

October 1, 2007

Form:

- Our experience of music is much like our experience of daily life. It is helpful to think of musical form as a goal-oriented journey.
- Many of the words used to describe a journey may also be applied to our experience of music:
 - Detour
 - Path
 - Landmark
 - Revisiting
- Form is hierarchical. Large units are subdivided into smaller units.
 - (We often use vocabulary derived from rhetoric—phrases, periods, etc.—to describe formal units.)

Phrases:

- A phrase is the smallest formal unit that still ends with a cadence.
- Phrases may be conclusive (creating a sense of repose) or inconclusive (requiring further motion).
 - The degree of repose achieved by a phrase is determined largely by the cadence (see below for more on cadences).
 - There is also a sense of musical verticality involved here. Musical tension is heightened as the melody ascends above the tonic. Repose is attained as the melody descends back towards the tonic. A melody that descends down to $\hat{1}$ will lend a greater sense of resolution than one that terminates on some pitch above $\hat{1}$.

Periods:

- A period consists of a pair of complementary phrases, the first of which is inconclusive and the second conclusive. The first phrase is often referred to as the antecedent and the second the consequent.
- The first two phrases of “Oh, Susannah” make a period. The first phrase ends with an inconclusive half cadence on $\hat{2}$. The second phrase begins exactly as the first but is altered slightly to end on $\hat{1}$:

“Oh, Susannah”



- Not all phrase pairs form periods. The first two phrases of “Deck the Halls” are identical. They do not form the necessary antecedent-consequent relationship required for a period:

“Deck the Halls”



Cadences:

- A cadence is a point at which a relative sense of resolution is achieved.
- A perfect authentic cadence (PAC) is referred to as such because it gives the greatest sense of repose. (The outer voices also resolve to a *perfect* octave, the interval that gives the greatest sense of resolution.)
- Criteria for a PAC:
 - Bass: V to I in root positions ($\hat{5} - \hat{1}$)
 - Soprano: $\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ or $\hat{7} - \hat{1}$
- An imperfect authentic cadence (IAC) is less conclusive than a PAC. Certain factors can imperfect the degree of repose given by a cadence.

Examples of cadences:

Ex. 1



- Is example 1 a PAC even though we have $\hat{2} - \hat{3} - \hat{1}$ in the soprano?
 - Yes, example 1 is still a PAC. The B is an *échappée*, a melodic decoration which does not affect the true motion from $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$.

Ex. 2



- Is example 2 a PAC despite the $\hat{2} - \hat{3} - \hat{4} - \hat{5}$ in the soprano?
 - Yes, example 2 is still a PAC. The $\hat{3} - \hat{4} - \hat{5}$ figure forms a melodic embellishment to $\hat{2}$.

Ex. 3



- Is example 3 a PAC?
 - Yes. The resolution from $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$ is simply delayed.

Ex. 4

Handel, Suite 14, courante (p. 70)

- What type of cadence is found at the end of example 4?
 - The cadence is an IAC. Even though the melody ends on $\hat{1}$, the real resolution is from C in m. 3 (the seventh of V^7) to B ($\hat{3}$) on the downbeat of m. 4. The final two pitches in the soprano form a melodic embellishment to B.
 - A similar situation occurs in example 7:

Ex. 7

Bach, French 5, gavotte (p. 115)

- The C of m. 3 resolves to B in m. 4. The final A and G form a melodic embellishment to B.

Ex. 8

Bach, French 5, sarabande (p. 114)

- What type of cadence does example 8 end with?
 - It ends with an IAC.
 - It may appear to end with a PAC because the final two pitches in the bass are $\hat{5} - \hat{1}$ while the soprano descends from $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$. The real cadence, however, occurs on the downbeat of the last measure as $\hat{4}$ resolves to $\hat{3}$. The last measure is an expansion of the tonic harmony (the bass arpeggiates while the soprano passes from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{1}$).

Assignment:

- Read chapter 3 (“Structural functions”) in *Form in Music*.