

APPENDIX ONE

Rameau, *Nouveau système de musique theorique* (1726): Chapter 23, “Examples of Errors Found in the Figures of Corelli’s op. 5”

All emphases and capitalizations are Rameau’s. Cross-references to other sections of the *Nouveau système* are omitted. Also omitted is Rameau’s explanation of various abbreviations he uses to refer to the movements. The annotations in brackets following many paragraphs highlight important issues. These annotations often use modern terminology instead of Rameau’s. Numbers in brackets are page numbers in the original. According to Lee Brentlinger, who is studying the transmission of Corelli’s op. 5, Rameau’s source for these pieces was undoubtedly a French manuscript, not a published edition. The thoroughbass figures he cites agree with no published edition, but are close to those in a Parisian edition of the 1730s by LeClerc.

[95] We shall see by placing the Fundamental Bass beneath Corelli’s Basso Continuo the true chords which must be found there as a consequence of the *Connection* [*Liaison*] that the fundamental progression of a *Fifth* must support most naturally within each harmonic *Motion* [*Modulation*]. This progression [of a fifth] can only be broken off after a *principal Tone* [a tonic chord], except in the case of *broken* or *interrupted Cadences*.

[Rameau insists that all progressions in the fundamental bass (all root progressions) follow the pattern of cadences: root progression down by a fifth in a perfect cadence, up by a fifth in an irregular cadence, up by step in a broken cadence (*cadence rompuë*), or down by third in an interrupted cadence (*cadence interrompuë*). In each of these cadences, the first chord is dissonant: a seventh chord in the perfect, broken, and interrupted cadence; an added-sixth chord in the irregular cadence. (Note that a 6 above a note in the fundamental bass refers to an added-sixth chord, not to a first-inversion triad.) Among these cadences, the perfect and irregular,

B. C.: 6/5 3 6 4/2

A B C D

F. B.: 7 7 7 7

Example A1-1. Sonata No. 1, first Allegro, m. 5; mm. 9-10

in which the root progression is by fifth, are the models for other progressions. Only after a tonic chord may the fundamental bass move freely.]

We will see that Corelli, when he figured the Chords that this Bass must carry, was guided much less by knowledge than by the Intervals that his ear made him use between the *Violin* [*Dessus*] and the *Bass*.

[Rameau stresses that he is not criticizing the compositions, which he regards as the result of Corelli's genius, but the thoroughbass figures that Corelli added to the completed composition. Rameau states this position repeatedly during the chapter. He thereby implies that he views working out the voices of a composition as an act distinct from and prior to the application of thoroughbass figures.]

Since the source of the Harmony is the same in these two different progressions A-B and C-D [in Example A1-1], consequently the Notes A and C must be figured the same. But Corelli seems to have judged them only according to the *Violin*, which makes a *Sixth* and *Fifth* from Note A, while it only makes a *Sixth* from Note C. The same problem appears in numerous other passages in the same Allegro and elsewhere.

[Two issues are involved here: Explicitly, Rameau criticizes Corelli's inconsistency. Implicitly, Rameau favors the first figuring because he believes that a proper approach to a dominant-seventh chord (a *dominant-tonic* in his terminology) is a root progression down by fifth from a seventh chord, not a root progression up by step from a triad. There are two reasons for his position. First, he believes that a triad (on scale-step 4) would imply the stability of a temporary tonic arrival on that scale step. Second, a seventh chord built on scale-step 2 allows a root progression by fifth imitating a perfect cadence, which is for him a stronger motion than a root-progression up by step which might imitate a broken cadence.]

[97] Although one could give a 6/4 Chord to Note A [in Example A1-2], conforming to the Fundamental Bass indicated by a custos below Note A, the 4/2 Chord that Corelli figured elsewhere is even more apt, conforming to the Fundamental-Bass Note placed below Note A. This is because we are in the *Key of D*, and not at all in the *Key of G*, which 6/4 represents.

