An Ecossaise Exercise: Lesson Plan and
Materials for a Class in the Second Week on Tonicization
Designed for a 50-minute class period

This lesson plan and accompanying Keynote slide show present secondary functions as energetic, goal-directed chords that contain a leading tone and therefore mimic the voice leading of dominant-to-tonic progressions. It is designed for use in the second week on tonicization, after students have been introduced to the basics of secondary functions, their typical qualities, the difference between essential and nonessential chromaticism, and so on. In presenting secondary dominants as chords that contain local leading tones that demand upward resolution (onto their local "tonics"), this lesson stresses the importance of identifying a local leading tone as a prerequisite for understanding secondary function. Here, secondary leading tones are presented as necessary components of secondary functions that can help students quickly identify the targeted "tonic."

The primary activity of the lesson is what I call "An Ecossaise Exercise." (See Section III, below.) I present a melody from Schubert's Ecossaise, D. 299, No. 3, stripped of accompaniment.[1] The melody features several local leading tones, most of them chromatically inflected. It thus presents opportunities to hear and recognize altered degrees, to hone solfège syllables, and, especially, to understand that recognizing the leading-tone energy of applied chords can give away their applied function, even in the absence of harmony. We take three passes through the Ecossaise. First, we sing it, without accompaniment. Next, we discuss possibilities for harmonization and I add an accompaniment based on students' suggestions of chords. Finally, I offer alternative (or non-obvious) harmonizations not proposed by the students.

[1] The melody appears in Nancy Rogers and Robert Ottman, *Music for Sight Singing*, Ninth ed., (New York: Pearson, 2014), 233.

The Ecossaise Exercise is framed on the front end by some introductory material, and on the back end by further exercises. Instructors may take freely from this material without being bound to its particular examples or order of presentation. The lesson begins with an examination of secondary "leading-tone" energy in some straightforward examples by Bach and Beethoven. The level of difficulty is relatively low here, but the emphasis of the presentation is different, since I approach the chords not so much as harmonic entities to be labeled with roman numerals, but as containers of upward-striving melodic energy, in which inflected tones desire, and ultimately achieve, resolution onto the root of the following chord. Section II gives two easy singing exercises as catalysts for discussion about leading tones, upward resolution, and secondary function.

After completing the Ecossaise Exercise, instructors might include various other exercises appropriate for solidifying visual and aural recognition of secondary functions. Section IV includes two harmonic dictations that may be presented in a manner that emphasizes their similarity to two diatonic progressions (also given), except that they feature one or more pesky chromatic inflections. In my experience, the second of these dictations leads nicely into Section V, in which I show how one might harmonize an ascending chromatic line. Here an opportunity arises to study some eighteenth-century sources: Riepel's Monte pattern and a Minuet template by Mozart.[2] Two possible homework assignments are given at the end of the lesson plan; these might easily be tweaked to accommodate the goals of different curricula.

Lesson Plan

I. <u>Introduction to Secondary Leading Tones as Energetic Functions (Slides 2-7)</u>

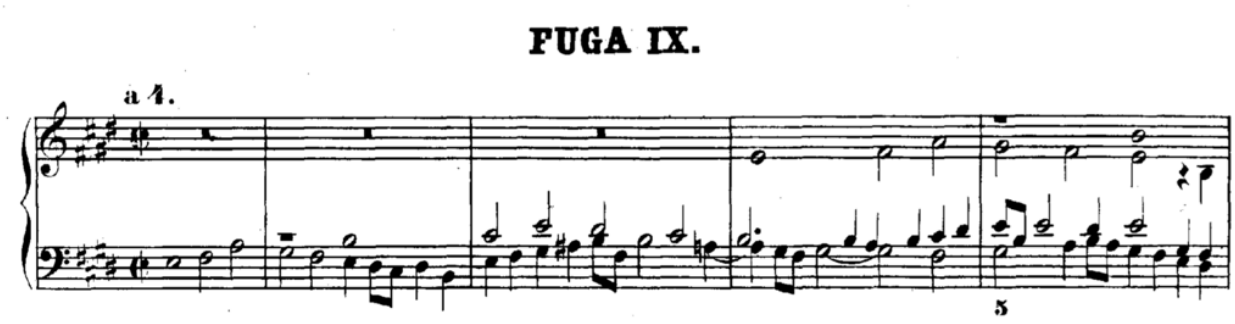
Though some students may have intuited this property during their introduction to secondary functions, I begin class by making explicit that all applied chords—whether they are V

[2] In the curriculum I currently teach, these resources are relevant to a capstone project in the third semester of the theory sequence: the composition of a Minuet and Trio in Mozart's style for string quartet.

