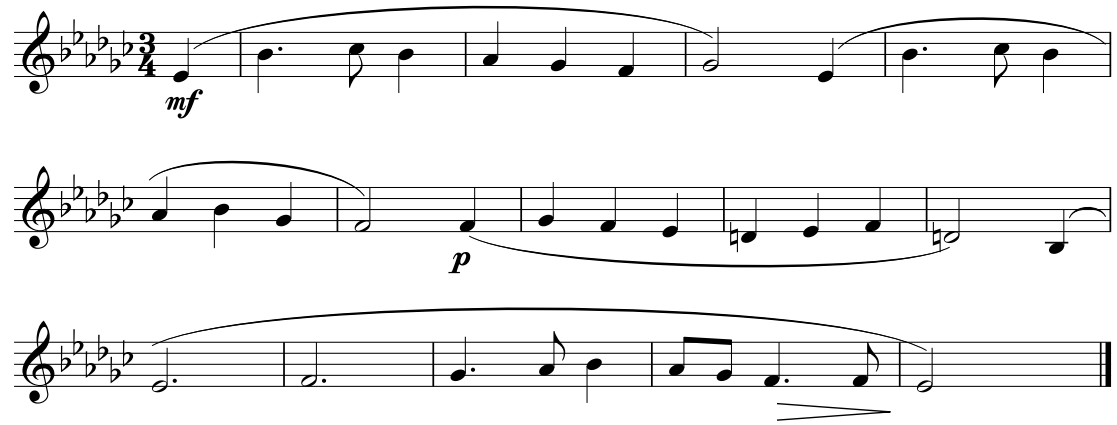
C.



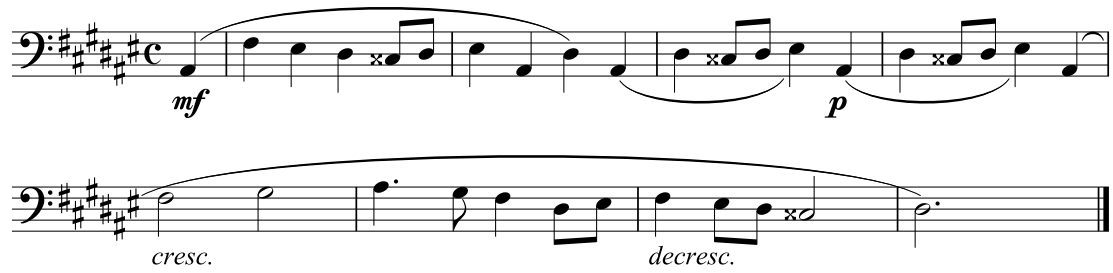
D.



E.



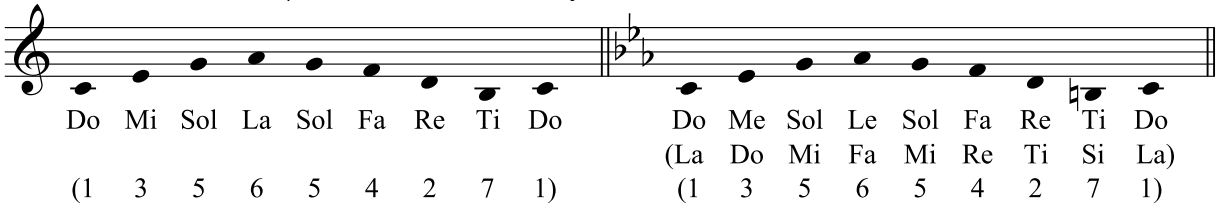
F.



SIGHTSINGING | TIPS

Tonicization- always tonicize before doing any sightsinging or dictation exercise. To tonicize simply means to sing a short melodic pattern that centers your ear on the tonic of the key. There are numerous tonicization patterns but the following is recommended:

Tonicization pattern shown with the syllables for minor do, minor la, and numbers.



There are a two benefits of this pattern. First, all seven diatonic pitches are sung. Second, this pattern outlines not only the tonic triad but also the dominant seventh triad (sol-fa-re-ti), thus providing a very strong grounding in the tonicized key.

Always keep “do” - regardless of what happens in the melody, always be able to return back to the tonic (“do”) if you get off.

Sing at a slow and **steady** tempo. Sing at a tempo where you have time to look ahead to the next note. If you make a mistake, do not stop - keep going!

A student will be given a short period of time to look over a sight-melody before having to sing. Some things to observe during that period include:

- The key and starting pitch/syllable
- Time-signature
- Recurring sections
- Repeated rhythmic or pitch patterns
- Large or awkward leaps
- Accidentals

TERMS

- Triads and inversions
- Major scales
- Minor scales
  - Natural
  - Harmonic
  - Melodic
- 6/4 chords
  - Cadential
  - Passing
  - Pedal
- Function
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  - Predominant
  - Dominant
- Cadences
  - Perfect Authentic (PAC)
  - Imperfect Authentic (IAC)
  - Plagal (PC)
  - Deceptive (DC)
  - Half (HC)
- Non-chord tones
  - Passing tone (PT)
  - Neighbor tone (NT)
  - Appoggiatura (APP)
  - Escape Tone (ET)
  - Suspension (SUS)
  - Retardation (RET)
  - Anticipation (ANT)
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  - minor
  - half-diminished
  - fully-diminished
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  - Italian
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- Modes
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  - Dorian
  - Phrygian
  - Lydian
  - Mixolydian
  - Aeolian
  - Locrian

ONLINE RESOURCES

Music Theory for Musicians and Normal People (http://tobyrush.com/theorypages/index.html)

- Excellent informational sheets on a wide variety of theory topics, ranging from beginning to advanced.

musictheory.net

- Basic ear-training and keyboard exercises
- Fundamental topics such as rhythm, meter, scale, key signatures, and intervals
- More advanced topics on diatonic chords, sevenths, progressions, and Neapolitan chords.

teoria.com

- Ear-training and theory exercises
- Jazz exercises

Dolmetsch Music Theory (http://www.dolmetsch.com/theoryintro.htm)

- In-depth lessons on numerous music theory and history topics, including figured bass and twentieth harmony.

8notes.com/theory

- Ear-training exercises and basic music theory topics.