

CHAPTER 5

Root Position Primary Triads

CONNECTING PRIMARY TRIADS

Primary triads in root position can be connected with few errors using the following guidelines:

Place roots of triads in the Bass voice.

Keep the *common tone* in the same voice, then move the remaining two voices to the nearest chord tones by step (conjunct motion).

When there is conjunct root position movement, there is no common tone. In that case, move all upper voices contrary to the Bass to the nearest chord tones.

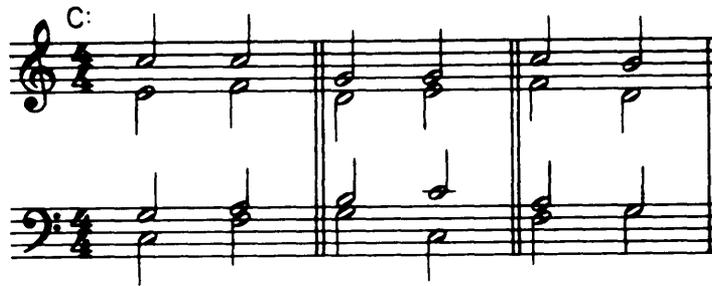


FIGURE 5.1: Connecting Primary Triads

DOUBLING

When writing triads in four parts, it is necessary to double one of the notes of the triad. Generally, double tonal notes. Modal notes may occasionally be doubled as a result of melodic line. In some instances it is necessary or desirable to triple the root and omit the fifth.



FIGURE 5.2: Doubling in Primary Triads

KEY ESTABLISHMENT

The primary means of establishing a key is to move from the major dominant triad to the tonic triad. The dominant triad in natural minor is minor. Therefore, the major form of the triad is borrowed from its parallel major key by raising the third with an accidental to create a leading tone and stronger resolution. This process creates the *harmonic minor scale*.



FIGURE 5.3: Major Dominant Triad in Minor

Use of the *ascending melodic minor scale* results in a major quality subdominant chord that may create a change of modality to major.

ANALYSIS AND FIGURED BASS

Roman and *Arabic* numerals are used to indicate chords and doublings. Roman numerals are used for analysis and to indicate chord roots. The Roman numeral will correspond to the scale degree on which the triad is built. An **upper case** Roman numeral indicates a major triad (unless qualified). A **lower case** Roman numeral indicates a minor triad (unless qualified). A plus sign (+) qualifies an upper case Roman numeral to indicate an augmented triad. A circle (o) qualifies a lower case Roman numeral to indicate a diminished triad. All other alterations or additions are indicated with chromatic signs and Arabic numerals.

FIGURE 5.4: Analysis

Arabic numerals are used for *figured bass* or *figuring* and indicate notes above the **Bass** voice, primarily as simple intervals. The complete figuring for a root position triad with the:

root doubled is $\begin{matrix} 8 \\ 5 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$. This is often abbreviated $\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$. When no Arabic numerals appear, a

root position triad is intended.

FIGURE 5.5: Doubled Root Figuring

fifth doubled is $\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 5 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$.

FIGURE 5.6: Double Fifth Figuring

third doubled is $\begin{matrix} 5 \\ 3 \\ 3 \end{matrix}$.

FIGURE 5.7: Doubled Third Figuring

8
root tripled and fifth omitted is 8
3

FIGURE 5.8: Tripled Root Figuring

The Arabic numerals of figured bass refer to diatonic intervals by name. A 5 indicates a diatonic fifth regardless of quality. When accidentals are used, such as with the dominant chord in minor, the **same** accidental must appear in the figured bass. This is done by writing the accidental to the left of the Arabic numeral. An accidental may be used without an Arabic numeral to indicate an alteration of the note a third above the Bass note. This applies regardless of chord position. A slash through a number indicates that the corresponding note is raised a half step. An accidental in the Bass voice is not normally indicated in figured bass.

FIGURES 5.9: Accidentals and Figured Bass

CADENCES

Primary triads in root position may be used to form three types of harmonic cadences:

AUTHENTIC.

PLAGAL.

HALF.

Authentic Cadence

An *authentic cadence* occurs when the dominant chord progresses to the tonic chord at a cadence point. In a *Perfect Authentic cadence*, both chords are in root position and the tonic scale degree appears in the Soprano voice over the tonic chord. The Perfect Authentic occurs most often as a final cadence.

The figure shows two musical examples of a Perfect Authentic Cadence. The first example is in E major, showing a dominant chord (V) in root position moving to a tonic chord (I) in root position. The second example is in E-flat major, showing a dominant chord (V⁴) in fourth inversion moving to a tonic chord (i) in first inversion. The tonic scale degree (8) is shown in the soprano voice over the tonic chord in both cases.

