

Some of the Most Common Chord Progressions in Baroque Major Harmony

(Speak about minor also)
Ted Greene – 1974-06-12

- 1) All combinations of the three primary triads (I, IV, and V) such as:
- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| a) I IV V | b) I V I | c) I IV V I |
| d) I IV I V I | e) I V (I) IV I | |

A generous use of I, IV and V chords in a piece of music creates a strong feeling of a “key” or “tonal center”; an over-use of them creates monotony. The secondary triads (ii, iii, vi, [vii^o]) are used to balance out the sound and create more interest. Some of the most common progressions using them are:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 2) I vi ii V (I) | 3) I vi IV V (I) | 4) iii vi ii V (I) |
| 5) I iii IV (V) I | 6) I ii (iii) IV I (scalular) | 7) IV iii ii I (scalular) |
| 8) vi iii IV I | 9) ii vi IV I | 10) (I) IV vii ^o iii vi ii V I etc. |
- Roots up a 5th

Roots up a 5th

Roots up in 4ths
- 11) ii V iii vi
- up a 4th

As stated above, more or less, the I, IV, and V are the three main pillars of a major key. It's commonly accepted that iii and vi are substitutes for I, ii for IV, and vii^o for V.

This is usually stated:

Tonics: I, iii, vi | *Sub-Dominants:* ii, IV | *Dominants:* V, vii^o (sometimes iii is used as a dominant also).

These chords are said to be *functioning* in the above ways.

Practice all above progressions in 3- and 4-note triads using good voice-leading. Do eventually in all keys. Also do comparable versions in minor keys using both v and V, ii^o for ii^o where it sounds better (also try ii) — other than these suggestions, stick to the *natural minor* chords.

Cadences

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 up into what are known as *Phrases*. The closing points of these phrases are called *Cadences*; even today most music is still regulated by phrases and cadences. Most cadences have used combinations of the three primary triads (or their substitutes).

Cadences are classified in two ways:

1) by which of the three primary chords are used at the end. (When Tonic and Dominant are used it is called an *Authentic Cadence*; when Tonic and Sub-Dominant are used it is known as a *Plagal Cadence*.)

2) by how *final* the cadence sounds. The terms perfect and imperfect identify cadences that end with the tonic triad. The *Perfect Authentic Cadence* uses the progression V - I or V7 - I (and comparable 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.

Perfect Authentic:

The *Imperfect Authentic [Cadence]* uses the V - I progression also but the I chord has its 3rd or 5th in the bass and/or the soprano, or the V has its 3rd or 5th in the bass. They sound less final.

The *Authentic Half [Cadence]* uses the progression I - V; (if a chord other than I is used to precede V, it is still called a half cadence).

Half cadences give the impression of more to come.

The *Plagal Cadences* are exact counterparts to the Authentic ones in terms of the types and rules. The *Perfect Plagal [Cadence]* uses the progression IV - I in which the IV chord has its root in the bass and the I has its root in bass and soprano. The *Imperfect Plagal [Cadence]* uses IV - I, and I has either its 3rd or 5th in bass and/or soprano, or IV has its 3rd or 5th in the bass. The *Plagal Half Cadence* uses the progression I - IV (or sometimes V - IV, vi - IV, etc.). Examples:

Perfect Plagal

Imperfect Plagal

Plagal Half

Take some songs and analyze the cadences.

[Ted's note to himself:] Include Deceptive and all cadences in minor keys too.

- ① All combinations of the 3 primary triads (I, IV+V) such as:
 a) I IV I b) I V I c) I IV V I d) I IV I V I e) I V (I) IV I

Speak about minor also

A generous use of I, IV+V chords in a piece of music creates a strong feeling of a "key" or "tonal center"; an over-use of them creates monotony. The secondary triads (ii, iii, vi (vii°)) are used to balance out the sound and create more interest. Some of the most common progressions using these are:

- ② I vi ii V(I) ③ I vi IV V(I) ④ iii vi ii V(I) ⑤ I iii IV(V) I ⑥ I ii (iii) IV I
 ⑦ IV iii ii I ← SCALULAR ⑧ vi iii IV I ⑨ ii vi IV I
 ⑩ (I) IV vii° iii vi ii V I etc ⑪ ii V iii vi
↑ ROOTS UP 4TH ↑ SCALULAR ↑ ROOTS UP IN 4THS ↑ A 4TH

