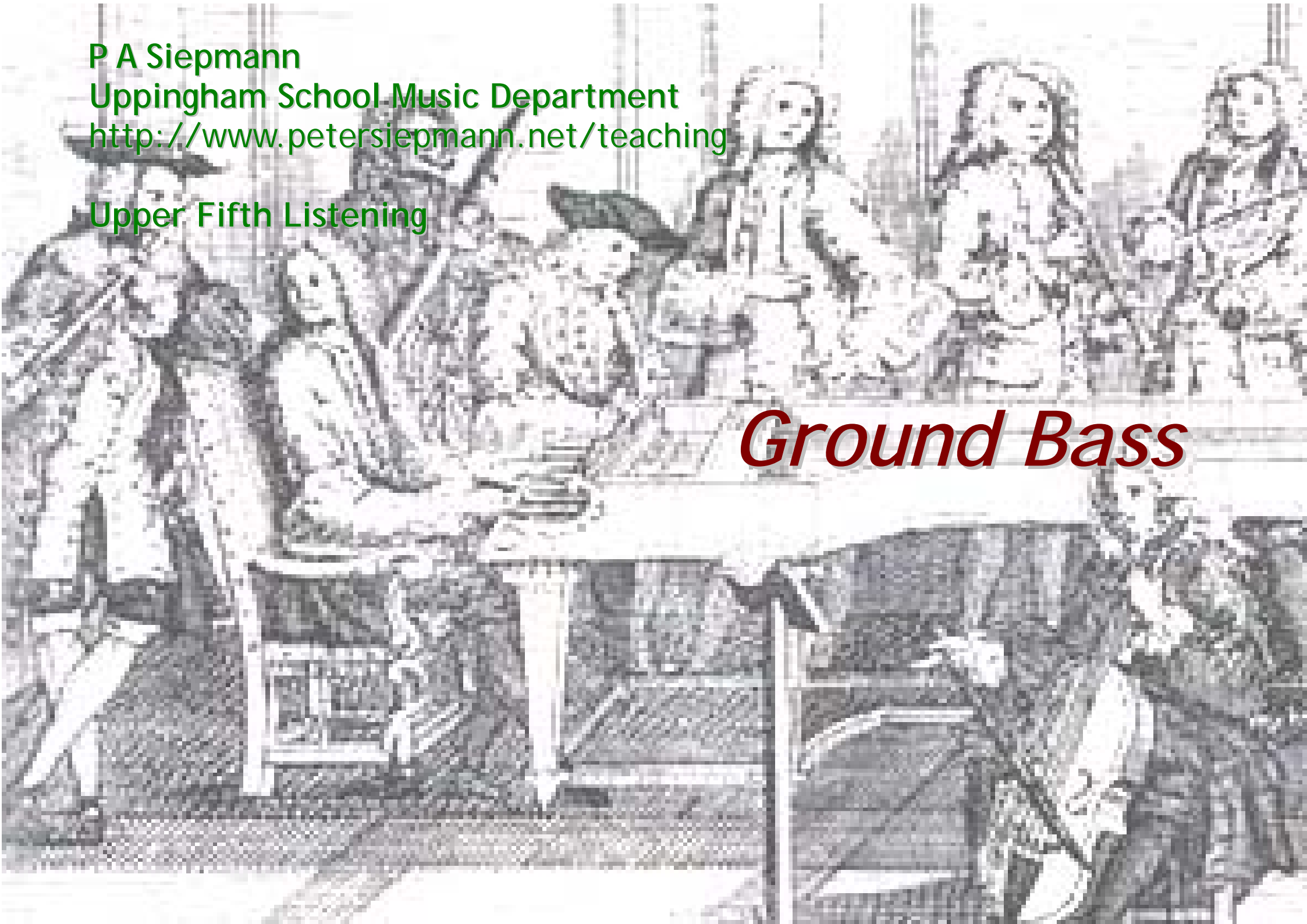


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Upper Fifth Listening

Ground Bass





Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

- A ground bass (also known as a basso ostinato) is a repeated bass melody.
- Each repetition, the other parts play something different. *What topic does this remind you of?*
- *Worksheet question 1*



Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

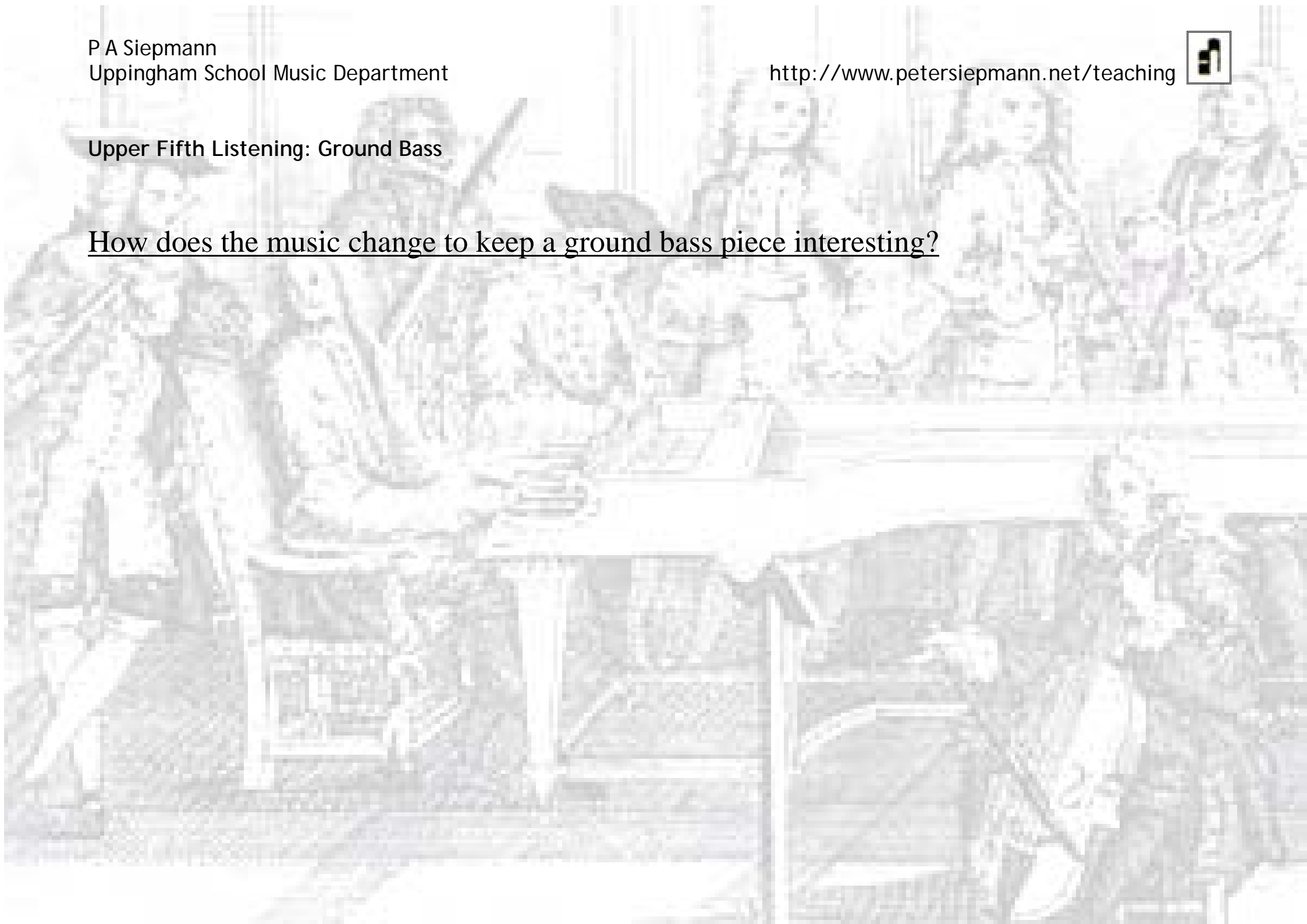
- A ground bass (also known as a basso ostinato) is a repeated bass melody.
- Each repetition, the other parts play something different. *What topic does this remind you of?*
- *Worksheet question 1*
- Ground basses were particularly popular in the Baroque period *When was that?*
 - o in the baroque period, the bass lines were
 - prominent
 - often played by the basso continuo
 - a bass instrument (e.g., cello) plus a harmony instrument (e.g. harpsichord, organ, lute)
 - harmony indicated by figures below the bass line called figured bass:

The image shows a musical staff in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of the following notes: G2, A2, Bb2, C3, Bb2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2. Below the staff are the corresponding figured bass figures: 5/3, 6, 7/5# (with a sharp sign above the 5), 7/5# (with a sharp sign above the 5), 6/4+ (with a plus sign above the 4), 8, 7- (with a minus sign above the 7), 47 (with a plus sign above the 4), and #5/#3 (with a sharp sign above the 5).



Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

How does the music change to keep a ground bass piece interesting?





Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

How does the music change to keep a ground bass piece interesting?