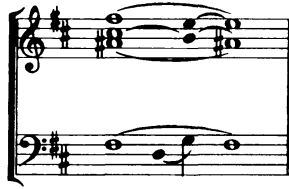
Example A1-2. Other examples on the same topic [that when Corelli added figures, he was guided primarily by the intervals between the *violin* and the *bass*]:
 Sonata No. 1, first Adagio; Sonata No. 1, first Allegro, mm. 29–30;
 Sonata No. 1, first Allegro, mm. 38–39; Sonata No. 1, second Adagio, mm. 23–24;
 Sonata No. 2, first Adagio, mm. 8–9; Sonata No. 3, first Allegro, m. 28;
 Sonata No. 10, first Adagio, m. 17

[Two issues influence Rameau’s argument. Explicitly, the 6/4 represents a triad, hence a tonic. This 6/4 therefore implies for Rameau the key of G, which contradicts the prevailing key of D major. In addition, as already noted, Rameau prefers a descending fifth in the fundamental bass to approach the dominant.]

6/4 must be figured above Note C to indicate the *perfect Chord* of the *principal Tone*, which must naturally follow the *Dominant* heard at Note B. This 6/4 is even more necessary because Note D is in the Chord of that *principal Tone* and not at all in the Chord of the *Dominant*.

[For Rameau, the F# and D on the second beat imply a B-minor tonic triad that resolves the dominant, thereby creating a quarter-note harmonic rhythm. Corelli’s figuring implies a half-note harmonic rhythm with a neighboring chord between two dominants, and with the bass D as a rather complex dissonance functioning as a dominant of the G. See Example A1-3.]

If Note L is figured correctly, then Notes G and J are figured incorrectly, since each of these notes has a different fundamental bass.



Example A1-3.

Note L represents the *principal Tone*; Note G makes the *Fifth* of a *Dominant* [i.e., of a seventh chord], and Note J makes the *third* [of a *Dominant*]. Thus, each of these Notes must be figured in relation to the Chord of the fundamental Tone that they represent [i.e., in relation to the root of that chord], conforming to the style of figuring adopted by Corelli. Consequently, $6/4$ must be figured for a Note a *Fifth* above a *principal Tone* [i.e., a fifth above the root of a chord], as at L; $4/3$ for a Note which is a *Fifth* above a *Dominant* or a *Third* above a *Subdominant* [i.e., a fifth above the root of a seventh chord or a third above the root of an added-sixth chord], as at N; and $6/5$ for a note a *Third* above a *Dominant*, as at A in [Example A1-1].

[As in preceding examples, Rameau implies that a triad is improper for note G because the chord is not a tonic. Rameau addresses note J again on his p. 98.]

If Note P is figured correctly, then Note E and also Note C in [Example A1-1] are figured incorrectly, because each of these Notes represents a different fundamental Tone, or at least is a different distance [from the fundamental Tone]. Consequently, 6 must be figured for a Note which is the *Third* of a *principal Tone*, as at P; $4/3$ for a Note which is the *Fifth* of a *Dominant*, such as Note E; and $6/5$ for a Note which is the *Third* of a *Dominant*, such as Note C in [Example A1-1].

[As in preceding examples, Rameau implies that a triad is improper for note E in Example A1-2 and note C in A1-1 because the chord is not a tonic.]

If $4/3$ is figured correctly at N, then it is incorrect at M. Even worse, the Chord at M designated $4/3^\sharp$ is worthless. It is from this very type of error that one can judge the difference that existed between knowledge and feeling in such an excellent musician as Corelli.

If that Composer had known that of two Stepwise Notes that fill one single *Beat* of the *Measure* [such as the D^\sharp and E above Note M] one is the master in deciding which Note one wishes to have carry the Harmony, he would have seen that of the two Notes of the *Violin* that go along with Note M, that which makes the *Fourth* [over the *Bass*] should have been chosen for the Harmony. He would have felt it himself if he had been able

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff is a Treble Clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and the word "etc." to its right. The middle staff is a Bass Clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and the word "etc." to its right. Above the middle staff are the figures "B. C.: 5 7 6". Below the middle staff are the letters "Q R S" aligned with the notes. The bottom staff is a Bass Clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and the word "etc." to its right. Above the bottom staff are the figures "F. B.: 6".