of, V^7 of, vii˚ of, or $vii^{\circ 7}$ of, or $vii^{\emptyset 7}$ of—all applied chords contain the "leading tone" to the chord that they lead to. This is true whether the tonicized chord is major or minor, and it's true whether the leading tone takes an accidental or not. (In most cases, applied chords do feature chromatically raised scale degrees. Exceptions occur only where the possibility for a local "leading tone" exists in the diatonic scale, between ^3 and ^4 in the major mode and between ^2 and ^3 and ^5 and ^6 in the minor mode.) These (raised) degrees *act like leading tones*; they *tonicize*—that is, they treat as if it were a tonic—the degree that is a half-step above them. And in so doing, they mimic the V-to-I voice leading (or the vii˚-to-I voice leading) that students are at this point intimately familiar with.[3]

Bach, Fugue in E Major from Book II of the WTC.

So, if I raise scale-degree ^4, like Bach does in the opening of this four-voice fugue, then I am tonicizing ^5. (Animations on the Keynote accompany this discussion.)

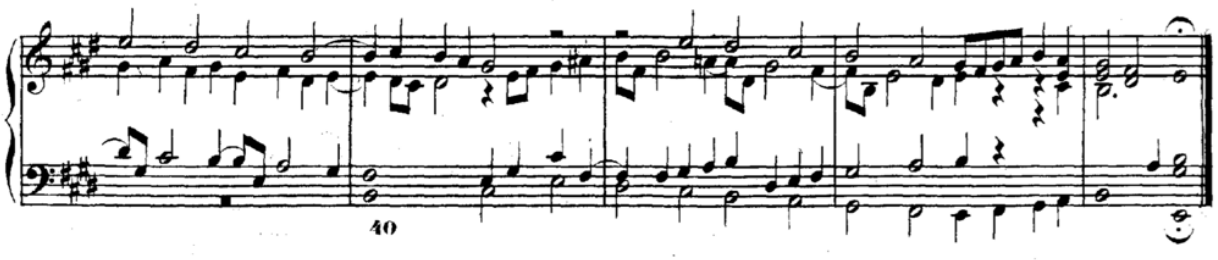


Here, it is important to make an effort to encourage students to hear the inflection in the bass line as an indication of function. It is not simply "sharp ^4," it is that sharp 4 is a *raised* scale degree,

[3] This explicitness may further clarify for students that the leading tone—the important part of these chords and the thing that desires upward resolution—is the *third* of major- and dominant-quality chords but the *root* of diminished- and half-diminished-quality chords. Of course, some applied dominant chords also feature chromatically lowered degrees, for instance V^7/IV in major and V^7/VI in minor. Still others feature raised degrees that do not function as leading tones, for instance when ^#4 appears in a V7/iii chord, as in mm. 15-16 of the Andante movement of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, where it occurs in the solo horn. These issues are relevant to any discussion of secondary functions, but they play a subsidiary role in the current lesson, whose primary focus is on secondary leading-tone energy.

and so must discharge upward, onto the dominant, ^5. That Bach's two-voice texture here makes it difficult to discern the quality of this applied chord is not a drawback; the goal in this first example is merely to hear the leading-tone function of the inflected degree.

Bach reminds us of this A#-to-B motion at the end of the fugue, where the counterpoint is intact, but inverted—note that the A#-B is now in an upper voice, but the E-D# is there in a lower one. The Keynote presentation uses colors to make this invertible counterpoint clear. (It also uses beams to highlight a really nice closing gesture that helps to bring the fugue to an end: two very slow descents, in the outer voices, both of which span an entire octave from E down to E.[4]) Again, listen carefully to this alto voice and get a sense of the A#-B, again rising, again against a dissonant tritone. (Since there are three voices here, it is slightly easier to assign a roman numeral: the chord is V4/2 of V. Still, for the moment I am more concerned with recognizing and hearing the leading-tone function of inflected degrees than I am with assigning roman numerals.)

