

Chapter 8

Triads in First Inversion

MUS 112 – Wednesday March 29

Molloy College

First Inversion Triads

- Most chord progressions will contain at least one chord in first inversion
 - This is not a necessity, but it is very common

Bass Arpeggiation

- One way in which first inversion triads often originate is through bass arpeggiation.
 - In the previous example, we saw that the bass line was improved with arpeggiation without changing the harmony.
- We often see fast arpeggios are used to create accompaniment figures in piano music.
 - i.e. Alberti bass
- When this happens, the lowest note in the bass is considered to be the bass voice, with the other notes in the arpeggio filling the role of inner voices.
 - It helps to create a “textural reduction” of such music.

12

12

p

Ab: I V⁶ I

This musical score shows measures 12 and 13. The key signature has four flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The melody in the treble clef consists of eighth notes in measure 12 and a half note in measure 13, with a slur over the final two notes. The bass line in measure 12 features four groups of beamed eighth notes, each marked with a '3' for triplet. In measure 13, the bass line continues with four groups of beamed eighth notes. The dynamics are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 12. Chord symbols 'Ab: I', 'V⁶', and 'I' are placed below the bass staff.

Textural reduction

This section shows the textural reduction of the previous measures. The treble staff contains a half note in measure 12 and a half note in measure 13, with a slur over the final two notes. The bass staff contains a half note in measure 12 and a half note in measure 13, with a slur over the final two notes. The dynamics are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic in measure 12. Chord symbols 'Ab: I', 'V⁶', and 'I' are placed below the bass staff.

A musical score for measures 19-22. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including some beamed sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is in treble clef with the same key signature. It features a complex texture with multiple beamed sixteenth notes and eighth notes, some of which are marked with a 'b' (basso) and a 'q' (quarta) indicating specific intervals or positions. The measures are separated by bar lines.

Textural reduction

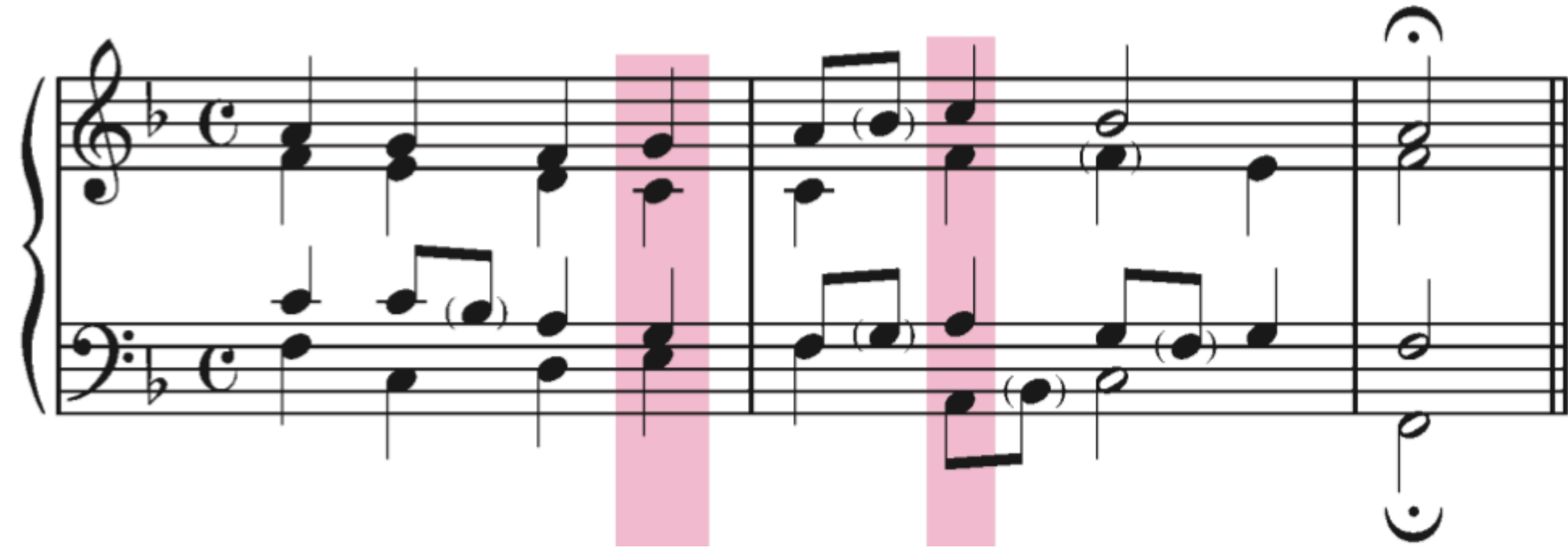
A textural reduction of the musical score for measures 19-22. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three flats. It shows a simplified melodic line with half notes and whole notes, connected by a slur. The bottom staff is in bass clef with the same key signature. It shows a simplified bass line with half notes and whole notes, also connected by a slur. The measures are separated by bar lines.

Substituted First Inversion Triads

- There are three reasons that we may substitute a root position triad with a first inversion triad.
 1. To improve the contour of the bass line.
 2. To provide a greater variety of pitches in the bass line.
 3. To lessen the weight of V and I chords that do not serve as the goals of harmonic motion.

vii^o in First Inversion

- Diminished triads are always written in first inversion.
- Historically, composers sought to avoid having any dissonant interval between an upper voice and the bass voice.
- Writing a vii^{o6} avoids this issue.
 - This applies to ii^{o6} as well.



- The V^6 allows the stepwise motion of the bass line to continue and also lessens the effect of this interior V–I progression.
- The I^6 in the second measure provides variety and allows the bass to imitate the soprano figure from the previous beat

Part-writing with first inversion chords

- All previous guidelines apply
- Doubling
 - Root-position chords
 - Whenever possible double the root.
 - First-Inversion chords
 - Double whichever note allows for the smoothest part-writing
- Avoid Doubling the leading tone.
 - Why?
 - A doubled leading-tone implies parallel octaves.
 - $\wedge 7$ pulls so strongly to $\wedge 1$ that even if both leading-tones do not resolve up by step we will hear it as likely happening.