99% Perspiration

Module 3 of *Music: Under the Hood*

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Osher Course
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Outline

- Part writing
- Part writing – Bach
- Part writing – Beethoven

Part Writing

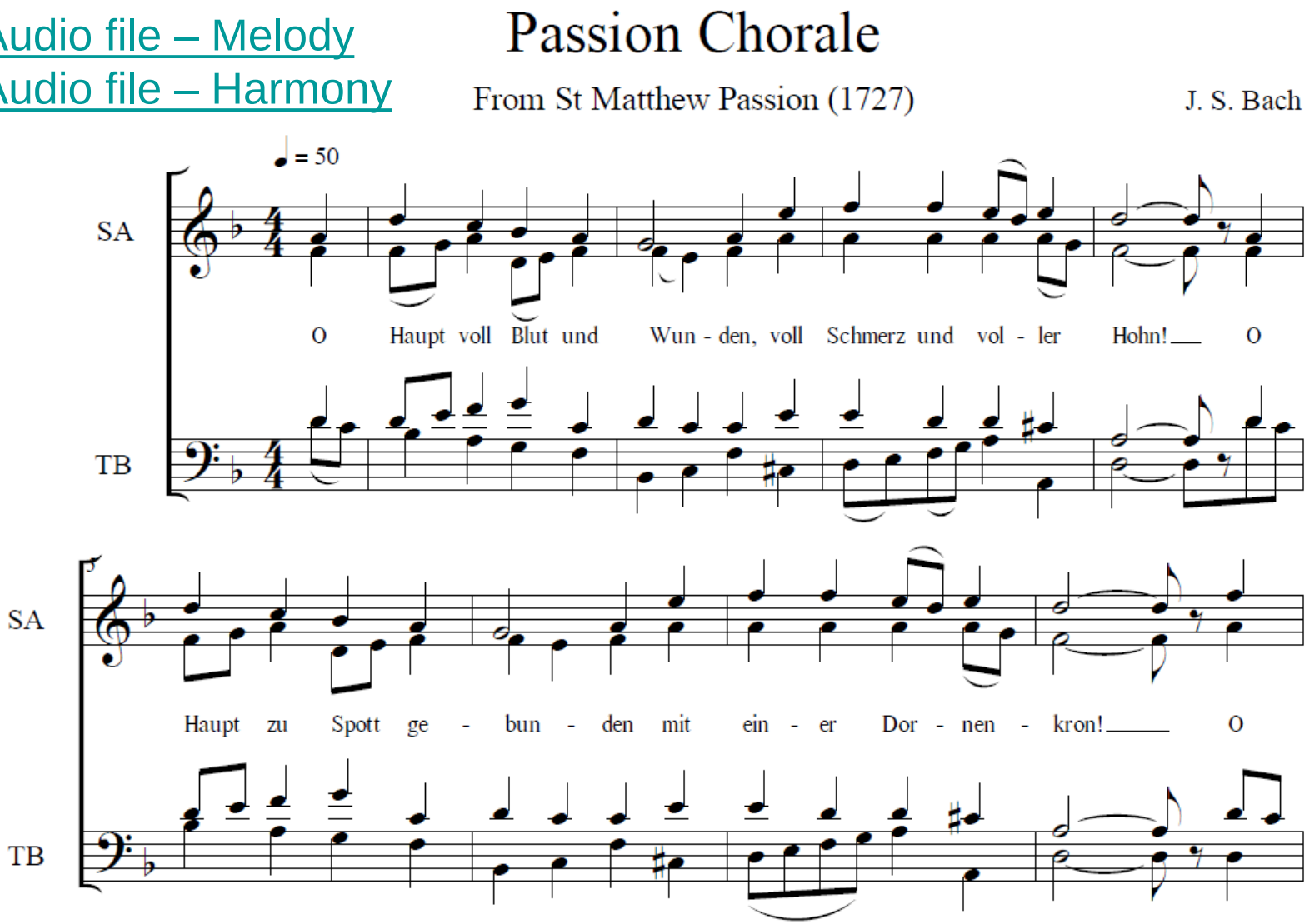
- Music is 1% inspiration…
  - …and 99% perspiration
- Example: **Part-writing**
  - A seemingly simple chore.
  - Add harmony parts to a melody.
  - It's a complex combinatorial problem.
  - The "harmony" and the "melody" ideally become one.
    - Neither makes sense without the other.

Part Writing: Bach

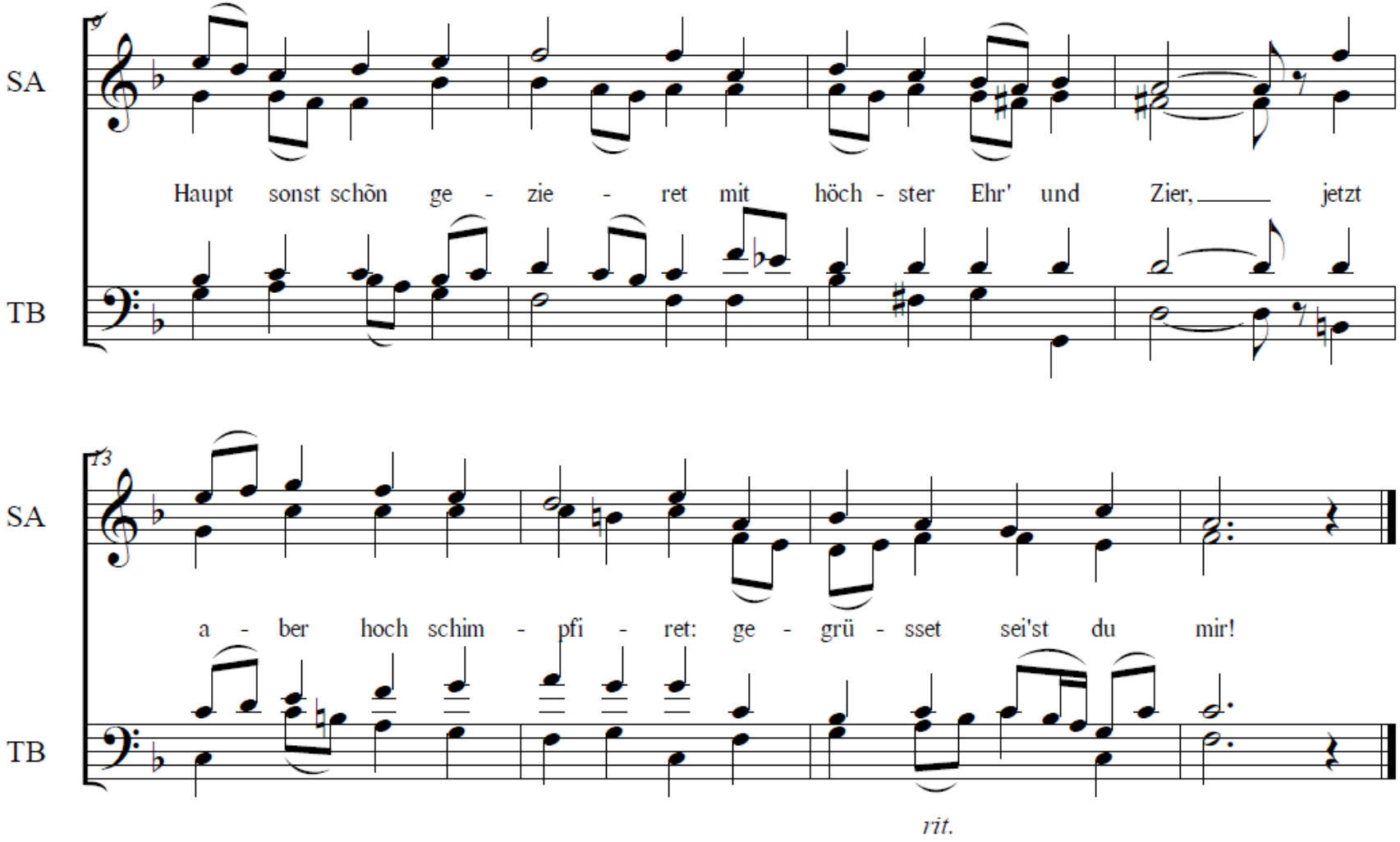
- Chorale harmonizations
  - Governed by traditional rules since 18th century
- The chorale tune itself is of little interest.
  - The “harmony” brings it alive.
- Consider this famous chorale…

Part Writing: Bach

Audio file – Melody
Audio file – Harmony



Part Writing: Bach



Part Writing: Bach

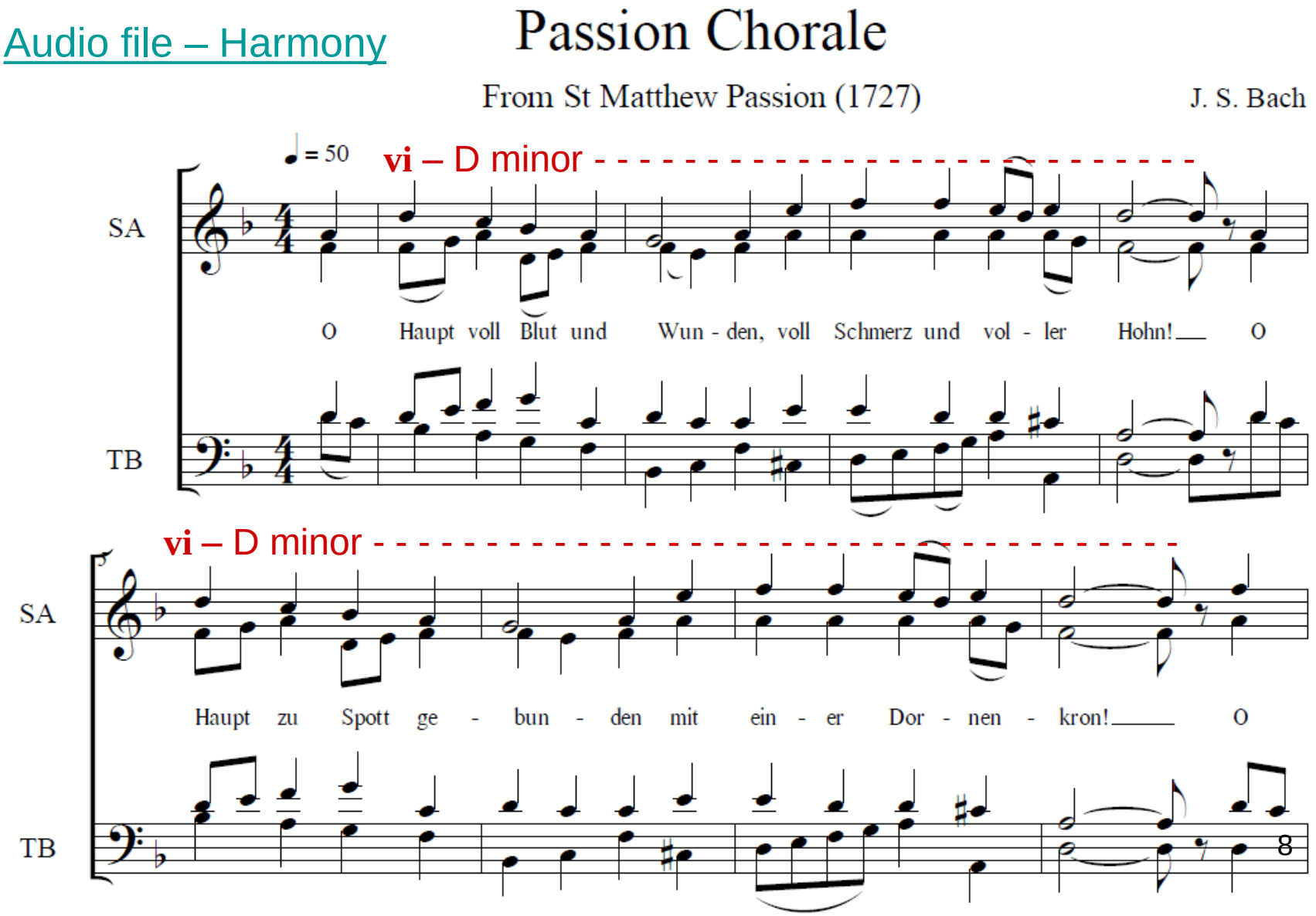
Translation of Text

O sacred Head, now wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns,
Thine only crown;

