CHAPTER SEVEN

*The Triad in First Inversion: Tonic, Subdominant, and Dominant Triads*

The theory of inversion permits changes of the intervallic structure of a triad without destroying the triad's identity, or quality.

The fist inversion of a triad has the third in the bass.

The complete figuration written below the bass tone to indicate the first inversion of a triad is 6/3. Under normal conditions, the 3 is omitted.

When a flat, natural, or sharp sign is placed below the 6, the third above the bass tone is affected. In other words, the accidental represents the interval of a third above the bass.

The use of an inversion of a triad makes possible better voice leading in the bass. An inverted triad coming between the strong root positions of triads increases the musical interest of a composition.

The first inversions of major and minor triads may be found as early as the 13th century. The principles of voice leading into and out of an inverted triad were definite by the end of the 16th century.

The doubled tone in the first inversion triad may be approached and left by contrary, oblique or similar motion.
METHOD OF DOUBLING

The following tables show the method of doubling in the first inversions of major and minor triads in chorale harmonizations by Bach:

**Doubling in the Major Triad**

- Soprano 66%
- Bass 19%
- Inner Voices 15%

**Doubling in the Minor Triad**

- Soprano 55%
- Bass 33%
- Inner Voices 12%

Of all triads found in the first inversion in Bach’s chorales the tonic, the first classification dominant, and the second classification subdominant triads have the highest frequency.

- Tonic 50%
- Dominant 30%
- Subdominant 20%

A triad in first inversion may be introduced in the bass by chromatic stepwise motion. When this happens, the bass line usually ascends. The triad in first inversion is usually a first classification dominant triad in a related key, however, a slightly different analysis will be discussed later, in connection with this use of a chromatic chord progression.

**Uns ist ein Kindlein heut’ gebor’n (3rd phrase)**

![Musical notation image]
CHAPTER EIGHT

The Triad in First Inversion: Leading Tone, Supertonic, Submediant and Mediant Triads

The following table shows the remaining possible triads used in first inversion, in major and minor keys. The triads in the third row are extremely rare in first inversion, in the music of the 18th century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>SECOND CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>THIRD CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>FOURTH CLASSIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major key</td>
<td>vii°</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minor key</td>
<td>vii°</td>
<td>ii°</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rare</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>II (V of V)</td>
<td>vi°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIRST CLASSIFICATION
Leading Tone diminished triad

Bach used the diminished triad on the leading tone in two ways:

1. as a contrapuntal chord between two positions of the tonic triad

2. as a first classification chord preceded by the second classification subdominant triad.

Doubling - When a leading tone triad appears in first inversion, the third is the best tone to double, and the fifth is the next best tone to double.

Never double the root of a leading tone triad.

Unequal Similar Fifths

Bach does not hesitate to write a perfect fifth moving to a diminished fifth, or the reverse, when it occurs between two upper voices.
SECOND CLASSIFICATION
Supertonic Triad

A study of the compositions of Bach, shows that he prefers the first inversion of the supertonic seventh chord to that of the supertonic triad.

The supertonic triad in inversion gives the aural effect of the bass line using the subdominant in root position.

Doubling

When a supertonic triad appears in first inversion, the third is the best tone to double, the root may be doubled if it is in the soprano.

**Do not** double the fifth in major keys. (It causes parallel fifths).

Avoid doubling the fifth in the minor keys.

The root or third are found in the soprano and the fifth is rarely found in the soprano in minor keys.

As in the chart on page one of this chapter, the II (V of V) is rarely found in 1st inversion.

THIRD CLASSIFICATION
Submediant Triad

In a major key, Bach occasionally used the first inversion of the submediant triad as common chord between two keys. The triad becomes a second classification supertonic triad in the new key. In all instances the third is doubled.

Goptt sei gelobet und gebenedeiet (4th phrase)

Use of the submediant as a major or diminished triad in minor keys in first inversion is practically non-existent in the works of Bach.
FOURTH CLASSIFICATION
Mediant Minor Triad in a Major Key

Use of this triad in first inversion by Bach is restricted to a few progressions. The triad is approached by either the dominant or the subdominant triad. In both instances retrogression occurs in the classification of chords. The triad is followed by either a subdominant or submediant triad before it progresses to the first classification chord.

The other typical appearance of the mediant triad in Bach is found in cadences. This incipient mediant is not really a mediant at all but a dominant. This occurs when the sixth above the bass moves to the fifth above the bass.

Doubling - The third of the mediant triad is always doubled.

Mediant Triad in a Minor Key

The augmented mediant triad has a fairly high frequency in its first inversion. Use of this triad is limited to certain typical progressions. The triad is preceded by a second classification chord (most often a subdominant triad) and then progresses to a submediant triad.

As in a major key, Bach used the augmented mediant triad in minor keys in the cadence formula. Still the incipient median actually is the resulting dominant.

Doubling - The third of the chord is always doubled.
PARTWRITING EXERCISES - CHAPTER 8

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
CHAPTER NINE

The Triad in Second Inversion

The second inversion of a triad has the fifth in the bass. The figured bass for
the second inversion of a triad is $6^4$

The fifth (bass) is always doubled.

The second inversion chord must always be prepared and resolved. The
interval of the fourth is found between the bass and one of the upper voices.
Due to the fact that the fourth was considered a dissonant interval from the 16th
century until the beginning of the 20th century, this preparation and resolution is
necessary.

Bach used the second inversion less often than one would expect. The
following table shows the five second inversion chords and their use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Bach</th>
<th>Bach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accented Cadential 6/4 Chord</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-wise 6/4 Chord</td>
<td>common</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing 6/4 Chord</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>quite common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arpeggiated 6/4 Chord</td>
<td>common</td>
<td>less common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedal 6/4 Chord</td>
<td>common</td>
<td>rare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These five chords as shown are the only uses of second inversion.
SECOND INVERSION TRIADS

Accented Cadential 6/4
- must be accented
- must occur at a cadence
- 6 moves to 5, and 4 moves to 3
- prepared by step from above or below
- resolved by same tone

Stepwise 6/4
- does not have to be accented
- does not have to occur at a cadence
- prepared by step from above or below
- resolved by same tone

Arpeggiated 6/4
- prepared by leap from same chord
- resolved by leap to same chord, or to same tone, or by step

Pedal 6/4
- prepared by same tone
- resolved to same tone

Passing 6/4
- prepared by step
- resolved by step, in opposite direction of preparation
Label each second inversion chord by function name

1.

2.

3.

4.