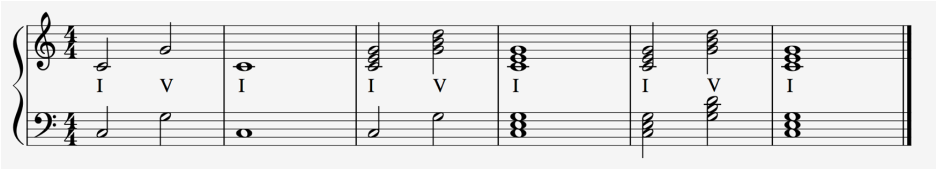
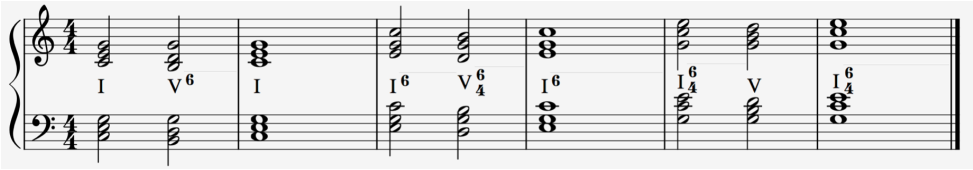
Playing with Blocks: How Keyboard Harmony Exercises Makes Learning Repertoire Easier

WSMTA State Conference, June 21, 2019
University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA
Lark Powers

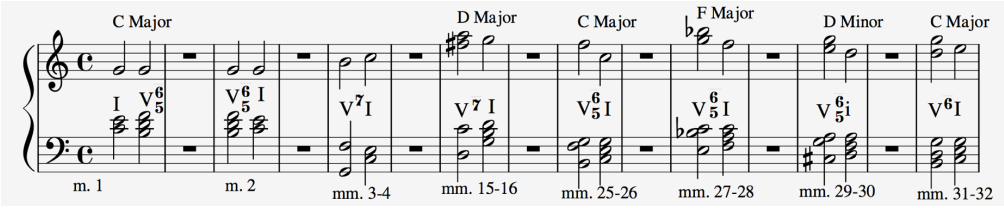
Tonic and Dominant Triad Examples
I - V - I voicing possibilities based on level of student, play in many keys:



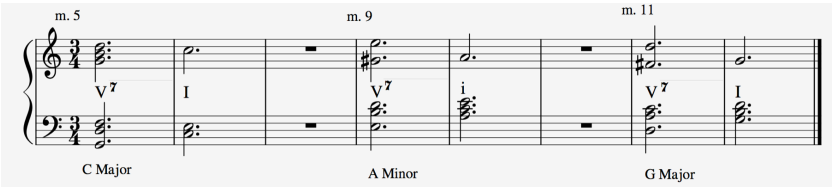
I - V - I with inversions in three positions, play in all keys:



Haslinger Sonatina in C:

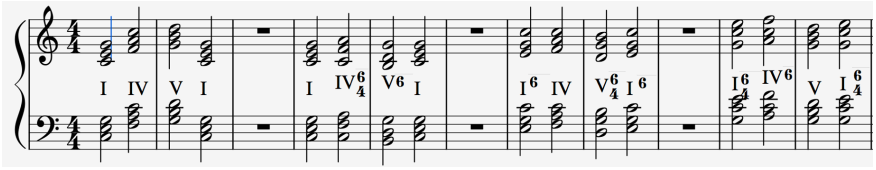


Schubert Waltz in C:

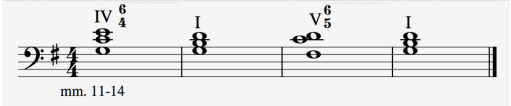


Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant Triad Examples

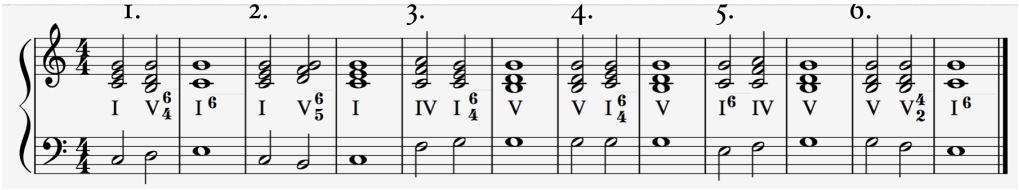
I - IV - V in three positions, play in all keys:



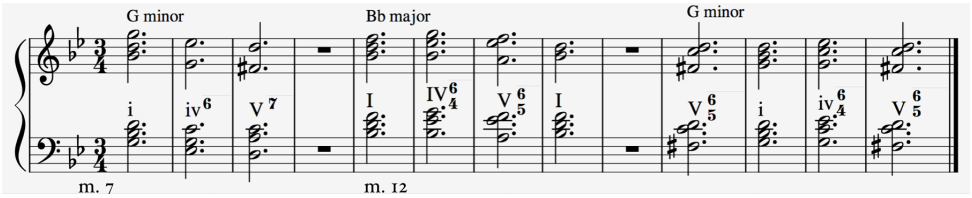
Mockingbird:



Some voice-leading examples using primary chords:

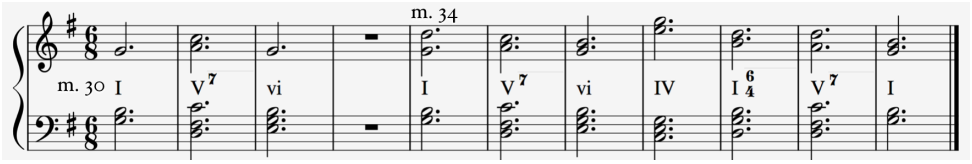


Waltz in G minor, Alfred:

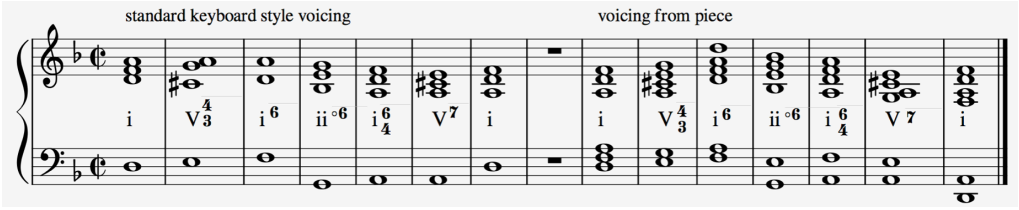


Adding ii and vi:

Beethoven Sonatina in G major, movement II:

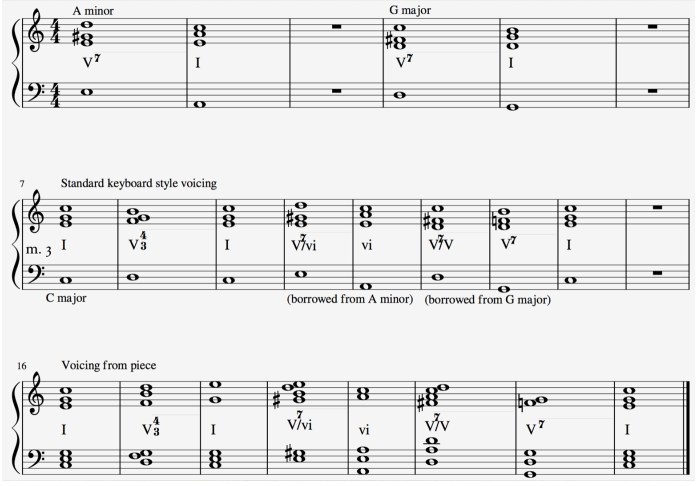


Clementi Prelude in D minor:



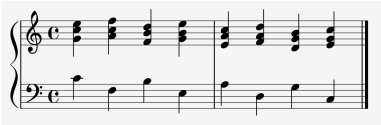
Adding Secondary Dominants

Grand Piano Band, Alfred:

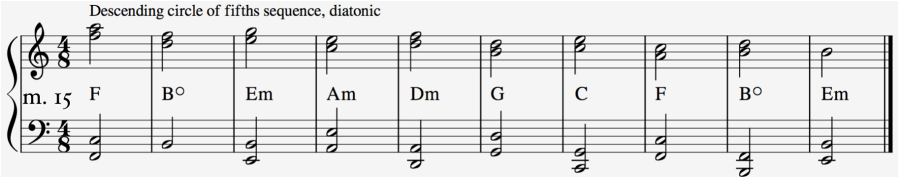


Sequences

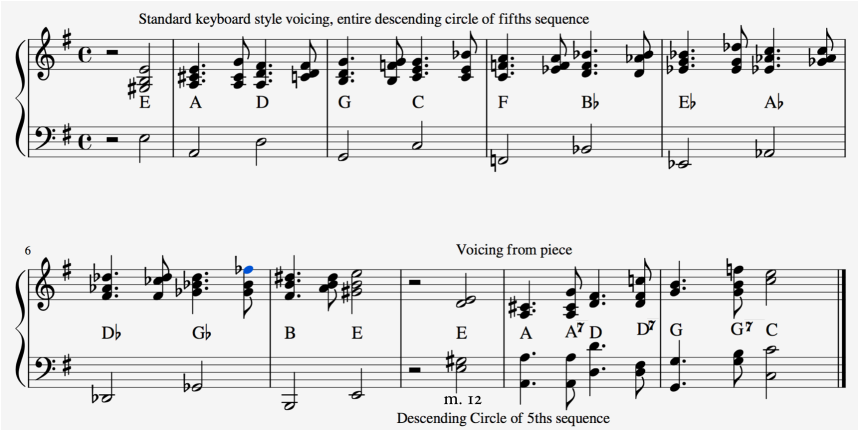
Descending Circle of Fifths Sequence



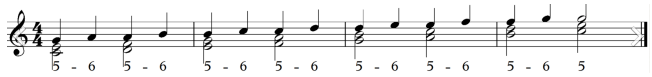
Szelényi Changing Bars:



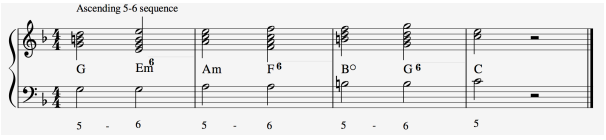
Handel Suite no. 8 in G, HWV. 441, IV. Aria:



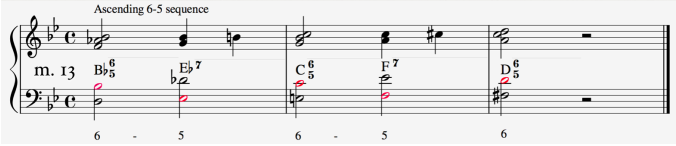
Ascending 5-6 Sequence



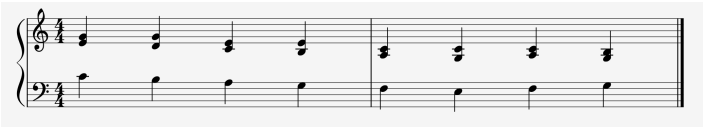
Telemann Bourrée in F:



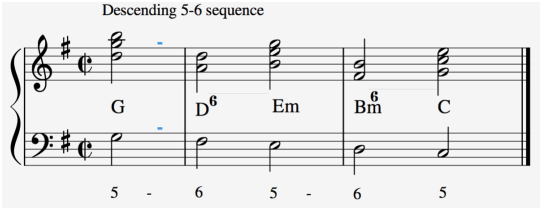
Moszkowski Etude in G minor, Op. 91 no. 10:



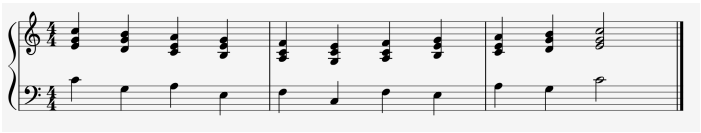
Descending 5-6 Sequence (Descending 3rds):



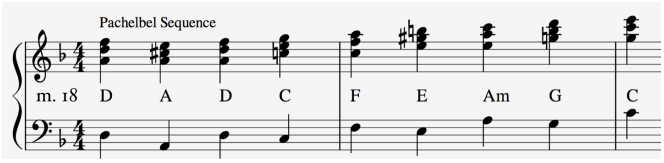
Bach Gavotte from French Suite no. 6 in G:



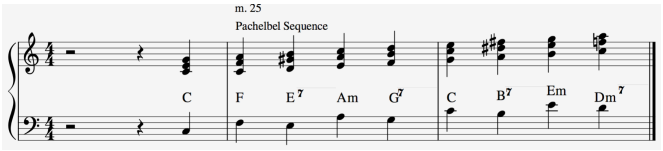
Root Position Variant of Descending 5-6 Sequence (Pachelbel):



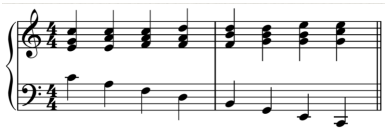
Burgmüller Awakening in the Wood, Op. 109 no. 12:



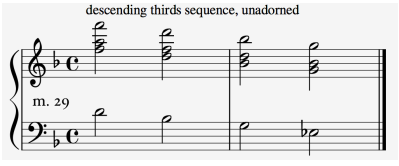
Moszkowski Etude in C, Op. 91 no. 11:



Descending Thirds Sequence (unadorned):



Heller Prelude, Op. 45 no. 23:

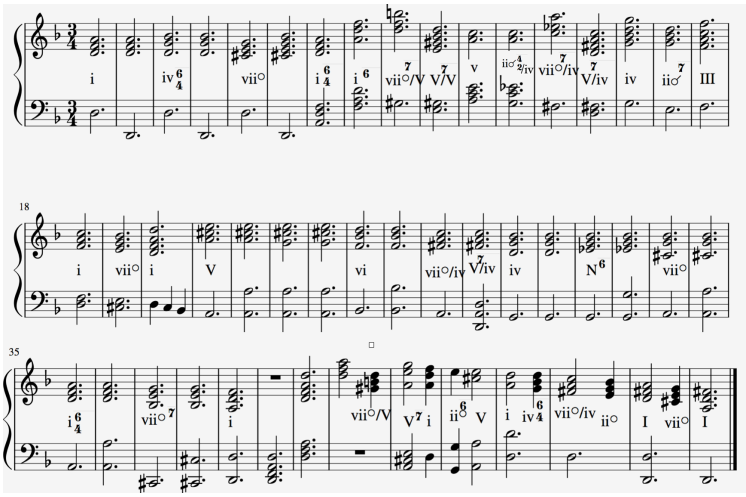


Blocking as a Strategy for Musicality: possibilities with similar texture throughout

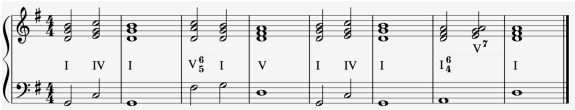
- Bach Prelude in C, from WTC 1, BWV 846
- Bach Prelude in C minor, BWV 999
- Beethoven Sonata Op. 27 no. 2, movement 1 “Moonlight”
- Heller At the Spinning Wheel, Op. 45 no. 1
- Burgmüller L’Harmonie des Anges, Op. 100 no. 21

Consider writing out a blocked version when texture is less constant

- Bach Prelude in D minor, BWV 926



- Burgmüller The Swallow, mm. 1-8



Blocking as a Strategy for Memory:

- Susie Garcia Bridge over Troubled Waters

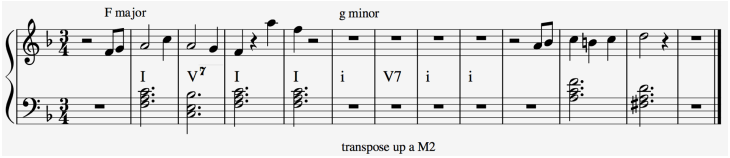
Eb minor:
i | i | iv6/4 | i
iv6/4 | V6 | VI6 | V6
i | i | iv6/4 | i
iv6/4 | V6 | i | i

- Handel Sarabande and Variations (La Folia)

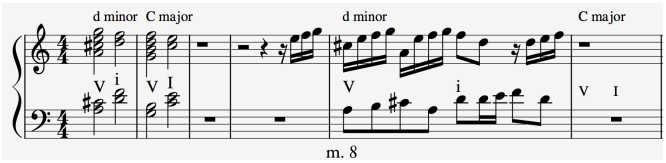
D Minor:
i | V | III | VII
iv | i | iv6 iio6 | V
i | V | III | VII viio6/iv
iv V6/5/III | III VI | iv i6/4

Transposing as a Strategy to Reinforce Keyboard Harmony

Consider transposing entire easy pieces after doing harmonic analysis.
Erase transposed portions of pieces to force students to focus on the harmony:
Sibley The Cuckoo:



Bach Allemande in A minor:

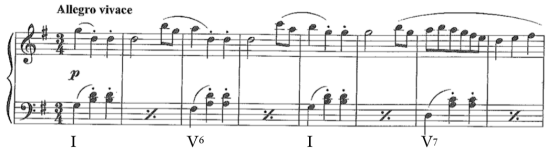


Some pieces contain extended passages which are exact (or almost) transpositions of previous material:

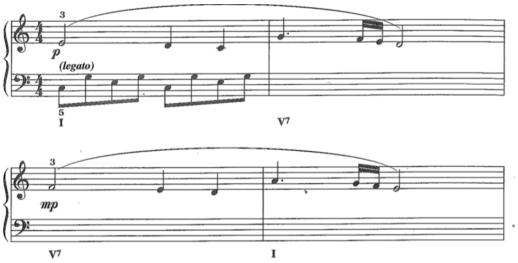
- Bertini Allegro from 24 Studies, Op. 29 no. 16
- Rameau Minuet in Rondo

Use Keyboard Harmony to Fill in Missing Pieces:
Erase repeated portions in the score or replace similarly voiced measures with chord indications

Waltz by Hummel, Czerny, from ReadAhead



Alberti Bass in 4/4 time in C Major, from Alfred Adult Piano Course Level 3:



Some Keyboard Harmony Texts:

- Keyboard Harmony of Deborah Wanless and Caroline Bering, 4 levels
- Schaum, Easy Keyboard Harmony, 5 levels
- The Royal Conservatory Music Development Program, Official Examination Papers: Keyboard Harmony, 10 levels

Link to scores used:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1l1ATTQCIwyCq6h0g5JzKEyKhIKwH9QKU/view?usp=sharing