**Section 5.4**

**Harmonic Analysis 1:**

**Homophonic Texture**

**Harmonic analysis** is the analysis of chords in musical context. Harmonic analysis involves four stages or steps for each chord:

1. **Harmonic rhythm**
   - Determine the **harmonic rhythm**. The harmonic rhythm is the speed at which the chords (harmonies) change. For instance, if there is a new harmony every half note, the harmonic rhythm is the half note.

2. **Pitch inventory**
   - Take a **pitch inventory**: Say (or think) the pitches from low to high. Don’t repeat doubled notes. Find the root and make a “stack of thirds.”
   - Check the **chord quality** (major, minor, etc.) and write the **roman numeral** for the root of the chord.
   - If the chord is inverted, then add the **inversion**.

**Homorhythmic** accompaniments are among the easiest to analyze, because the harmonic rhythm or speed of the chord changes is often the same as the rhythm of the melody. Below are the four steps applied to each chord of an example. It is important to apply all four steps to each individual chord, then move on. The key and roman numerals are written below the music.

First say: CEG, CE(G), GBDF, GBDF, CE(G)?, GBD

Then write: C: I V7 I? vi7? V

The third harmony in the example above is ambiguous, because there are only two pitches: C and E. The missing note of the triad could be either G (for CEG, a I chord) or A (for CE(G)=vi). To resolve ambiguities like this one:

1. **Consider harmonic progressions** from section 5.3. Sometimes this will favor one possibility over another. Both V—vi—V and V—I—V are valid progressions, so the progressions don’t help much here.

2. **Assume the fifth is missing**
   - It is common to leave out the fifth, and if the progression makes sense, musicians tend to hear a two-note chord as the root and third (or root and seventh). So it is better to analyze CE as a I (tonic) chord here.
Harmonic Analysis: blocked chord and arpeggiated accompaniments

Blocked chord and arpeggiated accompaniments (including Alberti bass) normally change harmonies when the accompaniment pattern varies. The broken chord example below is typical. Remember to say (or think) all the notes from low to high (without repeating notes), and then reorder the notes to make a stack of thirds and find the root.

Nonchord tones

In the examples above, D in the first measure and C in the second are nonchord tones. **Nonchord tones** are notes that don’t fit in the harmony. They are normally used to connect or decorate notes in the chord. You can recognize nonchord tones because they will not fit into a stack of thirds, no matter how the pitches are reordered. See 5.5 and 5.6.

Finding the root

When chords are inverted, the root may not be obvious. Some common patterns are helpful to remember. These patterns may not work with nonchord tones or every voicing, but they are a great place to start:

1. The top note of a second or fourth is often the root.
2. The bottom note of a fifth or seventh is often the root.