

A Summary of Telemann's Advice from his
Exercises in Singing, Keyboard-Playing, and Thoroughbass

Aria	Summary
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right hand moves as little as possible. • The range of the right hand is about b-e2 (in Aria 11 he says f2, however). • A slash indicates that the upper voices remain held. • In a 6/3 chord one most often doubles the 6 or 3; if this is uncomfortable, one may double the bass.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 6/3 chord on the second bass degree often takes a 4, even if not indicated. • One should be cautious about doubling the bass of a 6/3 in the highest voice.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One must avoid parallel fifths and octaves. • Hidden (also called direct) fifths or octaves occur in similar motion. They are prohibited because parallel motion would result if the gap were filled in by step. • If the right hand gets too low, one may play two chords over the same bass note so that the right hand may leap higher within the same harmony.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain direct fifths are allowed (either when the top voice moves by step or in a change of position in the same harmony). • All rules only apply as far as circumstances allow them. • Contrary motion is the best means of avoiding parallel and hidden fifths and octaves. • The bass doubling in the 6/3 chord is more permissible as a pick-up.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrary motion is when the hands move towards or away from each other. • Contrary motion is especially good when the bass ascends by fourth between 5/3 chords or when a 5/3 chord follows after a 6/3 chord. • For continuity the right hand may play during a rest in the bass voice. • The diminished fifth may enter unprepared. • Ornaments in the vocal part do not necessarily affect the harmony of the accompaniment, although they can. • The French do not use a dash to indicate a passing note in the bass; with time, one learns to recognize such notes without a dash.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubling the bass of a 6/3 chord in the soprano drowns out the third of the chord. • For many consecutive 6/3 chords one plays in three voices; if a tenor is singing, one plays this passage an octave lower to avoid parallel fifths between voice and accompaniment.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2, 4, dim. 5, 7 and 9 are dissonances. • 1, 3, perfect 5, 6, 8 are consonances. • Generally dissonances are prepared and resolved down by step in a suspension, even though there are many exceptions. • Any consonance may serve as the preparation.
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The figure 9/4 requires the 5. • The figure 9/7 requires the 3. • The figure 4 takes 5 and 8. • The figure 9 takes 5 and 3. • Organs need not re-articulate repeated chords, as is necessary on other keyboard instruments. • The right hand may occasionally move away from its starting position. • Dissonance need not be prepared over a pedal point.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a suspended dissonance, the tied voice resolves by descending step to a consonance. • The resolution must be in the same voice, regardless of whether it is in the bass, a middle voice, or the top voice. • Resolutions to a unison are not good because a voice is lost.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In certain sequences with 7th chords, the 5 must be omitted, unless you play with 5 voices. • One re-articulates the right hand as needed depending on the circumstances of the performance.
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidentals over a bass note indicate a change of harmony. • One may play higher than f2 if the bass ascends unusually high or modern clefs are used. • The dim. 5 is not always indicated in a 6/3 chord, although it should be. • The dim. 5 requires the 3 and 6. • The aug. 5 resolves up in a non-standard manner.