FIGURE 5.10: Perfect Authentic Cadences

In an *Imperfect Authentic cadence*, either chord is inverted, and/or the root is not in the Soprano on the tonic chord. The Imperfect Authentic cadence occurs most often at cadence points other than final.

The figure shows five musical examples of Imperfect Authentic Cadences. Each example shows a dominant chord (V) moving to a tonic chord (I) in various inversions. The first example is in G-flat major (V to I⁶). The second is in A major (V^{6/3} to i³). The third is in B major (V to I). The fourth is in G major (V[#] to i). The fifth is in C major (V⁶ to I^{5/3}).

FIGURE 5.11: Imperfect Authentic Cadences

Occasionally, in a Perfect Authentic cadence, the leading tone may DROP to the fifth of the tonic chord when it is in the Alto or Tenor voices. This is usually a result of supertonic to

tonic voice leading in the Soprano voice. It is written this way to allow all notes of the chord to appear.

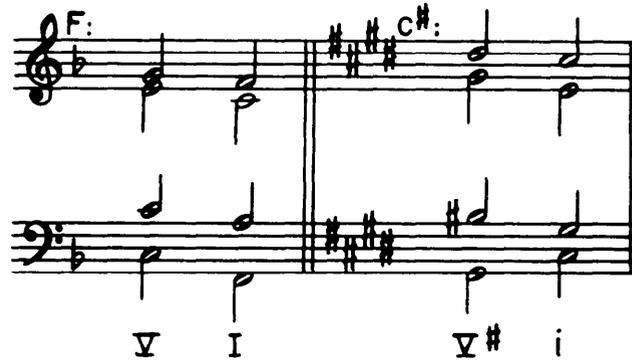


FIGURE 5.12: Leading Tone Dropping in a Perfect Authentic Cadence

Plagal Cadence

A *Plagal cadence* occurs when the subdominant chord progresses to the tonic chord at a cadence point. In a *Perfect Plagal cadence*, both chords are in root position and the tonic scale degree appears in the Soprano voice over both chords.

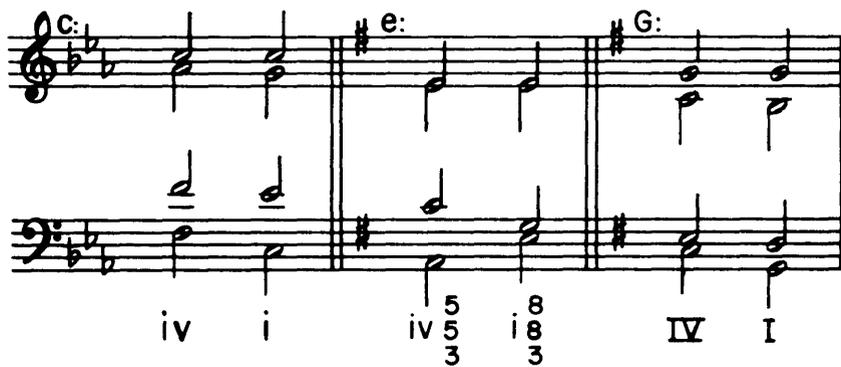


FIGURE 5.13: Perfect Plagal Cadence

In an *Imperfect Plagal cadence*, either chord is inverted, and/or the root is not in the Soprano on the tonic chord. Plagal cadences often follow final authentic cadences to emphasize finality.

FIGURE 5.14: Imperfect Plagal Cadences

Half Cadence

A *Half cadence (Semi-cadence)* occurs when any chord, regardless of inversion, progresses to the dominant at a cadence point. Generally, the dominant chord will be in root position. A *Plagal Half cadence* occurs when any chord, regardless of inversion, progresses to the subdominant at a cadence point. Generally, the subdominant chord will be in root position. Half cadences are not used as final cadences.

FIGURE 5.15: Half Cadences

Picardy Third (Tierce de Picardie)

Occasionally, the tonic triad in minor will be borrowed from its parallel major at an authentic cadence. This is known as a *Picardy Third (Tierce de Picardie)* and occurs at final

cadences. When figured bass is used, it must reflect the alteration that occurs.

The image shows a musical score for a Picardy Third cadence in G major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The piece is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines. Above the treble staff, the notes are: Measure 1: G4, A4, B4; Measure 2: G4, A4, B4; Measure 3: G4, A4, B4. Above the bass staff, the notes are: Measure 1: G2, B2, D3; Measure 2: G2, B2, D3; Measure 3: G2, B2, D3. Below the bass staff, figured bass notation is provided: Measure 1: V# I#; Measure 2: V# I#; Measure 3: V·x· I#.

FIGURE 5.16: Picardy Third

CHORD SUCCESSION

Chordal movements used with primary triads in root position are:

I may progress to IV or V

IV may progress to V or I

V may progress to I

V may go to IV if IV immediately progresses to V

Any chord may follow itself. Chords generally progress across a bar line.