

# Passacaglia

A passacaglia is a type of **instrumental** piece usually associated with the **Baroque** period in which a bass line is repeated for the whole piece. This is a **GROUND BASS**. The passacaglia was often played on the organ but it other instruments (e.g. strings) could play it too.

Characteristics of a passacaglia:

- Slow tempo
- Usually triple time (though other time signatures also used)
- Often in the minor key
- Based on a short 4 or 8 bar phrase.

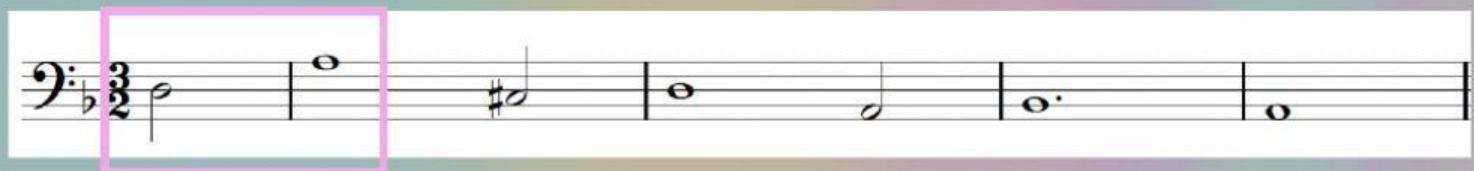
The bass line is repeated many times while the upper parts are varied. While the theme in the bass is repeated, the upper parts become increasingly elaborate.

The French term for Passacaglia is the *Chaconne* and in England it was called the *Chacony*. e.g. Purcell's *Chacony in Gm*

The musical score consists of four staves: Violino 1, Violino 2, Viola, and Basso. The Basso staff is highlighted with a red box. The score is repeated three times, with the second and third repetitions also having red boxes around the Basso staff. The score is in 3/4 time and G minor.

e.g. Passacaglia in Dm – Buxtehude  
(based on a 4 bar theme)

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3/2 time signature, bass clef, key signature of one flat. The first measure is highlighted with a pink box.

1. Name the key
2. Name the interval marked
3. Name the cadence
4. On manuscript paper, rewrite this in  $\frac{3}{4}$  so that it sounds the same
5. Now rewrite what you have written up an octave in the treble clef

e.g. Passacaglia in Cm – Bach  
(based on an 8 bar theme)

### 1. Name the cadence

2. Listen and choose the correct pattern of notes below to complete the missing note in the bass line above

A musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. The score is in bass clef and common time. It consists of four measures of music. The first measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata. The second measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata. The third measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata. The fourth measure shows a bass note followed by a fermata.

A musical staff in bass clef, with a key signature of two sharps and a tempo of 'P' (Presto). The staff consists of four measures of rest, followed by a vertical repeat sign.

A musical staff in bass clef, two flats, and 4/4 time. It features five notes: a quarter note, a half note, a half note, a quarter note, and a half note.

3. On manuscript paper, transpose the notes marked [redacted] an octave higher in the treble clef.

e.g. Passacaglia – 3 movt Violin Concerto - Shostakovich  
(based on a 17 bar theme). This is a **20<sup>th</sup> Century** Passacaglia

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Andante (♩ = 72)



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Listen from **18:22**

Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/Tempo	Texture/Structure/Form	Timbre