

# Contents

• Preface	Page 2
• The basics	Page 3
• Harmonizing with I, IV en V in the key of C	Page 6
• Harmonizing with I, IV en V in the keys of D, F and G	Page 11
• Harmonizing with I through VI	Page 17
• Harmonizing in minor keys	Page 24
• Church Modes	Page 30
• Modes: tips en tricks	Page 33
• Closing	Page 37

*Cover: drawing by organ builder Bernhardt Edskes of the Rugpositief case in the church of Loppersum (NL) as it could have been in the renaissance time.*



## Preface

Improvisation is a skill which has been all but lost, except for the talented few. It is such an important discipline for the church organist as well as the professor and concert artist. Most people feel that a person is born with the talent and it is true that for some, improvisational abilities develop faster and easier. However, a method for learning the process is a necessity and must be taught in a methodical way. In the past the organist practiced both improvisation and literature. In modern times the organist spends hours learning organ literature but basically no time on improvisation. The study of improvisation increases the development of a person's awareness of the structure and forms found in keyboard literature.

For years I have been searching for a way to bring improvisation into the curriculum of my university music program. As stated above, there is a real need for a focus in this direction. Most teachers concentrate on teaching literature without touching on the subject of improvisation.

What learning must one achieve before improvisation can begin? The first step in learning to improvise is to develop an in-depth understanding of harmonization. This book completely fulfills this necessity. I am very excited about the approach that Sietze de Vries has in presenting a systemized instructive way of learning to harmonize melodies which is the main tool in developing the inner ear. Training the inner ear gives the person automatic spontaneous response to the choices given by the melodic structure intuitively as well as intellectually before actually playing the harmonies. Unfortunately, emphasis on training the inner ear is usually neglected.

Three of my students have spent a year studying this method with Sietze de Vries and give personal testimony to its benefits. They are prime examples of the importance of first mastering harmonization. As stated above only when a person is able to master the skills necessary in harmonizing found in this book, is it possible to go to the next step. Fortunately, the next book in the series solves the problem on how to get from harmonizing to improvising.

My thanks go to Sietze de Vries for sharing his vast knowledge and experience to produce such an important book. I look forward with anticipation to the next volume.

Judy Glass  
Professor of Organ  
Southern Adventist University

# The Basics

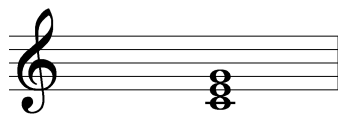
The basics for harmonizing is the triad.

A triad consist of an root note (tonic) with two other notes stacked on top.

These two notes are the third and the fifth.

These notes are part of the harmonic sequence in the tonic and therefore sound very natural. The further we go from the triad, the more dissonant the sound becomes.

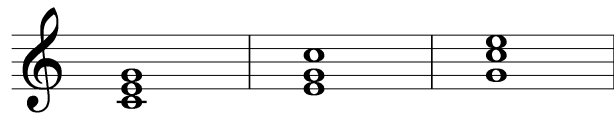
The root triad of C looks like this:



This is the so called 'Major' triad, the 'minor' triad will be discussed later in the book.

A triad has three positions because you can invert it twice. This means that the placement of notes can be switched.

You can play the triad of C in three different ways:



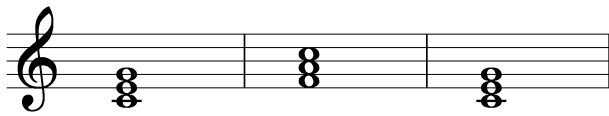
We call these inversions root position, first inversion (6 chord), and second inversion (6/4 chord).

***With you right hand practice the inversions the C triad over the whole keyboard, up and down.  
Try to do the same thing with the root triad of F and G.***

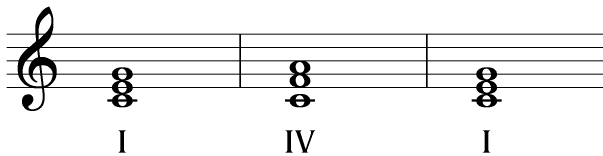
Triads of F & G:



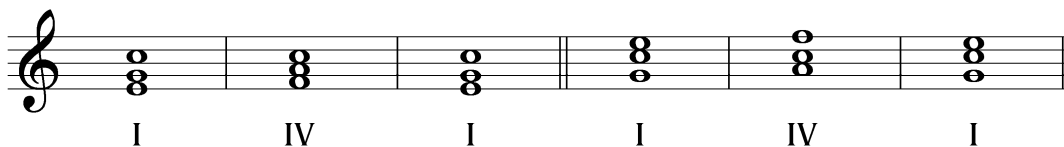
You can join triad together with each other. By using formulas with Roman numerals you can get chord progressions. Using the C scale we call the triad of C, I. The triad of F is then IV. If we then play I-IV-I we get this:



If we invert the triad of F once down, we get the following progression:



But the following examples are also I-IV-I because triads can be inverted in different ways:



In summary, it is very important to know and recognize the triads and their inversions. Make sure you always know what the root is and where to find it.

*Practice as many inversions as possible of I-IV-I in the scale of C.*

*A handy memory aid is: with I-IV-I the C stays the same.*

*The left hand may also participate by playing the root of the triads (C-F-C).*

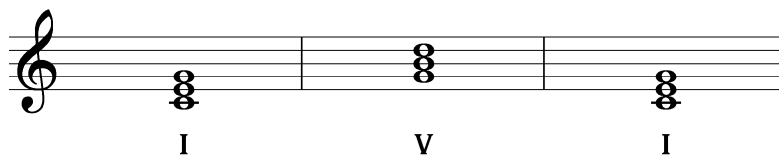
*The left hand stays the same no matter what inversions the right hand plays. Use the same fingers to prevent confusion. For example, the pinky will always play the C.*

*Now try to harmonize the following melody using the two chords you have practiced. The written melody note is always the highest in the triad. As before the left hand plays C for the I and F for the IV.*

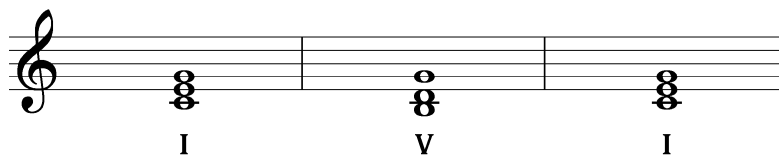


A new formula: I-V-I

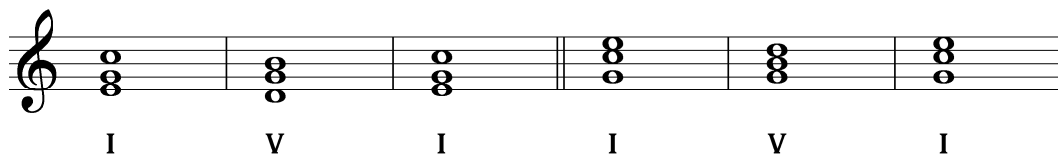
Of course we are taking about the triads of C (I) and G (V). The chord progressions looks like this:



If we invert V down twice, we get:



We can also invert all of the chords for this formula like we did for the I-IV-I. It looks like this:

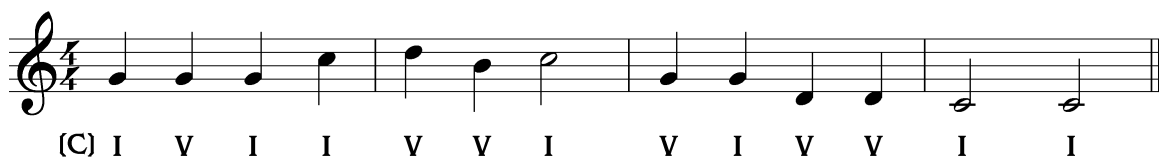


***Practice the inversions of I-V-I.***

***The left hand will play C (I) and G (V).***

***This formula also has a memory aid: with I-V-I in C the G in the right hand stays the same.***

***Try to harmonize the following example using only I and V.***



There are also a lot of combinations you can make using I, IV, and V. Because these three chords are the basic building blocks of most music, you will already be able to harmonize a large number of hymns in this way. It won't sound very interesting yet, but it's the start for creating your own harmonizations of hymns. When only using I, IV, and V you will sometimes create forbidden chord progressions called parallels. Do not worry too much about this yet because ways to avoid these will be discussed later.