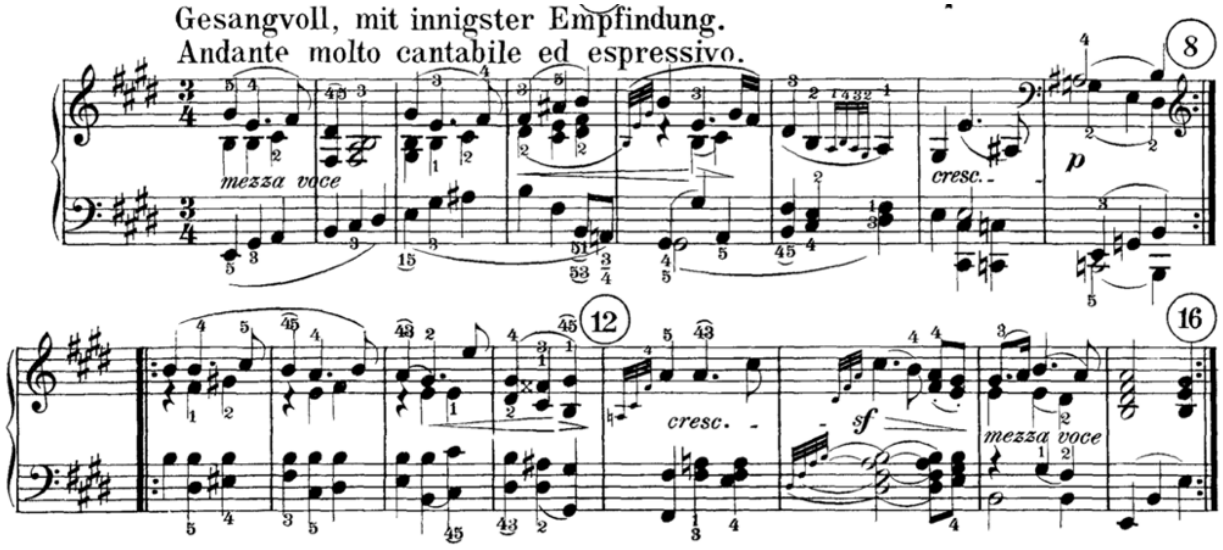


Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E Major, Op. 109, iii.

An excerpt from about a century later shows that even in slightly more difficult cases, understanding voice-leading energy can clarify function. Consider the first reprise first: Just as in

[4] These octave descents are mentioned in Steven Rings, *Tonality and Transformation* (New York: Oxford, 2011), 168-169.

the Bach, A# here is heard first in the bass, where it is part of a V^6/V chord, and then in an upper voice. In both, it is directed at B. *It is B's leading tone*.[5]



The beginning of the second reprise is somewhat trickier. (The Keynote presentation zooms in on the relevant portion.) Approaching the chromatic inflections as leading tones can help. E#, raised scale degree ^1, is a leading tone to ^2. And F double sharp, which is raised scale degree ^2, is a leading tone to ^3. Listen to these chromatic pitches and see if you can hear their directed energy and their leading-tone-like resolution onto their secondary "tonics."

II. Optional: two singing exercises (Slides 8-11)

Two singing exercises given in the accompanying Keynote can solidify understanding of the upward tendency of local leading tones (the first eight measures of one of Bruckner's settings of the *Tantum Ergo*, and Schumann's "Beim Abshied zu singen," Op. 84[6]). I present the examples

[5] If the instructor wishes to show the entire first reprise, she or he should be prepared to field questions regarding the augmented sixth chord in mm. 7-8. At this point in the semester, and especially on a day devoted to chromatic "energy," I have no problem explaining the curious agglomeration as something like a secondary function: it has an A# in it, which is a leading tone to B, and it resolves to a B major chord. Note, too, that the lowered scale degree (^b6) *descends* by step, as is typical of lowered degrees. One must be careful, however, for the augmented sixth chord does have one potentially dangerous similarity to a secondary dominant chord: its enharmonic quality!

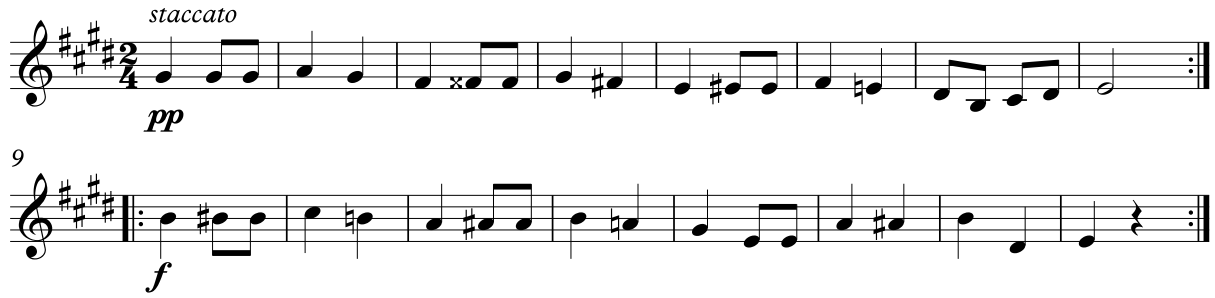
[6] The Schumann excerpt appears in Stefan Kostka, Dorothy Payne, and Byron Almén's *Tonal Harmony with an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, Seventh ed. (New York: McGraw Hill New York, 2013) 257.

in the following way: How quickly can you analyze these chords? Quickly, if you see that the chromatically inflected pitch is a leading tone to the tonicized chord. The task here is to spot the chromaticism and then ask yourself if it is marking the next pitch as a sort of local tonic. You can figure out what the quality of the chord is later (double back and listen, or take a closer look); for now I'm only interested in understanding the leading-tone function.