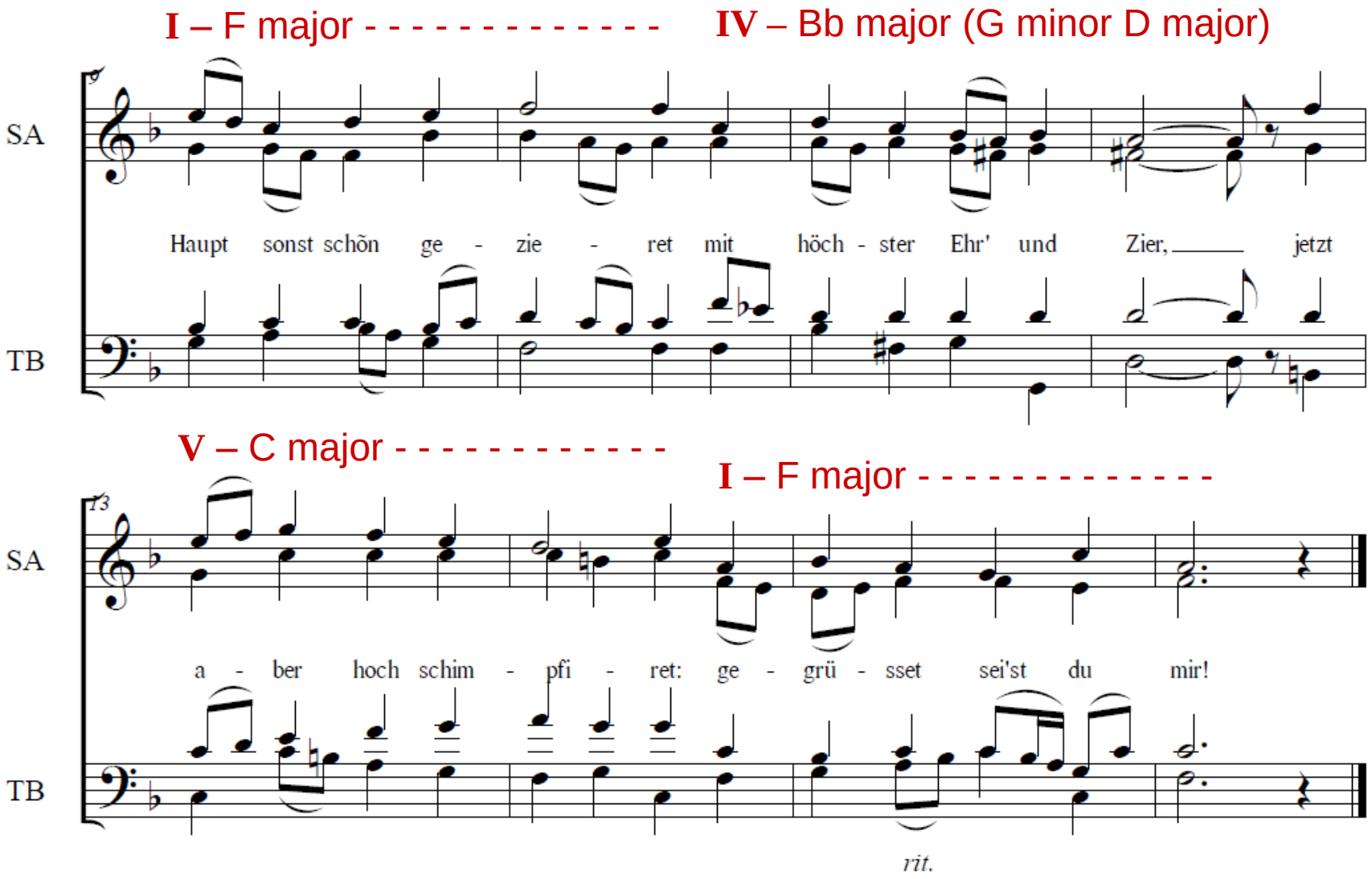
O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.

Part Writing: Bach

[Audio file – Harmony]

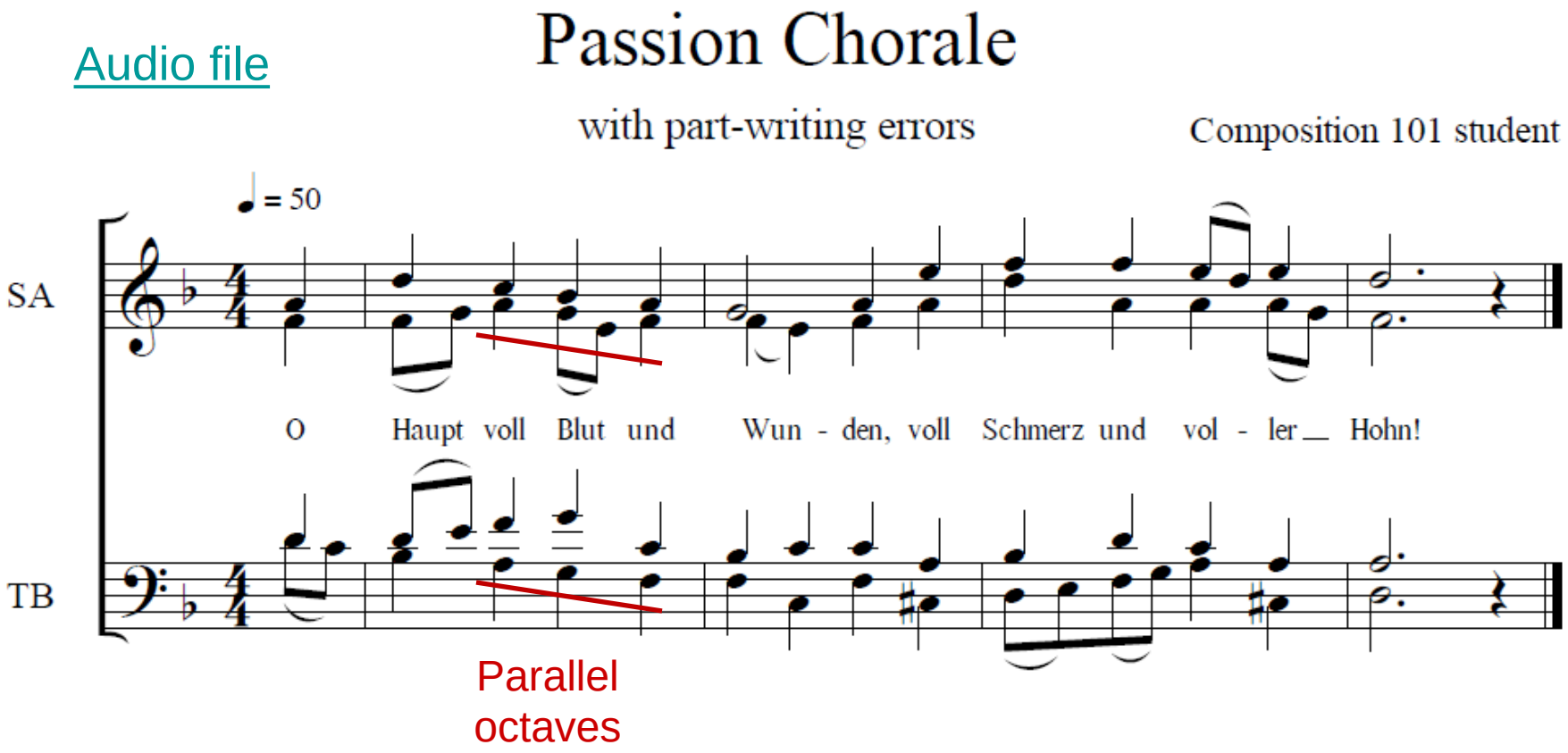


Part Writing: Bach



Part Writing: Amateur

Audio file



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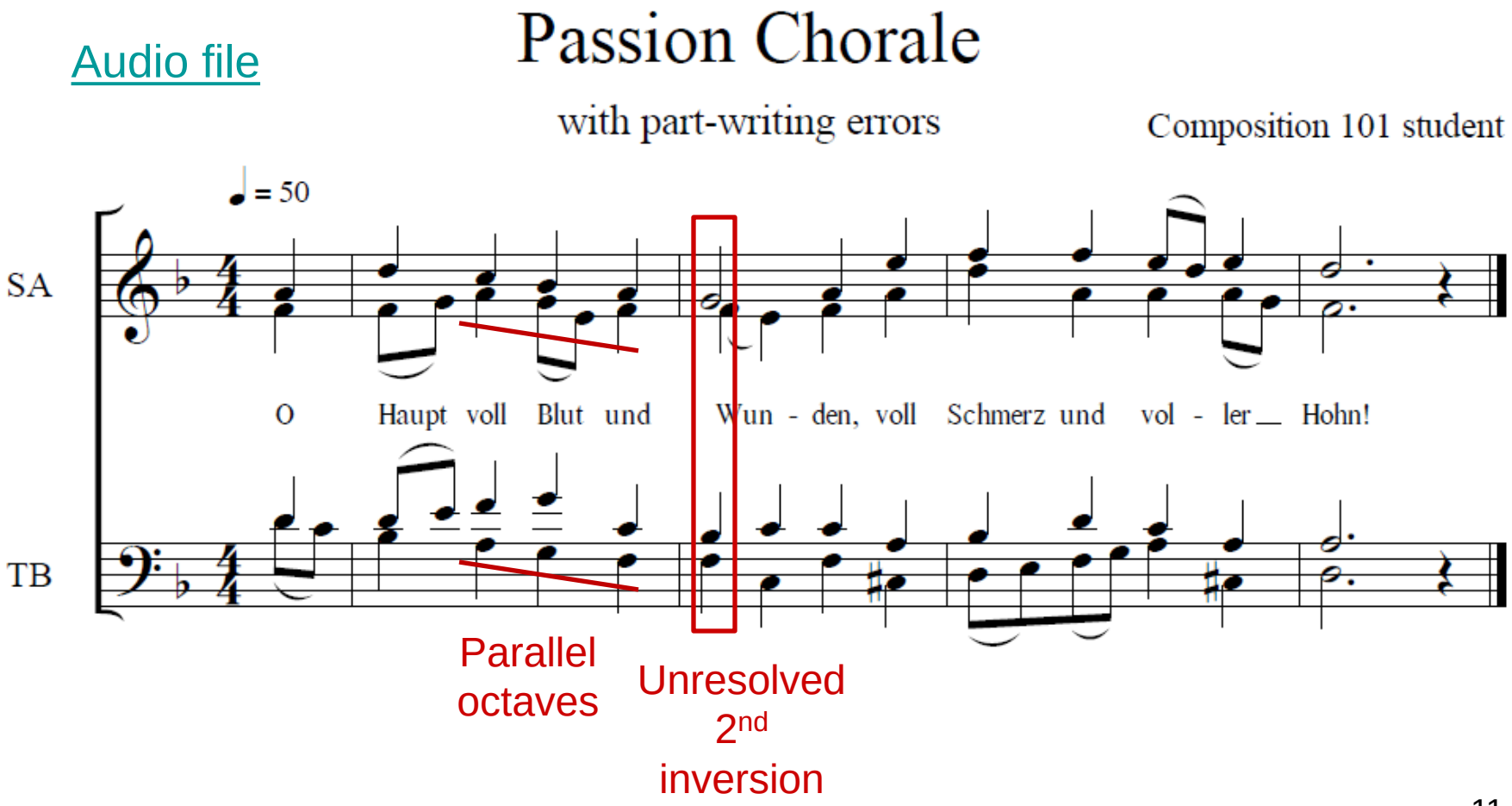

