
Introduction

Marilyn Saker

Volume 4 of *Musical Insights* is dedicated to the memory of Bruce Benward, the much-revered music theorist who developed the macro analysis system and founded the Macro Analysis Creative Research Organization. His profound influence continues to be felt worldwide, not only by the many music students fortunate enough to study his teachings, but also by the members of the organization he founded over twenty years ago. His resolute words advocating his simple, yet elegant, analytical method are never to be forgotten:

Whoever thought that researching letter names of chord roots (macro analysis), rather than roman numerals, would uncover an environment dominated by circle progressions and divulge significant musical sub-patterns that had been camouflaged since the dawn of tonal music? The freedom to scrutinize musical paradigms that are easily detected by the ear but not always so easily recognized on the score by the eye, can often be perceived through the mechanisms and strategies found in macro analysis. Macro analysis, as a method of musical analysis, is so fresh and innovative that only a few of the sophistications and *savoir-faire* have been thoroughly discovered and adequately understood.¹

Without a doubt, Dr. Benward would have approved of the macro analysis explorations appearing in this volume. The pedagogical applications discussed by John Check, Gary Don, and Nolan Stolz reveal a close kinship to Dr. Benward's well-known contributions to music theory education. The analyses by Jean Richards and Donald Traut introduce macro-analytical approaches that sustain Dr. Benward's fundamental wish for analysts to investigate varied perspectives of the system. Dr. Benward was *Musical Insights* greatest supporter, and he would have been pleased by the articles being written using the system he developed throughout his career.

The purpose of macro analysis is to reveal large harmonic gestures in tonal music by identifying chord prolongations and forward harmonic motion. The basic symbols of the system are uncomplicated, and in fact, straightforward enough for beginning theory students to understand.

1. Benward, Bruce. "Some Insights by the Author of Macro Analysis." *Musical Insights* 1 (1997): 9.

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The macro-analytical technique can be used by itself or with more conventional methods, such as Roman numeral analysis.

In macro analysis, the roots of chords are labeled with letter-based symbols; forward harmonic motion is marked with slurs. The following example illustrates some of the primary symbols of the system.

The image shows a musical score for measures 1-4 of Rinke's "St. Lucian" in G major. The score is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. Below the score, the macro analysis and Roman numeral analysis are provided. The macro analysis uses letter-based symbols: A, E, A, D, g#° A, E. The Roman numeral analysis uses Roman numerals: I, I⁶, V, I⁶, I, IV, vii^{o6}, I⁶, I, V. Solid slurs connect the A, E, A, D, and g#° A symbols, indicating a circle-of-fifths progression. A dotted slur connects the g#° A and A symbols, indicating a leading-tone progression.

Macro Analysis: A E A D g#° A E

A major: I I⁶ V I⁶ I IV vii^{o6} I⁶ I V

**Measures 1–4 of Rinke’s “St. Lucian”
analyzed using both macro analysis
and Roman numeral symbols.**

In the above example, notice how the chord quality of each macro symbol matches the quality of its corresponding Roman numeral. The omission of inversion symbols in the macro analysis allows chord prolongations to be readily visible. Solid slurs identify the circle-of-fifths progressions in the phrase, with the dotted slur indicating a leading-tone progression (a substitute for a circle progression). Additional information about the macro analysis system can be found in Dr. Benward’s textbook, *Music in Theory and Practice*, and at www.macromusic.org/tutorials/.

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Marilyn Saker, Editor/Publisher