

Cadences

Ted Greene 3-29-1975

Much of the earliest known music was vocal, not instrumental; naturally, the singers had to have little pauses to breathe, so music came to be divided into sections that are called phrases. Actually, this is just a theory, but regardless of how phrases came into being, they continue to regulate even much of the music heard today. A study of different types of phrases will come later with a study of *Form*, but for now, one particular facet will be discussed at bit: The ends of phrases are called **Cadences**. Cadences are classified in two ways:

- 1) *By the chords involved at the very end* (when I and V are used, the cadence is called *authentic*. When I and IV are used, the cadence is called *plagal*. In minor keys i and V are used for the authentic, i and iv for the plagal); and
- 2) *By how final the cadence sounds.*

Specific Types of Cadences:

- 1) *Perfect Authentic Cadence* — uses the progression V - I or V7 - I (V - i or V7 - i in minor) in which the V chord has its root in the bass and the I has its root in both the bass and soprano; it is very final sounding:

The image displays two examples of a Perfect Authentic Cadence in A major. The first example shows the progression A - Bm7 - A, with guitar diagrams for each chord. The second example shows the progression D - E - F#m - D - A/E - E - A, also with guitar diagrams. Below the diagrams is a musical staff in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and 4/4 time signature, illustrating the chord progressions with notes and stems.

- 2) *Imperfect Authentic Cadence* — also has the V - I (V - i) progression but with one or more of the following conditions:
 - a) The I has its 3rd or 5th in the bass
 - b) The I has its 3rd or 5th in the soprano
 - c) The V has its 3rd or 5th in the bass

Imperfect Authentic Cadences are less final sounding than their Perfect brothers:

The image displays an Imperfect Authentic Cadence in A major. The chord progression is F#m - C# - F#m - F#m - C#7 - D - A - D - E7 - A. The final A chord has its 3rd (C#) in the bass, which is one of the conditions for an imperfect authentic cadence. Above the chords are guitar diagrams. Below is a musical staff in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and 3/4 time signature, showing the notes and stems for each chord.

- 3) Authentic Half Cadence — these use the I - V (i - V) progression and like the imperfect cadences, do not sound completely final (in this case because they end on V). If V is preceded by any chord other than I, it is still known as *half cadence*.

Chord progression: C#m, A, E, C#m, G#7, C#m, F#m, C#m, C#m, G#

- 4) Plagal Cadence — uses IV - I (iv - i); is often added after a V or V - I; usually sounds very final.

Chord progression: A, G#, C#m, D#o, C#m, G#, C#m, F#m, C#

- 5) Deceptive Cadence — this occurs when V goes to any chord besides I (i). The most common chord to be used is vi (VI), but others are used too (actually a plagal cadence that goes V - IV - I is also technically a deceptive cadence). Deceptive cadences always give the feeling that something else has to come.

Chord progression: Db, Ab/C, Db, Gb/Bb, Db, Ebm, Db/F, Gb, Ab7, Bbm

Cadences are often disguised by melodic continuity in one or more parts, to keep the flow of a piece going:

J. S. Bach – *Bouree* – 1st Lute Suite

Perfect authentic cadence
V i

etc.

melodic continuity

In all the cadences except the Perfect Authentic, vii^o or other related chords may replace V.

There are other types of 1/2 cadences, that is, some phrases substitute a different chord for V, but they are more rare.

It is suggested that from now on, when you study a piece of music, you should analyze the cadences; there is much to be learned about a composer's thinking by studying his choice of cadences.

[The chord diagrams included here are merely suggestions by the transcriber. There are other fingering possibilities as well, and Ted would probably have encouraged a student to play the examples in other areas of the neck and in different keys.]

CADENCES

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The ends of phrases are called CADENCES; cadences are classified in two ways: ① by the chords involved at the very end (when I and V are used, the cadence is called authentic, when I and IV are used, the cadence is called plagal; in minor keys i and V are used for the authentic, i and iv for the plagal); and ② by how final the cadence sounds.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF CADENCES:

① PERFECT AUTHENTIC CADENCE - uses the progression V I or V7 I (V i or V7 i in minor) in which the V chord has its root in the bass and the I has its root in both the bass and soprano; it is very final sounding:

② IMPERFECT AUTHENTIC CADENCE - also has the V I (V i) progression but with one or more of the following conditions:
 ① the I has its 3rd or 5th in the bass
 ② " " " " " " " " soprano
 ③ " V " " " " " " bass

③ AUTHENTIC HALF CADENCE - these use the I V (i V) progression and like the imperfect cadences, do not sound completely final (in this case because they end on V). If V is preceded by any chord other than I, it is still known as a half cadence.

IMPERFECT AUTHENTIC CADENCES are less final sounding than their PERFECT brothers:

④ PLAGAL CADENCE - uses IV I (iv i); is often added after a V or V I; usually sounds very final.

⑤ DECEPTIVE CADENCE - this occurs when V goes to any chord besides I (i).

The most common chord to be used is vi (VI), but others are used too (actually a plagal cadence that goes I-IV I is also technically a deceptive cadence). Deceptive cadences always give the feeling that something else has to come.

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J.S. BACH - BOUREE - 1ST LUTE SUITE →

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