

## 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>
$\overset{7}{7}$ , $\overset{7}{3}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$ , $\overset{7}{5}$	$\overset{6}{6}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$	$\overset{6}{4}$ , $\overset{4}{3}$	$\overset{6}{2}$ , $\overset{4}{4}$ , $\overset{4}{2}$ , $\overset{6}{2}$

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

$\overset{5}{4}$ , $\overset{5}{4}$	$\overset{9}{9}$ , $\overset{9}{3}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$	$\overset{9}{9}$ , $\overset{5}{4}$ , $\overset{5}{4}$	$\overset{9}{9}$ , $\overset{7}{7}$ , $\overset{5}{3}$	$\overset{5}{2}$	$\overset{7}{4}$ , $\overset{4}{2}$
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	------------------	-------------------------------------

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.