

from *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis* by Allen Forte and Steven Gilbert

J.S. Bach's C major Prelude from *The Well-Tempered Clavier, volume 1* written in block chords to more clearly show voice leading. (This prelude can be treated like a 5-voice chorale.)

EXAMPLE 167. Bach, WTC/I, Prelude 1

Example 167 consists of two parts. Part (a) shows the original C major Prelude from J.S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Volume 1*, measures 1-4. The right hand has a continuous sixteenth-note pattern, while the left hand plays block chords. Part (b) shows a reduction of the first four measures into block chords. The right hand part is reduced to a single note (C) in each measure, and the left hand part is reduced to a single note (E) in each measure. The chords are labeled with figured bass notation: 4 2, 6 5, and 8.

The outer voices in bars 1-4 can be reduced to C and E with neighbor tones:

EXAMPLE 169.

a. Bach, WTC/I, Prelude 1

Example 169 shows the reduction of the outer voices from the first four measures of the prelude. The right hand part is shown with notes 1 (C), 2 (D), 3 (E), and 4 (F). The left hand part is shown with notes 1 (C) and 2 (E). The notes are connected by lines, and the bass line is labeled with figured bass notation: I, II₂⁴, V₃⁶, and I. An alternative reduction is shown to the right, with notes 3 (E), N (D), and 3 (E) in the right hand, and I, V₃⁶, and I in the left hand.

One possible Schenkerian graph of the entire prelude:

EXAMPLE 176. Bach, WTC/I, Prelude 1

Example 176 shows a Schenkerian graph of the entire prelude. The graph is drawn over the original notation, showing the underlying structure and voice leading. The right hand part is shown with notes 1 (C), 5 (G), 10 (E), 15 (C), 19 (G), 23 (E), 30 (C), 32 (G), 34 (E), and 35 (C). The left hand part is shown with notes 1 (C), 2 (E), 3 (G), 4 (D), 5 (F), 6 (A), 7 (C), 8 (E), 9 (G), 10 (A), 11 (C), 12 (E), 13 (G), 14 (A), 15 (C), 16 (E), 17 (G), 18 (A), 19 (C), 20 (E), 21 (G), 22 (A), 23 (C), 24 (E), 25 (G), 26 (A), 27 (C), 28 (E), 29 (G), 30 (A), 31 (C), 32 (E), 33 (G), 34 (A), 35 (C). The graph is labeled with figured bass notation: I, (V), I, IV⁷, V, I, and i. The bass line is labeled with figured bass notation: I, V, and I.