

The Realization of Partimenti

An Introduction

Giorgio Sanguinetti

Abstract A *partimento* is a linear guide for the improvisation of a keyboard piece. Partimenti were developed for the training of composers in the conservatories of Naples during the eighteenth century. They contain all the information needed for the realization of complete pieces of music, and their practice bestowed on practitioners a fluency in composition unparalleled since then. The Neapolitan masters usually recommended different stages of realization, from the simplest (*con le sole consonanze*) to highly elaborate textures. The rules for the realization of partimenti have survived in many sources, but they cover only the first stage of realization because the techniques for more advanced realizations were transmitted orally. With the decadence and extinction of the living tradition, the realization of partimenti became a lost art. However, some principles for advanced realization may be inferred from the surviving written realizations, and from the analysis of the *partimento* in question. Relying on the foundation formed by the rules, and integrating them with these principles, the present article shows some examples of how a present-day musician can create a satisfying realization.

The *partimento* as potential music

IT IS NOT EASY TO TELL exactly what a *partimento* is. It is a *basso continuo* or thoroughbass, but one that does not accompany anything except itself. It is a figured bass, but very often it has no figures at all. It is a bass, but can as well be a soprano, an alto, or a tenor. Whether tenor, alto, or soprano, it is often the lowest voice, but sometimes it can skip from one voice to another in the texture. It is written, but its goal is improvisation. And, finally, it is an exercise—perhaps the most efficient exercise in composition ever devised—but also a form of art in its own right. So, what is a *partimento*? Perhaps a good definition is a metaphor: a *partimento* is a thread that contains in itself all, or most, of the information needed for a complete composition. The classic organicist metaphor of the seed might also be used, but usually the seed metaphor and its musical counterparts, like the *Grundgestalt*, do not develop in the dimension of time. Rather, they are self-contained, like a thematic or motivic statement. The *partimento*, by contrast, is a linear entity that runs from the beginning to the end of a (potential) composition.

A *partimento* is only potentially music. Its implications need to be unfolded in order for it to become a full-fledged composition. Every aspect of the final music can be contained, or hinted at, in a *partimento*: tonal direc-

tion, modulations, harmony, diminutions, imitations, texture, style, and genre. There is, however, no single correct solution. Every partimento can allow an unlimited number of possible realizations, according to the skills, taste, and degree of sophistication of the performer-composer. In practice, partimento masters often recommended a multilayered approach to partimento realization. At the beginning of book 4 of his *Partimenti*, Fedele Fenaroli (n.d. [ca. 1850], 61) warns his readers, “One should study the following partimenti first with simple consonances, and subsequently with the dissonances, according to the rules previously set forth.”¹ A nineteenth-century author of an annotated edition of the same work, Emanuele Guarnaccia (ca. 1851, 3), goes a step further: “To begin with, one will play all unfigured basses with simple consonant chords: from that performance the Master will clearly understand if his pupil has correctly understood the principles thereof. Secondly, one shall introduce all feasible dissonances for that given bass. Lastly, one shall shape the properly said Imitation.”² In other words, the first step is a simple, chordal realization based on the analysis of bass line, the identification of the bass patterns, and their accompaniment using the simplest possible schemata appropriate to those patterns. This stage was often referred to as *con le semplici consonanze* (with simple consonances), but this did not mean that only consonant chords were used. In fact, by *consonanze*, partimento tradition meant all the chords included in the basic accompaniment patterns, above all the Rule of the Octave (for a discussion of this foremost rule, see Christensen 1992). As we shall see, the Rule of the Octave includes many dissonant chords, like seventh chords in all inversions, and even an augmented sixth chord (on descending $\flat\textcircled{6}$ in minor): all these chords were considered consonant.³

The second stage consists in adding dissonances to the basic realization. By *dissonanze*, partimento theory means only one kind of dissonance: the suspension. Suspensions can be added to the simple realization either by scanning the bass line for appropriate locations or by choosing a more elaborated variant of the same pattern that has already been used in the first stage.

The final stage of realization includes all those aspects that may bestow on the partimento its distinctive shape and style: diminutions, imitation, and texture. In practice, not every partimento is suitable for a three-stage realization. Yet even very simple partimenti, such as those in Fenaroli n.d. [ca. 1850], book 3, can easily support a great number of possible realizations, from simple block chords to amazingly complex polyphonic or even orchestral realization.

1 “I seguenti *Partimenti* si devono prima studiare colle semplici consonanze e poi colle dissonanze, secondo le regole antecedenti.”

2 “Primieramente si suoneranno tutti i bassi senza numeri con i semplici accordi consonanti: dalla esecuzione della qual regola il Maestro si accorgerà se il suo allievo abbia bene e giustamente afferrati i principii a tale oggetto stabiliti; il secondo luogo si introdurranno tutte le dissonanze,

di cui ciascun basso è suscettibile; e in ciò dovrassi adoperare giusta le norme relative alle dissonanze medesime; il terzo ed ultimo luogo si formerà la propriamente detta Imitazione.”

3 Fenaroli, however, considered the Rule of the Octave the manifestation of a deeper tonal structure that is referred to as *basi fondamentali del tono* (foundations of the key). I discuss this issue in Sanguinetti (in press-b).

More advanced partimenti, especially those with strong contrapuntal implications, like fugues, have a narrower range of possible realizations. In addition, some elements of dissonance are already present in the basic schemata (e.g., the chromatic descent; see Example 7). Hence, one should not be too rigid with the application of a two- or three-stage realization. Sometimes elements of further stages will be introduced already in an earlier level.

The presence—or absence—of figures makes a great deal of difference. In the Neapolitan tradition, fully figured partimenti are more the exception than the rule. Partimenti are usually either totally (or almost totally) unfigured (e.g., in Fenaroli n.d. [ca. 1850], bks. 4 and 6, or in Francesco Durante's *Diminuiti*), or very little figured. On the other hand, partimenti with complicated figures do belong to different local traditions, such as the Bolognese school of Padre Stanislao Mattei and the Roman school of Pietro Raimondi.

Unfortunately, more or less detailed instructions have survived only for the first two stages of a realization. These instructions are usually titled *regole* and *principi* (“rules” and “principles”) and are relatively abundant in European libraries, particularly in Italy. Except for the most celebrated of all—those by Fenaroli—the *regole* are almost always in manuscript, whether they bear the name of their author or not. The reason is that in Italian eighteenth-century conservatories, a student obtained a textbook by copying it himself from other manuscripts. Unlike formal treatises or manuals, *regole* and *principi* are very sketchy. They are more like notes or aids for memory. The main focus of the rules is on the realization of unfigured basses, based on the Rule of the Octave and its complement, a series of bass patterns called *moti del basso* (motions of the bass; the nature and structure of the *regole* are described more accurately below). Therefore, it is not always easy to discern partimento rules from thoroughbass rules. Both are based on the same principles, but a real continuo treatise, such as Francesco Gasparini's *L'armonico pratico al cembalo* (1708), deals also with specific problems of accompaniment, such as the relations between the harpsichordist's right hand and the solo part, while partimento rules completely ignore such issues.