III. An Ecossaise Exercise (Slides 12-14)

In the Ecossaise Exercise, I take away accompaniment altogether and invite the class to hear secondary functions even in the absence of harmony.

Schubert, Ecossaise, D. 299, No. 3 (Melody Only)



An opportunity arises to present a bit of history: the Ecossaise is a *contredanse*, meaning it is danced by couples in lines. It's supposed to be Scottish (the word "Ecossaise" means "Scottish" in French); but the dance is actually of French invention! Ecossaises are typically in two-four, they're pretty fast, and they feature lots of dynamic contrasts. Typically, they have a lively rhythm, very often quarter-eighth-eighth. (This may have been appealing to Schubert, who wrote a bunch of Ecossaises, and of whom it might be reasonably said that quarter-eighth-eighth is his favorite rhythm.[7])

[7] According to Marjorie Wing Hirsch, this "pavane rhythm" is "one of Schubert's favorite musical symbols for death," but Brian Newbould cautions against the interpretation in terms of death in all cases. See Hirsch, *Schubert's Dramatic Lieder* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 40, and Newbould, *Schubert: The Music and the Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 160-161. For examples of the rhythm in other works by

We take three passes through the Ecossaise. On the first pass, we sing the melody alone, observing dynamics, of course, and in our best *staccato*. Its four chromatic inflections, on scale degrees ^1, ^2, ^4, and ^5, present ample opportunities to recognize altered degrees visually and to "find" them aurally, and they provide an opportunity to drill inflected solfège syllables, should instructors use systems that feature them (e.g., "di," "ri," "fi," and "si"; "mi" and "ti" already end in "i"—this is because they are already only a semitone away from the next diatonic degree!). We then talk about possibilities for chords (and roman numerals) of the inflected pitches.

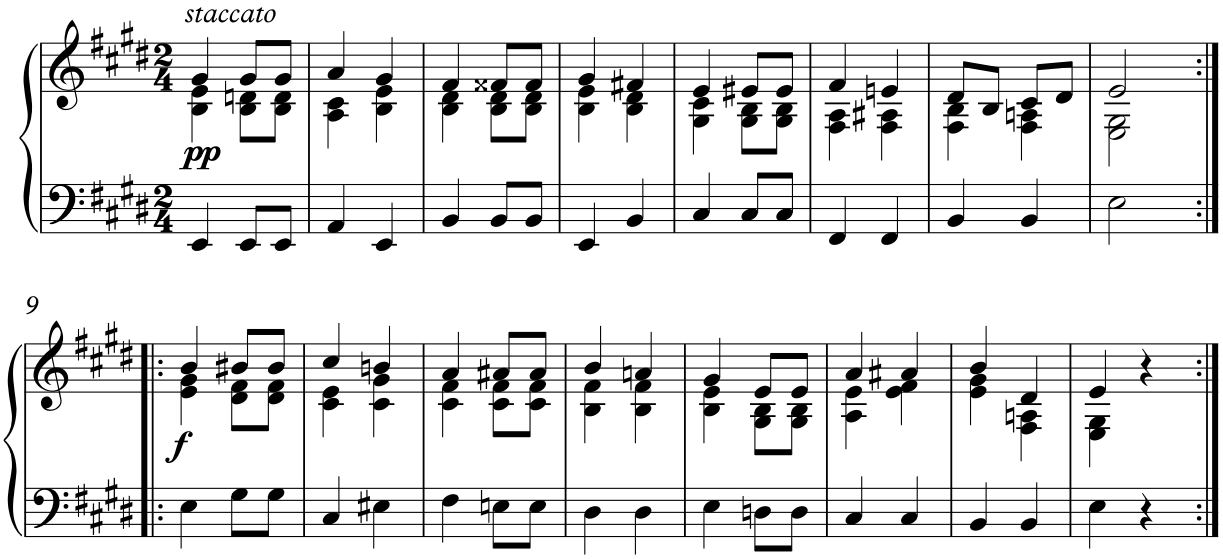
On the second pass, I ask the class to sing the melody while I improvise a homophonic accompaniment at the piano, based as much as possible on the class's suggestions for harmony. (I try to preserve insofar as possible the class's suggestions for chord qualities and bass lines.) After singing, I play again the harmonization at the piano, and I ask the class to use their ears to identify the qualities and functions of the chords I'm playing and to consider whether their intuitions about the viability of certain chords were right. I spend some time playing, listening to, and tweaking chords suggested by students in an effort to evaluate whether and how well they work, and to compare the different effects engendered by different chord qualities and positions.

