

## MUS 142

### Figured Bass Reference Chart

This chart lists the common figured bass symbols. In each group, the simplest (and usually the most common) form is listed first, followed by the fuller-figured varieties. The fuller forms show the intervals you are always expected to fill in, even though the common form omits them. Notice that the figure 8 does not appear: it is normally used to show the voice-leading in the resolution of a suspension.

Remember that *figures are always affected by the key signature*. The notes you play are drawn from the scale corresponding to the key signature of the music.

#### TRIADS

<u>root</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> inv</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> inv</u>
(nothing), $\flat$ , $\natural$ , $\sharp$ , 3, $\overset{5}{\flat}$ , $\overset{5}{\natural}$ , $\overset{5}{\sharp}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$	$\overset{6}{6}$ , $\overset{6}{3}$	$\overset{6}{4}$

#### SEVENTHS

<u>root</u>	<u>1<sup>st</sup> inv</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> inv</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> inv</u>
$\overset{7}{7}$ , $\overset{7}{3}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$ , $\overset{7}{5}$	$\overset{6}{6}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$	$\overset{6}{4}$ , $\overset{4}{3}$	$2$ , $4$ , $\overset{4}{2}$ , $\overset{6}{2}$

#### OTHER (usually suspensions, anticipations or harmonized accented passing notes)

$4$ , $\overset{5}{4}$	$9$ , $\overset{9}{3}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$	$\overset{9}{9}$ , $\overset{5}{4}$	$\overset{9}{9}$ , $\overset{7}{7}$ , $\overset{3}{3}$	$\overset{5}{2}$	$\overset{7}{4}$ , $\overset{4}{2}$
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Figures can be raised or lowered by writing accidentals immediately to the right or left of them. The accidental either cancels something in the key signature or provides a chromatic alteration not normally part of the key.

A shorthand for *raising* a figure is to write a slash through it. Every figure except for 3 can be slashed as shown below (3 is raised by substituting a  $\sharp$  or  $\natural$  for it, depending on the key signature):

2   4   5   6   7   9

Sometimes a + is used instead of the slash, giving 2+, 4+, 5+, 6+, 7+, 9+.

One exception to the slash convention is that a *lowered fifth* is written with this backslash:      5

A horizontal line written after a figure (e.g. 6 —) indicates that all upper voices are to be sustained while the bass note changes.