Example A1-4. Sonata No. 9, second Allegro, mm. 12–13

to think about it. And he would have had no doubt if he had known of the Fundamental Bass, from which he would have been convinced that he had to figure that Note M with a $6/4$, and not with a $4/3\sharp$, which has not even a shadow of the Harmony.

[Rameau reads the progression from X-M as an irregular cadence. Hence he only wants a $6/4$ chord over note M. Once again, Rameau acknowledges Corelli's genius in composing the sonatas at the same time that he faults Corelli for not understanding his own composition well enough to figure it properly.]

[98] The same error is found in [Example A1-4].

The *Violin* alone should have informed Corelli that Note Q carries no Harmony, and that on the contrary it is Note R that carries the Harmony. Consequently, the $7/5$ figured on Note Q is worthless.

[Rameau implies here that notes not part of the harmony—nonharmonic tones in our modern terminology—should not be given figures. Thus, instead of Corelli's thoroughbass figures, which here simply tell the performer what to play, Rameau wants a notation that will indicate the functional harmony. Perhaps he was already thinking ahead to his proposal published in 1732 that thoroughbass figuring should be replaced with a notation that listed the chord roots and chord types. In such a notation, many problematic figurings that arise from the presence of nonharmonic tones in the bass would never arise; see the reference to *figured Melody* two paragraphs below.]

It must also be noted in [Example A1-2] that the $6/4$ figured on Note J is even more incorrect [than was discussed above], since the *Dissonance* represented by Note H is not *resolved* until Note K. Therefore Note J must carry the same Chord as Note H; instead of $6/4$, $6/5$ must be figured there according to the Fundamental Bass.

When Corelli employed the harmony of an *irregular Cadence* from N to P in [Example A1-2] (as can be recognized by the *Sixth* added to the *perfect Chord* of the *Subdominant*, which then descends immediately by

a *Fourth* in the Fundamental Bass), he could well have anticipated that the same *Cadence* takes place from X to M in [Example A1-2] and from Q to S in [Example A1-4]. But when one does not know the source of the Harmony, the *figured Melody* [*Chant figuré*] sometimes disguises it so much that the Ear can be fooled, as one sees here.

And if one wished to go by the most perfect progression in the Fundamental Bass at Note F in [Example A1-2], one would see that Note F must instead be figured with a 9 rather than with a 7, since the Note stipulating the 9 would have been expressly written in the Fundamental Bass, while only a *custos* would have marked the note which stipulates the 7.

The 7 which the Fundamental Bass stipulates at Note F introduces an imitation of the *interrupted Cadence* into [the piece],¹ whereas the 9 that [the Fundamental Bass] stipulates there introduces an imitation of the *perfect Cadence*. Now this is not a *Harmonic Connection* where the *Key* changes, which must happen in *interrupted Cadences*. Moreover, when *interrupted Cadences* are thus used [where there is no key change], this is done more by accident and involuntarily than by knowledge.

[For Rameau, an interrupted cadence (motion from a seventh chord down by third to another seventh chord, such as G⁷ to E⁷) always indicates a change of key, however temporary. Since there is no key change here, Rameau rejects this cadence as a possible explanation for the progression.]

People who accompany on the Clavecin will be able to see that the 9 is much easier to use here than the 7, and if it did not require such a detailed digression, we would also give a reason for it much more satisfactory than that of the *Connection* within the same *Key*. Corelli's Works are full of this little fault, [99] which has rightfully been deemed less important than the beauties which abound there.

[Perhaps Rameau's "much more satisfactory reason" is that "chords by subposition serve only to suspend sounds which should be heard naturally" (Rameau 1722, Book 3, Chapter 31). Hence, explaining note F as a subposed ninth chord defines the role of the notes in this chord more fully.]

Example on Another Topic. [Example A1-5]²

The *Dot* of Note A, which *syncopates* that Note, carries a Harmony. Because of that, Corelli figured it with a 5/2. But that Note A, which therefore represents the *Dissonance* and which has already sounded with the *Leading Tone* B, cannot exist together with Note C which is the

1. Rameau writes *broken Cadence* (*Cadence rompuë*) throughout this paragraph, clearly an error for *interrupted Cadence* (*Cadence interrompuë*).