As mentioned above, the second stage of realization consists in the elaboration of the basic stage using the *dissonanze*, or suspensions (other dissonances, e.g., passing and neighboring notes, were considered as part of diminution, the third stage). The *regole* were generally quite accurate in the description of dissonances. For each kind of dissonance—fourth, seventh, ninth, and second—they list all possible preparations and resolutions, and sometimes they also suggest intricate patterns of different, interwoven suspensions.

For the third stage there are, unfortunately for us today, no rules. Clearly, this subject was considered too complicated to be suitable for written rules, and it was entirely committed to an oral tradition. The oral transmission of knowledge was essential in the context in which the partimento tradition flourished, the conservatories of eighteenth-century Naples. In each of the four conservatories that were active in Naples—in chronological order

of their founding: Santa Maria di Loreto (1537), Sant'Onofrio a Capuana (1578), Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini (1583), and Poveri di Gesù Cristo (1589)—students had daily lessons from their masters, and they also had the assistance of tutors called *maestrini*. Oral tradition was certainly the best possible solution for teachers and students in a Neapolitan conservatory, but it leaves us totally unprepared to decrypt the most advanced and challenging partimenti, such as the toccatas, the sonatas, the concerti, and, above all, the fugues. The present essay is intended as an introduction to the realization of partimenti, from the simplest to the more advanced. It is based partly on the *regole*, partly on a few surviving early examples of written realizations, and partly on an empirical analysis of the partimenti. I do not deal with partimento fugues because they would require a type of discussion that goes beyond the limits of the present essay.

Partimento rules: An overview

In the eighteenth century, accompaniment from an unfigured bass was a controversial Italian specialty. As Buelow (1986, 219–20) points out, it was often sharply criticized by German musicians and theorists like Andreas Werckmeister, Johann Mattheson, and C. P. E. Bach. In more recent times a German-oriented scholar like Franck Thomas Arnold (1931) showed scant interest in it. Apart from a certain nationalistic bias, German detractors of unfigured basses had legitimate reasons for concern. There is little doubt that figured basses provide a much more secure foundation for performance. Unfigured basses, however, were used not only for accompaniment, but also—and, I would say, principally—for teaching composition. For that purpose, they are by far more useful than their figured counterparts. In fact, the realization of an unfigured bass calls into play the capacity to analyze the bass and to understand the underlying tonal functions. The analysis of the bass line is carried on primarily through the identification of linear patterns, which leads to the selection of the best accompaniments from a set of alternative solutions. In order to play an unfigured partimento, the student must memorize a remarkably (but not impossibly) large number of tonal paradigms, or schemata. These paradigms would later become a repertoire of materials for free composition. The examples that follow are based mainly on the rules of Fenaroli. First published in 1775 as *Regole musicali per i principianti di cembalo*, Fenaroli's 117 rules have been repeatedly reprinted until the early decades of the twentieth century, often together with the partimenti of the same author.⁴

⁴ In the discussion of the examples of realization, I refer to the first edition (Mazzola-Vocola) for the *Regole*, and to the mid-nineteenth-century Giovanni Canti edition for the examples, because both have been reprinted in facsimile and are easily available.

During their long history, the number of the rules increased until in the mid-nineteenth century (well after the death of their author) they reached the number of 134, as in the Giovanni Canti edition (ca. 1850). Fenaroli himself acknowledged the “open” nature of his rules when, at the end of the first edition, he wrote, “Whenever [the learned Masters] shall find rules lacking, or errors, they shall have the right to add, and adjust at their wish [the rules in this book]; since what we did here is nothing but to put in order the rules that everybody already knows perfectly, and to give beginners a guiding light, so they will not play randomly.”⁵ Therefore, Fenaroli himself recognized his rules as the systematization of a shared teaching tradition, a tradition that can be traced back to Bernardo Pasquini and Alessandro Scarlatti. In other words, his rules can be seen as a collective work, the result of a stratification of knowledge shared by generations of teachers and students. Fenaroli does not, however, cover all aspects of the theory. In order to get a more complete picture of partimento theory as a whole, we must also refer to other sources, such as the manuscript rules of Carlo Cotumacci (I-Nc Rari 1.9.14/1), Francesco Durante (I-Bc E.E 171), Giovanni Furno (I-Nc Od. 1.6/1), Giacomo Insanguine (I-Mc Nosedà Th.c-116 a), Giovanni Paisiello (I-Nc 3.4.17 bis), Bernardo Pasquini (I-Bc D. 138), Nicola Sala (I-Nc S.1.94), Alessandro Scarlatti (I-MOe Campori γ-L.9.41 and GB-Lbl Ms. Add. 14244), Saverio Valente (I-Mc Nosedà Q 13–15, 13–16, 13–17), and the printed work of Tritto (1816) and Paisiello (1782).

Except for Pasquini in Rome, all these masters operated in one of the Naples conservatories from the early eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. The *regole* that they wrote down allow us to become acquainted with a large repertory of tonal patterns used in eighteenth-century composition.

All partimento rules fall into five classes, or categories:

Class 1: Basic axioms and procedures

Class 2: Rule of the Octave

Class 3: Suspensions

Class 4: Bass motions

Class 5: Scale mutations

This is not the order in which the rules are arranged in the sources—most of them follow a more or less haphazard organization. Taken as a whole, however, the content of the various *regole* exhibits a remarkable consistency, albeit with individual differences. As I have already said, partimento rules consist in large part of harmonic and contrapuntal patterns, the memorization of which is an essential prerequisite for partimento playing. In the short span

5 “Se mai trovassero regole mancanti, o errori, [i dotti Maestri] potranno aggiungere, ed accomodare a loro piacere, mentre qui altro non si è fatto se non mettere in ordine le regole, che da tutti molto bene si sanno, e dare a’ principianti un lume, acciò non suonino a caso” (55).

of an essay, it is impossible to detail all the partimento patterns. Therefore, I discuss only those that are used in the realization of the subsequent musical examples. The patterns are arranged according to the class of the rules.

Some partimento patterns and rules

Class 1: Basic axioms and procedures

Cadenze In partimento theory, cadences have a double meaning. They are closing formulas, but also the first significant tonal structure, composed with an opening tonic, a middle dominant, and a closing tonic. Fenaroli considers three types of cadences: simple (*semplice*), compound (*composta*), and double (*doppia*). They are ordered according to the number of beats required by the dominant. The simple cadence uses only the dominant triad (or seventh) and occupies one beat; the compound cadence uses a 4–3 suspension and takes up two beats; the double cadence needs four beats and consists of the formula $\begin{smallmatrix} 5 & 6 & 5 & 5 \\ 3 & 4 & 4 & 3 \end{smallmatrix}$. The performer can choose any of these cadences in one of the three positions, with the tonic (first position) or the third (second position) or the fifth (third position) in the top voice. Double cadences are best suited to the final cadence (if four beats are available).⁶ Example 1 shows the three kinds of cadences, in different positions and using different chords.

Cadential progressions The next example shows cadences in which the space between the opening tonic and the dominant is partially “filled in” through a stepwise ascent. In partimento sources, there is not a single, consistent way of labeling these motions, so I use the modern term “cadential progressions.”

