

Music 232

Form: Cadences, Phrases & Periods

These notes are a distillation of Kostka/Payne's Tonal Harmony. They are in no way a substitute for reading and working through the actual text book.

Overview

- Cadences: four types
- Harmonic rhythm
- Motive
- Phrase
- Period

Musical Form

Form refers to the way in which a composition is structured (think of architecture, where a building or house is divided into different rooms and floors).

The Cadence

A cadence is a goal or arrival point, signified by a particular combination of two chords. This goal can be the final one of a piece or one of many internal goals within the composition. Types of cadences are defined by the types of chords that are found in them.

I. Authentic Cadence

A. Authentic Cadence: some form of V or vii^o (dominant) followed by I/i (tonic).

B. Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC)

1. V⁽⁷⁾ – I/i with both chords in root position and the tonic in the melody of the I/i chord

C. Imperfect Authentic Cadence (IAC): an authentic cadence that is NOT authentic.

1. Root position IAC: the 3rd or 5th is in the melody of the tonic chord
2. Inverted IAC: one or both of the chords is inverted
3. Leading tone ICA: some kind of vii^o chord substitutes for the V⁽⁷⁾ chord

Usually it is the PAC that concludes a piece or movement, but it is possible that a root position IAC could be the final cadence.

Not every V⁽⁷⁾/vii^o – tonic progression is a cadence; only when it acts as the goal of a larger passage—usually every few measures. This applies to all cadence types.

II. Half Cadence

A. A common *progressive* or *unstable* cadence; it stops on a V chord.

B. The *Phrygian half cadence* has a specific bass line in the minor mode: scale degrees 6-5 as a part of a iv⁶ – V⁽⁷⁾ progression.

III. Deceptive Cadence

A. When we expect to hear an authentic cadence, but the V⁽⁷⁾ is followed by something else (usually the submediant vi/VI, which recalls specific part-writing concerns).

B. The deceptive cadence is usually used to EXTEND (not end) a phrase; after the deceptive cadence, the phrase will often repeat with the "proper" authentic cadence in place of the initial deceptive cadence.

IV. Plagal Cadence

A. Typically IV/iv – tonic.

B. Final-sounding, but not a strong/stabilizing as the PAC/IAC.

C. Often added as a tag after a PAC/IAC (as in the "Amen" sung at the end of hymns).

It is always possible to find exceptions to these specific chord combinations. The table below offers a more general set of definitions:

Type	First chord	Second chord	Classification
Authentic	Contains the leading tone	Tonic	Conclusive
Plagal	Does NOT contain the leading tone	Tonic	Conclusive
Deceptive	Contains the leading tone	NOT the tonic	Progressive
Half	Does NOT contain the leading tone	NOT the tonic	Progressive

V. Harmonic Rhythm

As a general rule, the last chord of a cadence usually falls on a stronger beat than the preceding chord.

VI. Motives and Phrases

Motive

A motive is the smallest identifiable musical idea. It consists of either a pitch pattern, rhythm pattern or both.

Phrase

A phrase is a relatively independent (self-contained) musical idea that ends with a cadence.

Subphrase

A subphrase is a distinct portion of a phrase, but not a phrase because:

1. it does not end with a cadence
2. it seems too short to be relatively independent (self-contained)
3. it is more of a melodic event, while a phrase is more of a harmonic event

Labeling/analysis: we usually label different phrases with lowercase letters; a, b, c, etc.

Interpretation: unlike identifying chords, for example, the identification of phrases can be more subjective (how one hears it) and it is reasonable for a single piece (or portion of a piece) to be analyzed in different ways at the phrase level.

VII. Periods

A period is a larger structural unit made of at least two phrases, where the final phrase has the most harmonically conclusive (strongest) cadence. Many periods are made of just two phrases, having an *antecedent* and *consequent* relationship (sometimes in a *question* and *answer* manner).

Example 1 (of a period diagram):

(*antecedent*) (*consequent*)
 ph.1-----HC, ph.2-----PAC/IAC

Example 2 (of a period diagram):

(*antecedent*) (*consequent*)
 ph.1-----IAC, ph.2-----PAC

In both examples, the second cadence is the strongest (most conclusive).

In a period, the phrases must have different endings. If the endings and material between the two phrases are the same, we just have a *repeated phrase*, NOT a period.

Questions to Consider

Define musical form

Define cadence

Define the following types of cadences:

Authentic Cadence (AC)

Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC)

Imperfect Authentic Cadence (IAC)

Root position IAC

Inverted IAC

Leading tone IAC

Deceptive Cadence

Half Cadence

Phrygian Half Cadence

Define motive

Define phrase

Define subphrase

Define elision

Define period

Define antecedent

Define consequent

How are phrases labeled in periods and other structures?

What is the difference between a parallel and contrasting period?

Define double period

Define phrase group

Define repeated period

Define musical sentence

VIII. Parallel Period

In a parallel period, both phrases **begin** with similar (or identical) **melodic** material and each phrase would be diagrammed/analyzed with the same lowercase letter "a". If the second phrase melodically begins the same as the first, but is different at its cadential point, a prime (variant) symbol will be added to the letter in a diagram (see below):

|———parallel period———|
-----a-----HC -----a'-----PAC

Even if the beginning material in each phrase is sequentially related in terms of the melodic material, the period should be analyzed as parallel.

IX. Contrasting Period

In a contrasting period, each phrase begins with different melodic material and should be diagrammed/analyzed with a different lowercase letter: "a", "b", etc.

|———contrasting period———|
-----a-----HC -----b-----PAC

Expansion

A common way to expand a period is to repeat the antecedent (aab) or the consequent (abb) phrase, or both can be repeated (aabb). This does not alter the fundamental structure of the period; it merely makes it longer.

X. Three-Phrase Period

A three-phrase period contains three distinct phrases; two antecedent and one consequent, or one antecedent and two consequent, as determined by the cadences.

XI. Double Period (aka 4-Phrase Period)

A double period is usually four phrases in two pairs. The cadence at the end of the second pair is stronger than the cadence at the end of the first pair. The two pairs could have a parallel or contrasting relationship.

|———double period———|
|——antecedent——||——consequent——|
ph.1-----ph.2-----ph.3-----ph.4-----

XII. Repeated Period

A (usually) two-phrase period is repeated. The second iteration may have be more ornamented or be transposed by an octave, but the essential material is the same.

-----a-----HC -----a'-----PAC -----a-----HC -----a'-----PAC

or

-----a-----HC -----b-----PAC -----a-----HC -----b-----PAC

XIII. Phrase Group

A phrase group is several phrases that will seem to belong together structurally, but they will not follow the "proper" order of cadences according to the above-mentioned period types. The last cadence might not even be the strongest cadence. This is common in transitional/connective passages that link more significant thematic areas together (thematic areas that HAVE clear periodic structures).

-----a-----HC -----a-----HC -----a-----HC

or

-----a-----PAC -----a-----PAC -----a-----PAC