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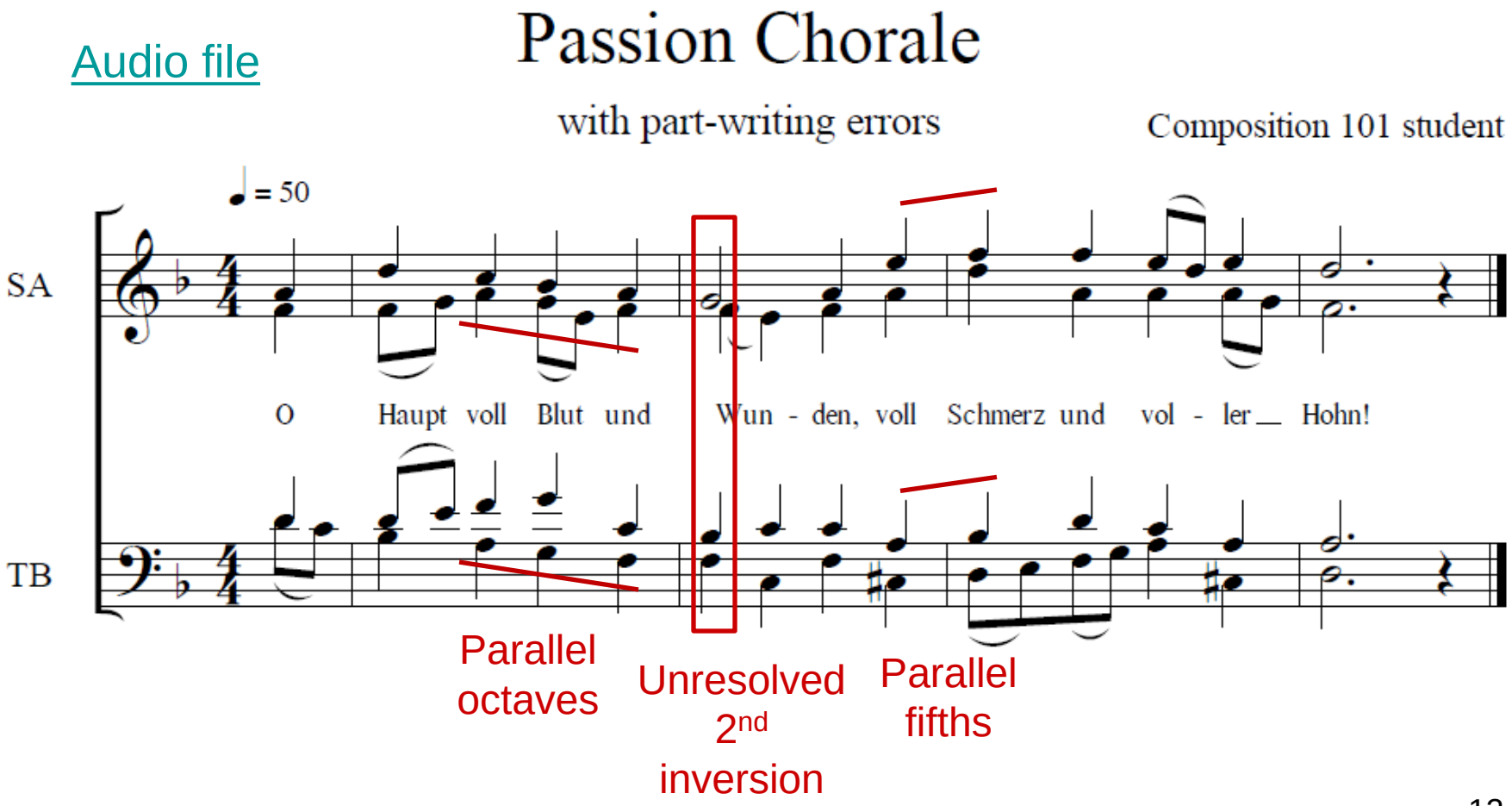

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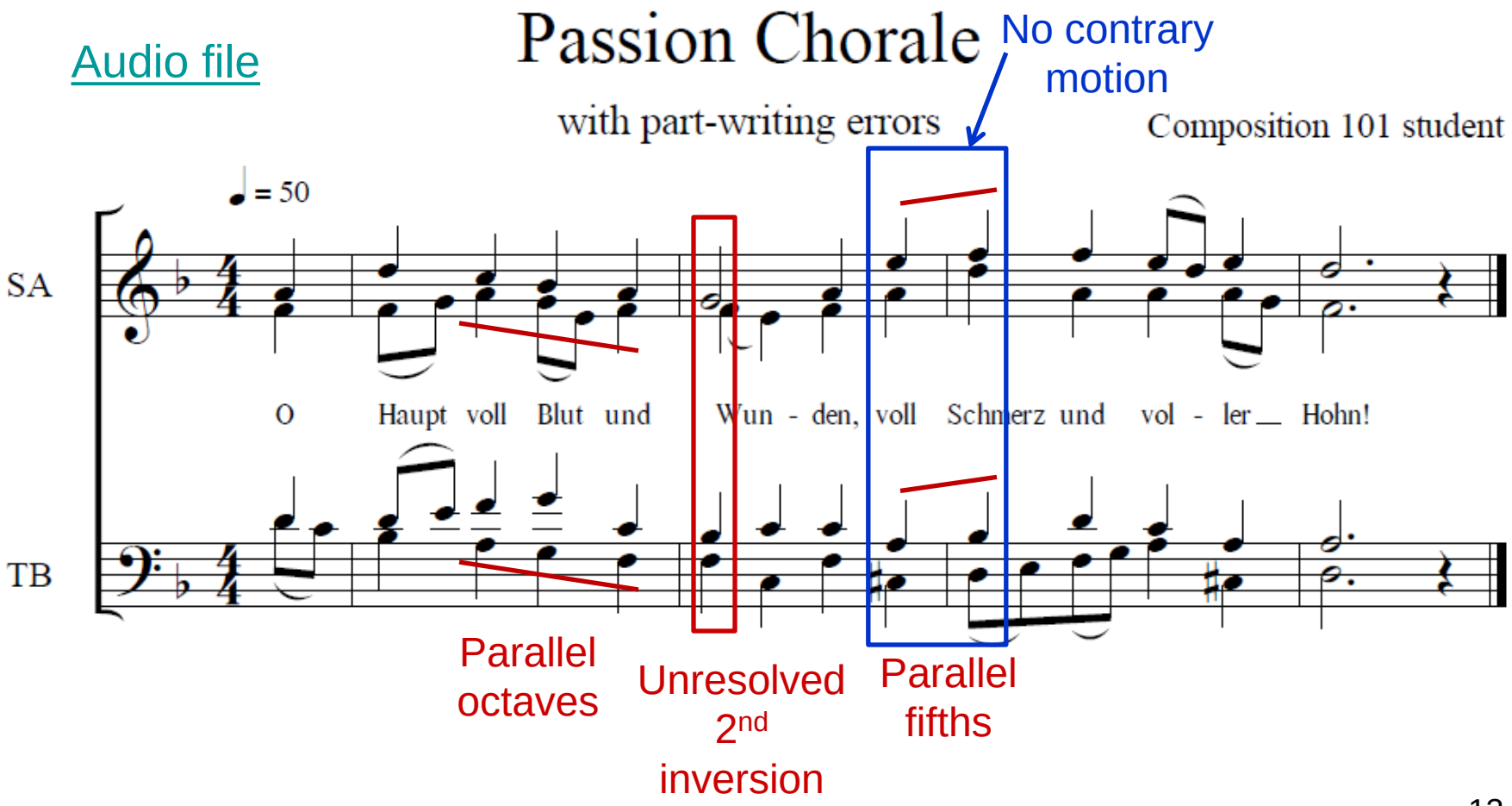