On the third pass, I offer alternative harmonizations that were not suggested by the students. These may emphasize different qualities or inversions of secondary chords (diminished seventh instead of dominant seventh, dominant 6/5 instead of dominant 7, and so on). They may substitute decorative (or "nonessential") chromaticism for "essential" chromaticism. (To my ears, for instance, F double sharp on beat of m. works best as a chromatic passing tone. In my

Schubert see, e.g., the Impromptu in B-Flat Major, D. 935/iii, the slow movement from the String Quartet D. 810, "Death and the Maiden" (and the song from which it draws its title), the Wanderers Nachtlied, D. 768, and the second theme from the finale of the String Quartet, D. 804, "Rosamunde," which Maja Cerar calls an Ecossaise in "Song Allusions in Schubert's Quartets" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2009), 122.

experience, students can easily hear the difference between the chromatic passing tone and V^7/iii.[8]) Or they may look for opportunities to use secondary chords even where the melody does not feature inflected degrees. (An opportunity for a secondary dominant exists in m. 1, for instance, where G# in the melody is compellingly harmonized by V^7/IV. The third pass is thus a good place to ask students if they can hear the chromatically lowered scale-degree ^7 and to discuss the major-minor chord quality that arises as a result of this inflection.)

Because I begin harmonizing the Ecossaise by taking suggestions for chords from students, early stages of the harmonization might feature fewer secondary chords than shown below. But by the end of the third pass, something like the following would emerge:

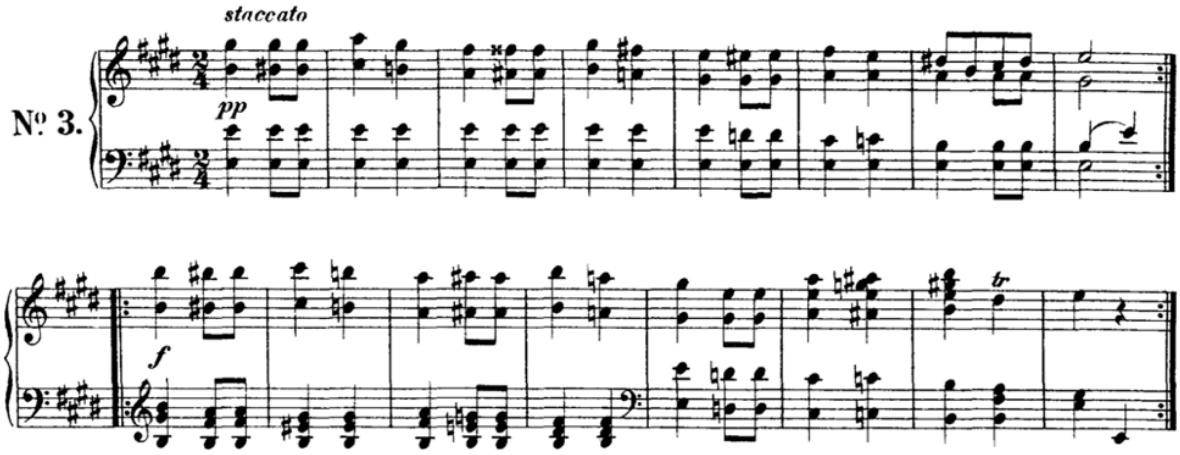


With a bit of practice, I am able to vary this basic pattern on the spot, substituting different bass lines and chord qualities and asking the class to consider the effects. (To compare the different effects produced by root-position chords versus inverted chords, I've given root-position chords

[8] A Minuet template given as a homework assignment at the end of this lesson gives the student further practice in deciding between essential and nonessential chromaticism.

