

Figured Bass Conventions

Intervals and Accidentals

- Each number indicates an interval above the bass note.
- An accidental, with no number, refers to the 3rd.
- A slash through a number raises the interval by half a step.
- A flat, sharp, or natural beside a number is applied to the interval.

Triads

- In Root Position with the tonic in the bass, (5) and (3) above the root are assumed.
- In First Inversion with the 3rd in the bass, the number 6 is indicated, (3) is assumed.
- In Second Inversion with the 5th in the bass, the numbers 6 and 4 are indicated.

7th Chords

- In Root Position the number 7 is used, and (5) and (3) above the root are assumed.
- In First Inversion with the 3rd in the bass the numbers 6 and 5 are used, (3) is assumed.
- In Second Inversion with the 5th in the bass the numbers 4 and 3 are used, (6) is assumed.
- In Third Inversion with the 7th in the bass the numbers 4 and 2 are used, (6) is assumed.

Example of Figured Bass Realized in Keyboard Format

The example shows a sequence of chords and their figured bass notation. The top staff is a single bass line with figured bass notation. The bottom staff is a two-staff keyboard realization with treble and bass clefs, showing the chords and their figured bass notation.

Chords and Figured Bass Notation:

- Am: #6 6
- G#°/B: 6 4 #4 2
- Am/C: 6 7
- Am/E: #
- E7/D: 6 5 7 #
- Am/C: 6 7
- Dm7: #
- E: 6 5 7 #
- B°7/D: 6 7
- E7: #
- Am: 6 7