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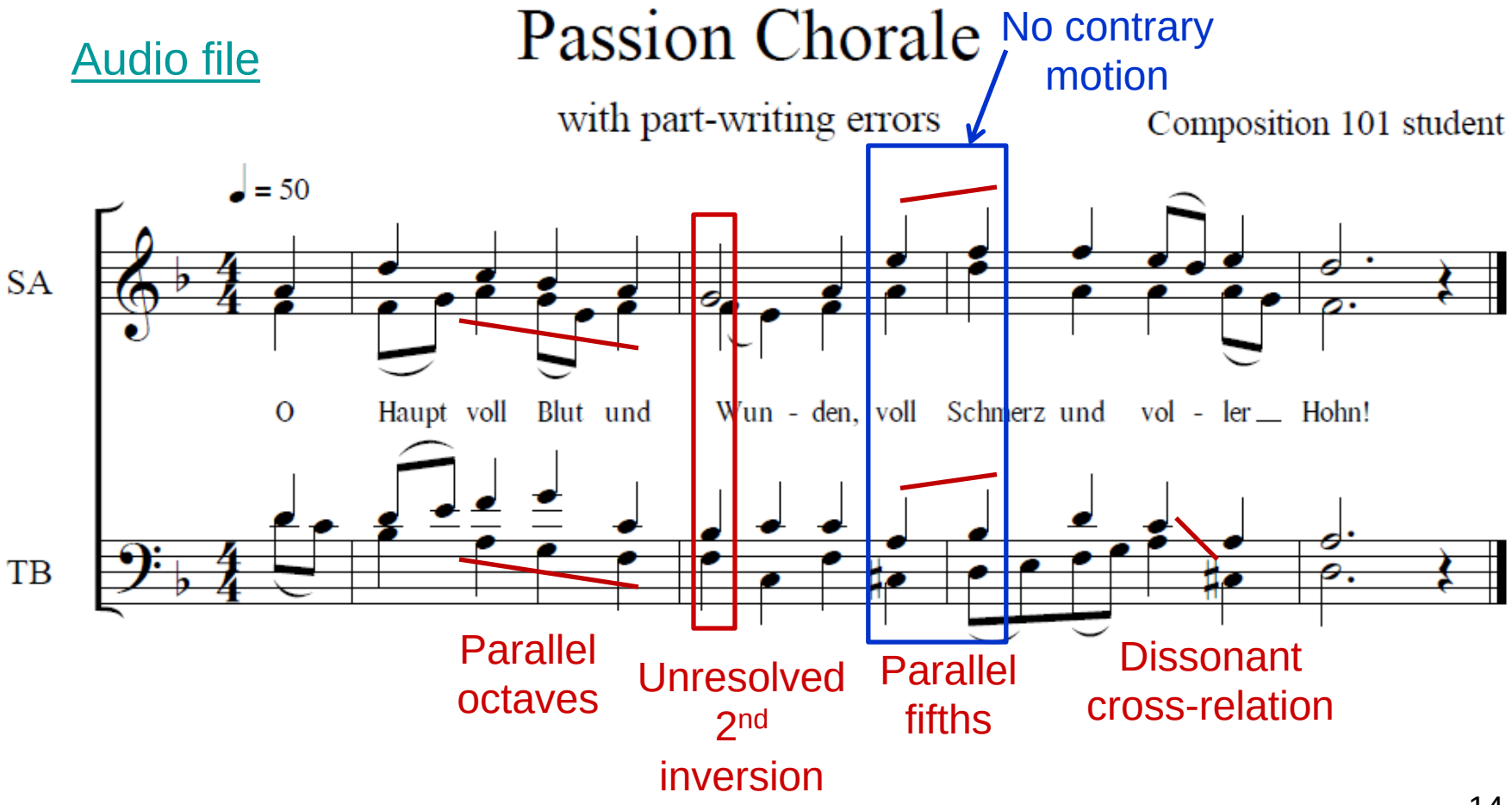
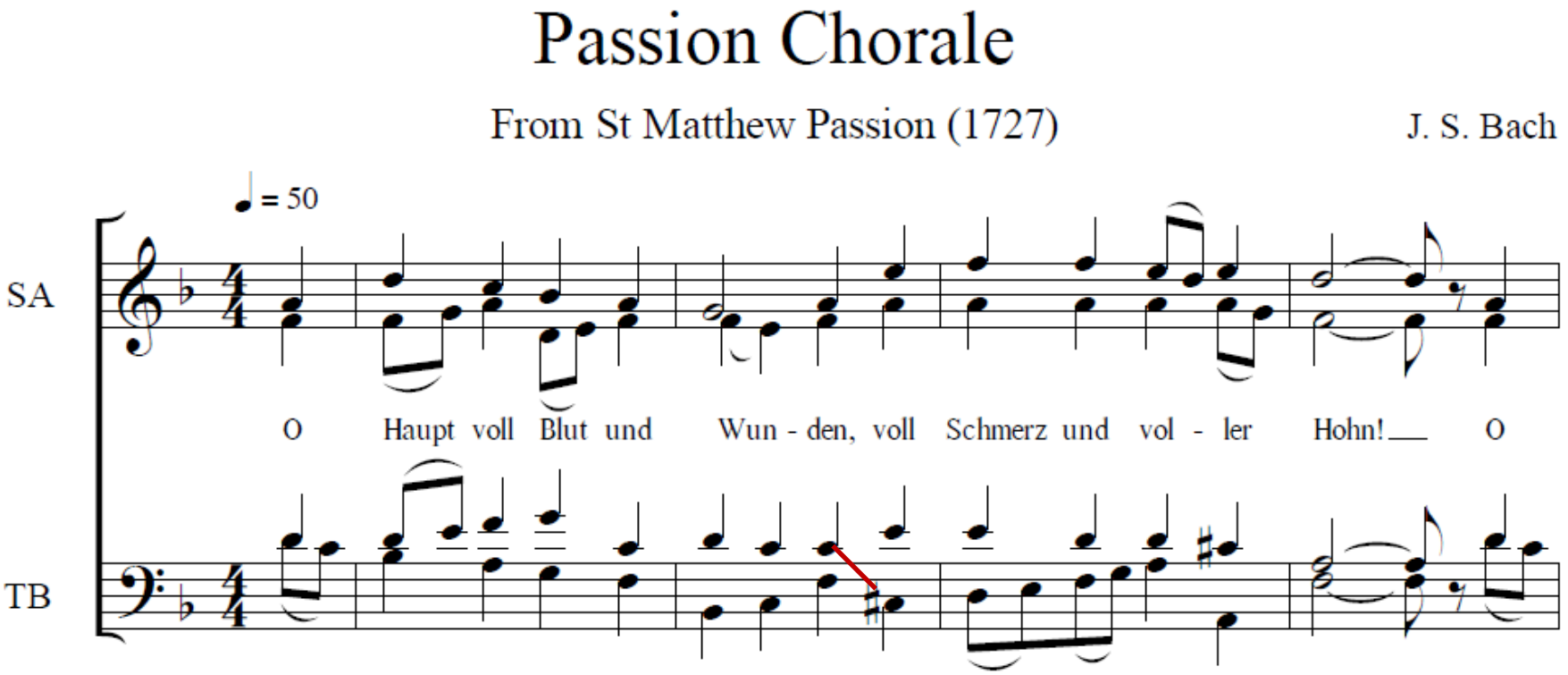
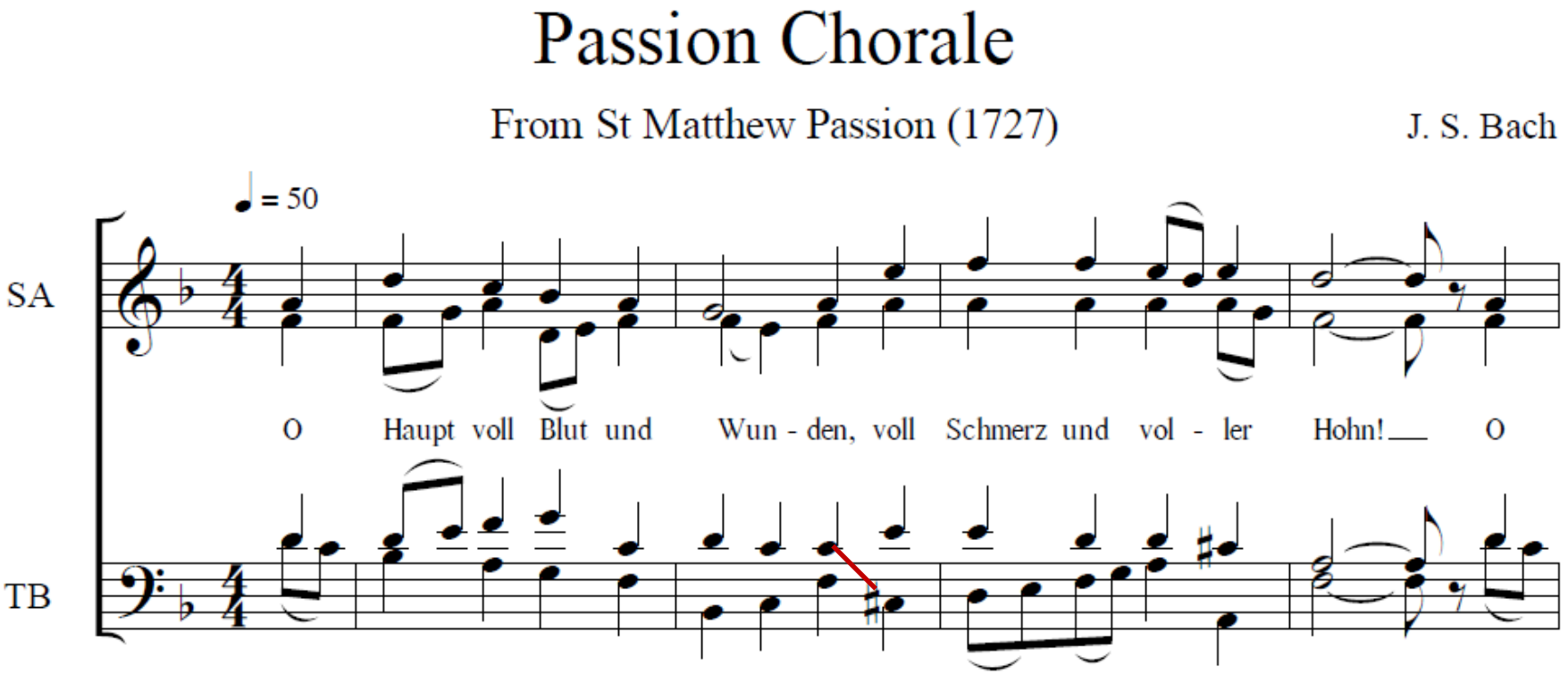


Part Writing: Bach



Uh-oh. Dissonant cross-relation in Bach's harmonization?

Part Writing: Bach



Uh-oh. Dissonant cross-relation in Bach's harmonization?
Technically no, because this starts a new phrase.

