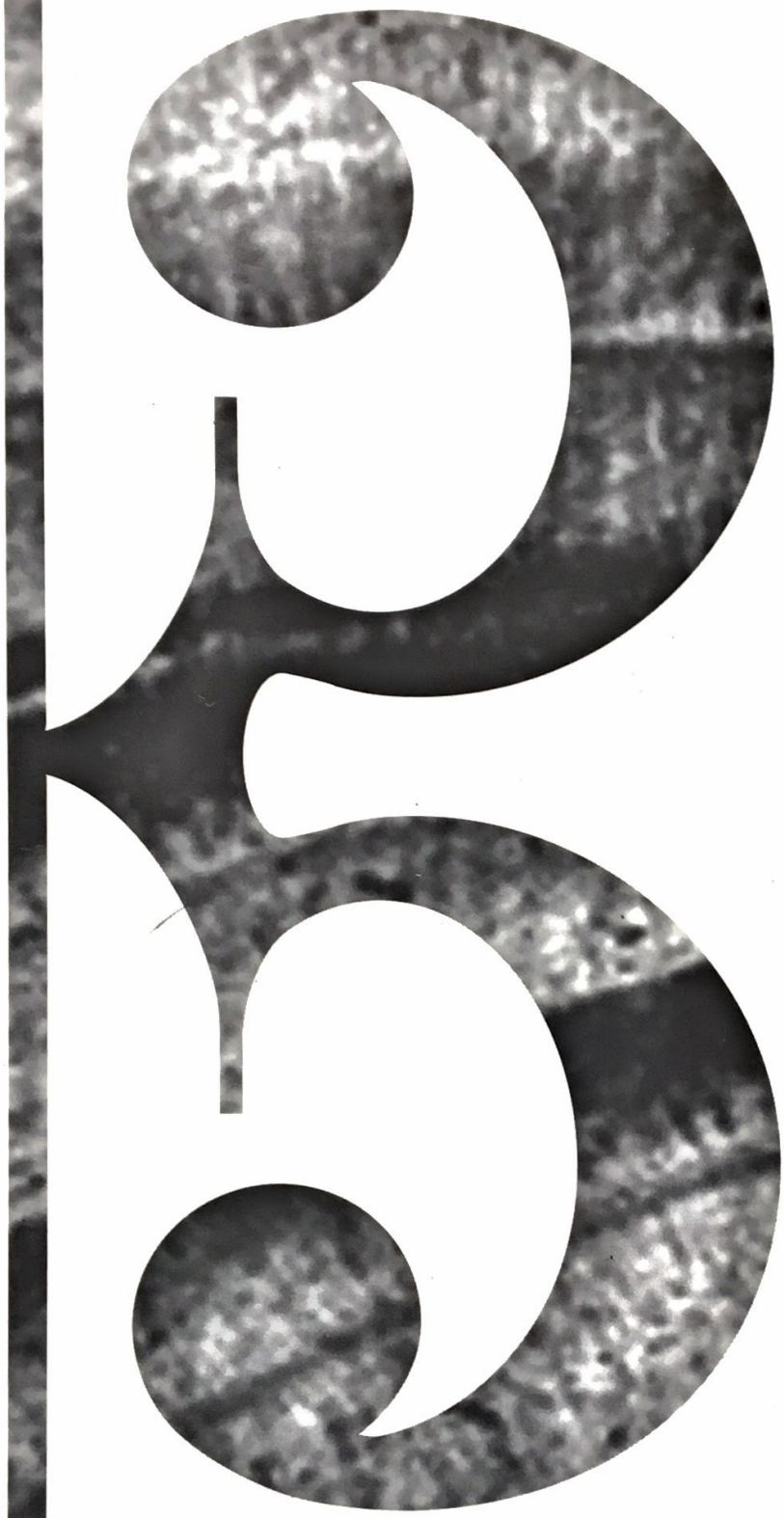


The Music Theory Handbook

Marjorie Merryman

Publisher CHRISTOPHER P. KLEIN
Acquisitions Editor BARBARA J. C. ROSENBERG
Developmental Editor J. CLAIRE BRANTLEY
Project Editor JEFF BECKHAM
Production Manager DEBRA A. JENKIN
Art Director BURL DEAN SLOAN

ISBN: 0-15-502662-3

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 96-76368

Copyright © 1997 by Harcourt Brace & Company

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Requests for permission to make copies of any part of the work should be mailed to: Permissions Department, Harcourt Brace & Company, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, Florida 32887-6777.

Address for Editorial Correspondence: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 301 Commerce Street, Suite 3700, Fort Worth, TX 76102.

Address for Orders: Harcourt Brace & Company, 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL 32887-6777. 1-800-782-4479, or 1-800-433-0001 (in Florida).

