

HKDSE Listening – Form 4

Baroque Music – Figured Bass

During the Baroque period, the **bass** voice possessed greater importance in supporting the musical texture.

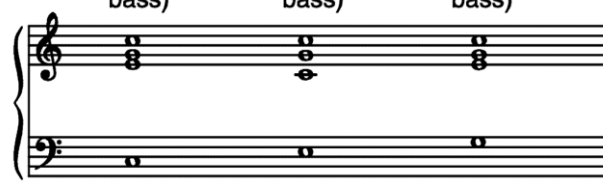
Baroque composers wrote out the melody (or melodies) and the bass line but left it to the performers to fill in the appropriate chords or inner parts.

Numbers, called **figured bass**, are used in the basso continuo to indicate to the continuo player the appropriate chords to be played.

The **realization**—the actual playing—of such a bass depends on the type of piece and the skill and taste of the player, who had considerable room for improvisation.

Triads

- Different numbers are used to indicate inversion of chords

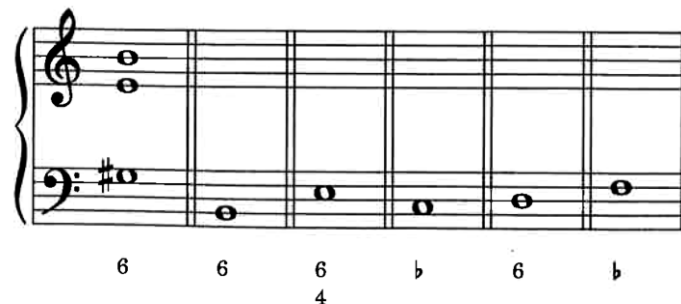
Root position (Root in bass)	First inversion (3rd in bass)	Second inversion (5th in bass)
		
(5) (3)	6 (3)	6 4

- Accidentals are used to indicate the raising or lowering of chord tones

	A.	B.	C.	D.
chords				
figured bass				
	b6	6 b	6 4+	6

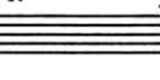
Class exercise

Construct chords above each bass note according to the figured bass.



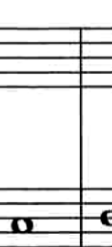
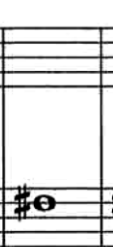
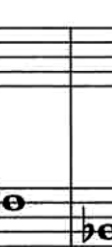
6 6 6 4 b 6 b

Seventh Chords

Root position (Root in bass)	First inversion (3rd in bass)	Second inversion (5th in bass)	Third inversion (7th in bass)
			
7	6 5	4 3	4 2 or 2

Class exercise

Construct chords above each bass note according to the figured bass.

A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.
					
6	b6 4		6	6 #5	b7 1