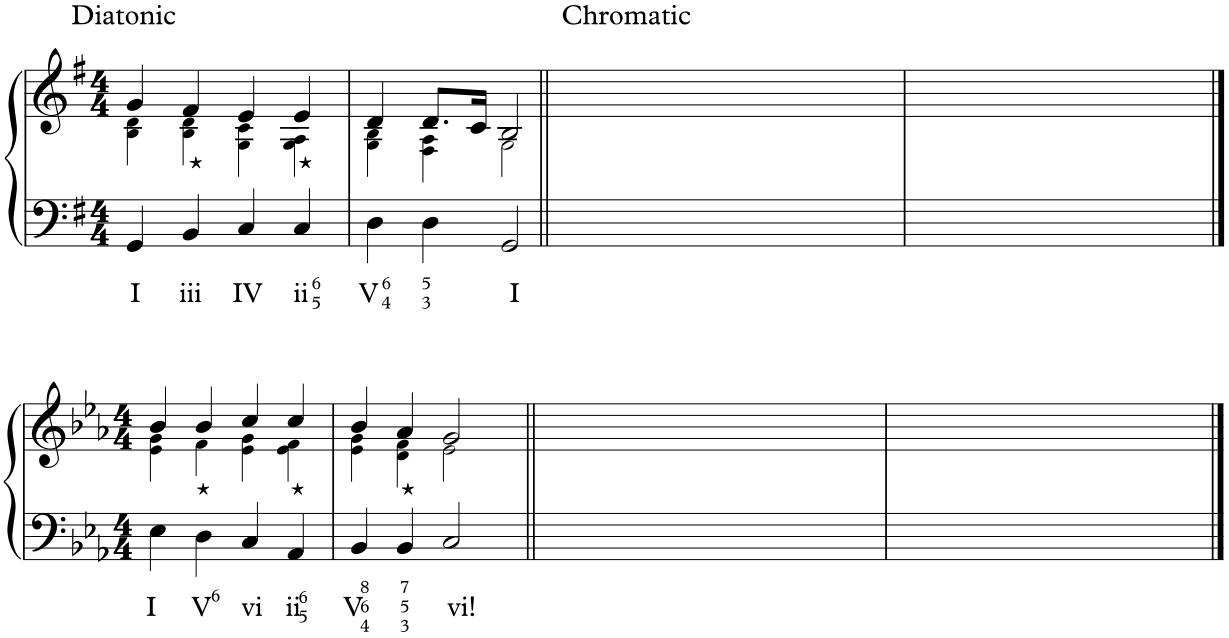
in the first reprise and inverted chords in the second.) Slide 13 on the Keynote presentation identifies the possible locations for applied dominants with asterisks.

In case there is interest, I am including with this lesson plan Schubert's own solution, which has some idiosyncratic features that make it quite difficult to analyze. At this point in the semester, it may be best to present Schubert's harmonization, if at all, as a sort of counterexample—something wacky that calls attention to the differences between the institutionalized voice-leading rules of the twenty-first-century American textbook and the aesthetic variety of nineteenth-century compositional practice. Instructors can choose to build it in to discussion to the extent they deem it pedagogically useful, or in the instance that the students are interested to see it.

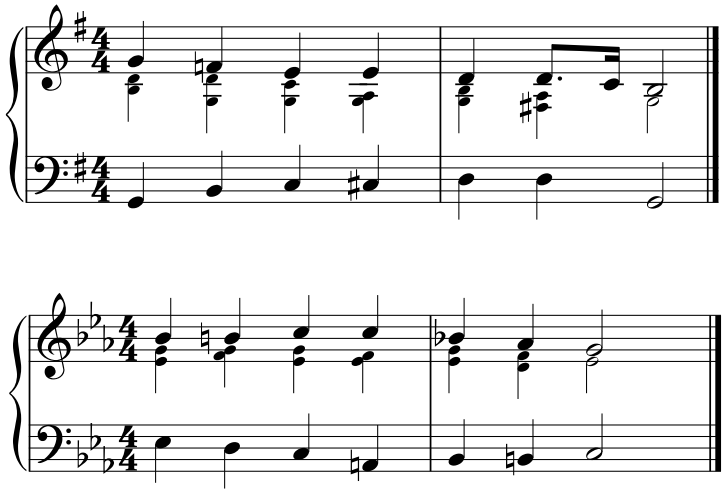


IV. Harmonic Dictation (Slide 15)

Two harmonic dictations, presented as chromatic versions of diatonic progressions, are given below. On the left is a diatonic progression, which I play once so that the students in the class can get their tonal bearings. I then endow it with some secondary leading tone energy (see below) and ask the students to dictate outer voices and roman numerals. I tell the students that at *, some of the notes and/or the Roman numeral will change.



The inflected progressions I play are given below. An important feature of the second one is the chromatically rising line in the bass in the last four chords. After inviting students to put their solutions on the board, I then bracket this rising line and it becomes the focus of the final component of the class.