Pasquini (I-Bc D. 138, 4–5) gives an account of this motion in the following way:

When one finds three notes [in the bass] that ascend stepwise, and the last leaps downwards a fifth, or upwards a fourth, we shall give to the first note [the chord of the] sixth; to the second, [the chord of the] fifth and sixth; to the third note, fourth and third, and with the fourth the fifth is given too. . . . To the note [of the bass immediately] before the cadence we shall always give fifth and sixth together, and to the last [before the close] remember to play the fourth followed by the third.⁷

This first rule illustrates the cadential progression $I_3^6 II_5^6 V_4^5 I$. Every time, as Pasquini says, that we find in the bass three notes ascending by step followed by a leap of a fifth down or a fourth up, we should use this chord progression. At the same time, he states as mandatory the six-five chord on ④ moving to ⑤,

⁶ These are the most common types of cadence, but there are others: for a complete list, see Sanguinetti (in press-b).

⁷ “Quando si trovano tre note che ascendono di grado e l’ultima salta di 5. in giù ò 4. in sù si farà alla prima 6. alla 2., 5., e 6. alla 3. nota, 4. e 3., e con la 4. ci si intende la 5.

come in esempio [example follows]. Alla nota sotto cadenza si dà sempre 5. e 6. assieme, et all’ultima si procuri di fare la 4; e poi la 3.”

Cadenze semplici

Cadenze composte

Cadenze doppie

The musical examples show three types of cadences: *Cadenze semplici*, *Cadenze composte*, and *Cadenze doppie*. Each example is presented in two systems, one for C major (one sharp) and one for C minor (no sharps or flats). The notation includes treble and bass staves with chords and fingerings indicated by numbers 3, 4, 5, and #.

Example 1. Simple, compound, and double cadences

and the 4–3 suspension on ⑤. At the beginning of Durante's collection of partimenti and *regole* known as the *Numerati*, and disseminated in countless copies in music libraries all over Europe, he offers examples of cadential progressions under the somewhat misleading name of *cadenze semplici*. In an example he shows the gradual filling in of the space between the opening tonic and the dominant. In the first progression (Example 2a) only II_5^6 appears as predominant degree; in the second (Example 2b) the opening tonic is expanded

(a) (b) (c)

The musical examples show three cadential progressions: (a), (b), and (c). Each example is presented in two systems, one for C major (one sharp) and one for C minor (no sharps or flats). The notation includes treble and bass staves with chords and fingerings indicated by numbers 4, 5, 6, and #.

Example 2. Cadential progressions

Example 3. Descending half step

through a lower neighbor with I_3^6 appearing on ③; in the third progression (Example 2c) the space of the fifth is totally filled in, and the result is the lower fifth of the ascending Rule of the Octave (see below).

Bass descending by half step There are basically three possibilities for a bass moving down a semitone. It can revert to its starting point to form a neighbor-tone pattern (Example 3a), it can descend further (Example 3b, a fragment of the Rule of the Octave), or it may stop after the half step (Example 3c). In the first case, the note after the semitone (sometimes called the *mi* tone) takes the sixth, or a sixth plus a *quinta falsa* (diminished fifth), and the *fa* tone above it takes a five-three chord. Durante calls the third case a *terminazione di grado*. This term means literally “stepwise ending,” which might be translated as “stepwise cadence.” In his example, Durante shows an archetypical Phrygian cadence: a descending tetrachord with a half step between the last two notes, and a 7–6 suspension on the next-to-last note. The motion ends with a half cadence on the dominant. In a *terminazione di grado* the situation is the reverse of the first case: the *mi* note (after the half step) will have a five-three chord with a major third (the dominant triad), and the sixth will be displaced on the note before the half step (the *fa* note). Very often, this *fa* note will last for two beats. In such cases the sixth is to be preceded by a suspended seventh.

Class 2: The Rule of the Octave

The Rule of the Octave is the most basic and important rule of the partimento tradition and might be considered without exaggeration the paradigm of the eighteenth-century concept of tonality. As Thomas Christensen (1992, 91) points out, “The idea behind the *règle* . . . is that each scale degree can be associated with a unique harmony, one which reciprocally defines that scale degree.” Thus, the Rule of the Octave (in its different versions) differs from any other scale-based sequential pattern—such as 5–6 ascending, or 7–6 descending—because sequential patterns transpose the same chords on every scale degree and therefore lack the key-defining power of the rule.

First described by the French lutenist François Campion (1716), the Rule of the Octave is a model for the harmonization of the major and minor

scale in both ascending and descending directions. Its central position in the partimento practice lies in the fact that the Rule of the Octave is the cornerstone of unfigured bass accompaniment. The Neapolitan masters favored several different versions of this rule, but eventually one version became standard, the one described by Fenaroli (see Example 4). The harmonic frame is the same as in Campion, but Fenaroli devises for this scale an efficient voice leading that makes it usable in all three positions. The Fenaroli scale settles the problem of consecutive six-three chords, which prevented some earlier versions from using all three positions, and avoids all direct successions of triads. The introduction of two dissonant six-five chords on ④ and ⑦ further reinforces the tonal coherence of the system. The only problematic connection is between ⑤ and ⑥, where the alto voice doubles the tenor, and the remaining voices are forced to rise in direct motion with the bass. Example 4 shows the Fenaroli scale realized in all three positions (with the octave, the third, and the fifth in the upper voice).

Class 3: Dissonances (suspensions)

In partimento theory only suspensions are considered dissonances. All other dissonances (those resulting from melodic motion) are considered part of diminution. For example, the seventh on the dominant is considered a passing tone, and is usually referred to as *quinta del tono con la passata della settima*. Of all four dissonances (fourth, seventh, ninth, and second), only the last, the second, occurs in the bass. In fact, every time a syncopated or tied note occurs in the bass, it is always treated as a suspension and is accompanied with a second and a fourth in the upper voices. The quality of the fourth depends on the direction of the bass motion. If the bass after the syncopation descends one half step and then comes back to the previous note, then the fourth of the accompaniment must be perfect (Example 5a). If the bass continues its descent, then the fourth will be augmented (Example 5b). In the first case, the bass outlines a lower-neighbor figure in the same scale. In the second case, after the syncopation, the bass proceeds four tones downward, and the note on which the motion ends will be considered a new tonic. In other words, the augmented fourth transforms the bass note that supports it into the fourth degree of a new scale. This was called an instance of scale mutation, or *terminazione di tono*.

Class 4: Bass motions

Bass motions can be divided in two groups: those with conjunct and disjunct motions. Conjunct motions include all stepwise progressions of the bass in the same direction, both diatonic and chromatic. Disjunct motions coincide mostly with sequences, that is, with regular transpositions of a model (an interval). Often conjunct bass motions (in themselves not sequential) may utilize

(a)

First position

Second position

Third position

Example 4. Rule of the Octave (Fenaroli). (a) Ascending. (b) Descending

sequential accompaniments (e.g., the several patterns for the accompaniment of the ascending scale as alternatives to the Rule of the Octave). Example 6 shows some of the most widely used of these patterns, both ascending and descending. The ascending patterns are 5–6 (Example 6a), 8–7–6 (Example 6b), and 10–9–8 (Example 6c); the descending are 5–6 (Example 6d), 3–#4–6 (Example 6e), 6–6 (Example 6f), and 7–6 (Example 6g).⁸

Chromatic (stepwise) motion descending Almost all descending patterns are elaborations of a series of 7–6 suspensions. The pattern shown in Example 7 is by far the favorite (but not the only) accompaniment for a descending chromatic motion. Examples of it abound in all musical literature. Its fame is due perhaps to its being the so-called *lamento bass*: the descending tetrachord that since the seventeenth century has been a symbol of lament in music. The 7–6 suspensions enhance the expressive power of the bass and call for a slower tempo than the diatonic 7–6. There are two positions: with tenths in the upper voice and with 7–6 suspensions in the upper voice.