Part Writing: Bach

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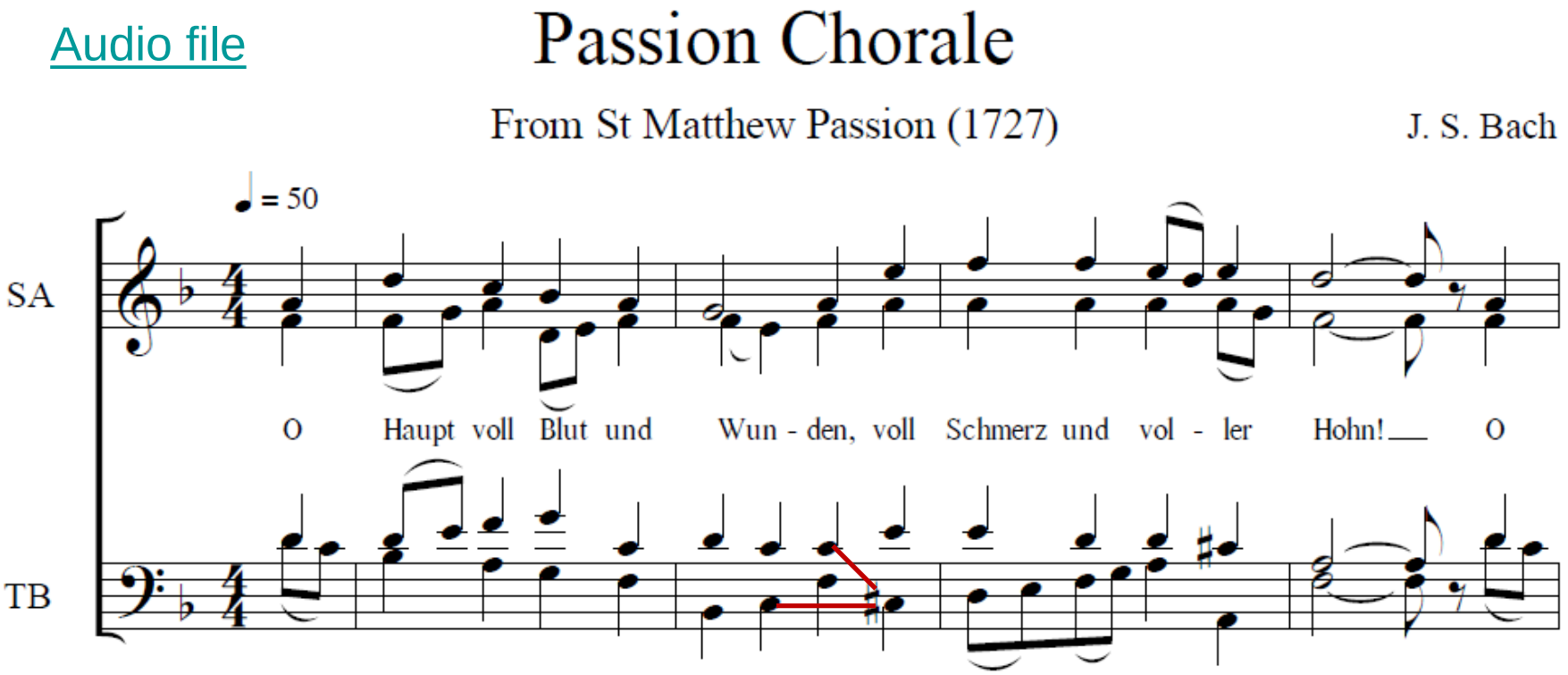
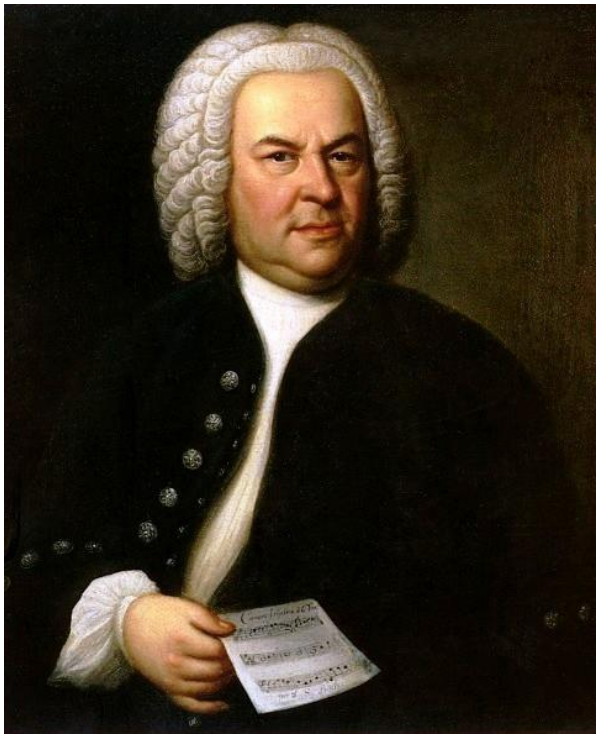


Uh-oh. Dissonant cross-relation in Bach's harmonization?
Technically no, because this starts a new phrase.
Also C# picks up previous C

Part Writing: Bach

- Of course, following all the rules doesn't make a good chorale.
  - The technical details must serve a larger purpose.
  - Let's have a second look at the Passion Chorale…