- adding/subtracting instruments/parts
- changing rhythms
 - e.g., doubling note values *technical term?*
 - e.g., halving note values *technical term?*
- changing melodies
 - e.g., add notes to decorate the melody
- changing harmonies
 - e.g., doubling a part in thirds
- changing key
 - e.g., dominant
 - e.g., relative major/minor

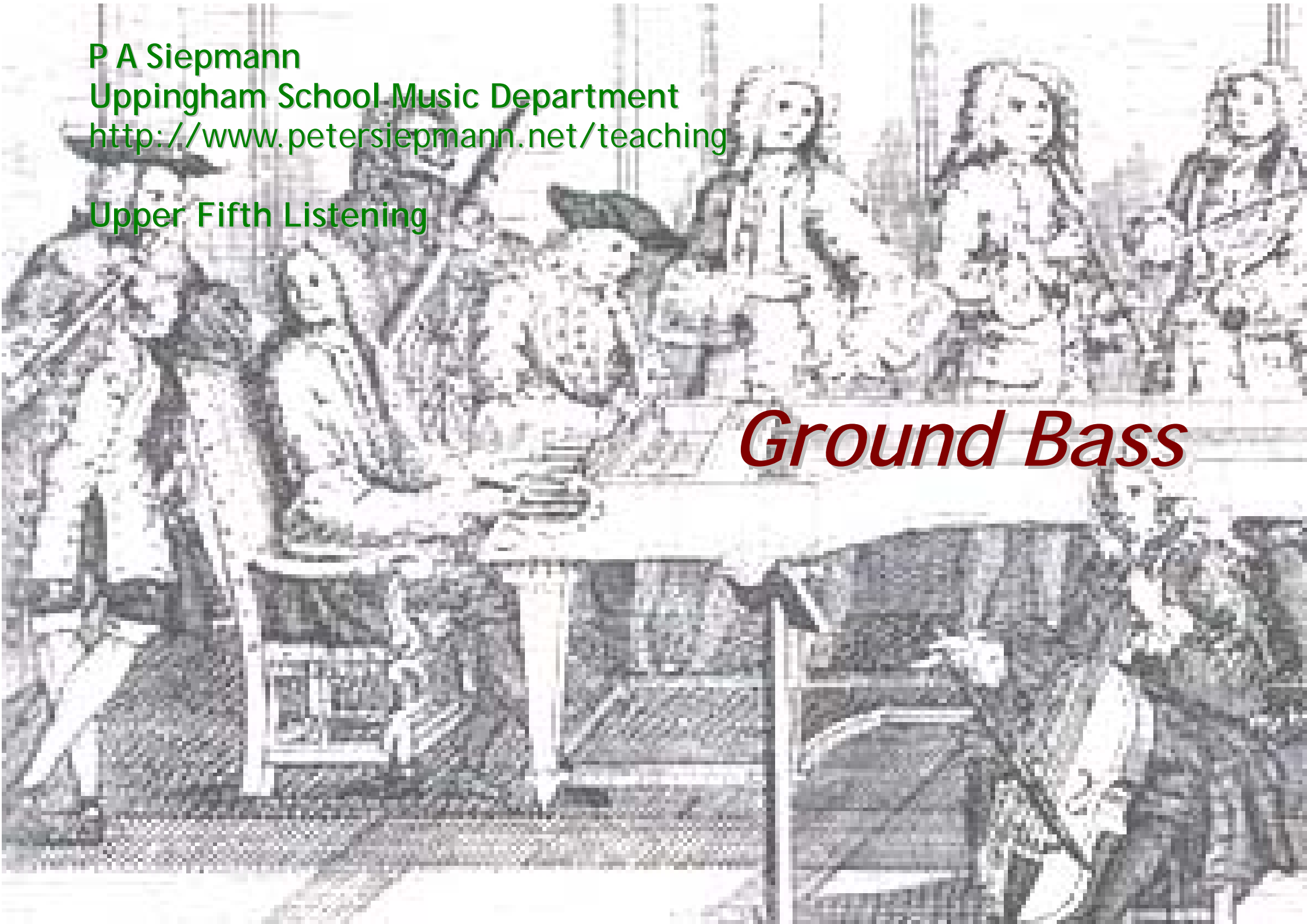
In general, as the piece progresses, the music tends to become more and more complex.

- *Worksheet question 2*
- *Worksheet question 3 (if time)*

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Upper Fifth Listening

Ground Bass





Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

- Rhinegold 4.3
- Recap.: How can the music change to keep a ground bass piece interesting?



Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

- Rhinegold 4.3
- Recap.: How can the music change to keep a ground bass piece interesting?
 - adding/subtracting instruments/parts
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 - e.g., doubling note values *technical term?*
 - e.g., halving note values *technical term?*
 - changing melodies
 - e.g., add notes to decorate the melody
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 - changing key
 - e.g., dominant
 - e.g., relative major/minor



Upper Fifth Listening: Ground Bass

Other types of ground bass piece

- A Chaconne

- the ground bass is part of a repeating chord pattern
 - (remember that in a 'normal' ground bass piece, the chords can change over the top of the repeating bass line)
- an example of a Chaconne is the famous 16th century chord progression called *La Follia* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipTXKoZX7Qc>):

a minor – E major – a minor – G major – C major – G major – d minor – E major

- A Passacaglia

- the ground bass tends to be tuneful
- it can move through the parts (i.e., not always at the bottom)
- often with three beats in a bar (triple time)
- Rhinegold 4.1