⁸ Following Neapolitan usage, the “X” indicates the interval of the tenth above the bass.

(b)

First position

Second position

Third position

Example 4 (continued)

(a)

(b)

Example 5. The 2–3 suspension in the bass. (a) Without terminazione (neighboring motion).
(b) With terminazione (descending motion)

(a)

Example 6(a) shows a conjunct (scalar) motion ascending in the right hand, with accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand accompaniment consists of eighth notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C).

(b)

Example 6(b) shows a conjunct (scalar) motion ascending in the right hand, with accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand accompaniment consists of eighth notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C).

(c)

Example 6(c) shows a conjunct (scalar) motion ascending in the right hand, with accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The left hand accompaniment consists of eighth notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C).

(d)

Example 6(d) shows a conjunct (scalar) motion descending in the right hand, with accompaniment in the left hand. The right hand melody consists of eighth notes: C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The left hand accompaniment consists of eighth notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C).

Example 6. (a, b, c) Conjunct (scalar) motion ascending with several possible accompaniments. (d, e, f, g) Conjunct (scalar) motion descending with several possible accompaniments

(e)

Example 6(e) is a musical score in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of four measures. The treble clef staff contains chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-A4-B4, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The bass clef staff contains notes with figured bass: 3, #4, 6, 3, #4, 6, 3, #4, 6, and a final G2. The notes in the bass are G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, and G2.

(f)

Example 6(f) is a musical score in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of four measures. The treble clef staff contains chords: G4-B4-D5, G4-A4-B4, G4-B4-D5, and G4-B4-D5. The bass clef staff contains notes with figured bass: 5, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, #6, and a final G2. The notes in the bass are G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, and G2.

(g)

Example 6(g) is a musical score in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of four measures. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4. The bass clef staff contains notes with figured bass: 5, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6, 7, 6, 8, and a final G2. The notes in the bass are G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, and G2.

Example 6 (continued)

(a)

(b)

Example 7(a) and (b) are musical scores in G major, 3/4 time. Example 7(a) consists of two measures. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4. The bass clef staff contains notes with figured bass: 5, 6, 7, 6, 7, #6, #, and a final G2. The notes in the bass are G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, and G2. Example 7(b) consists of two measures. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4. The bass clef staff contains notes with figured bass: 5, 6, 7, 6, 7, #6, #, and a final G2. The notes in the bass are G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, G3, A3, B3, and G2.

Example 7. Chromatic descent from ⑥ to ⑤. (a) Position with tenths in the top voice.

(b) Position with 7-6 suspensions in the top voice

(a)



(b)



(c)



Example 10. Three versions of the bass ascending by fourths and descending by fifths.

(a) Simple (with triads only). (b) With suspended ninth. (c) With chain of sevenths

semitone motion is described by all collections of rules and corresponds with one of the oldest continuo rules. We can read it in the earliest sources, such as Galeazzo Sabbatini (1628) and Lorenzo Penna (1672). Scarlatti (I-MOe Campori γ-L.9.41, c. 4r) calls this the *regola universale indispensabile* (universal and indispensable rule) and extends its application both to diatonic (*per natura*) and to chromatic (*per accidente*) half steps. Similarly, Pasquini (I-Bc D. 138, 4) admits its validity to “all notes that we call *mi fa*.” The rule states that the note moving upward is accompanied by the sixth, and the next note by the fifth. The sequential motion is diatonic and therefore also uses ascending whole tones. But it always begins on one of the two diatonic semitones: ③–④ or ⑦–⑧. A sequence with only two occurrences, where the first triad is minor and the

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

Example 11. Bass ascending by step and descending by thirds. (a) Alternating six-three chords and triads. (b) Alternating six-five chords and triads. (c) Alternating six-three chords and 9–8 suspensions. (d) Alternating ninths and seventh chords. (e) Alternating triads and 9–8 suspensions

second is major, was called by Joseph Riepel a Fonte (1755). Example 11 shows five possible accompaniments: except for the last, all derive from the first.

Class 5: Scale mutations (*terminazioni di tono*)

The descending motion called by Durante *terminazione di grado* (see Example 3) is a special case of *terminazione di tono*, an event described by all partimento masters except Fenaroli. The term means literally “key ending,” and it indicates a tonal motion that ends in some different key. It has obvious affinities with the concepts of modulation and tonicization, but its specific meaning is related to the practice of unfigured bass. The accompaniment of a bass without figures depends entirely on the awareness of the scale that is in use at any moment. Without a clear understanding of the local key, the accompanist would be totally lost. When he identifies one of the patterns of a *terminazione di tono*, the partimento player knows that the scale he has been using is going to change to a new one, and that he must base the new patterns on the new scale. For this reason, I suggest translating *terminazione di tono* as “scale mutation.”

Furno (I-Nc Od. 1.6/1) describes four bass motions that may induce a scale mutation, two ascending and two descending (as discussed below, there are also other ways to produce a scale mutation). When the bass moves up a semitone, the two notes a minor second apart become ⑦ and ① of the new scale. When the bass moves up a whole tone, the two notes a major second apart become ④ and ⑤ of the new scale. When the bass moves down a semitone, the two notes a minor second apart become ⑥ and ⑤ of the new scale. When the bass moves down a whole tone, the two notes a major second apart become ② and ① of the new scale. The Phrygian cadence described by Durante as *terminazione di grado* clearly must have a fermata on the last note. But this is not necessary for a *terminazione di tono*, which is usually followed by a confirmation of the new scale (through a cadence or a cadential progression).

A simple realization of an unfigured partimento: Fenaroli, book 4, no. 2

The selection of patterns I have hitherto introduced, though only a fraction of those offered by Fenaroli and the other masters, may allow us to sketch a realization of a simple unfigured partimento. A good choice would be the second lesson from Fenaroli’s book 4, which consists entirely of unfigured partimenti. The partimento is reproduced in Example 12. The numbered brackets are my addition and show a segmentation of the bass line with reference to the patterns listed below.

Example 12 shows the following patterns:

1. Chromatic descending motion from ⑧ to ⑤
2. Cadential progression ③ ④ ⑤ ①
3. 2–3 suspension with *terminazione di tono*

Example 12. Fenaroli book 4, no. 2 (with symbols added)

4. Cadenza
5. Ascending stepwise and descending by third
6. Chromatic ascent

For the accompaniment to the first segment we can choose one of the two positions of the pattern in Example 7. The choice depends on the appropriate level of rhythmic activity in the upper voice, and the possibility of a smooth voice-leading connection with the next pattern.

Segment 2 (bars 2–3, 8–9, and 17–19) consists of a cadential progression ③ ④ ⑤ ① and entails the chord progression $I_3^6-II_3^6-V_3^5-I$. Since the dominant lasts only one beat, there is no place for 4–3 suspensions such as those shown by Durante in Example 2. Notice the passing tone that connects the beginning of segment two with the previous segment. In all three instances, this will be left unaccompanied.

