

Cadences and Post-Cadential Material

Cadences

Cadences (from the Latin verb *cadere*, meaning “to fall”) come at the end of phrases and act as a “punctuation” for a phrase or a theme. Before beginning any study of form, it is important to have a clear agreement and understanding about cadences. This is because classical forms are often articulated and defined through their themes and cadences. You may already be aware of several types of cadences, like authentic cadences, half cadences, plagal cadences, etc.

In this course, we will focus on only three types of cadences:

1. *Perfect Authentic Cadence* (PAC): a root-position $V^{(7)}$ to I with tonic in the soprano
2. *Imperfect Authentic Cadence* (IAC): a root-position $V^{(7)}$ to I without tonic in the soprano
3. *Half-Cadence* (HC): a phrase ending with a root-position dominant triad (not seventh).

Some notes about cadences:

1. Cadences will most often follow a cadential progression, some examples of these are listed below. Cadential progressions commonly begin with a I^6 chord.
2. Cadences will almost never follow immediately after tonic prolongation.
3. Typically, one should look and listen for cadences in the harmony and confirm the cadence with the melody. Of course, there are exceptions.
4. Often, the soprano and bass voices will articulate the *point of cadence* simultaneously.
5. The *harmonic rhythm* of a phrase typically speeds up as the cadence draws closer. Use this as both a visual and an aural indicator that you may be coming to the end of a phrase.
6. Most importantly, when analyzing form (especially classical era works), it is important to remember that PACs and IACs only occur when there is motion from a root position dominant or dominant seventh harmony to a root position tonic harmony.¹ **If either harmony is inverted, there is no cadence** (e.g. $V-I^6$ is not a cadence, neither is V^6-I)

¹ Caplin, William. “The Classical Cadence: Conceptions and Misconceptions.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 51–117.

Attenuated Cadences

A cadence is *attenuated* if it fails to reach its goal. This happens fairly often for both structural and rhetorical reasons, and should not be seen as inherently problematic. There are three kinds of attenuated cadences: abandoned, evaded, and deceptive.

1. In cases where there is an issue with the dominant harmony, we call it an *abandoned cadence*. Usually, this means a V chord will change inversions, like to V⁶ or V⁴₃. Usually the change to an abandoned cadence is obvious, as all of the built-up drama and tension towards the cadence will dissipate. In some instances, the dominant will disappear.
2. If instead there is an issue with the tonic harmony it is an *evaded cadence*. This usually involves resolving to a I⁶ chord rather than a root-position I chord.
3. In the case where the dominant harmony resolves to the submediant (or sometimes IV⁶) rather than tonic, it is a *deceptive cadence*.²

Following any attenuated cadence, there will usually be a “one-more-time” cadential extension where the cadence eventually reaches its goal.³ This means that the cadence is re-done and will be “corrected” soon after.

Post-Cadential Material

Similar to how some works have material that comes “before the beginning” (like an introduction), many works have music that comes “after the end” of a piece or section. There are three possibilities for such materials.

Coda

A coda is a rather large and substantial section of music that comes after the end of a piece or section on the largest hierarchical level. Its primary function is to let the listener know that the work is coming to a close, wrap-up loose ends, and act as a general conclusion to the entire work or section. In the coda, the composer will most likely introduce one or more new themes and may modulate or change mode.

² Caplin, William. *Classical Form: A Theory of formal functions for the instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 101–107.

³ Schmalfeld, Janet. "Cadential Processes: The Evaded Cadence and the 'One More Time' Technique." *Journal of Musicological Research* 12 (1991): 1–52.

Codetta

Even though codetta looks like “small coda,” the two really have very different functions and occur at different hierarchical levels. Codettas follow PACs and live on the same hierarchical level as periods, sentences, phrases, cadential extensions, etc. Because of this, they often found in the middle of pieces, unlike codas. There are usually not new themes introduced in codettas.

Codettas will usually be short (one to four measures) and serve to release tension. They are marked by tonic pedals, tonic prolongation, or tonicization of harmonies on the flat-side of the key (subdominant or submediant). There may be some repeats of melodic motives that center around tonic, but the closure from the cadence will be preserved.

Cadential Extension

Cadential Extensions occur immediately after a cadence and repeats the cadence, either literally or slightly varied. Unlike codettas, this will undo the closure achieved by the cadence before re-attaining closure. Most often they will occur after an attenuated cadence or an IAC.

While there are occasionally new melodic ideas heard in cadential extensions, most frequently the composer will repeat the cadential material with what some call the “*one more time*” technique, where the composer “backs-up” to try the cadence again.

$$\parallel I^6 - ii^6_5 \mid I^6_4 - V \mid vi \parallel$$

A very common cadential progression leading to a *deceptive* cadence

$$\parallel I^6 - ii^6 \mid V - V^4_2 \mid I^6 \parallel \quad \text{or} \quad \parallel I^6 - ii^6 \mid V - V^6 \mid I \parallel$$

Typical *abandoned* cadential progressions

$$\parallel I^6 - ii^6 \mid I^6_4 - V \mid I^6 - I \mid IV - V^7 \mid I \parallel$$

an *evaded* cadence followed by a cadential extension

Figure 1 An evaded cadence with a cadential extension followed by a Codetta. Caplin 2004, 105.