

Part-Writing: Using Inversions



WHEN COMMON PRACTICE COMPOSERS USED *INVERTED CHORDS* IN FOUR-VOICE WRITING, THEY FOLLOWED SOME *GENERAL PATTERNS* REGARDING WHICH NOTE OF THE CHORD SHOULD BE *DOUBLED*.

ROOT POSITION

IN *ROOT POSITION TRIADS*, COMPOSERS USUALLY DOUBLED THE *ROOT*, WHICH IS IN THE

BASS

OF THE CHORD.



FIRST INVERSION

THE DOUBLING OF *FIRST INVERSION TRIADS* DEPENDS ON THE *TYPE* OF THE CHORD BEING WRITTEN.

IN *MAJOR FIRST INVERSION TRIADS*, COMPOSERS DOUBLED THE

SOPRANO

OF THE CHORD.



IN *MINOR FIRST INVERSION TRIADS*, COMPOSERS DOUBLED THE

BASS
OR
SOPRANO

OF THE CHORD.



IN *DIMINISHED FIRST INVERSION TRIADS*, THEY DOUBLED THE

BASS

OF THE CHORD.



SECOND INVERSION

IN *SECOND INVERSION TRIADS*, COMPOSERS USUALLY DOUBLED THE *FIFTH*, WHICH IS IN THE

BASS

OF THE CHORD.



HERE'S *ANOTHER* WAY TO THINK OF IT: THE *ONLY* TIME YOU CAN'T DOUBLE THE *BASS* IS IN *FIRST INVERSION MAJOR TRIADS*, WHERE YOU SHOULD DOUBLE THE *SOPRANO* INSTEAD.

OKAY, WE KNOW *HOW* TO USE INVERSIONS IN FOUR-PART WRITING... BUT *WHEN* CAN WE USE THEM?

THE ONLY "RULE" REGARDING *ROOT POSITION TRIADS* AND *FIRST INVERSION TRIADS* IS THAT *DIMINISHED TRIADS* ARE ALWAYS PLACED IN *FIRST INVERSION*.

OTHER THAN THAT, YOU CAN USE *ROOT POSITION* AND *FIRST INVERSION* ESSENTIALLY *WHENEVER YOU WANT!*

IT'S *SECOND INVERSION TRIADS* THAT HAVE THE *BIG RESTRICTIONS*.

THE *CADENTIAL* $\frac{6}{4}$ CHORD

IS A *TONIC TRIAD* IN *SECOND INVERSION* FOLLOWED BY A *ROOT-POSITION DOMINANT CHORD* AT A *CADENCE*.



F: $I^{\frac{6}{4}}$ V I

THE *PASSING* $\frac{6}{4}$ CHORD

IS A CHORD PLACED IN *SECOND INVERSION* WHERE THE *BASS* IS TREATED LIKE A *PASSING TONE*: THE *MIDDLE NOTE* OF A *STEPWISE LINE* MOVING *UP* OR *DOWN*.



F: $I^{\frac{6}{4}}$ $V^{\frac{6}{4}}$ I

THE *PEDAL* $\frac{6}{4}$ CHORD

IS A *SECOND INVERSION CHORD* WHERE THE *BASS* IS TREATED LIKE A *PEDAL TONE*: A NOTE PRECEDED AND FOLLOWED BY THE *SAME NOTE*.



F: I $IV^{\frac{6}{4}}$ I

IF YOU WRITE A *SECOND INVERSION TRIAD* AND IT'S NOT ONE OF *THESE THREE SITUATIONS*, THEN YOU ARE *NOT* WRITING IN THE *COMMON PRACTICE PERIOD STYLE!* THE COMPOSERS OF THE STYLE JUST DIDN'T USE THESE CHORDS *WILLY-NILLY*.