The main feature in segment 3 consists of a suspension in the bass. Rules of class 3 state that all suspended basses must be accompanied by a four-two chord (the sixth is a frequent, though not strictly necessary, addition). The problem is the quality of the fourth—is it perfect or augmented? Usually con-

tinuo basses indicate this with the appropriate figures, but there *are* no figures in Fenaroli's book 4. The problem is easily resolved if we observe the behavior of the bass. After the descending resolution, it does not come back to the first note, but continues its descent a fifth downward. We recognize the figure known as a bass suspension with scale mutation (*con terminazione di tono*), and according to the above-mentioned rule, we also know that the quality of the fourth in the suspension must be augmented.

Segment 4 (bars 5–6 and 14–15) consists of the bass leaping a fifth or a fourth. This motion is called a *cadenza* and in its complete form entails a motion from a tonic to a dominant and back to a tonic (the motion in bars 14–15 is an incomplete *cadenza* repeated twice). As we have seen in connection with the rules of class 1, the Neapolitan masters classified the *cadenze* according to the metrical units of the dominant. In both cases the dominant lasts two beats, thus allowing the metrical space for a *cadenza composta*. However, in bars 5–6 a *cadenza doppia* is a good possibility because the bass leaping by octave allows the two beats needed for the 4–3 suspension without voice-leading complications. Conversely, the double cadence (with 4–3 suspension) is not a good choice for the same segment in bars 14–15 because the bass moves to the third together with the resolution of the suspension. A simple cadence is better suited here.

For segment 5 we have an ample choice of patterns, but for the moment we shall confine ourselves to the simplest one (this passage is designed for a different kind of elaboration). For the chromatic ascent in bars 12–14, we can use the ascending pattern shown in Example 9.

Now we can sketch a first attempt at a realization. The realization in Example 13, though intended as a first stage, is in truth a hybrid because it incorporates passages with suspensions. Indeed, for the chromatic segments 1 and 6, even the simplest accompaniment patterns already include suspensions. On the other hand, other passages, like bars 14–15 and, particularly, bars 9–11, sound empty and dull. A further stage of elaboration will find a solution to these problems. What makes bars 9–11 sound unconvincing is the sudden stop of the rhythmic activity in the second half of bars 9 and 10. Although the surface rhythm of this partimento often moves by eighth notes, the essential rhythmic pulse—the rate with which harmonic and voice-leading events change—moves by quarter notes throughout the piece. The halt in bars 9 and 10, therefore, is not accidental. Rather, it is a signal that something must take place here. This something is an imitation. Example 14 shows a further stage of elaboration for bars 9 to 15.

In general, we can state this principle: in partimento practice, any abrupt interruption of the rhythmic pulse calls for a continuation of the same rhythm in the accompaniment, and often signals the entrance of an imitation. The

Example 13. A basic realization of Fenaroli book 4, no. 2

Example 14. Fenaroli book 4, no. 2, bars 9–15 (further elaboration)

performer, therefore, must restore the rhythmic continuity of the partimento by introducing a complementary rhythm. (For a more chromatic realization of this same partimento, see the article by Stella, this issue.)

Shaping a partimento: The art of diminution

The pedagogy of diminution was developed in Italy during the Renaissance and the Baroque era and was codified in several famous treatises. These range from early examples like Sylvestro Ganassi's *Fontegara* (1535) and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli's *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali et motetti passeggiati* (1594) to later ones like Francesco Rognoni's *Selva de varii passaggi* (1620). Although in Europe this pedagogical tradition eventually became obsolete, in Naples diminution continued as an essential part of composition training well into the eighteenth century. A counterpoint student trained in the Durante tradition would practice endlessly writing diminutions on partimento schemata such as the *cadenze*, the Rule of the Octave, and the different bass patterns. According to the surviving documents, Leonardo Leo's tradition was different and closer to a Fuxian approach (see Sanguinetti, in press-a). As has been mentioned, rules explaining exactly how to transform a basic realization into a more elaborate composition do not exist. There are, however, several sources from which we may infer some principles about advanced realization. Some authors, and most notably Durante in his *Diminuiti* and Fenaroli in his book 5, provide a few bars of realization before some partimenti in order to give the performer a hint about the intended texture and thematic content. In addition, there are some realizations of partimenti from the early nineteenth century (mostly in manuscript) that may give us an idea of how an advanced style of partimento realization might sound.

In general, one might say that if the simple realization of a partimento resembles a standard continuo realization, the decorated realization differs in the following features:

- (a) The rhythmic activity of the right hand is usually faster than the harmonic rhythm.
- (b) The right-hand line often consists of a "polyphonic" melody.
- (c) The left hand may take part in the realization of inner voices.
- (d) The realization follows the principle of complementary rhythms.

One might perhaps say that the process of reworking a continuo-like realization of a partimento into a version with diminutions is the exact opposite of the reduction of a complete composition in what Rothstein (1991) calls the "imaginary continuo."

As mentioned above, there are very few surviving documents of realized partimenti, especially from the central period of the tradition—the eighteenth century. The reason is that partimenti were used for improvised performance, so there was little need for written-out realizations. At the beginning of

the nineteenth century, however, the practice of improvisation declined, and partimenti began to be realized in written form. Thus, the nature of the partimento underwent a slow but inexorable transformation into the harmony exercise (the typical late-nineteenth-century realization of a Fenaroli partimento is a four-voice, block-chord, melodically steady school work). Luckily, some early-nineteenth-century realizations have survived (and perhaps more are to be discovered) that may allow us a glimpse into the authentic tradition. One of the most significant documents is the manuscript I-MOe F.370 in the Estense library in Modena, which contains the realization of partimenti by Fenaroli and Durante.⁹ The author of the realizations, Angelo Catelani, studied partimento in the Real Collegio di Musica in Naples with Giovanni Furno, a disciple of Carlo Cotumacci, who was in turn a student of Durante (his other teachers at the Real Collegio di Musica were Gaetano Donizetti, Nicolò Zingarelli, and Girolamo Crescentini). The date of the manuscript is unknown, but Catelani states in his autobiography that he joined the Real Collegio in 1831, so this manuscript must have been written shortly after. Since the line of transmission is very short and direct, we can take Catelani's realizations as closely representative of the Durante tradition.

As an example I have chosen a partimento from one of the two surviving series of *partimenti di Durante*, the so-called *Diminuiti* (Example 15). Durante's partimenti have been transmitted through countless manuscript copies, and only recently have been published on paper by Giuseppe Pastore (Durante 2003) and on the Web site *Monuments of Partimenti* edited by Robert Gjerdengen.¹⁰ The partimento is listed as no. 20 in the online edition, and as no. 12 of the Pastore edition.

The *Diminuiti* are totally unfigured, but Durante supplied for each of them a few bars of hints for their realization, usually with alternative solutions. The performer may choose his or her favorite model of texture and apply it to the whole partimento or, of course, invent a different solution. Both possibilities offered by Durante for partimento no. 20 point to a light texture in the style of a two-voice invention. The partimento is clearly subdivided in phrases by the cadences, easily recognizable by the bass leaping an octave.¹¹ The leap occupies two beats, so the cadences belong to the second type, the *cadenza composta*, and need therefore a 4–3 suspension. The first challenge posed to the performer is the completion of the first phrase (mm. 1–6), which overlaps the beginning of the second phrase (mm. 6–9). The second phrase repeats the beginning of the first, but the G# in bar 7 sets out a scale mutation followed by

⁹ The content of the manuscript consists of the realization of 24 partimenti from Fenaroli's first four books, plus bks. 5 and 6 of Fenaroli (complete) and an appendix with the realizations of 24 partimenti of Durante.