## Harmonizing with I, IV, and V in the key of C

Nr.1: Psalm 81 (*All the melodies come from the Dutch 'Liedboek voor de kerken', 1973*)

The image shows three staves of music in C major. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. Below the staff are the chord symbols: (C) I, I, IV, V, I, IV, V, IV, I, IV, V. The second staff has notes: G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. Below the staff are the chord symbols: I, V, IV, V, I, I, IV, I, IV, I. The third staff has notes: C2, D2, E2, F2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1. Below the staff are the chord symbols: I, IV, I, IV, I, IV, I, IV, I, V, I.

### *A few important matters:*

- 1. At the beginning of the harmonization you will find the root listed, in this case [C]. Before you start playing remember: C=I, F=IV, and G=V.*
- 2. Coordinate your releases between the left and right hand. Do not play the right hand staccato and the left hand legato, or vice versa. The best way to play is 'portato,' meaning that there is a small amount of space between the chords.*
- 3. Count! Especially at the end of the lines. Hold the last note of the line for three full beats followed by one beat of rest.*

Nr.2: LvK 449 'Du reines Licht'

Musical notation for 'Du reines Licht' in 4/4 time. The piece consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a C-clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). The chords are: (C) I I V I I I IV I. The second staff notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). The chords are: I IV V I V IV I. The third staff notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). The chords are: V I IV I I I V I. The fourth staff notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter). The chords are: I IV I IV I V I.

Nr.3: Psalm 93

Musical notation for Psalm 93 in 4/4 time. The piece consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a C-clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C6 (quarter). The chords are: (C) V I IV I V IV I IV V I. The second staff notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C6 (quarter). The chords are: I IV I V I IV V I IV V. The third staff notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C6 (quarter). The chords are: I IV I IV I IV V I I V. The fourth staff notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C6 (quarter). The chords are: I V I IV I IV V I IV V.



Nr.4: Psalm 1

(C) I IV V I I IV I IV V I

IV I IV I V IV I I IV I

V I IV I I I V I I IV I

I I IV I IV IV I IV I V

I V I IV I V IV I IV V

I IV V I I IV I IV V I

*The Psalms don't have time signatures, but were written with a specific pulse in mind. Each half note should equal about 60 on a metronome (or about one second).*

*In Psalm and hymn books this is often indicated by a 1 over a half note where the key signature is usually placed. Many hymns also have this indication.*

*You can use this same tempo often for hymns in cut time (2/2).*

*The time signature in and the period of the melodies composition are important factors in choosing the right tempo. For example, a song from the Romantic period (19th Century) with a 3/4 or 4/4 time signature is played significantly slower than a Psalm. LvK 26, 290, 393, and 441 are examples of romantic hymns that should not be sung too fast.*

*On the other hand some pre-reformation melodies, like LvK 208, 253, and 278, can be played and sung much faster. The time signature and the period of composition say more about the correct tempo than the notes. As an accompanying organists you are not just a player, but a singer as well.*

Nr.5: LvK 124: 'Het daghet in den Oosten'

*Caution: in the first line you see that you can also change the triad during a melody note!*

Two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains 13 notes with chords: (C) I, I, V, I, IV, I-V, I, IV, I, IV, I, V, I. The second staff contains 13 notes with chords: I, IV, IV, V, I, IV, V, I, V, I, IV, V, I.

Nr.6: Psalm 21

Six staves of musical notation in treble clef. The chords for each staff are: (C) V, I, IV, I, IV, I, IV, I; IV, I, IV, I, V, IV, V; I, I, I, IV, I, V, I; I, IV, IV, V, I, IV, V, I; I, IV, IV, I, I, IV, I; I, V, IV, I, V, I.

Nr.7: Psalm 68

*Try to fill in the correct roman numerals underneath this Psalm melody. Try several alternatives: you can harmonize a G in the melody with both a I and a V, and a C with a I or a IV. You can especially create variety by changing chords on a repeated melody note.*

The musical score consists of ten staves. The first staff is a single melodic line starting on G4. The second staff has a '(C)' chord symbol below the first note. The third staff ends with a repeat sign. The fourth and fifth staves show a block chord accompaniment. The sixth through ninth staves show the melody with various chord symbols (I, V, IV) placed below the notes. The tenth staff shows the melody ending on a whole note G4.

*Now try to play the melodies you have practiced from memory. Always remember to pay attention to articulation and counting!*