2. The third note in the fundamental bass is an A in the original.

Example A1-5. Sonata No. 2, first Adagio, m. 7

principal Tone announced by the *Leading Tone*; for no *Dissonance* may exist in the chord where it is to be *resolved*. Thus that *Syncopation Note* A is out of place in such a case. The *Fundamental Bass* allows us to see that the Note which follows A ought to be at the place of the *Dot A*.

[For Rameau, the term *Dissonance* here refers to suspensions. Hence his explanation that “all *Dissonances* cannot exist in the chord where they must be *resolved*.”]

Therefore note well that sometimes the Intervals used by Corelli between the *Violin* and *Bass*, sometimes habit, as with that ill-conceived *Syncopation* in [Example A1-5] (for this Composer was particularly fond of *Syncopation*), and sometimes his Ear all guided him in his figures much more than his understanding; for the same Chord that he might have seen between the *Violin* and the *Bass*, or that he was in the habit of figuring in a certain manner, or that his Ear made him perceive in certain passages issued forth from him more often than he hit upon [the right chord for the right reasons], leaving aside the familiar Chords with which even the weakest Musicians do not make errors. But we will not stop there, instead going on to other remarks no less important than the preceding.

[Here Rameau reverses his earlier stance and criticizes the written parts for being guided by the figuring. It is not clear why Rameau finds the suspended *Bb* so troublesome and does not merely regard it as a 4–3 suspension and/or as part of a subposed chord.]

For example, what can one think of the manner of figuring many Notes that rise by Step [*Diatoniquement*; Example A1-6], where nearly all the 5s and 6s must indicate a different Chord, according to [Example A1-7].

[100] Corelli knew of all these last figures to designate the very Chords

Example A1-6.

B. C.: 5 6 7 4 9 6 9 6 7 6
 etc.

F. B.: 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7
 etc.

Example A1-7.

that are set down in the Fundamental Bass. Undoubtedly, if he had recognized these Chords, he would have figured them there as he did elsewhere.


Corelli's manner of figuring [in Ex. A1-6] is an evasion which almost all Musicians make use of quite willingly, and on account of their using it, one can accuse them of not knowing what they have practiced in such cases.

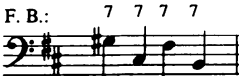
[However useful Rameau's insistence on seeing all chordal connections as cadences or imitated cadences may be in explaining many progressions, it is hopelessly inadequate in sequential motions as in Example A1-6. In his contorted attempt to deal with this progression, Rameau even violates his usual practice of avoiding syncopated harmonic rhythm by tying the G-seventh chord over the first barline.]

There is another thing to take note of in this Composer: when he uses some quarter-note rests in his Basso Continuo, he does not indicate the Chord that must be played during that rest [Example A1-8].

If the rest followed a *principal Tone*, there would be nothing to say in such a case. But since this rest is between two *Dissonances*, of which the first must be *resolved* and of which the second must be *prepared*, one cannot then dispense with sounding the Harmony that exists during that rest.

Since it is up to the Accompaniment to furnish the source of the Harmony, it is absolutely obligatory always to make the necessary *Connection* felt there. Without this *Connection* a defective gap is found there, at least in a passage where the rest not only interrupts the necessary *Connection*,

B. C.: 7 7


F. B.: 7 7 7 7


Example A1-8. Sonata No. 6, first Allegro, m. 42

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the Basso Continuo (B. C.) with figures 6^b, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6. The middle staff is the Fundamental Bass (F. B.) with figures 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7. The bottom staff is another Fundamental Bass with figures 7, 7. The score is labeled with letters N, A, D, G, H, J, L, M. The first Fundamental Bass ends at A, and the second starts at D. The third starts at G and ends at H. The fourth starts at J and ends at L. The fifth starts at M.

Example A1-9. Sonata No. 7, first Allegro, mm. 26-31

but destroys it. This is so because the [proper] manner of laying out a Basso Continuo can never suspend that *Connection*.