¹⁰ Pastore's edition is based on an eighteenth-century manuscript (I-LE Pastore MS.A.5) that has been in the possession of his family for several generations. Unfortunately, this

edition is flawed by an exceptionally high number of errors, which make it unsuitable for any use (except, perhaps, as a thematic catalog).

¹¹ Throughout this article, by "phrase" I mean a group of bars concluded by a cadence. In the case of a group of cadences, the phrase is concluded by the last cadence of the group.

(a)



(b)



Example 15. Durante, *Diminuiti* no. 20. (a) The partimento. (b) Durante's hints for realization

a cadence in the key of the minor dominant, the correct realization of which is the purpose of this second phrase. The third phrase (mm. 10–15) repeats the first exactly, but transposed up a fifth, so transposition here is the new task. Phrase 4 (mm. 16–29) exhibits a progressive fragmentation of the material exposed in the first phrases. The initial part of this phrase (mm. 16–21) consists of two-bar units composed of the first eight notes of the first phrase followed by the last two beats of bar 5. This unit is twice transposed up a third. In bar 22, after the third transposition, the performer abruptly encounters a new fragment, which is a slight modification of bar 2. The immediate recognition of it, and the matching of it with its correct counterpart, is probably the most difficult challenge that this partimento presents to the performer. Bars 23–28 consist of the repetition and transposition of a descending tetrachord followed, and concluded, by a cadence in the home key. It is not immediately

Example 16. Motivic overlapping in bars 22–30 of Catelani's realization

obvious that the tetrachord derives from the conclusion of the figure in bar 22, which in turn appears already in bars 2–3. The performer should therefore utilize the correspondent right-hand figures and at the same time attempt to coordinate them into a continuous, flowing eighth-note rhythm. The fifth phrase pushes the limit of the minor hexachord that so far had contained the left-hand figures and moves up all the way through the octave. The performer now faces the delicate problem of the alterations in the minor scale. The last phrase consists in a reiteration of the closing cadence, preceded by a twofold repetition of the descending tetrachord.

In his realization, Catelani chooses the second model, keeping essentially to a two-voice texture. Occasional entrances of a third voice fill in the harmony or make explicit an inner voice already hinted at in the polyphonic melody of bar 2 of Durante's template (the complete realization is shown in Example 16).

The technique of realization is based primarily on the memorization, and recognition, of the matching patterns of bass and upper voice. In the first phrase, the bass essentially ascends and slowly descends through the lower tetrachord of the D-minor scale, and the upper voice accompanies this motion by moving in tenths with the bass, thus continuing the model of realization suggested by Durante. Incidentally, this realization corresponds to the typical "Prinner" schema of the galant style, as described by Gjerdingen (2007, 45–60). For the first cadence in bar 5, Catelani chooses an unusual ascending realization using a series of three successive reaching-over motions. This solution allows the second phrase to develop in the upper register, which gives space for the elaborate cadence in bars 8 and 9. For the realization of the

The musical score for Example 17, Durante no. 20 (Catelani), is presented in six systems. Each system contains two staves, a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first system (bars 1-6) shows a descending tetrachord in the bass and a corresponding melody in the treble. The second system (bars 7-12) continues the sequence. The third system (bars 13-19) shows further fragmentation. The fourth system (bars 20-25) continues the sequence. The fifth system (bars 26-31) shows further fragmentation. The sixth system (bars 32-37) concludes the piece with a final cadence.

Example 17. Durante no. 20 (Catelani)

third phrase (mm. 10–15), Catelani transposes exactly his realization of the first phrase, except for the cadence that now is kept in the low register. Bars 16–21 of the fourth phrase are obviously realized as a sequence. Far less obvious is the realization of the further fragmentation in bars 23–29. As we have already observed, this passage is made entirely with a descending tetrachord that is directly derived from the conclusion of the preceding phrase (and, less directly, from the structural bass notes in bars 2–5). Instead of accompa-

nying the bass with the corresponding upper-voice fragment as in bars 2–3 (four notes in parallel motion by tenths), Catelani chooses the more complex solution shown in Example 16. In doing so, he overlaps the repetition (on different registers) of the same tetrachord in the bass (D–C–B–A, bars 23–25; C–B–A–G, bars 25–27: see lower brackets in Example 17) with three different motives (a, b, c: see the upper brackets in Example 17; incidentally, bracket “b” corresponds to the Fonte schema).

After the cadence in bar 28, the ascending motion that begins the first phrase continues through a complete octave. Catelani takes this as encouragement for an imitation, so instead of overlapping the end of phrase 4 with the beginning of phrase 5, he leaves the first bar of the new phrase (m. 29) unaccompanied and starts an imitation on the next bar. In the last phrase, Durante seems to suggest a close on two registers: first with the repetition of the tetrachord (mm. 33–35), then with the repetition of the *cadenza semplice* (mm. 36–38). The realization adheres strictly to this disposition but seems to distinguish between a principal and a secondary register. In fact, Catelani chooses to conclude the upper register with a stronger cadence in first position, and the lower with a weaker cadence in second position.

An advanced realization of an unfigured partimento: Fenaroli book 4, no. 13

Keeping in mind the essential principles of the advanced realization and the example of Catelani, we might attempt to realize an unfigured partimento using diminutions and imitations in order to obtain an idiomatic keyboard texture (see Example 18). As always, the first step will be an analysis of the bass, and its segmentation into recognizable patterns. This task is more difficult to accomplish here than in Fenaroli’s book 4, no. 2 (Example 12), because the bass itself is much more elaborated, and the essential rhythmic pulse ranges from one each bar (as in bars 1–4) to three (as in bars 5–6).

The patterns are as follows:

1. Stepwise ascent ①–⑤
2. Cadential progression ①) ③ ④ ⑤ ①
3. *Do-si-do* (complement to *do-re-mi*)
4. Descending by thirds (triads)
5. Scale mutation with ascending semitone ⑦–⑧
6. Ascending by fourths and descending by fifths
7. ⑥–① in minor

The next preliminary step is the identification of the phrases (the span of music delimited by the cadences). In this partimento there is only one kind of cadence, the cadential progression ④–(②)–⑤–⑧, with ② acting (when present) as an embellishment of ④. These cadential progressions are in bars 6–7, 13–14, 18–19 (repeated in 20–21), 27–28, 34–35, 39–40, and 45 (repeated).

The musical score is written in bass clef, 3/8 time, and D major. It consists of 48 measures, divided into eight systems of six measures each. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with various phrasing slurs and fingerings indicated by numbers 1 through 7. The piece ends with a double bar line in the final measure.

Example 18. Fenaroli book 4, no. 13

So, if we discard the reiterated cadences (e.g., those in bars 19–21 and 45–48), there are seven phrases.

