

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 1

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata KV 545. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' and the dynamics include 'p' (piano). The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) in C major. The right hand plays a melody with various ornaments and trills.

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' and the dynamics include 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) in C major. The right hand plays a melody with various ornaments and trills.

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.' and the dynamics include 'p dolce' (piano dolce) and 'legato'. The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) in C major. The right hand plays a melody with various ornaments and trills.

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.' and the dynamics include 'f' (forte). The left hand plays a continuous Alberti bass pattern, which is a broken chord sequence (C4-E4-G4-A4-B4-C5) in C major. The right hand plays a melody with various ornaments and trills.

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

24 *Sostenuto*
p

28 *sotto voce*
cresc.

The image shows the first system of the Raindrop Prelude by Chopin, measures 24 to 28. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). Measure 24 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The bass line features a continuous eighth-note pedal point on C. Measure 28 is marked *sotto voce* and *cresc.* (crescendo). The right hand has a melodic line with some grace notes.

Diagram illustrating the harmonic structure of the bass line in the Raindrop Prelude:

Measures 24-25: C7 (C-E-G-Bb) and F/C (F-A-C). The C pedal (in bass) starts as a consonant note (in the chord).

Measures 26-27: G7 (G-B-D-F) and C (C-E-G). The C pedal (in bass) is now a non-chord tone.

The diagram shows the bass line with the C pedal point held across measures 24, 25, 26, and 27. The chords above are indicated as C7, F/C, G7, and C. The C pedal point is shown as a continuous line in the bass, with a bracket indicating it starts as a consonant note in the first two measures and becomes a non-chord tone in the last two.

e.g. Bach Prelude in C major

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. 1st 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 a full orchestra, with multiple staves for woodwinds, strings, and brass. Three specific areas are highlighted with colored boxes to illustrate the concept of an inverted pedal:

- Top Staff (Woodwinds):** A red box highlights a section where a single note (likely a D or E) is sustained across several measures, serving as a pedal point in the upper register.
- Bottom Staff (Bass):** A blue box highlights a section where a single note (likely a D or E) is sustained across several measures, serving as a traditional pedal point in the lower register.
- Bottom Staff (Bass):** A red box highlights another section where a single note is sustained, further illustrating the concept of an inverted pedal.

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.

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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

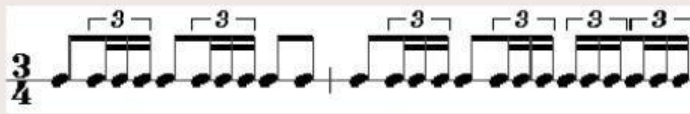


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Td73Lhq8npc>

- **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.