[Here Rameau criticizes a common feature of thoroughbass figuring that does not provide a full accounting of the harmonic structure of a passage. Once again, he seems to be looking ahead to his 1732 proposal for a new system of chord labeling to replace thoroughbass figures.]

See [Example A1-9] on the same topic.

[102] The first Fundamental Bass ends here in the *Key of F major* at A, and resumes immediately afterward in *D minor* at D, which is related to it.

The second Fundamental Bass maintains the *Key of D minor* by means of an *irregular Cadence* between G and H.

The third Fundamental Bass once again maintains the *Key of D minor* by means of an *interrupted Cadence* between J and L.

Note here that one can cause a listener to confuse the *irregular Cadence* G-H and the imitation of the *perfect [Cadence]* L-M. The first Note of each of these *Cadences* (G and L) gives the same harmonic source. But by virtue of the *Cadences* that they announce, one can take either one or the other as fundamental.

[Rameau here explains the essentials of *double emploi* without using that term.]

Not one of the three types of Harmony indicated by these three Fundamental Bases is announced to us by Corelli's figuring; but let us return to the beginning of the Example.

The first rest can be realized as is, because the [preceding] Connection ends there on the *principal Tone*.

The other rests cannot do without the source of the Harmony which must support the Connection there.

In any case, if one could provide a *Connection* during this example solely by means of the Chords that Corelli figured, we would be wrong to condemn him. But note well that according to the *Connection* of the Basso Continuo Melody and that of the *Violin*, only the Key [*Modulation*] of *D* can be understood, and that that Key is absolutely destroyed by the Chord figured at N, which according to the *Violin* must impart to us the Key of *F*.

We do not insist on this source of the Key, if it could be brought about and followed by a *Connection* relative to that of the Melody. But on the contrary, one cannot follow Corelli's figuring thereby considering the *Violin* line, without sounding some *unprepared minor Dissonances* [chord sevenths], or without imitating a *broken Cadence*, while the Melody gives no occasion for such a cadence.

[Rameau insists, as he did in connection with Example A1-6, that what Corelli marks as a sequential progression must be interpreted in terms of cadential progressions. When he speaks of unprepared chord sevenths that would arise by following Corelli's figures, he may be referring to the progression from measure 29 to measure 30: even if the end of measure 29 is read as an F-major triad, Rameau would insist that the E-diminished triad in measure 30 represents a C dominant-seventh chord with an unprepared B \flat . When Rameau speaks of imitating a *broken Cadence*, he is referring to the progression from measure 30 to measure 31, in which Corelli's figures imply a C-seventh chord (because a diminished triad is for Rameau the upper portion of a dominant-seventh chord) moving to a D-minor triad.]

Should Musicians sensitive to the Harmony try to accompany Corelli's Basso Continuo by considering the *Violin*, they will soon sense its flaw and will acknowledge the necessity of filling in the rests there according to the Harmony announced by the Fundamental Bass.

See [Example A1-10] on the same topic.

[103] It must be noted here (and this must be applied to the preceding Example as well) that in every Melody that touches two Strings of the same Harmony (which one calls an arpeggio [*Batterie*]), [each Note of the Melody] is expected to remain on the same String that it leaves [when it] passes to the other note. Otherwise the *Dissonance* which can appear next would be intolerable, having only been *prepared*, in this case, by the String where the Sound has not remained until that *Dissonance*.

Thus the String (i.e., Note A of the *Violin*) is expected to remain until the *Dissonance* D which it *prepares*. It remains to note that D makes a

Example AI-10. Sonata No. 5, first Allegro, mm. 59–62

Dissonance with M which here represents the Basso Continuo and even the Fundamental Bass.

Thus, the *Dissonance* D will be *resolved* on the *Consonance* G; at the same time that *Consonance* G prepares the *Dissonance* H, which will be *resolved* on the *Consonance* I, and that in turn prepares the *Dissonance* L, etc.

[Along with many thoroughbass writers, Rameau here notes that in an arpeggiation one must follow each line within the arpeggiation and not necessarily the note-to-note sequence in order to understand properly the preparation and resolution of dissonances.]