The phrases are grouped in a ternary form with recapitulation: the first section (A) is composed with phrases 1–3; section B, with phrases 4 and 5; section A', with phrases 6 and 7.

Phrase 1: Bars 1–7 An elementary voice-leading analysis will confirm that the sixteenth notes in bars 1–4 are diminutions of a single note, the first

one in each bar. The essential motion in these bars is therefore a segment of the D-major scale, D–E–F \sharp –G–A (segment 1: bars 1–5). As we have seen in the second section of the present essay, there are several ways to accompany an ascending motion. The first and most important is the Rule of the Octave. According to it, we should give a five-three to the D, a six-four-three to the E, a six-three to the F \sharp , a five-three (or six-five) to the G, and a five-three to the A. In his book 3, Fenaroli lists other patterns for the accompaniment of the ascending stepwise motion: the 5–6, the 7–6, and the 9–8 (see Example 6). At this stage, there is no way to tell which pattern is the better suited for this occasion. A good strategy is to wait for other hints before choosing one solution. This first phrase is closed with a cadential progression (segment 2: bars 5–7) in which bass degrees ③ and ④ are slightly embellished by a skip down a third. As usual, cadences bring about a slowing down of the surface rhythm and an acceleration of the harmonic rhythm.

Phrase 2: Bars 7–14 After the cadence we might expect that the rhythm resumes the original pace in sixteenths, but instead it keeps moving in eighth notes. This sudden slowing down of the surface rhythm very often signals the presence of thematic elements in double counterpoint and the possibility for imitation. The essential figure of segment 3 is ③ ⑦ ⑧ or *do-si-do*, a pattern that in partimento practice always combines with its complement, ① ② ③ or *do-re-mi* (for the terms *do-si-do* and *do-re-mi*, see Gjerdingen 2007, 77–88). This latter figure, in turn, corresponds to the first three notes of segment 1: segments 1 and 3 are therefore in double counterpoint (at least for the first three notes). This discovery has remarkable consequences for the realization of both segments. Concerning segment 1, the *do-si-do* pattern coincides with the first three notes of the upper voice in first position of the Rule of the Octave. Accordingly, this will be the basis for the accompaniment to segment 1. Conversely, as an accompaniment to segment 3, the right hand will reproduce exactly the first three bars of the bass. The imitation cannot proceed beyond the third bar—the fourth bar of segment 1 is in fact incompatible with the beginning of the new segment 4 (bar 9). The rule governing the accompaniment of this segment is very simple. It states that every new bass note must have a triad. Clearly, a sudden break in the sixteenth run is hardly desirable here, so a way to continue the previous motion must be found. The third bass note of this pattern, however, is chromatically raised—G \sharp instead of G \natural . This is the ascending *terminazione di tono* (scale mutation) described in class 5 as the first of Furno's four *terminazioni di tono* and brings in the new scale of A major (cadential confirmation follows immediately after). According to the rule, the chromatically raised note in the bass must have the sixth, not the fifth (a diminished fifth—*quinta falsa*—may be added to the sixth chord). The last two bars of the phrase consist in a cadential progression. Even if the surface rhythm continues as before, the cadence allows a slower pace in the right hand.

Phrase 3: Bars 14–21 This phrase is divided in two segments: segment 5 (bars 14–17) is a sequence composed with a model and three transpositions,

clearly followed by a repeated cadential progression leading to a fermata. The sequence in segment 5 is called by Fenaroli “bass ascending by fourth and descending by fifth” and allows a large number of possible accompaniments: Example 10 shows a small selection of patterns. In order to be used in this context, any pattern of accompaniment must be converted into a fast and light texture, using the appropriate diminutions. The following cadential progressions may or may not alternate eighths and sixteenths in complementary motion with the bass.

Phrase 4: Bars 22–28 According to Durante, when a stepwise dyad occurs in the bass with the two tones a half step apart, and the motion stops on the second tone, the first or *fa* tone needs the sixth, and the second or *mi* tone the fifth. The C \natural –B motion corresponds also to the third of Furno’s four *terminazioni di tono* and will be confirmed by a cadence at the end of the phrase. These rapid notes represent a diminution of a bass that essentially circles around B (with G supporting a neighboring harmony). We understand this tonally ambiguous passage properly only in retrospect, when the cadential progression in bars 26–28 makes it clear that the local key is E minor, and the C is the (natural) sixth degree of this scale. The Rule of the Octave offers several possibilities for this scale degree. When lowered ⑥ descends on ⑤, we can use the minor third and major sixth, minor third and augmented sixth, or minor third, augmented fourth, and augmented sixth.

Phrase 5: Bars 28–35 Phrase 5 brings the harmony from II back to I. Bars 28–33 are a transposition one step lower of bars 21–26. Together they form a large-scale Fonte, one which makes use of root-position dominants (instead of six-five, first-inversion ones). This scheme will affect the realization, too, suggesting that we make bar 28 as a variant of bar 21, despite the different harmonic situation. The bass in m. 21 makes use of the ascending *terminazione di tono* (scale mutation) described in class 5 as the first of Furno’s four *terminazioni di tono*. The C \sharp of the previous phrase is now corrected as C \natural in bar 29, followed by D in bar 30: the two notes a semitone apart become ⑦ and ① of D major, and the new key is confirmed by two cadential progressions, the second “nested” within the first (see the nested brackets in bars 28–33 of Example 18).

Phrases 6 and 7: Bars 35–40 and 40–48 These two phrases together form the recapitulation. Their order is inverted, so that phrase 6 corresponds to phrase 2 (except for the scale mutation) and phrase 7 to phrase 1. With all the preceding observations in mind, we may now attempt to draft a possible realization of Fenaroli book 4, no. 13 (see Example 19).

* * *

Given the introductory nature of this essay, the issue of partimento realization cannot be taken much beyond its first steps. As I hinted at earlier, partimenti could assume virtually every genre, form, and style of music, especially, though not exclusively, styles of keyboard music. Leonardo Leo was especially fond

Example 19. A realization of Fenaroli book 4, no. 13

of partimenti in the style of a concerto or a toccata. Durante wrote beautiful examples of Galant sonatas in partimento notation. At the beginning of the tradition, Bernardo Pasquini and Gaetano Greco wrote organ *versetti* as partimenti. And, of course, fugue was considered the crowning glory of all partimento studies and was practiced by all Neapolitan masters. Besides those already mentioned, Pasquale Cafaro, Cotumacci, Sala, Zingarelli, and many others left behind partimento fugues. The realization of these different genres, forms, and styles of partimenti clearly encompasses more subtle and intricate issues than those I have dealt with here, but the fundamental tasks of realization do not change: memorization of the rules, analysis of the bass, recognition of patterns, and—above all—a mind open to all possible suggestions that the composer disseminated in the partimento itself.



Example 19 (continued)

As I have said, there are very few surviving written realizations of partimenti, and most of them are from the nineteenth century. Of eighteenth-century realizations, very little is known. The reason for the paucity of written realization from what we might call the “golden age” of partimento is simple—as mentioned, realizations were improvised. It is likely, therefore, that all the stages we went through—analysis, pattern identification, recognition of harmonic rhythm, problems of voice leading, localization of cadences, and so on—were instantly negotiated without the need for reflection. Equally likely is that this (almost) unconscious act of composing was the goal toward which the Neapolitan masters tirelessly trained their pupils. So an eighteenth-century student at Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini probably would make his (I am afraid that students in the four conservatories were all male) first attempts at partimento playing by following a path more or less as I have described it. As his skills became more secure, however, he could simply let his fingers “compose” for him in a quasi-automatic way.

