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**'When the Principal Part Pauses or Performs Plain Notes, the
Accompanist May Open the Draft on his Damped Fire':
The Continuo realization of Bass Solo Sections**

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Since the early days of basso continuo, authors of thoroughbass treatises have been asking the continuo player to refrain from what C.Ph.E. Bach called 'gratuitous passage work and bustling noise', while the soloist is performing. In a number of treatises, however (including Bach's own), the accompanist is asked to add soloistic elements to the realization when the soloist is silent or has long notes to play. Unfortunately the authors of these treatises seldom define what exactly should be done or at best give a vague description. Lorenzo Penna (1672), for example, suggests that the organist should play some imitation of motives 'imitating the Arietta or other gay motive that was just sung', while Luigi Zenobi (c1600) simply invites the accompanist to come forward 'in a gentle manner with something more pleasing' when the solo part pauses. Luckily, in some editions as well as in manuscripts, we find little snippets of imitation or otherwise, sometimes written-out by a continuo player in the score; there are also examples that are printed in the continuo score. Other sources are treatises on counterpoint and diminution.

In my presentation I will discuss examples of bass soli found in works of composers such as Rasi, Castello, Frescobaldi, A. Scarlatti, Le Camus, Gasparini, Handel, and J.S. Bach, and demonstrate the various possibilities for imitation, melodic elements and ornamental passages.