Tissimo

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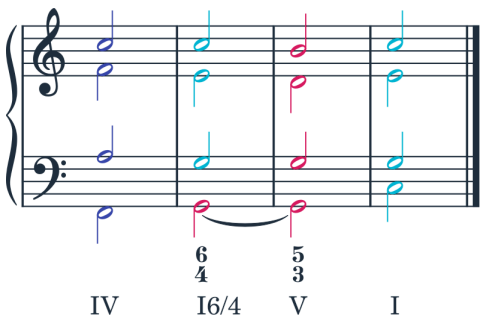
The 6/4 chord: three jobs

A **6/4 chord** is a triad with its 5th in the bass: C over G (Handout 01). Its C, a 4th above the bass, sounds unsettled, so a 6/4 almost never stands alone. It has a job.

THREE JOBS

Each chord wears the color of its root: I **cyan**, IV **indigo**, V **magenta**. A bass note that is not the root keeps its own color.

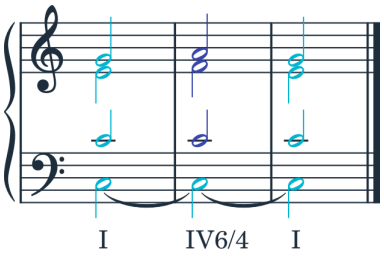
Cadential V in disguise



It comes just before V at a cadence. The bass is already on **G**, the dominant. Above it, C and E **lean** down to B and D: the figures read **6–5 over 4–3**. The two chords sound like one long V. Bach's *Prelude in C* has cadential 6/4s in bars 25 and 29 (Handout 377).

Spot it: the bass is on 5, the 6/4 falls on a strong beat, and V follows over the same bass.

Pedal the bass stays



The bass **holds** C while two voices step up and back, like neighbor notes (some books say *neighbor 6/4*). The top three voices are the C–E–G, C–F–A shape of Handout 42.

Spot it: the same bass note and the same chord before and after.

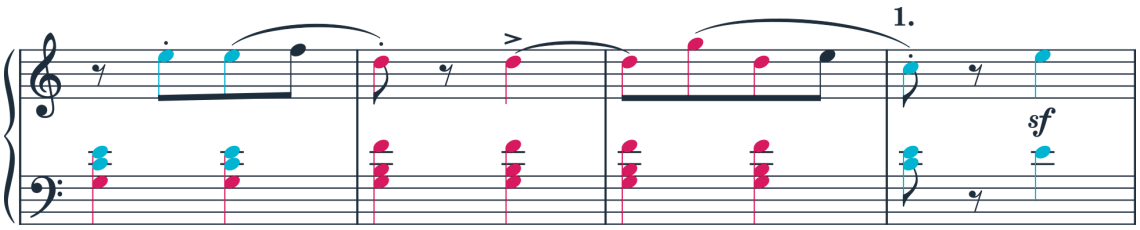
Passing the bass walks



The bass **steps** C–D–E between two positions of one chord; the soprano answers E–D–C. Chords in first inversion, like this I6, are the everyday way to make a bass step (Handout 208); the passing 6/4 is the step in between.

Spot it: the bass steps in and steps on, the same way.

IN YOUR PIECES



Burgmüller, *Arabesque*, bars 7–10 (Handout 343): **I6/4 – V7 – I** in C major · ink notes are not in the chord



Beethoven, *Für Elise*, bars 67–68 (Handout 342): **i6/4 – V7 – i** in A minor



Schumann, *The Wild Rider*, left hand, bars 2–3 (Handout 240): **i – iv6/4 – i** and **V – i6/4 – V** in A minor

Bar 7 of the *Arabesque* is not a plain C chord: its bass G is already the **dominant**; the left hand's C falls to B, and the right hand's E reaches D by way of F. *Für Elise* does the same over an E. Both are **cadential 6/4s**, on the first beat of the bar. *The Wild Rider* holds its bass on A, then E, while the chord above steps away and back on a weak beat: two **pedal 6/4s**.

Try it Play the three cards slowly and sing the bass. Then find the cadential 6/4 in *Amazing Grace*, bar 14 (Handout 229): C/G, G7, C, as the tune's E falls to D. Name more in Exercise 70.

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