

## Arpeggios in recitative style

(Prepared by Lucas Harris)

### A. "Dying-away" or "Decaying" chord

1. Used on *final chord of a cadence* to finish a phrase and suspend or stop the flow of the tactus.
  - a. Types of cadences to watch for:
    1. Falling fifth or rising fourth (penultimate chord takes a 4-#3)
    2. Falling whole step or half step (penultimate chord takes a 7-6)
  - b. The final chord is always a major chord and is (in contrast to some other styles like 19C opera) less emphasized than its penultimate following the stress of most Italian words (i.e. "**piz**-za")
2. Play a soft but full bass note placed with the singer's last syllable, then arpeggiate 'out of time' as you decrescendo into nothing.
  - a. Melodic motion from the penultimate chord which is completed going into the final chord (i.e., a 4-#3 over the dominant going to the tonic note of the final chord one or two octaves above the bass note) can be resolved together with the bass note, after which the arpeggio continues as normal.
  - b. The very last note can be so soft that it is almost "thought" instead of actually plucked
  - c. Pluck more notes towards the beginning and fewer towards the end, like a car running out of gas... . . . . .

*Lute: Prepare your r.h. fingers and 'peel' them off one by one*

*Guitar: Curl your fingers under the thumb and release them in a very slow fan rasgado, following through with the thumb*

### B. "Normal" or "Half-bar" or "Messa di voce" chord

1. Used on most whole notes or dotted half notes
  - a. Used to mark the strong (beat 1) and weak (beat 3) points of a whole-note tactus
  - b. Corresponds to the swelling in a vocal "*messa di voce*"
  - c. This arpeggio lets the singer know where the bar middle is going to be
2. Play a strong bass note, then crescendo through the notes of the arpeggio and place the last note precisely on the middle of the bar (on the third beat)
  - a. During the inactivity of the second half of the bar, let your instrument continue ringing and concentrate on following the singer and getting ready for the next chord
  - b. To achieve the crescendo pluck more notes towards the end

*Theorbo: Use the 'Kapsberger' arpeggio: Take the bass down an octave. Play your diapason, then jump up with your thumb any notes of the chord shape on courses 6, 5, 4, then finish with the index-middle-index on courses 2, 1, and 3 respectively.*

### C. "Impulse" or "Sniff" chord

1. Used when there is a short-duration rest on the vocal part to mark a single moment in time and provide a 'springboard' for the singer.
  - a. Often used to begin a new phrase, so this chord can have many different emotional qualities depending on the change in the affect, so be attentive and try to look ahead in the music
2. Stroke through all the strings at once in one quick gesture with **a lot** of follow-through
  - a. The continuo section leads this moment, so the continuo leader must always give a short and precise "sniff" before this

*Harp: Prepare all your fingers on the right strings, stiffen them as you sniff, then release them all at once.*

*Lute: Find a chord shape with all adjacent strings above the bass note, prepare your thumb on the bass note course, and let the thumb fall through the remaining strings with a very deep follow-through*  
*Theorbo: Use the above unless you really miss having a diapason. In this case, prepare your thumb on the diapason and your index finger on course 1. Simultaneously do a rest stroke with the thumb onto the next course and stiffen the index finger, raking it upwards through the first few courses all at once.*

#### **D. "Knife" or "Tennis-racket serve" chord**

1. Used during moments of sudden or sharp moments of dissonance between the bass line and vocal part
  - a. The singer's dissonant note is often "prepared" in the previous bar as a consonance that swells towards the moment of dissonance.
  - b. The next moment is often a 'dying away' chord or some kind of tension release as the dissonance resolves.
2. Sneak as close to the bridge as you dare and quickly and precisely 'snap' the notes of the chord all at once
  - a. This chord can be very effective using only three notes. Try using the thumb and just your index and middle fingers (your strongest fingers). Grab the strings securely and stiffen your fingers for a split second as you snap the strings as forcefully as you dare or according to the moment. Don't forget to release the tension.
  - b. Timing is crucial here. Don't forget to listen, as a good singer will tell you exactly where to play by the way they shape their crescendo.

#### **E. Unarpeggiated chords**

1. Used with quarter notes or half notes which don't have any special dissonances or impulses
  - a. Always remember the hierarchy of emphasis inherent in the whole note tactus:
    - Beat 1: Strongest
    - Beat 2: Weak
    - Beat 3: Strong
    - Beat 4: Weak
  - b. Sometimes the hierarchy can be displaced by a half note so that the third beat is strongest
  - c. Sometimes there are melodies in the bass line which imitate the singer
2. Pluck all the notes of a three or four note chord together simultaneously
  - a. Be mindful that your bass line might be able to be 'texted' if it is homophonic to the vocal part (uses the same rhythms) or imitates it. Use the syllable stress in the text in making decisions about relative emphasis.

*Guitar: Use downstrokes on strong beats and upstrokes on weak ones.*