V. The Rising Chromatic Line (Slides 16-18)

The rising chromatic fragment that undergirds the last four chords of the preceding harmonic dictation illustrates a wonderful possibility for applied dominants. If raised degrees resolve upward—that is, if they strive for, or desire upward resolution—then they allow for the possibility to set a chromatically rising melodic line. This is a lovely sound, and one the students are probably very familiar with (see, e.g., the "Christmas Minuet" given on Slide 16; The same progression in the opening of The Beatles' "Blackbird" has also been a class favorite.). Slides 16-18 show familiar examples of such progressions, including a historical one from Riepel.[9] I have had success introducing Riepel's Monte pattern as a fragment of just such a rising line. Slide 19 gives an apotheosis of sorts: two outer-voice lines that rise chromatically through an entire octave.[10]

VI. Two Potential Homework Assignments

There are many potential exercises and assignments that target and drill setting such ascending chromatic lines. Two are given below. One could reasonably ask students to prepare such melodies (or fragments thereof) to play at the keyboard.

[9] Riepel will be a primary interlocutor for my students for the next few weeks. His *Anfangsgründe zur musikalischen Setzkunst*, recently translated by John Walter Hill, is a hilarious and instructive contemporary "how-to" guide for writing a minuet. See Hill, *Joseph Riepel's Theory of Metric and Tonal Order, Phrase and Form* (New York: Boydell and Brewer, Pendragon Press, 2014).

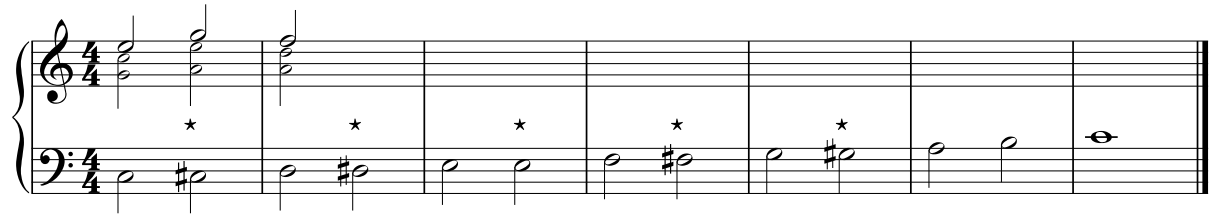
[10] If there is time and interest, one might compare a visually stunning chromatic rule of the octave given in Vogler's *Handbuch*; a facsimile is given in Robert Wason, *Viennese Harmonic Theory from Albrechtsberger to Schenker and Schoenberg* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1982), 15.

Potential HW 1:

Complete the following. In the first example, use applied chords at *.

- Label chords with figures or Roman numerals.
- Be able to play your solutions in major keys with up to some amount of accidentals.
- Be able to sing the ascending bass line while you play the right-hand chords.
- (Cf. the progressions in R.O. Morris, *Figured Harmony at the Keyboard* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 7, 10, and 25)

1. In the bass



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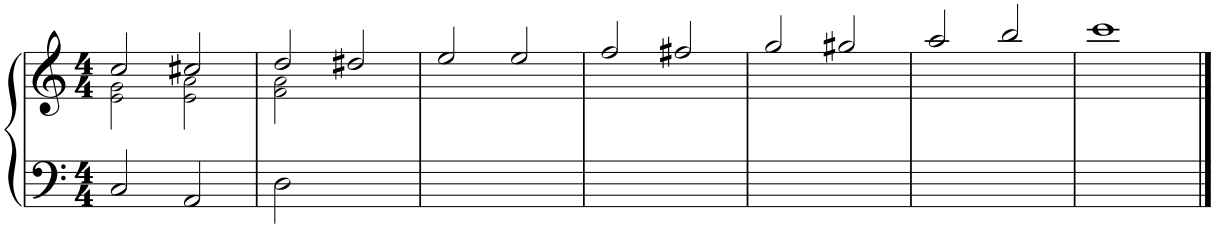
2. In the soprano