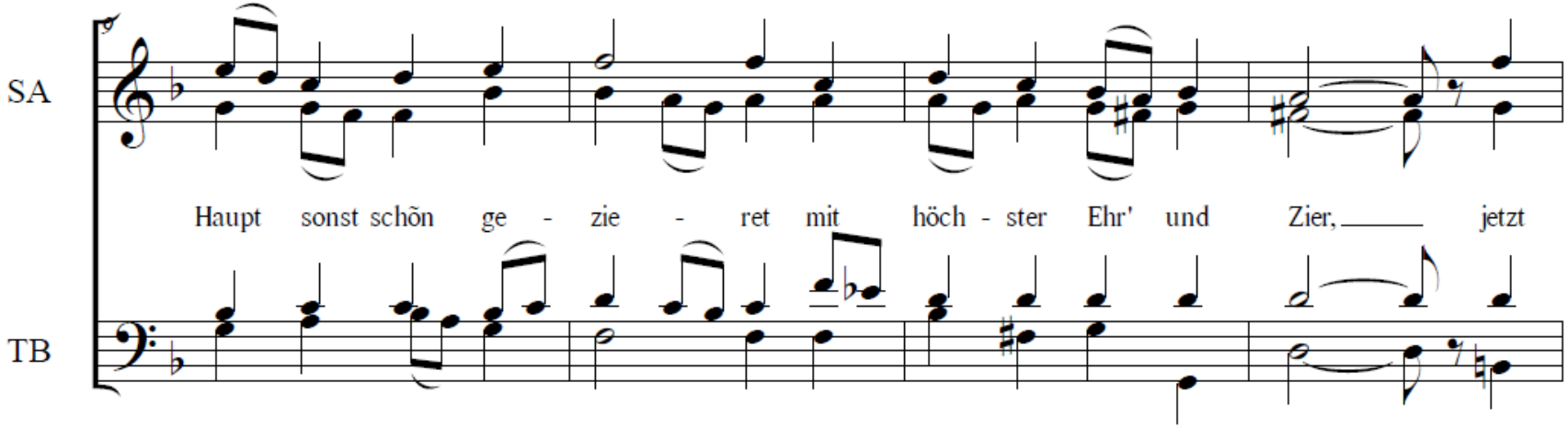


Part Writing: Bach

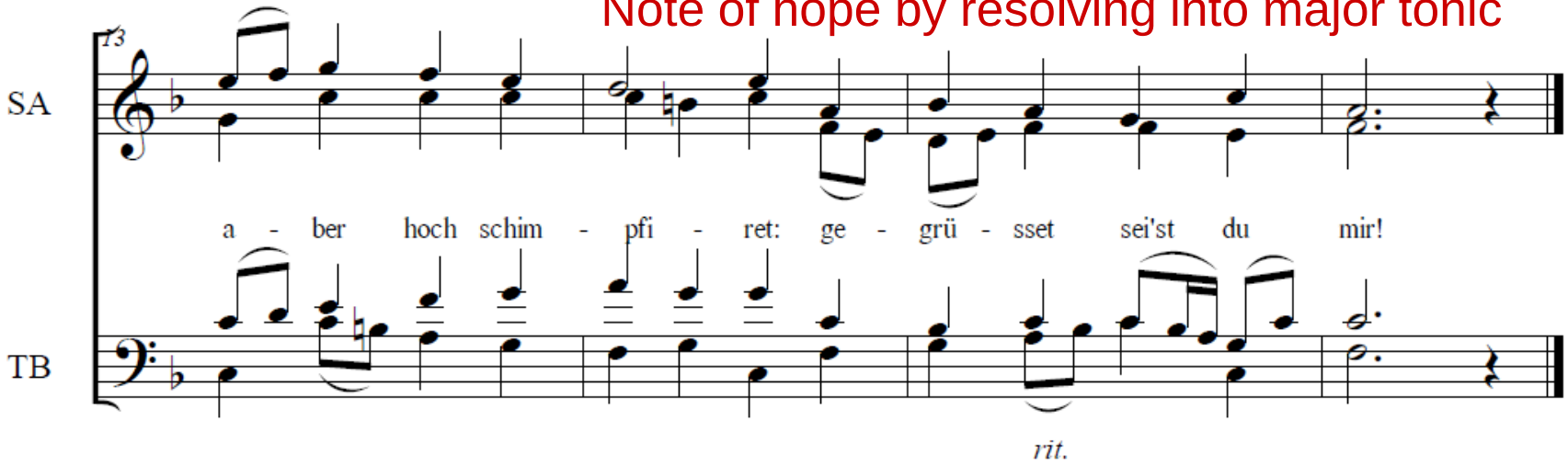
Audio file – Harmony

Part Writing: Bach

Recalls happier times in major keys

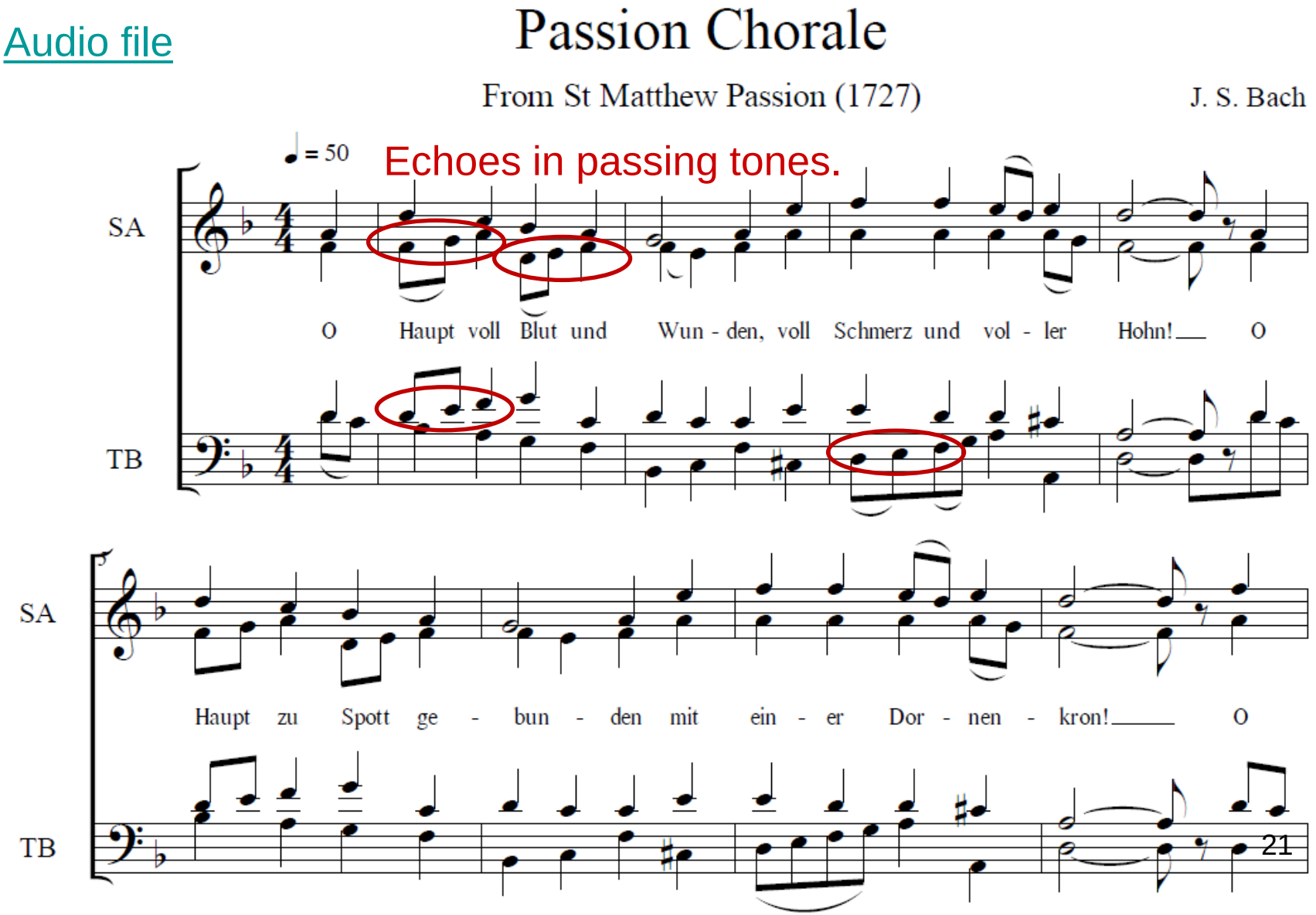


Note of hope by resolving into major tonic



Part Writing: Bach

Audio file



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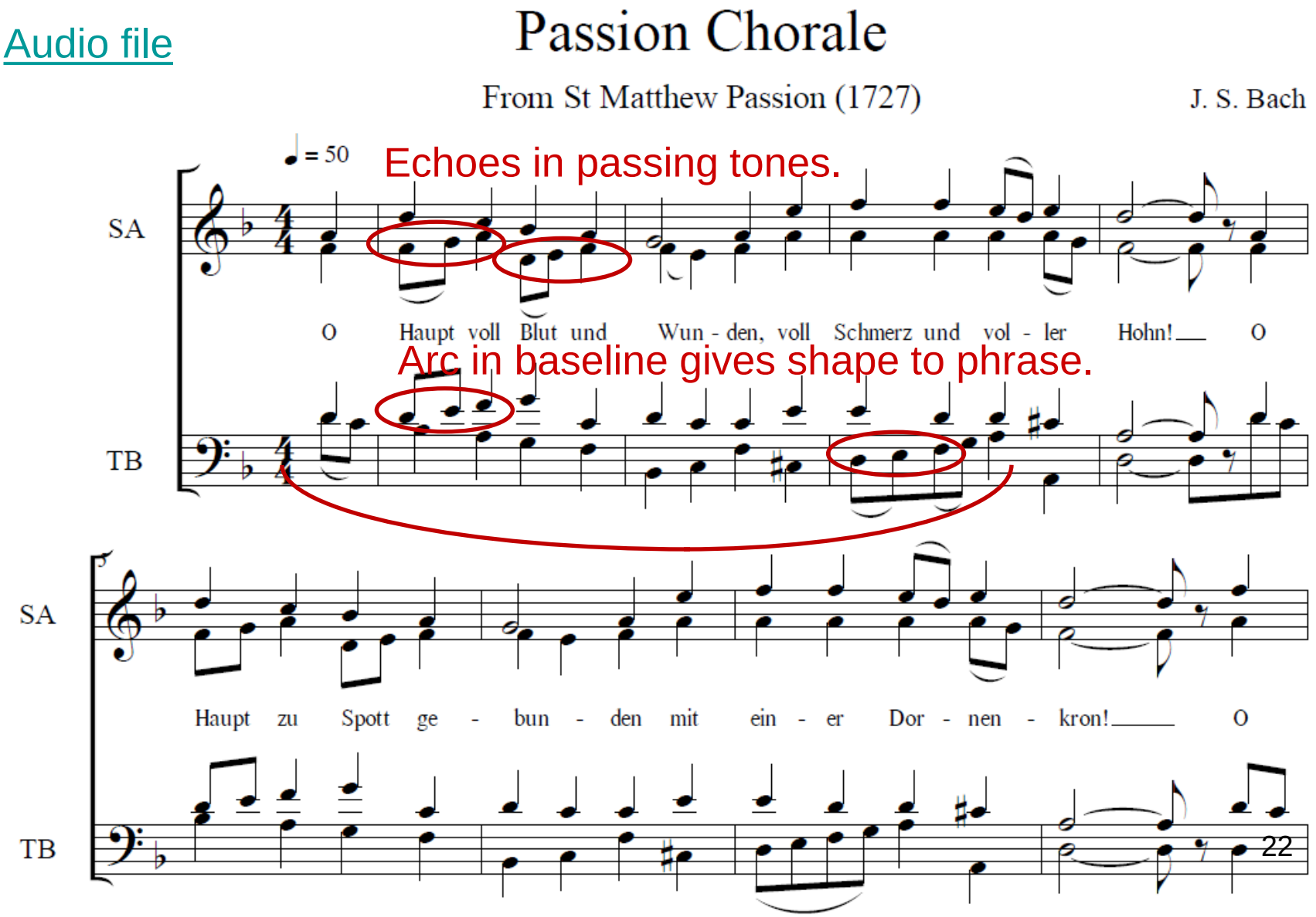

Part Writing: Bach

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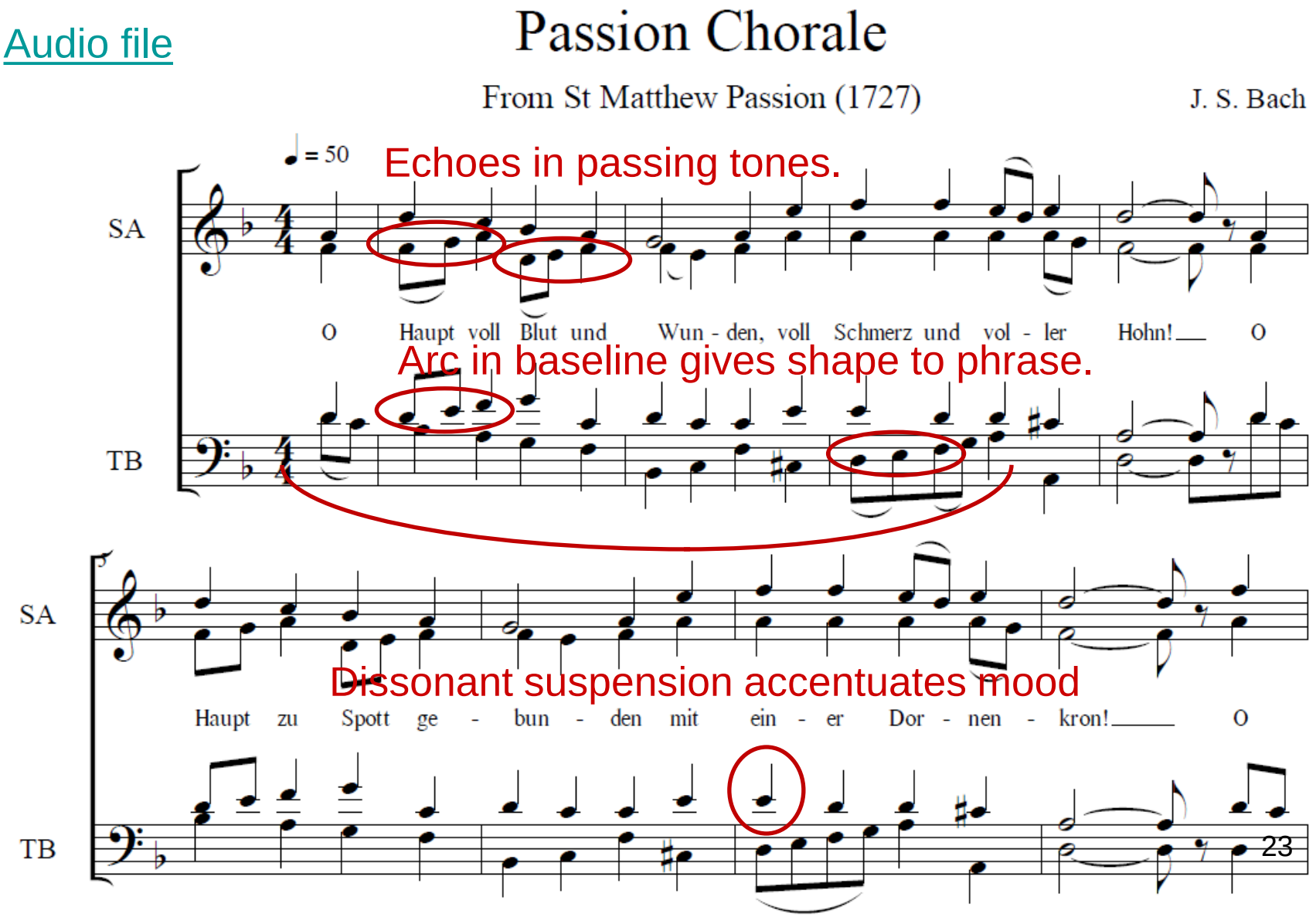
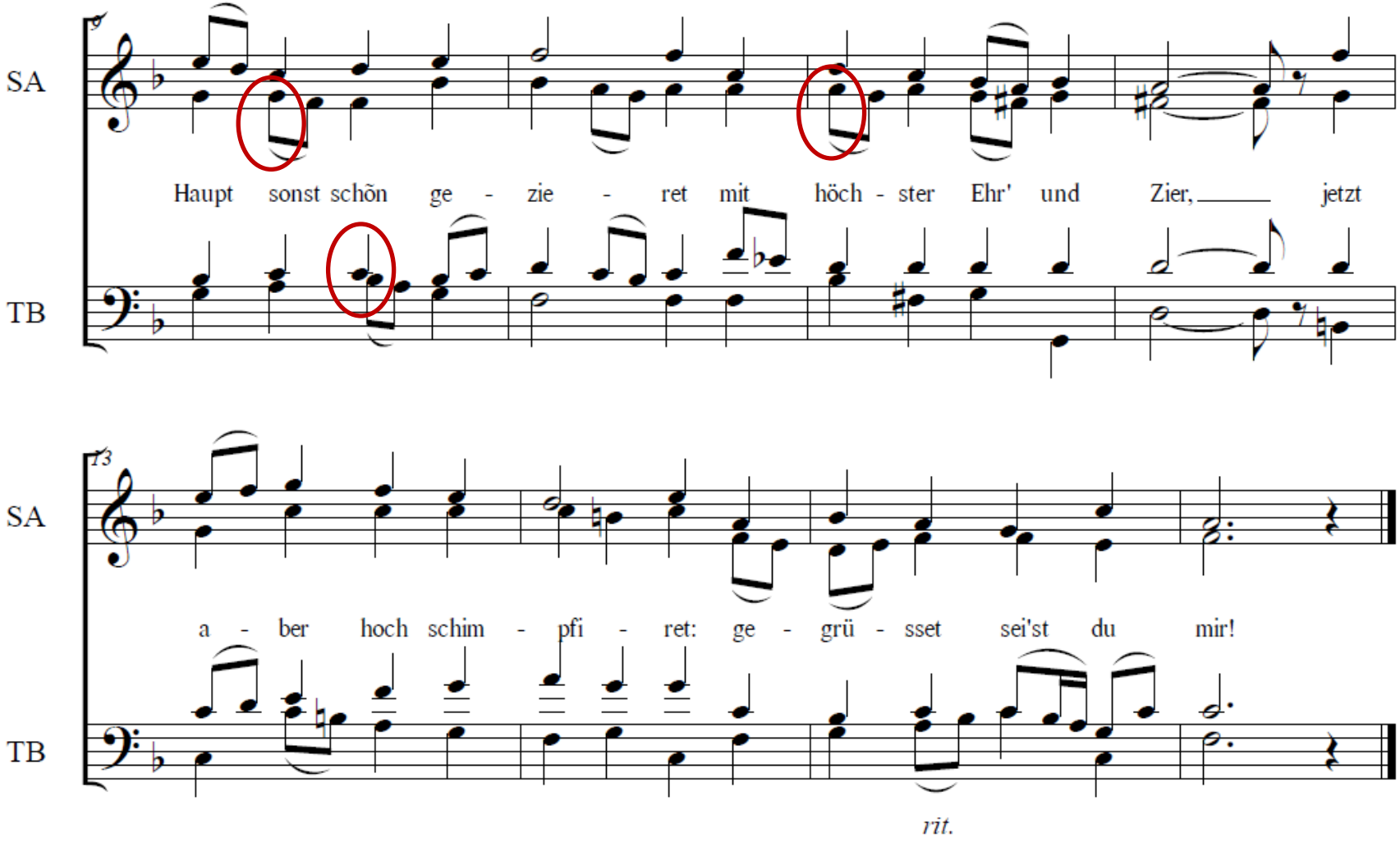


