MUSC450: Musical Form

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Contents

1 Cadences

Cadences occur at the end of phrases (e.g. imagine where a singer might breathe)

Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC): Secure and stable cadence going from a *V* chord (point of tension) to a *I* chord (point of release)

- Both chords must be in root position
- Melody line must land on the tonic and approach it step-wise
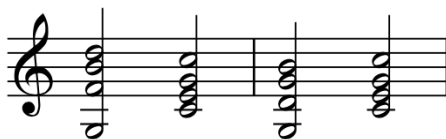- Considered the "most perfect" cadence

Figure 1: Perfect Authentic Cadence

Imperfect Authentic Cadence (IAC): Secure and stable cadence going from a *V* chord (point of tension) to a *I* chord (point of release) but either

- One of the two chords is NOT in root position
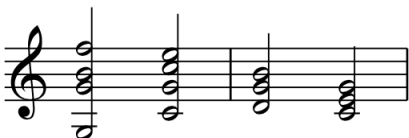- Melody line doesn't land on the tonic or doesn't arrive at the tonic by step

Figure 2: Imperfect Authentic Cadence

Half Cadence: Non-secure, unstable, unresolved, "questioning" kind of cadence where the phrase ends with the lingering tension of a *V* chord

- **Note**: Preceding chord doesn't matter, only the final chord matters (must be a *V* chord, usually on a strong beat)
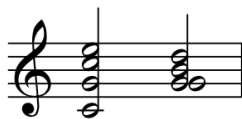
Figure 3: Half Cadence

Plagal Cadence: Secure move from *IV* to *I*

- If PC occurs after a strong cadence, usually called an "amen" cadence in church music (or **post cadential plagal gesture**)
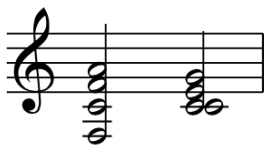
Figure 4: Plagal Cadence

Deceptive Cadence: Composer uses long-standing expectation of cadential closure to trick listeners (usually V to vi instead of V to I
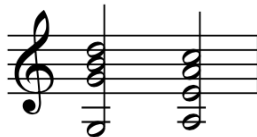

Figure 5: Deceptive Cadence

2 Levels of Metrical Perceptions

We can view beats/meter at varying levels

- Beats
- Measures as beats (**hypermeter**)
- Phrases/Half-phrases as beats

3 Extending, Expanding, and Connecting Phrases

Motivic Anticipation: Beginning phrase is repeated before the phrase continues to anticipate the main motive

Interpolation: Material in the middle of the phrase extends on immediate previous material

Standing on the Dominant: Dominant is emphasized and lengthened (usually occurs at the end of the phrase)

Cadential Extension: Entire cadential "turn around" is repeated (usually occurs at the end of the phrase)

Echo: End of phrase is repeated by secondary voice (doesn't have to occur at the end)

Phrase Elision: Rather than cadencing, composers will elide (omit) an PAC/IAC with the beginning of the next phrase

Melodic Links: Keeping melodic energy going even as harmony comes to a cadential closure

4 Constructing Short Musical Phrases

Musical phrases are perceived by

- Repetition
- Variation

Sentences: musical phrase with a balance of repetition and variation **with only one cadence**. Categorized into

- **Presentation**
    - **Basic Idea**: Most memorable part of the melody (may be repeated verbatim or tranposed)
    - **Varied Basic Idea**: Prolongation prolongs and confirms tonic-type harmonies **with no cadence**
- **Continuation**: derives material from the Basic Idea or presents new. Typically has repetition in the first half and adds variation in the second half
    - **Drive to Cadence**: Complex harmonies drive the music to a cadence
    - **Cadence**:

Continuations are usually marked by

- **Fragmentation**: small "germinal" motive from the Basic Idea extracted and modified
- **Sequencing**: Small musical ideas occur at one pitch level, then repeated a step higher/lower
- **Accelerated Melodic Motion**: Surface-level activity is increased, causing more subdivisions of the beat occurring in the melody
- **Greater Harmonic Variety**: Use more/different chords in the continuation than in the presentation
- **Faster Harmonic Rhythm**: Underlying harmonies change more rapidly in the continuation than in the presentation

How is the basic idea varied: Slightly different harmonies (in the last beat), slightly different rhythm

- Presentation is first for 4 bars (BI 2 bars, VBI 2 bars)

Features that create momentum in the continuation

- Sequencing, greater harmonic variety, faster harmonic rhythm, accelerated melodic material, fragmentation (triplet theme)

5   Periods

Periods: consist of 2 phrases: an **antecedent** that ends with a weak cadence, and a **consequent** that ends with a stronger cadence

- Antecedent ends with IAC $\implies$ Consequence ends with a PAC
- Antecedent ends with HC $\implies$ Consequence ends with an IAC or PAC

The strategy is a dialogue between a questioner and an answerer

Parallel Period: Each of the two phrases begin with the same (or similar) musical material

- A character asks a question then answers that same question

Sequential Period: Each of the two phrases being with the same (or similar) musical material BUT transposed up or down

- Musical characters have the same contour but begin and end in different places (increase or decrease drama)

Contrasting Period: Each of the two phrases begins with different musical material

- A character asks a question and a different character answers it

Note: Periods can be made up of two sentence and can use phrase modifications

PS: Four-phrase phrase chains that fit into one of the following two cadential schemes

- **Double Period**: HC HC HC PAC
- **Repeated Period**: HC PAC HC PAC

6   Forms

Two-part forms consist of several sub-categories within the **greater binary** classification

- First section usually ends with PAC in new key, HC in main key, or PAC/IAC in main key
- Second section ends with PAC in the main key

First section usually modulates to a second key, and the second section modulates back to te first key

If the piece is in major, the second key will likely be V. Otherwise the second key will be III

Instability in the second section comes from

- Standing on the dominant
- Sequences
- Rampant tonicizations

Simple Binary: Motivic material from first section does not directly return in the second section

Rounded Binary: Motivic material from the first secion returns at the end of the second section, resulting in ABA or ABA' (B section lacks a strong cadence)

Balanced Binary: Motivic material from the end of the first section returns at the end of the second section (can be transposed)

- First section ends in PAC in new key
- Second section ends with PAC in main key