

# 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 image displays a musical score for a Passacaglia in G minor, featuring four staves: Violino 1, Violino 2, Viola, and Basso. The key signature is G minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-8) shows the initial entry of the ground bass in the Basso staff, which is highlighted with a red box. The second system (measures 9-16) shows the first variation, with the Basso staff again highlighted by a red box. The third system (measures 17-24) shows the second variation, with the Basso staff highlighted by a red box. The upper staves (Violino 1, Violino 2, and Viola) show increasingly elaborate melodic lines in each system, while the Basso staff maintains the same repeating ground bass pattern. A red box in the first system highlights the first four measures of the Basso staff, and another red box in the second system highlights the first four measures of the Basso staff, illustrating the repetition of the ground bass.

Listen to the Passacaglia in Cm by Bach and answer the questions below  
(based on an 8 bar theme)

Time sig		Missing rest	Natural	Interval	cadence
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1. Insert the missing time signature
2. Name the rhythmic feature at the start \_\_\_\_\_
3. Add the correct rest to complete the bar marked in bar 4.
4. Name the interval marked in bar 6. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name the cadence at the end \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why is there a B natural at the end of bar 5? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Listen and choose the correct pattern of notes below to complete the missing note in the bass line above

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# Comparison Question

Listen to these 2 excerpts. In columns 1 and 2 tick all the concepts you hear (matching the total at the bottom). In the final column select seven concepts that are common to both

CONCEPTS	EXCERPT 1	EXCERPT 2	COMMON TO BOTH
<b>MELODIC</b>			
Acciaccatura			
Trill			
Sequence			
Mordent			
Turn			
<b>HARMONY/TEXTURE</b>			
Major			
Polyphonic			
Tierce de Picardie			
Homophonic			
<b>RHYTHMIC</b>			
Syncopation			
Anacrusis			
3 beats in a bar			
2 beats in a bar			
<b>STRUCTURE</b>			
Ground bass			
Basso continuo			
Pedal			
Ritornello			
<b>STYLES</b>			
Renaissance			
Baroque			
Concerto grosso			
Oratorio			
Passacaglia			
Solo concerto			
	9 total	9 total	7 common

# Concept checklist

Fill in your own definitions of each of these concepts you have looked at in this unit.

MELODY/HARMONY	
Acciaccatura	
Mordent	
Trill	
Turn	
Sequence	
Melisma	
Syllabic	
Perfect cadence	
Imperfect cadence	
Interrupted cadence	
Plagal cadence	
Tierce de picardie	
Obbligato	
C major	
F major	
G major	
A minor	
Tonic	
Sub dominant	
Dominant	
Relative major	
Relative minor	
Rhythm/Tempo	
Anacrusis	
Augmentation	
Diminution	
Simple time	
Compound time	

Texture/Structure/Form	
Basso continuo	
Concerto grosso	
Da capo aria	
Binary form	
Ternary form	
Polyphonic/ Contrapuntal	
Unison	
Homophonic	
Pedal	
Inverted pedal	
Ground bass	
Style	
Aria	
Recitative	
Chorus	
Opera	
Oratorio	
Mass	
Solo concerto	
Concerto grosso	
Passacaglia	
Timbre	
Ripieno	
Concertino	
A cappella	
<p align="center"><b>Summary of Baroque music</b></p> <p>Write down as many key identifying features as you can of music in the Baroque period.</p>	