Part Writing: Bach

Major key suspensions change mood



Part Writing: Bach

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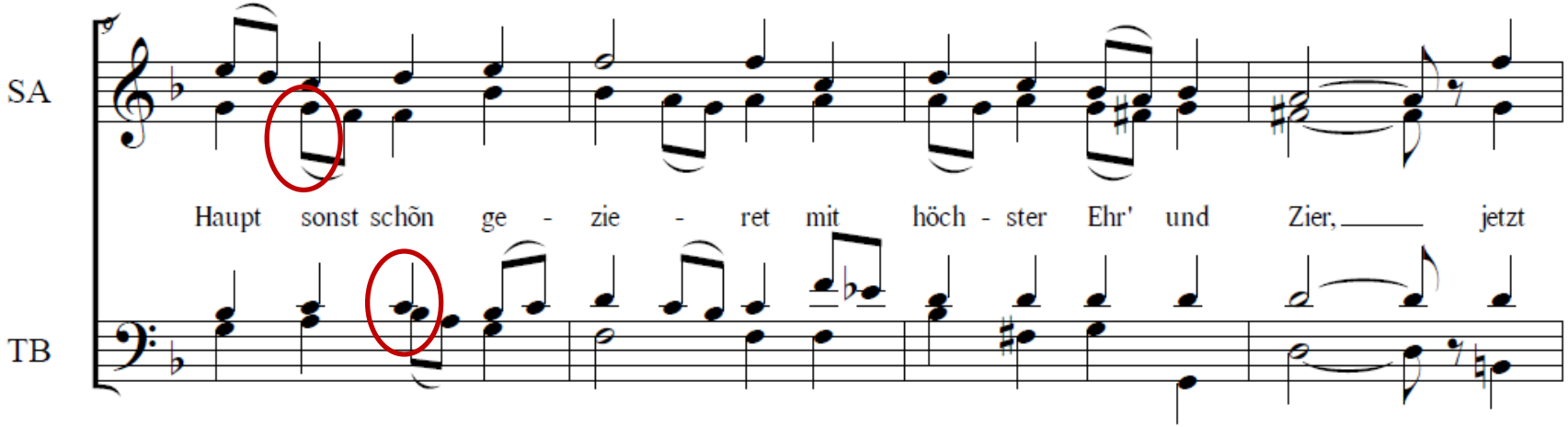
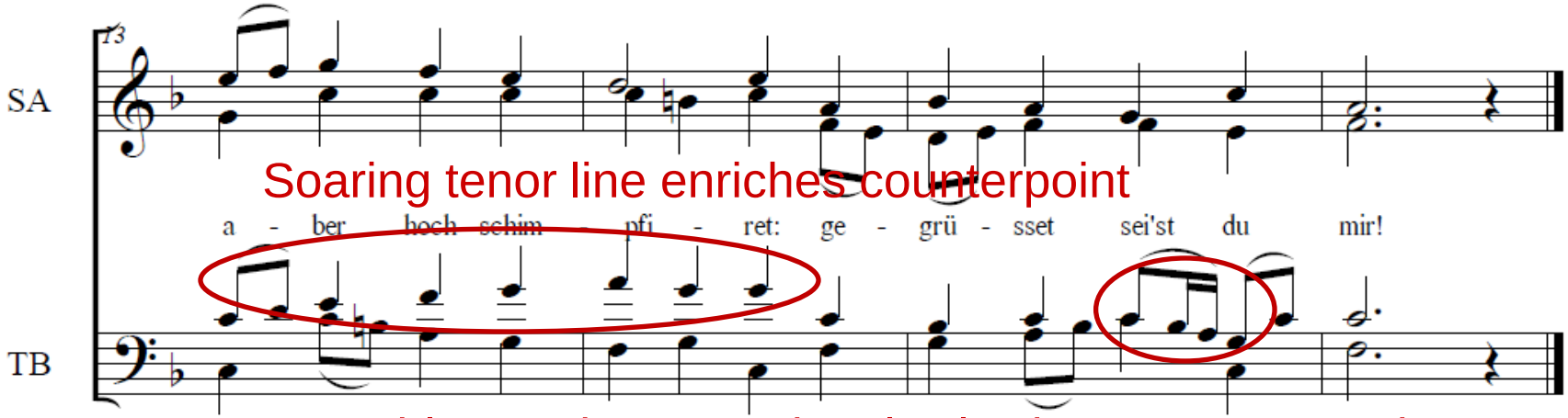




Soaring tenor line enriches counterpoint

Double passing tone signals slowing to more pensive mood.

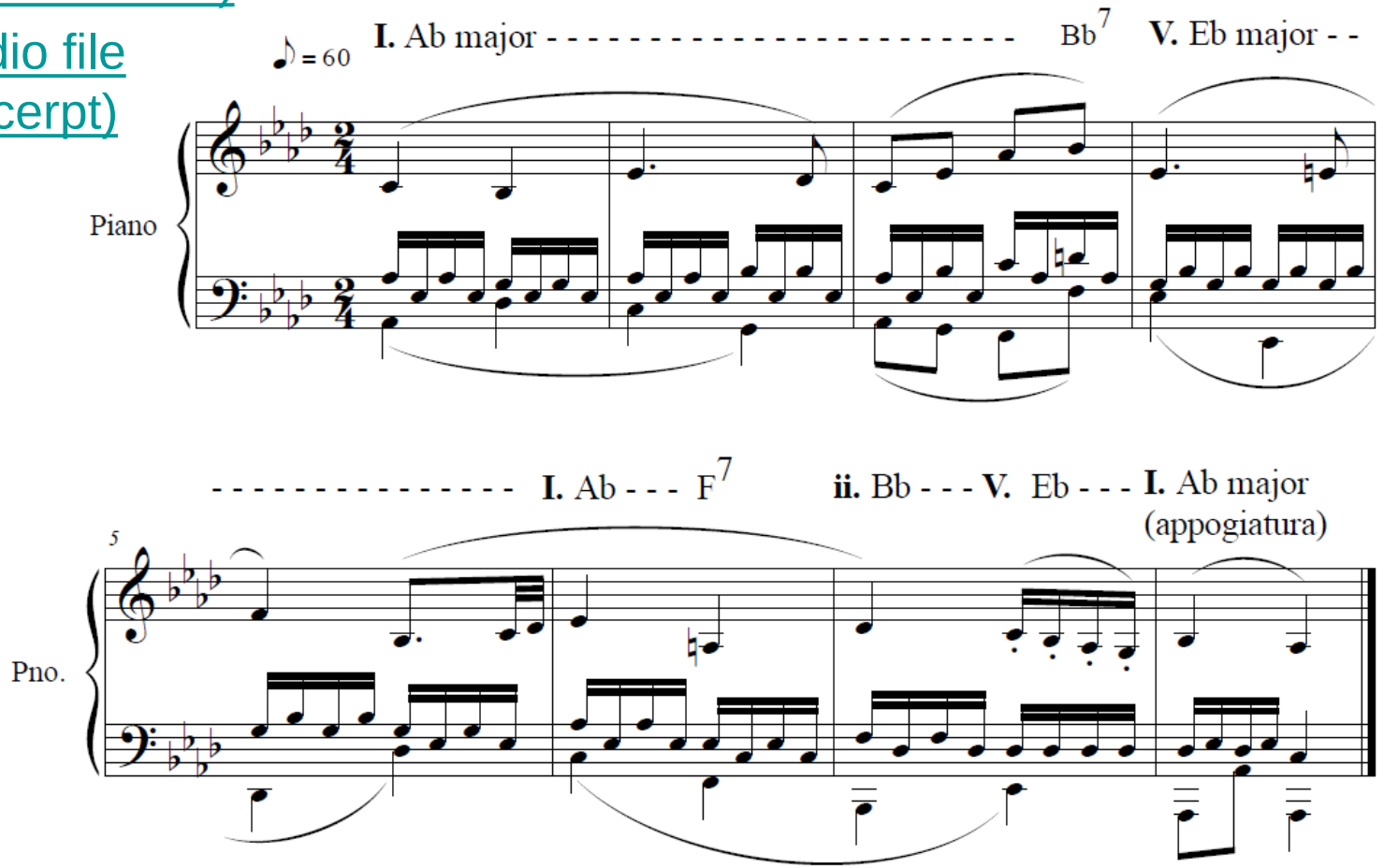
Part writing: Beethoven

Adagio Cantabile from Pathetique Sonata

L. van Beethoven (1798)

Audio file (performance)

Audio file (excerpt)