One can judge from these remarks that Corelli's figuring is worthless [here] and that he absolutely did not understand what his Ear made him apply successfully in this passage, for because the *Dissonance* D is expected to remain until the *Consonance* G which *resolves* it, Note N had to be figured with a 7 and not with a 6; and the following Note P should have been figured with the Chord that *resolves*, in this case, with the *Seventh*. The same goes for Notes Q, R, etc.

The rests can take place in the Harmony of the last Example, [104] by inserting the Basso Continuo figured in our manner there. For the rests only serve to delay [*suspendre*] the *Connection* without destroying it.

One cannot say that this is a misprint here, for it is repeated in the text in two consecutive *Measures*, and it is in the piece in the form of a series of three or four *Measures* figured in the same manner; and it does not seem that the intention was to figure a Chord on each quarter-note there, as should have happened, and as in fact happens in the two *Measures* preceding those in this example.

Example on Another Topic [Example AI-11]

In these last two examples there is a *Connection* that terminates only on the 6 that follows the 7 at Note G, as one can also learn from the melody

Example A1-II. Sonata No. 5, second Adagio, mm. 10-11 and 25-26

of the *Violin* in the Composer's score. The *leading Tone* which announces the end of this *Connection* is marked there precisely by a *sharp* or a *natural*; thus there must not be any Chords between that of the *Dominant* A and that of the *principal Tone* D. Nevertheless, Corelli figures one new [Chord] between that of the *Dominant* A and that of the *principal Tone* D in the first passage, and two new Chords in the other. What does one conclude from such an error?

If Corelli really meant to claim that the Chord figured with a 7 on the Notes labelled G was the same as the Chord on the *Dominants* at Notes A, he could have easily seen that this 7 in no way indicated such a Chord. Moreover, seeing as he was careful to mark the *leading Tone* everywhere with a *sharp* or with a *natural* (which must indicate the *leading Tone*), how would he have forgotten this here if he had been aware that the *leading Tone* must remain in the Harmony until the *principal Tone*, D at Note D?

Musicians who care about *consecutive Octaves* would perhaps not wish to allow the *Ninth* to be used here on a Note that descends immediately by Step. But isn't the source of the Harmony the most advisable? And if one can attribute to error the Harmony that we indicate here, then the fault is in the Basso Continuo [105] and not at all in the source which cannot be excluded from it. In any case, let us reject all scruples when considering a Composition that pleases us; and let us wait until we know perfectly the principle of our rules before basing any judgement on these rules.

[In that Rameau's fundamental bass remains on scale-step 5 under each 7-6 suspension, he understands each of these suspensions to arise from a subposed ninth chord. For example, the first chord is for him a D-seventh chord with a subposed B \flat . Within the progression from that suspended D-seventh chord to the following G-minor triad, an upper voice will proceed from C-B \flat , thereby implying parallel octaves with the immediately preceding C-B \flat in the bass. On a separate topic, note that Rameau figures the 4-3 suspension in the second passage as a suspension, not as a subposed chord.]

Example A1-12. Sonata No. 8, first Allegro, mm. 12-14

What does this 6 figured above Note A [in Example A1-12] mean? Is this how one resolves *Dissonances*?

[The following discussion concerns the resolution of the A within what Rameau regards as the implied B-seventh chord over note G.]

Note well the order of the Melody in the *Violin*, and you will find there a kind of repose on Note D. However, this repose, which is less noticeable than that which comes immediately afterwards, is adroitly broken by Corelli's Basso Continuo at Note A. But at the same time, this Composer destroys the effect with his Figuring.

The *Seventh* figured at Note G must *resolve* by descending Stepwise to the first place where the repose announced by the *leading Tone* that carries the *Dominant* G appears. Accordingly, this *Seventh* must *resolve* to the *Fifth* above Note A; and the *Sixth* there is worthless.

[Although the details differ, the progression here is similar to the one that Rameau objects to in the second progression in Example A1-2. In both cases, a dominant seventh moves to a 6 chord on the next higher degree before returning and resolving in a more emphatic manner shortly thereafter. Even though Rameau recognizes that the resolution of the dominant from notes G-A is "less noticeable" than the coming cadence (a remark that could have applied to the progression in Example A1-2 as well), he still insists that the seventh of the dominant chord resolve properly in the ensuing harmony.]

