

Cadences

What is a cadence?

- A cadence is a point of arrival that occurs at the end of a musical phrase
 - It acts like a sort of musical punctuation mark
- Some cadences are much more final-sounding than others
 - Similarly, some punctuation marks (like the period and the exclamation point) are more final-sounding than others (such as the comma or the question mark)
- Cadences that don't end on the tonic sound more like commas than periods

Half cadences

- Any musical phrase that ends on the dominant (with a V chord) ends with a **half cadence**

Allegro Mozart

I _____ V

- The half cadence does not sound conclusive—the music needs to return to the tonic
- We label these cadences **HC**

Authentic cadences

- Any musical phrase that concludes with the dominant moving to the tonic (V to I) ends with an **authentic cadence**

I _____ V I

- An authentic cadence sounds much more conclusive than a half cadence
- Most music ends with an authentic cadence

Perfect authentic cadences

- There are two different kinds of authentic cadences: **perfect** and **imperfect**
- A perfect authentic cadence ends:
 1. with the tonic (do) in the soprano
 2. with both the V and the I in *root position*

Perfect authentic cadence

C: V I

Imperfect authentic cadences

- All other authentic cadences are *imperfect*
- A imperfect authentic cadence might:
 1. end with some other scale degree other than the tonic in the soprano (mi or sol)
 2. end with either the V or the I *inverted* (for example, V - I⁶ or V⁶ - I)
 3. use the vii^o chord (the weak dominant) instead of the V chord (for example, vii^{o6} - I)
- We label perfect authentic cadences **PAC** and imperfect authentic cadences **IAC**
- IACs are not as final-sounding as PACs

Deceptive cadences

- When the bass moves up a step from V to vi instead of leaping to I at the end of a phrase, it creates a **deceptive cadence**

51 (Allegro)

ok: V⁷ - vi

- We label deceptive cadences **DC**

Plagal cadences

- When a musical phrase ends with the progression IV – I, it is a **plagal cadence**
- This is also known as the “Amen cadence”

God in Three Per - sons, - bless - ed Trin - i - ty,
Which went, and act, and - ev - er - more shall be,
Per - fect in pow - er, in - love, and pa - ti - ty,
God in Three Per - sons, - bless - ed Trin - i - ty! A - men.

E: v⁷ I (IAC) IV I (PC)

- We label plagal cadences **PC**

Finding cadences

- REMEMBER that NOT ALL V - I progressions are authentic cadences! – only those that occur at the end of a musical phrase
- Thus, to find a cadence, it is important to first LISTEN to the music, identifying resting points in the flow of the music
- Cadences generally occur at regular time intervals—often every four measures
- The length of a musical phrase generally coincides with the capacity of human breathing (a singer’s phrase)