Harcourt Brace College Publishers may provide complimentary instructional aids and supplements or supplement packages to those adopters qualified under our adoption policy. Please contact your sales representative for more information. If as an adopter or potential user you receive supplements you do not need, please return them to your sales representative or send them to:

Attn: Returns Department
Troy Warehouse
465 South Lincoln Drive
Troy, MO 63379

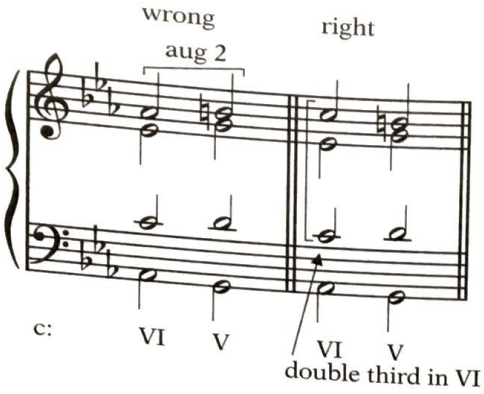
This book was printed on recycled paper made from 10% post-consumer waste and 40% pre-consumer waste. The total recycled fiber content is 50% by fiber weight.

Printed in the United States of America

6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 053 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

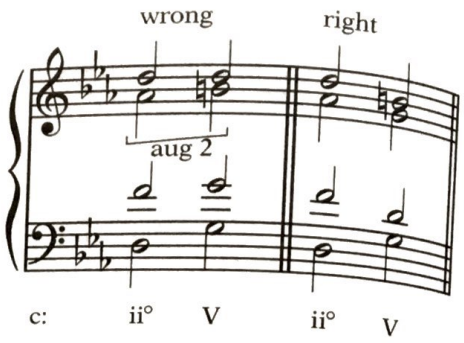
2.

VI-V



3.

ii°-V



HARMONIC PROGRESSION

The language of tonal music depends on the idea of **harmonic progression.** Progression means directed motion, or movement toward a goal, and harmonic progression therefore implies harmonic movement that is goal-directed. While any series of chords may be played in succession with more or less pleasing results, a *progression* of chords is moving toward a goal, and each harmony in the progression can be understood in terms of its place in that motion.

In order to understand the notion of harmonic progression, we must return to the idea that phrases have a beginning, middle, and end. This was discussed in species counterpoint in terms of melodic considerations: Certain pitches were appropriate for beginning a line, certain cadence patterns were possible for ending, and the nature of the middle had to do with building to a high point and then connecting smoothly to the cadence. In building coherent harmonic progressions, two new considerations must be added: One concerns the specific functions of individual harmonies within a key; the other expands the definition of cadence.

Function in harmony can be divided into three main types: **tonic function** provides central context and identity for beginning, as well as rest and repose, the ultimate end goal of harmonic motion. **Dominant function** means a lack of repose; the dominant specifically seeks the tonic for resolution. **Subdominant or pre-dominant function** is less dynamic than dominant; it seeks the tonic also, but more often than not moves to the dominant before arriving on the tonic.

The main harmonic functions can be summarized as I, IV, and V. These are sometimes called the **primary chords** in a key. The other harmonies fit in as follows:

ii—in major and minor, generally plays a pre-dominant role.

iii—in major, having two notes in common with both tonic and dominant triads, lacks a strong function; sometimes used in circle of fifths progressions to go to vi; in minor, III is the tonic of the relative major. It functions as an alternative to the minor tonic and is an important pole of harmonic activity.

vi—in major and minor, belongs ultimately to the pre-dominant group, but can substitute (temporarily) for I in a cadence formula, creating a deceptive cadence.

vii°—a weaker version of the dominant function, vii° seeks resolution to I.

Note that the pre-dominant chords ii and IV tend to move on to V, but V goes to I, not to ii or IV.

With the idea of harmonic function in mind, it is possible to appreciate coherence in chord progressions:

I – IV – V – I.

tonic subdominant dominant tonic

Same idea expanded: I – IV – V – vi – IV – ii – V – I.

tonic subdominant dominant deceptive cadence pre-dominant dominant tonic

CADENCES

Harmonic progressions are goal-oriented, and the goal of the progression is the cadence—the end. In species counterpoint only a few cadence formulas were allowed, but in harmony, many different cadence types are possible. In terms of chord progression, we can consider four basic cadence types:

Full or authentic cadence: V – I (called **perfect authentic cadence** if the tonic note is in the soprano of the I chord; called **imperfect authentic cadence** if $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{5}$ is in the soprano of the I chord). Perfect authentic is the most final of cadences.

Half cadence: a cadence on V. Not heard as final, a half cadence creates the need for an answering full cadence.

Deceptive cadence: V – vi. Not a final cadence, prolongs the tension in a progression toward a full cadence.

Plagal cadence: IV – I. Can be a final cadence, coming after a V–I full cadence (the "amen" ending).

There is a more detailed description of cadence types at the beginning of Part 5, page 87.

What makes a succession of chords a cadence? We wouldn't call every V–I succession a cadence, and some full cadences sound much more final than others. Factors that influence our perception of cadence include *melody* (the top voice): Does it sound complete? Does it end on the tonic, as opposed to the third or fifth?; *the bass line:* Does its line sound complete? Is the cadence in root position?; *rhythm:* Is the cadence on a weak or strong beat?; *phrase context:* Does this cadence resemble others in the same piece? Does the phrase length balance others in context? Does the phrase have a clear beginning, middle, and end? As knowledge of harmony increases, sensitivity to these other factors must also increase. Through listening and analysis it will become clear that the different combinations of phrase