The Harmonic-Bass Divorce in Rock: A Method for Conceptualizing the Organization of Chord Extensions

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Slides available at: www.midside.com/slides/
“Rock’n Me” (The Steve Miller Band, 1976), opening verse

Well I been look-in' real hard and I'm tryin' to find a job but it just keeps gettin' tough-er ev'-ry day but I got to do my part 'cause I know in my heart I got to please my sweet baby yeah.
Well I been lookin' real hard and I'm tryin' to find a job but it just keeps gettin' tougher ev'ry day but I got to do my part 'cause I know in my heart I got to please my sweet baby yeah.

Types of Harmonic-Bass Divorce

• Hierarchy
• Loop
• Syntax
“Rock’n Me” (The Steve Miller Band, 1976), opening verse

Well I been lookin’ real hard and I’m tryin’ to find a job but it just keeps gettin’ tougher ev’ry day but I got to do my part ’cause I know in my heart I got to please my sweet baby yeah.

Reduction by Nobile (2015): “Hierarchy Divorce”
• Hierarchy Divorce

J. S. Bach, Fugue in C minor,
The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1, BWV 847

Harmony above pedal:  i  V/iv  iv  vii⁰⁷  i  ii⁰  vii⁰⁷  I

Background harmony:  T  ____________________________
• Hierarchy Divorce

Opening keyboard part for “Jump” (Van Halen, 1984); recomposed
• Syntax Divorce

Opening keyboard part for “Jump” (Van Halen, 1984)
• Syntax Divorce

Opening keyboard part for “Jump” (Van Halen, 1984)
• Syntax Divorce

“Perfume & Bubblegum” (Chas Williams, 2005)
"White Hardware" (Chas Williams, 2005); verse
“With or Without You” (U2, 1987); intro

E-Bow

Loop

Bass

(Play 4x)

I  V  vi  IV  I
• Hierarchy or Syntax Divorce?

“My Life Without You” (Jim Riley, 2010); verse

\[ \text{V: 1 1 MAJ7 4} \]
• Loop Divorce

“I Really Got the Feeling” (Dolly Parton, 1978); intro

The “Soul Dominant”

\[ V^9_4 \Rightarrow \frac{IV}{5} \]
• Hierarchy—Loop—Syntax

“I Can’t Fight This Feeling” (REO Speedwagon, 1984); intro

\[\text{A} - \text{E/A} - \text{F\#m7/A} - \text{E/A} - \text{A/F\#} - \text{E/F\#} - \text{I} - \text{vi} - \text{IV} - \text{V} - \text{F\#m7} - \text{E/F\#} - \text{A/D} - \text{E/D} - \text{F\#m7/D} - \text{D/E} - \text{E} \]
“I Can’t Make You Love Me” (Bonnie Raitt, 1991); verse

Eb Gm7 Eb Bb/D Gm7 Cm7

Turn down the lights, turn down the bed, turn down these voices inside my head.
“I Can’t Make You Love Me” (Bonnie Raitt, 1991); intro

Upper voices:

Bass:

IV vi vi IV IV IV I VI IV I
I was born in a cross-fire hurricane,
And I howled at my ma in the drivin' rain.
THANK YOU!

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