Every day, for five to ten years, composition students in Naples had lessons from their masters, who instructed them in partimento, counterpoint, singing, and free composition. This was (at least initially) based on solfeggi, which might well be considered as the natural extension of partimento training. If we keep in mind that during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the Naples conservatories were the only institutionalized music schools in the world, it is clear that a composer who graduated in Naples was supposed to have had the best possible professional training. Among the students’ most

impressive skills were not only the ability to compose with astounding rapidity but also the dexterity to emulate different styles convincingly, skills indispensable if one wanted to survive in the boisterous opera market of the eighteenth (and nineteenth) century. Partimento training played a decisive role in the development of these skills and contributed greatly in shaping eighteenth-century compositional technique.

Works Cited

- Arnold, Franck Thomas. 1931. *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass as Practiced in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Facs. New York: Dover, 1965.
- Bovicelli, Giovanni Battista. 1594. *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali et motetti passeggiati*. Venice: G. Vincenti. Facs. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1957; Rome: Società Italiana del Flauto Dolce, 1986.
- Buelow, Georg J. 1986. *Thorough-Bass. Accompaniment According to Johann David Heinichen*. Rev. ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Campion, François. 1716. *Traité d'accompagnement et de composition selon la règle des octaves de musique*. Paris. Facs. Geneva: Minkoff, 1976.
- Christensen, Thomas. 1992. "The Règle de l'Octave in Thorough-Bass Theory and Practice." *Acta Musicologica* 64: 91–117.
- Durante, Francesco. 2003. *Bassi e fughe. Un manuale inedito per riscoprire la vera prassi esecutiva della Scuola Napoletana del Settecento*. Ed. G. A. Pastore. Padova: Armelin Musica.
- Fenaroli, Fedele. 1775. *Regole musicali per i principianti di cembalo*. Naples: Mazzola-Vocola. Facs. Bologna: Forni, 1975.
- . n.d. [ca. 1850]. *Partimenti ossia basso numerato*. Florence: G. Canti. Facs. Bologna: Forni, 1978.
- Ganassi, Sylvestro. 1535. *Opera intitulata Fontegara*. Venice: S. Ganassi dal Fontego. Facs. Milan: La Musica Moderna, 1934; Bologna: Forni, 1969; Rome: Società Italiana del Flauto Dolce, 1991. Trans. and ed. Hildemarie Peter. Berlin: Lienau, 1959.
- Gasparini, Francesco. 1708. *L'armonico pratico al cembalo*. Venice: A. Bortoli. Facs. New York: Broude Brothers, 1967.
- Gjerdingen, Robert O. 2007. *Music in the Galant Style*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- , ed. *Monuments of Partimenti*. <http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/music/gjerdingen/partimenti/index.htm>.
- Guarnaccia, Emanuele. [ca. 1851]. *Metodo nuovamente riformato de'partimenti arricchito di schiarimenti e di una completa imitazione dal maestro Emanuele Guarnaccia*. 2nd ed., 2 vols. Milan: Ricordi (Publ. No. 22891–22892).
- Paisiello, Giovanni. 1782. *Regole per bene accompagnare il partimento, o sia il basso fondamentale sopra il cembalo*. St. Petersburg: Pechashano v Tipographia Morskago shliakheshnago kadeshskago korpusa.
- Penna, Lorenzo. 1672. *Li primi albori musicali*. Bologna: P. G. Monti.
- Riepel, Joseph. 1755. *Grundregeln zur Tonordnung insgemein*. Frankfurt: Lotter.
- Rognoni, Francesco. 1620. *Selva de varii passaggi*. Milan: F. Lomazzo. Facs. Bologna: Forni, 1970.
- Rothstein, William. 1991. "On Implied Tones." *Music Analysis* 10: 289–328.
- Sabbatini, Galeazzo. 1628. *Regola facile e breve per ben sonare sopra il basso continuo nell'organo, manacordo o altro simile stromento*. Venice: Salvatori.

- Sanguinetti, Giorgio. In press-a. "Diminution and Harmony-oriented Counterpoint in Late Eighteenth Century Naples: Vincenzo Lavigna's Studies with Fedele Fenaroli." In *Schenkerian Analysis—Analyse nach Heinrich Schenker*, ed. Oliver Schwab-Felisch, Michael Polth, and Hartmut Fladt. Hildesheim: Olms.
- . In press-b. *The Art of Partimento in Naples: History, Theory and Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tritto, Giacomo. 1816. *Partimenti e regole generali per conoscere qual numerica dar si vede a vari movimenti del basso*. Milan: Artaria.

Manuscript Sources

- [Catelani, Angelo]. *Fenaroli. Partimenti disposti secondo i principi della scuola di Napoli—con appendice*. Modena, Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria (I-MOe) F.370.
- Cotumacci, Carlo. *Principi e regole di partimenti*. Naples, Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Biblioteca (I-Nc) Rari I.9.14/1.
- Durante, Francesco. *Partimenti, ossia intero studio di numerati per ben suonare il cembalo*. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale (I-Bc) E.E 171.
- Furno, Giovanni. *Regole di Partimenti*. Naples, Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Biblioteca (I-Nc) Od. 1.6/1.
- Insanguine, Giacomo. *Regole con moti di basso partimenti, e fuge [sic] del M[ae]stro G[iaco]mo Insanguine detto Monopoli*. Milan, Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, Biblioteca (I-Mc) Noseda Th.c-116 a.
- Paisiello, Giovanni. *Regole e partimenti*. Naples, Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Biblioteca (I-Nc) 3.4.17 bis.
- Pasquini, Bernardo. 1715. *Regole del Sig. Bernardo Pasquini per accompagnare con il cembalo*. Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale (I-Bc) D. 138.
- Sala, Nicola. *Elementi per ben sonare il Cembalo*. Naples, Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Biblioteca (I-Nc) S.1.94.
- Scarlatti, Alessandro. *Lezioni, toccate d'intavolatura per sonare il cembalo*. Modena, Biblioteca Estense e Universitaria (I-MOe) I-MOe Campori γ-L.9.41. Facs., with an introduction by Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini. Bologna: Forni, 1999.
- . *Principi del sig. re Cavaliere Alesandro Scarlatti*. London, British Library (GB-Lbl) Ms. Add. 14244.
- Valente, Saverio. *Partimenti principii di cembalo del sig. D. Saverio Valente accademico filarmonico*. Milan, Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, Biblioteca (I-Mc) Noseda Q 13–15.
- . *[Scale e partimenti]*. Milan, Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, Biblioteca (I-Mc) Noseda Q 13–16.
- . *Partimenti di Saverio Valente accademico filarmonico*. Milan, Conservatorio di Musica Giuseppe Verdi, Biblioteca (I-Mc) Noseda Q 13–17.

Giorgio Sanguinetti is professor of music at the University of Tor Vergata, Rome. He has written on the history of music theory, on Schenkerian analysis, and on classical form and is currently writing a book on the history, theory, and practice of *partimento*. 