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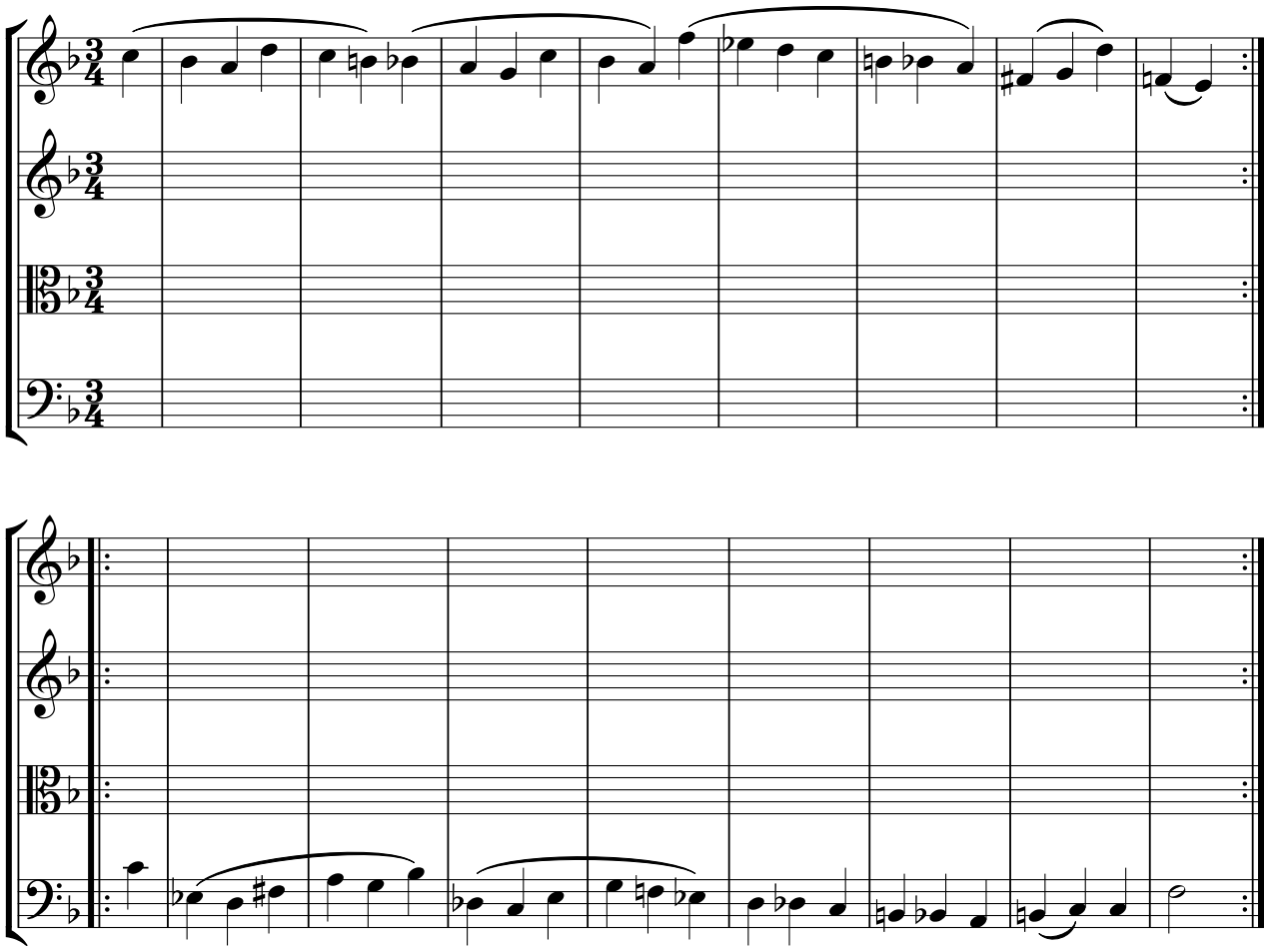
Potential HW 2:

A more difficult, but also more creative, assignment might involve looking at (and completing some portions of) the following Minuet template, which was written by Mozart for one of his pupils, Thomas Attwood, around 1785.[11] In addition to adding voices and roman numerals, students might also consider which of Mozart's chromaticisms work best with applied chords and which seem more like decorations.

Students will sometimes get a kick out of a letter Mozart wrote to his father about a different student, the daughter of the Duke of Guînes, who had trouble writing a minuet and for whom Mozart made a similar template. According to Mozart, "she has [no talent]; … she has no ideas, there are no results. … I wrote four measures of a minuet and said to her: 'Now look what an ass I am; I have begun a minuet and can't finish even the first part; be good enough to finish it for me.' She thought it impossible."[12] Mozart's father replied: "You write me that you have given the Duke's young girl her fourth lesson, and you want her to produce ideas—do you think everyone has your genius?"[13]

[11] See Alfred Mann, *The Great Composer as Teacher and Student: Theory and Practice of Composition* (New York: Dover, 1987), 48-52. Attwood's (canonic) solution and Mozart's revision of it may both be found in Daniel Heartz, "Thomas Attwood's Lessons in Composition with Mozart," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 100: 1973-1974, 182.

[12] This translation appears in Friedrich Kerst and Henry Krehbiel, *Mozart: The Man & the Artist Revealed in His Own Words* (New York: Dover, 2016), 25-26.

[13] Mann, 52.

Minuet template after Mozart (for Attwood)