

The Period

Part I: Definition and Two-phrase periods

Phrase Review

- A *phrase* is the smallest musical unit that ends with a cadence
- It is often based on a simpler underlying harmonic model
- It has a basic length (often four measures) which can be *e x t e n d e d*
- It may be made up of one or more interrelated motives

Periods

- A single phrase by itself is usually considered to be incomplete
- Like phrases in language, musical phrases combine to form musical sentences, or *periods*
- A *period* is the smallest unit of structure in which a musical thought is both stated *and* brought to its conclusion

Periods and Form

- In a short composition, a period may be an entire *section* of music
- In a larger composition, a period may constitute one of several *themes* in the piece
- A very short piece may have only one period in it

Two-Phrase Periods

- The most common type of period has two phrases in it
- These two phrases are often in a question-answer or *antecedent-consequent* relationship

Example

The musical score shows two staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, with a cadence at the end. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, also ending with a cadence. The tempo/mood is 'Poco meno e grazioso' and the articulation is 'G: leggiero'. Dynamics include 'dim.' and 'pp'.

- A weaker cadence in the antecedent is followed by a stronger cadence in the consequent
- The first phrase is dependent upon the second for harmonic completion

Cadence relationships

- An antecedent usually ends on an incomplete cadence (half or deceptive), but might also end on an authentic cadence that sounds less conclusive than the cadence in the consequent
- Common cadence relationships
 - HC / PAC
 - IAC / PAC
 - weak PAC / strong PAC

Identify Cadences

Allegro moderato

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

- IAC / PAC

Identify Cadences

Vivo

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16

- Weak PAC / strong PAC

Parallel and Contrasting Periods

- If the two phrases in a period begin similarly—with melodies that are clearly related to each other—we call the period a *parallel period*
- If the two phrases in a period are noticeably different from each other, we call the period a *contrasting period*

Parallel or contrasting?

Allegro

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

- Parallel period
- The two phrases are almost identical—only the cadences differ

Parallel or contrasting?

Moderato

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

- Parallel period
- The phrases begin similarly, although the second phrase is transposed

Parallel or contrasting?

- Contrasting period
- The phrases do not begin similarly

Modulating Periods

- If a period begins in one key and ends in a different key, we call it a *modulating period*

Asymmetrical Periods

- If the phrases in a period are of an approximately equal length, we call it a *symmetrical period*
- *Asymmetrical periods* contain phrases of different lengths
- *Asymmetrical periods* are often caused by phrase extension in the consequent

Example

- Asymmetrical period (4+6)
- Consequent extended with a two-measure suffix

For Next Time

- Look over pages 162-170 in the book
- Work on homework 6
 - Be sure to listen to the examples first (using the CDs that came with your workbook)
- Skills Test IB is this Friday