As stated above, more or less, the I, IV+V are the 3 MAIN pillars of a major key. It is commonly accepted that iii+vi are substitutes for I, ii for IV, + vii° for V. This is usually stated: TONKS: I, iii, vi | SUB-DOMINANTS: ii, IV | DOMINANTS: V, vii° (sometimes iii is used as a dom. also)

These chords are said to be FUNCTIONING in the above ways. Practice all above progressions in 3+4 note triads using good voice leading. Do eventually in all keys. Also do comparable versions in minor keys using both v + V, ii° for ii, where it sounds better (also try ii)- other than these suggestions, stick to the natural minor chords.

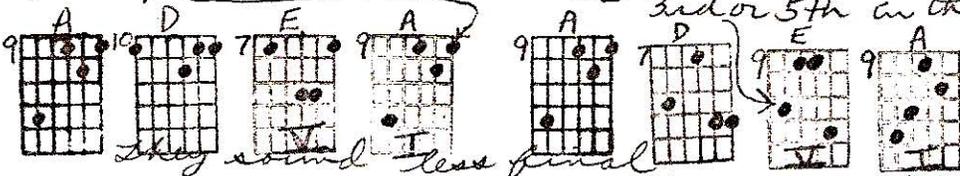
CADENCES

Much of the earliest known music was vocal, not instrumental; naturally, the singers had to ~~stop occasionally for~~ ^{have little pauses for} breath, so music came to be divided up into what are known as PHRASES. The closing points of these phrases are called CADENCES; even today most music is still regulated by phrases + cadences. Most cadences have used combinations of the 3 primary TRIADS (or their substitutes).

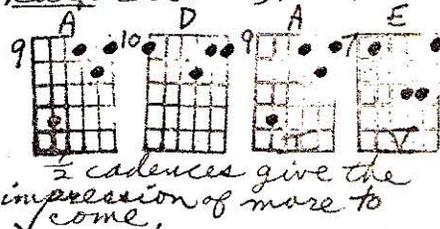
Cadences are classified in two ways: ① by which of the 3 primary chords are used at the end. (When TONIC + DOMINANT are used, it is called an AUTHENTIC CADENCE; when TONIC + SUB-DOMINANT are used, it is known as a PLAGAL CADENCE)

and ② by how final the cadence sounds. The terms perfect + imperfect identify cadences that end with the tonic triad. The perfect authentic cadence uses the progression V-I or V7-I (and comparable in minor) in which the V chord has its root in the bass and the I has its root in both the bass + soprano. → It sounds most final.

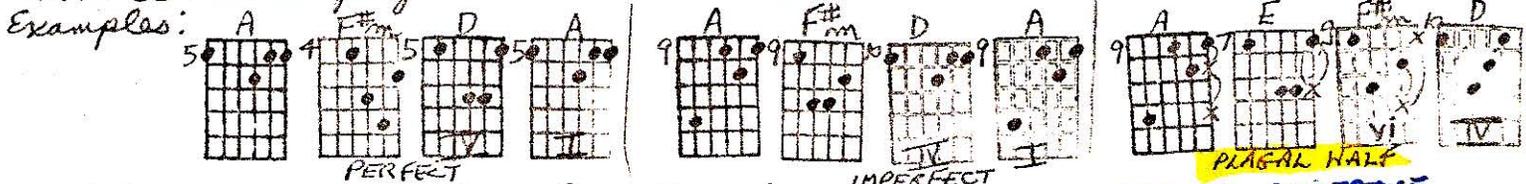
The imperfect authentic uses the V-I progression also but the I chord has its 3rd or 5th in the bass and/or the soprano, or the V has its 3rd or 5th in the bass.



The authentic half uses the progression I-V; (if a chord other than I is used to precede V, it is still called a half cadence).



The Plagal cadences are exact counterparts to the Authentic ones in terms of types and rules. The perfect Plagal uses the progression IV-I in which the IV chord has its root in the bass + the I has its root in bass + soprano. The imperfect plagal uses IV-I and I has either its 3rd or 5th in bass and/or soprano, or IV has its 3rd or 5th in the bass. The plagal half cadence uses the progression I-IV (or sometimes V-IV, vi-IV etc.)



Take some songs and analyze the cadences;

INCLUDE DECEPTIVE + ALL CADENCES IN MINOR KEYS TOO