Section 5.1

Texture in Music

Harmonic analysis is the analysis of chords in musical context. Understanding texture makes harmonic analysis much easier. Texture is the way harmonies, melodies, rhythms, and timbres (=sound qualities such as different instrument sounds) relate to create the overall effect of a piece of music. The four common texture types are monophonic, polyphonic, homophonic, and heterophonic.

Texture types

Monophonic texture

Monophonic texture includes only a single melody line. If more than one musician plays the same melody together, this is called playing in unison.

Polyphonic texture

Polyphonic texture consists of two or more independent melody lines:

Homophonic texture

Homophonic texture consist of a primary melody line with accompaniment. Various accompaniment types are possible, including homorhythmic, blocked-chord, and arpeggiated accompaniments (Alberti bass or broken chord).

Homorhythmic accompaniment

Homorhythmic accompaniments (also called chorale texture) have the same rhythm as the melody line. Slight variations in rhythm are possible.
Homophonic: Blocked chord accompaniment

Blocked chord accompaniments state the notes of each chord simultaneously using a repeated rhythmic pattern. One variation of blocked chord homophonic texture is the oompah accompaniment.

![Oompah variation](image)

Homophonic: Albert bass accompaniment

An arpeggio states the notes of a chord one after another; arpeggiated accompaniments state the notes of the harmony one at a time. One common type of arpeggiated accompaniment, Alberti bass, uses a low-high-mid-high pattern (common in music of the late 1700s):

![Alberti bass](image)

Homophonic: Broken chord accompaniment

A second type of arpeggiated accompaniment, broken chord style, uses a low-to-high and/or high-to-low order for the notes:

![Broken chord](image)

Heterophonic texture

Heterophonic textures consist of multiple performers playing or singing a single melody all at once, each adding their own subtle variations. This texture is common in some musics of India and Africa as well as some types of jazz.