

The Period

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 two or more phrase members

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

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
- The cadences of these two phrases will have a weak-strong relationship

Example

The musical score shows a two-phrase period in 4/4 time. The first phrase (measures 1-4) ends with a half cadence (HC), and the second phrase (measures 5-8) ends with a perfect authentic cadence (PAC). The score includes dynamics like 'Poco meno e grazioso', 'leggero', 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

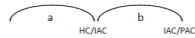


Parallel and Contrasting Periods

- 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*



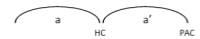
Parallel or contrasting?

Allegro

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

mf *sf* *sf*

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



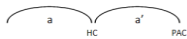
Parallel or contrasting?

Moderato

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

p dolce *p dolce*

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



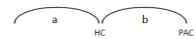
Parallel or contrasting?

Allegro

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

pp dolce

- 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*

Assai vivo

1 a IAC 9 a' PAC

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

Allegro vivace

1 a IAC 5 a' PAC

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