The *Cadence* is *broken* from G to A, or from G to H [in the Fundamental Bass], and the *Cadence* is *irregular* from J to L [both times].

We do not know if the faulty passage indicated here has been taken as a model, but many Musicians have many fewer scruples about using it than they have about making *two consecutive Octaves*.

Such a fault [moving to a 6 chord a step above a dominant seventh] may be excusable in one situation but not in another. For instance, whenever one can assume that the Notes carry no Harmony, or whenever one separates the *Dissonance* from the Harmony, provided that the natural

progression of a *minor Third* does not suffer; in such cases the *Sixth* figured on Note A is good.

[When Rameau speaks of the “natural progression of a *minor Third*,” he means the usual downward resolution of a chord seventh (because a chord seventh is the *minor* dissonance that arises from the addition of a minor third above a triad). Thus, when he says one can “retake the *Dissonance*” instead of resolving the chord seventh, he means sustaining the seventh of the dominant into the next harmony, as in the progression from notes G-A. Presumably, such a chord that retakes the chord seventh without resolving it will then return to the dominant seventh and then resolve properly. This is, of course, the basis of the progression in the second passage in Example A1-2, which Rameau censures as well as the progression here. But in both cases, the simplicity of the progression is clouded by several other dissonances. It seems that Rameau is objecting to those complicating factors here, not to the progression itself.]

If we would examine the Works of this Composer for all the omitted Figures, we would never be done; no less than if we would list all the passages where the errors that we have just condemned here appear. But we believe we have said enough to prove that Musicians recognized as the most skillful are not always free from faults—not in the source of their compositions (for one can suppose that they are all as sensitive to Harmony as Corelli seems to have been [judging] by his excellent Works), [106] but where they are obliged to give proof of their knowledge, such as in the Figures.

When we compose Music, that is not the time to recall the rules that could enslave our genius. In composing, we must only have recourse to the rules when genius and the ear seem to deny us what we seek. But when we wish to make known to others the source of Harmony that exists there, and to do that through the Basso Continuo Figures, that is the time when we must recall these Rules. If these Rules were worthless, our Ear could hardly protect us from errors to which they subjected us. In this case, all reason prohibits judging by Ear; and for most Musicians, to prohibit judging by Ear is to deprive them of all their knowledge.

One must conclude from this Chapter’s argument that whoever only knows how to Accompany according to the figures does not know Accompaniment. For to know Accompaniment, one must be able to correct these Figures, and consequently one must know Composition in a manner different from the way it has ever been known.

In condemning some Figures by Corelli, we do not claim to thereby condemn his Works. On the contrary, we have chosen them from all Works that are among the best in the matter of Harmony in order to make known that reason and Ear do not always agree among Musicians—not that they could not be in a state of proving the contrary nowadays.

Accordingly, our critical remarks apply more to the past than to the present.

[In these last two sentences, Rameau seems to be taking note of changes in compositional style between Corelli's generation and the music of the 1720s. One of these stylistic changes is the gradual reduction in a fast harmonic rhythm featuring many sequential progressions in favor of a slower harmonic rhythm featuring more root progressions by fifths. As a result, from Rameau's perspective, the progressions that he found most problematic in the works of Corelli were less common in more recent music.]

In debating the value of Science with Musicians, we have at the same time opened up the paths [to Science] for them. Thus, we soon hope to see Musicians more animated than ever in the noble rivalry which must make them distinguish themselves in their Art. In fact, will showing that they are as capable of illuminating the spirit as amusing the ear not greatly add to their merit? Hence, let us no longer be lulled by the frivolous pleasure of the senses; let us carry our ideas even further. For who better than one who is already experienced in an Art can carry it to its last degree of perfection? Let us begin now by laying down all prejudice. Instead of maintaining that our errors are correct, let us take pride in confessing them. That will yield a first proof of one's knowledge, that of acceding to the truth, whereas in opposing it, one remains forever in an ignorance that is uncovered sooner or later.