12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dim. 5 is useful and may be added at times to a 6/3 chord, even though it is not indicated. • The bass of a 6/4+2 chord may enter unprepared.
13	None
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chords over a pedal point are often unfigured. • Long pedal points in the bass may be rearticulated. • The right hand may rest in order to make a low pitch in the voice audible.
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompanists would do well to listen more. • The 4 may enter unprepared in a 6/4 chord.
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel fifths are allowed as long as one or both of the fifths are diminished. • Some prefer not to end with the fifth on top, but this is fine. • An aug. 2nd takes a 6 and aug. 4th. • Bass resolutions can be rationalized via an inversion of voices.
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel fifths arising between ornamental pitches in the voice part and the accompaniment are allowed.
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right hand may sustain over bass arpeggios. • Generally, the simpler, the better.
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right hand may be more active when the solo voice rests. • Cross relations (i.e., augmented relationships), though one prohibited, are not popular.
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort of the right hand has priority over a rule of only moderate importance.
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right hand may play with the bass or may play a chord during a rest in the bass.
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissonant pitches in the bass an Alberti-bass figuration should not be doubled in the right hand, except in a middle voice; otherwise parallel octaves occur. • If the hands come too close together, either drop a voice or leap up with the right hand.
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessity may require a five-voice chord. • Parallel fifths with the vocal part are excusable if the accompanist cannot see the vocal part.
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With multiple dim. 5ths, each one must be resolved properly.
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progression p5 to dim. 5 is allowed in the outer parts. • Dim. 5 may not proceed to an aug. 5th.
26	None
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parallel octaves and fifths between the right hand and the solo voice can be tolerated. • A passing seventh may be played when the bass ascends by fourth or descends by fifth, even if it is not indicated in the figures.
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If playing from a score containing the solo voice, the accompanist may play additional figures not indicated in the score in order to better harmonize passing and neighbor notes in the solo voice.
29	None
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An augmented unison is rare, and is usually indicated as an augmented octave, rather than a unison. • One must distinguish between intervals that are enharmonically equivalent, such as the augmented unison and the minor second.
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An augmented second is enharmonically equivalent to a minor third. • A diminished fourth is enharmonically equivalent to a major third.
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diminished fourth is generally placed between two middle voices. • An augmented third is enharmonically equivalent with a perfect fourth. • Whether or not augmented and diminished intervals are indeed allowed, the reality is that one needs to know how to treat them.
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diminished fifth is enharmonically equivalent with an augmented fourth. • A perfect fifth is enharmonically equivalent with a diminished sixth.

34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minor sixth is enharmonically equivalent with an augmented fifth. • A major sixth is enharmonically equivalent with a diminished seventh.
35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minor seventh is enharmonically equivalent with an augmented sixth. • A major seventh is enharmonically equivalent with a diminished octave.
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An augmented octave is enharmonically equivalent with a minor ninth.
37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second and a ninth indicate the same note, but differ in that the second is used when the bass resolves, and the ninth is used when the upper voice resolves. • The major ninth is enharmonically equivalent to a diminished third, which some call a tenth.
38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many diminished intervals make a strong impression.
39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an aria, the left hand does not re-strike a held bass pitch if the harmony is dissonant, but may do so if the harmony is consonant.
40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In opera, one plays the cadence with the singer; in cantatas, one plays it afterwards. • One may accompany in the full-voiced style with many three or four notes in each hand.
41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passagework should be avoided in recitatives. • One should only arpeggiate on the harpsichord; on the organ one strikes all notes simultaneously. • The faster and shorter the arpeggio, the better it is for the singer.
42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is doubtful whether thoroughbass may be played without any figures at all. • If the bass descends a minor third, followed by an ascending half step, then one plays a 6/3 on the first note. • Often a 6/3 chord allows for the addition of a diminished or perfect 5.
43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the bass descends by half step to a 5/3 chord, the first bass note takes a 6/3 chord.
44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A falling fifth in the bass at the cadence requires a major third on the first note. Alternatively, it may be figured with 6/4-5/3. • 6/3 may substitute for 6/5. • If the bass descends by step and is figured with 2, then add 6/4.
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If 2 occurs over a bass pedal, add 7/4. • An augmented 4 takes 6/2, but a perfect 4 takes 8/5. • A 6/4 chord takes the 8. • 7/4/2 occurs often in recitatives. Take care that the 7 resolves upwards.
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/3 takes the 6. Whether this 6 is major or minor requires a good ear. • Sometimes a figure is necessary as the preparation of the following dissonance. • The diminished 5 requires the 6. • 9 requires 5/3, but 9/6 requires only 3. • 9/4 takes 5. • Sometimes accidentals are unfigured and must be assumed based on the key.
47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes a 6 must be added to a diminished 5th, even though the 6 is not figured. This is the case if the bass ascends by step. • When playing a chord over a rest in the bass, be sure to determine whether the previous or following bass note determines the harmony. • With unfigured or sparsely figured basses, the best rule is to listen to the solo part.
48	None
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accompaniment need not have an interesting soprano line. • The accompaniment may double the vocal line at the unison. • The accompaniment may go higher than the vocal line.