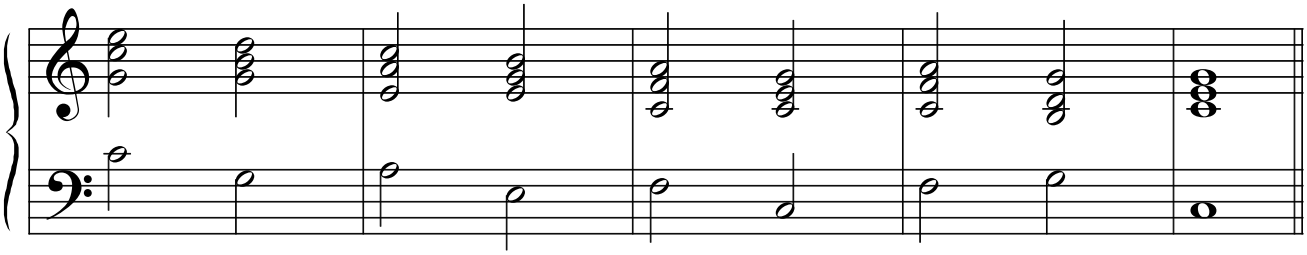
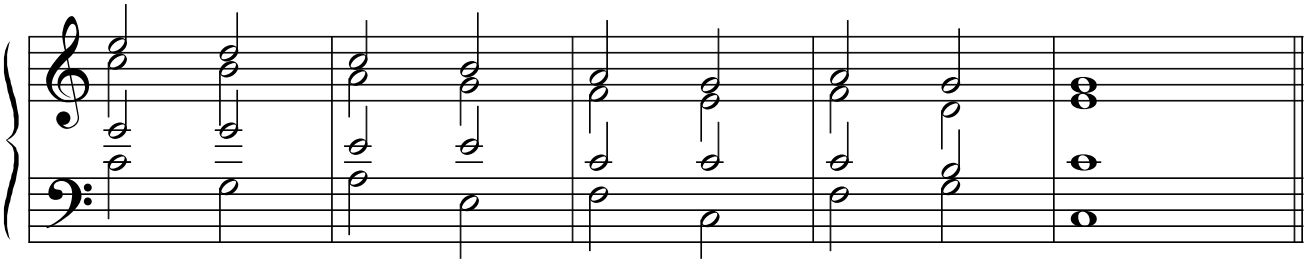
Writing for Four Voices: 3 Realizations of a Famous Bass Line

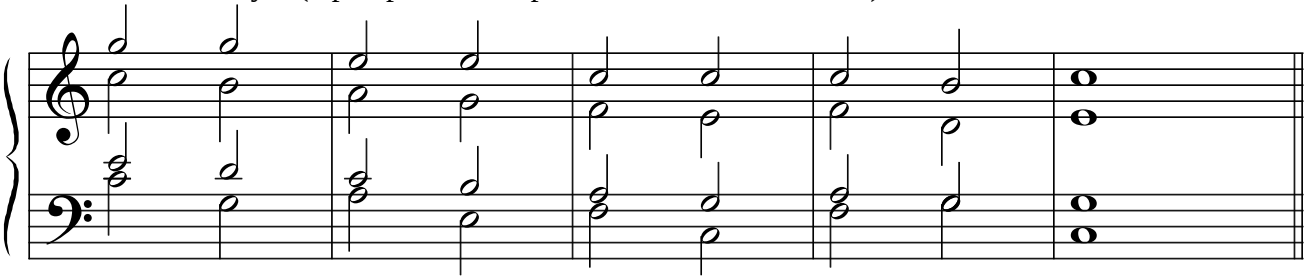
Continuo Style (or Keyboard Style): top 3 voices in R.H. as close as possible (mostly 3rds and 4ths).



4-Part Chorale Style (Closed position: top 3 voices in 3rds and 4ths).



4-Part Chorale Style (Open position: top 3 voices in 6ths and 5ths).



OBSERVED TENDENCIES
IN VERY STRICT FOUR-PART CHORALE STYLE

1. In upper 3 voices (S A T), common tones are kept in the same voice,
   otherwise stepwise motion is preferred.

2. Each chord contains a root, 3rd and 5th.
   Root position favors a doubled root.
   A doubled 3rd is avoided (unless the chord is diminished or stepwise contrary motion is involved)
   A doubled leading tone is avoided except when the function is iii.

3. Open or closed position is maintained.
   Ranges of voices are respected.
   In open and closed positions,maximum 2 octaves between T& B, minimum is a unison.
   Crossing and overlapping of adjacent voices is avoided.

4. Parallel unisons, P5th's, and P8va's between any two voices are rigorously avoided.

5. Contrary motion between outer voices is preferred.
   Between S and B, if one voice skips, another steps in the opposite direction.