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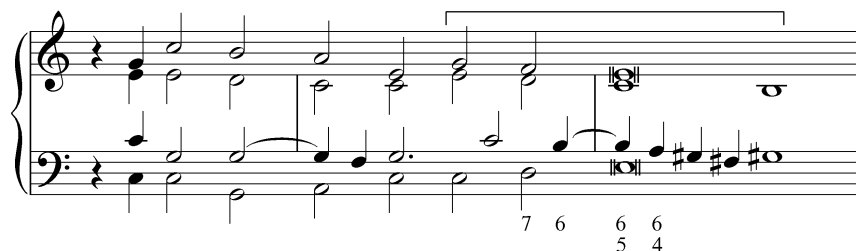
THE SIX-FOUR-CHORD (i)

The 6-4-chord

The 'appoggiatura' or 'cadential' 6-4-chord

The 6-4-chord

Chorale harmonisations are traditionally homophonic. Sometimes, however, traces of Renaissance polyphony linger, when the horizontal movement of the four parts almost seems to determine the chords. Here is an example from Michael Praetorius's setting of *Aus tiefer Not* (1609):



The final cadence progression is basically as follows:



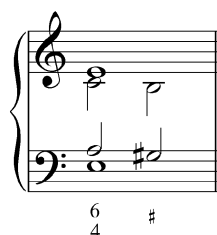
But as so often in music, the most exciting moments occur when the composer does the unexpected. In Praetorius's setting, the C in the tenor is delayed, beginning later (as an expressive syncopation), going on to become the 7th in the 7-6 suspension to the B; at the end of the penultimate bar we briefly hear the diminished triad. In the last bar, the alto does not move directly to the final note B but first to the 6th C, causing a wonderful, linear 6-5 dissonance between the alto and tenor.

(This 6-5 dissonance could be 'vertically' analysed as the 1st inversion of the 7-chord on C:



but this somewhat theoretical approach is hardly convincing, for there can be no doubt that Praetorius viewed E as the root of the entire final bar.)

As the 6-5 dissonance is resolved, the tenor moves from the 5th to the 4th. It is at this point that we hear the **6-4 chord**. The tension of the 6-5 dissonance is released, but not entirely removed, for we sense that the 6-4 chord too requires a descending movement: the 6th moves to the 5th and the 4th to the 3rd:



10. Practise the following cadences in all minor keys:

I I^6_4 V I I I^6_4 V I I I^6_4 V I

11. Practise the following cadences in all major keys; the 6-4-chord is preceded by IV in root position:

I IV I^6_4 V I I IV I^6_4 V I I IV I^6_4 V I

12. Practise the following cadences in all minor keys:

I IV I^6_4 V I I IV I^6_4 V I I IV I^6_4 V I

13.* Repeat ex.9-12 with a solo stop and pedals.

14. Play the following cadential phrases in four parts:

i ii iii iv v vi

6 5 4 3 6 5 4 3 6 6 5 6 6 5 6 5 6 5