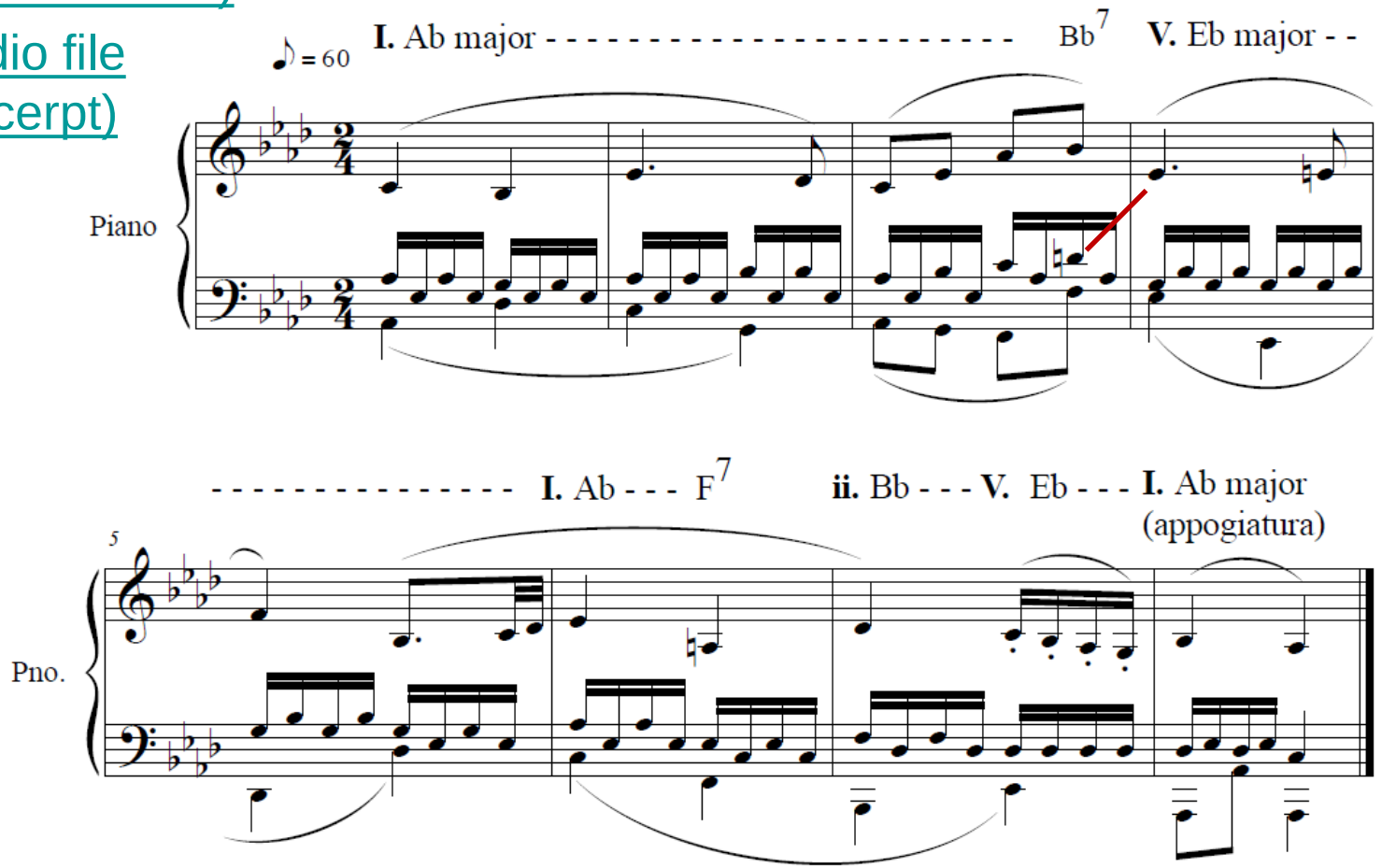


Part writing: Beethoven

Audio file (performance)

Audio file (excerpt)

Leading tone to Eb provides contrary motion



Part writing: Beethoven

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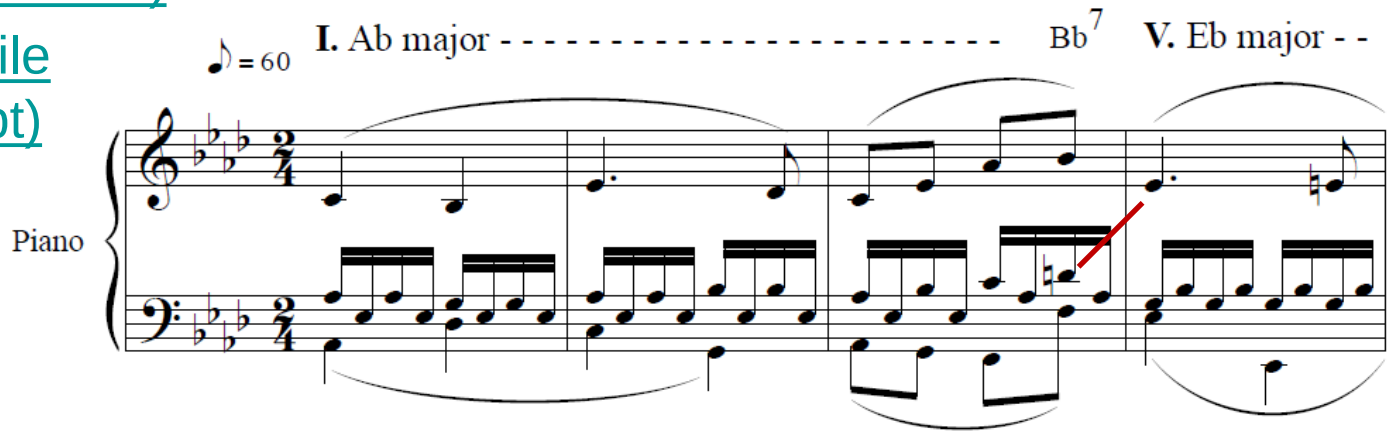
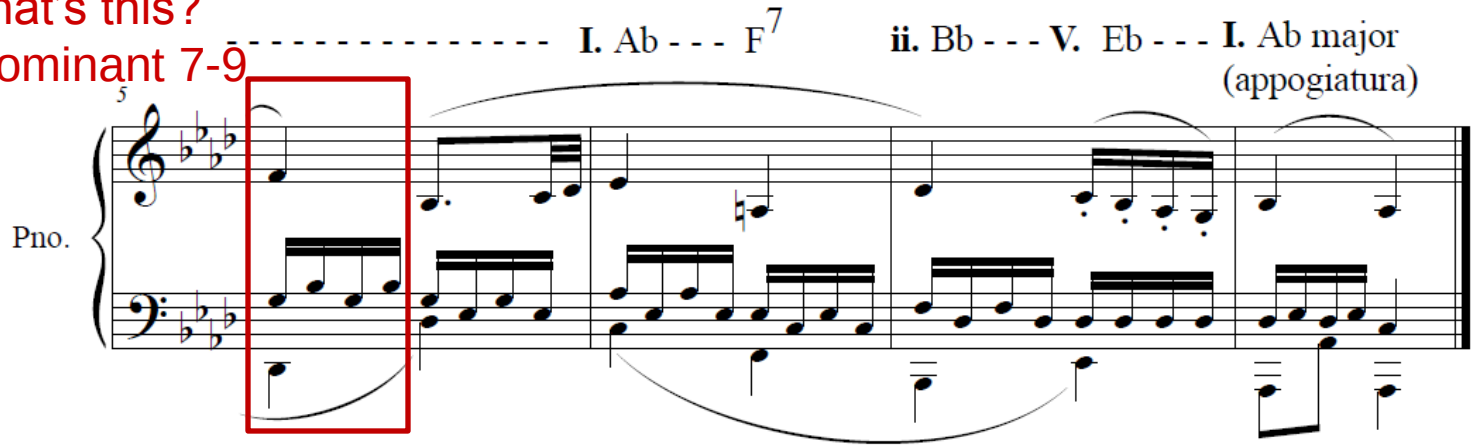


What's this?
Eb dominant 7-9



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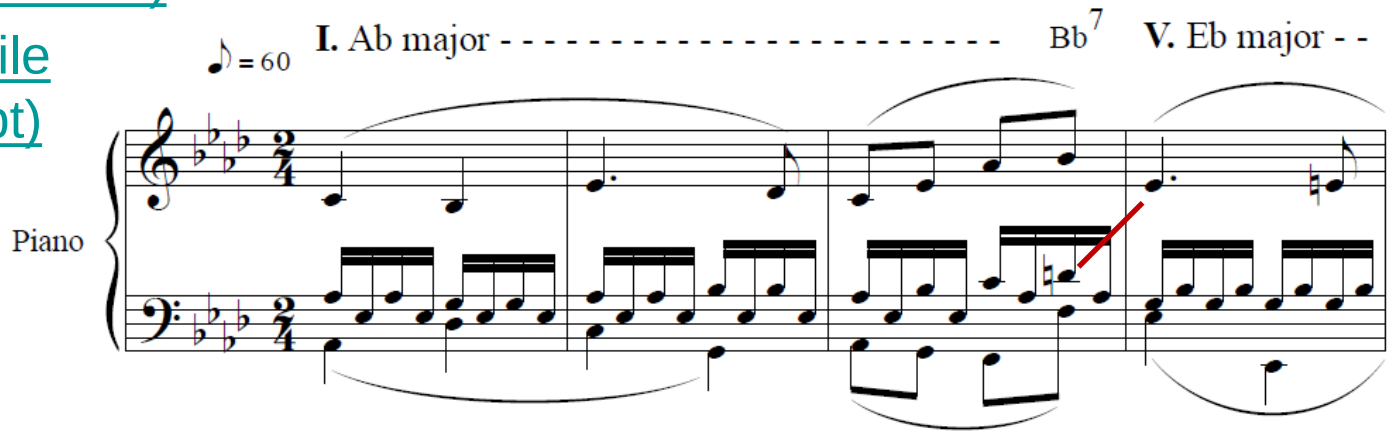

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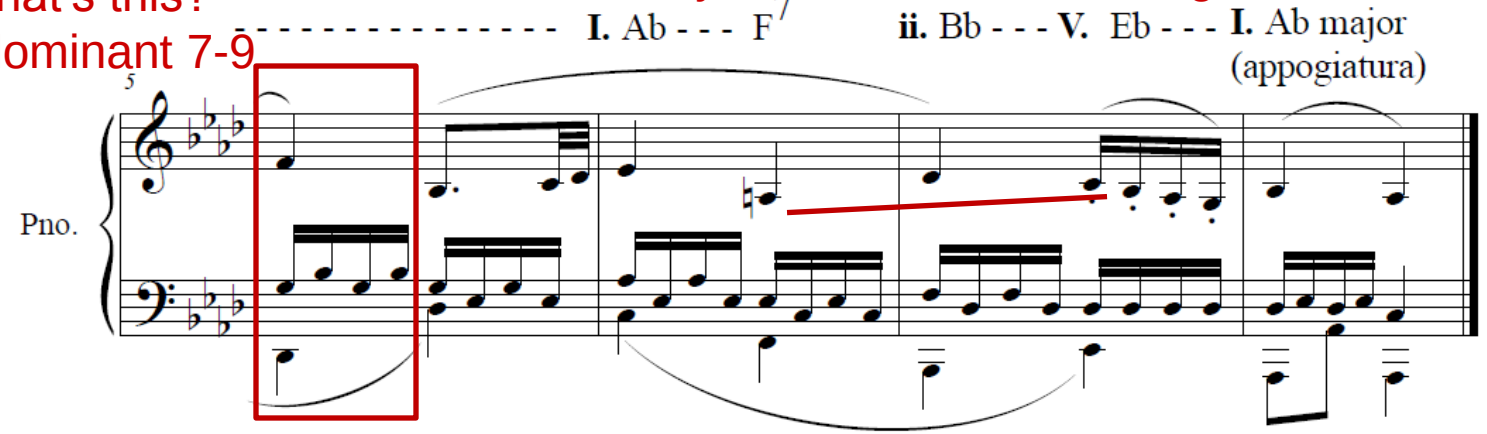
Delayed resolution of leading tone