

# STRUCTURE

## BASS LINES

- ALBERTI BASS

**Broken chords played by the left hand** outlining harmonies whilst the right hand plays the melody. Typically, the notes are presented in the order *lowest, highest, middle, highest*. The broken chord pattern helps to create a smooth, sustained, flowing sound on the piano. It can also be heard as an accomp. pattern on other instruments.

**Classical** composers such as Haydn and Mozart used this technique extensively.

Allegro



Mozart's Piano sonata KV 545, movement I

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata KV 545. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) repeated in a steady rhythm. The right hand plays a melody. The score is in C major and 3/4 time.

It gets its name from the 18th Century Italian composer, Domenico Alberti, who used it in many of his compositions.

Allegro



The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata KV 545. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) repeated in a steady rhythm. The right hand plays a melody. The score is in C major and 3/4 time.

Andante.

Mozart's Piano sonata KV 545, movement 2



The image shows a musical score for the second movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata KV 545. The tempo is marked 'Andante.'. The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) repeated in a steady rhythm. The right hand plays a melody. The score is in C major and 3/4 time.

Adagio.

Mozart's String Quartet KV 172, movement 2



The image shows a musical score for the second movement of Mozart's String Quartet KV 172. The tempo is marked 'Adagio.'. The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) repeated in a steady rhythm. The right hand plays a melody. The score is in C major and 3/4 time.

# STRUCTURE

## BASS LINES

- PEDAL

**PEDAL**, is short for 'PEDAL POINT@. It is a note which is held on or is repeated continuously in the BASS while the harmony changes above.

e.g. opening of Also Sprach Zarathustra  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIPWOOOFbwcQ>

e.g. Raindrop Prelude - Chopin



e.g. Bach Prelude in C major

Measures 1-4 of the Bach Prelude in C major. The bass line shows a continuous eighth-note pedal point on C. The harmony changes from C7 (C-E-G-Bb) to F/C (F-A-C) to Dm7/C (D-F-A-C) in measures 1-3, and then to G7 (G-B-D-F) and C (C-E-G) in measure 4. The pedal point is labeled 'C pedal (in bass) starts as consonant note (in the chord)' in measures 1-3 and 'pedal point (in bass) is now a non-chord tone' in measure 4.



# STRUCTURE

## BASS LINES

- **INVERTED PEDAL**

An **INVERTED PEDAL** is a pedal (ie a note that is held on or sounded continuously) in the TOP PART instead of the bass

e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> movt Mozart Jupiter Symphony

The image displays a page of musical notation for the first movement of Mozart's Jupiter Symphony. The score is written for multiple staves, including strings and woodwinds. Three specific areas are highlighted with red boxes to illustrate the concept of an inverted pedal. The first red box is located in the top staff, highlighting a sustained note (likely a C or G) that serves as a harmonic anchor. The second red box is in the staff below it, highlighting another sustained note. The third red box is in the bottom staff, highlighting a sustained note. These sustained notes are held throughout the movement, creating a continuous harmonic foundation. A blue box highlights a section of the bottom staff, showing a more active bass line. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

e.g. *The Wizard and I* (Wicked)

e.g. *With or Without You* (U2)

# STRUCTURE

## BASS LINES

- GROUND BASS

This is a theme in the bass which is repeated many times while the upper parts are varied.

e.g. Monteverdi *Zefiro torna*

Listen to the music and fill two concepts for each category in the grid below:

	CONCEPT 1	CONCEPT 2
MELODY/HARMONY		
RHYTHM/TEMPO		
TEXTURE/ STRUCTURE		
TIMBRE		

e.g. Little Brown Jug – NB this is an example of SWING music



e.g. Time Lapse – Michael Nyman

# STRUCTURE

## BASS LINES

- WALKING BASS

A moving bass line with notes usually of the same value. It often moves by step, but not always so. Features heavily in jazz/swing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGQN8vdwVrl>

e.g. In the Mood – this is an example of SWING music



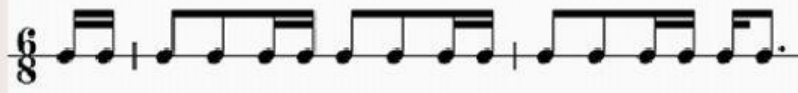
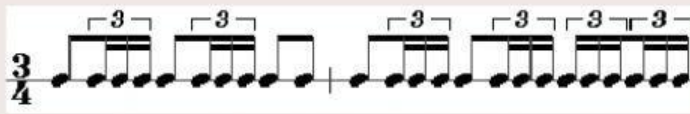
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Td73Lhq8npc>



- **OSTINATO** (*Rhythmic & Melodic*)

a short musical pattern repeated many times.

It can be purely **rhythmic** e.g. Ravel's Bolero , Holst – Mars, Pirates of the Caribbean



or it can be **melodic**.

e.g. Carillon – Bizet – Here the 3 note ostinato represents the pealing of bells



e.g. Carol of the Bells



- **RIFF**

A Riff is a repeated phrase usually found in jazz and popular music. It is similar to an ostinato.

e.g. Smoke on the Water – Deep Purple



e.g. Listen to Black Sabbath's "The Iron Man



e.g.. Listen to Day tripper – The Beatles



# QUIZ

For each of the following excerpts, choose the correct bass line or structural device from the following concepts:

ALBERTI BASS  
GROUND BASS

INVERTED PEDAL  
WALKING BASS

PEDAL  
OSTINATO

RIFF

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.