

Notes on Form

John Paul Ito

Multiple Phrases I: The Period

When two phrases that occur back-to-back have a certain kind of relationship, we say that they constitute a **period**. The criteria for the period are as follows.

- 1) The phrases must constitute a grouping unit – they must belong together with each other more than the first phrase belongs with the preceding music and more than the second phrase belongs with the music that follows.
- 2) The phrases must cohere together into a unified whole – they should sound like question and answer, or like statement and counterstatement. If the second phrase sounds like something of a non sequitur, then the phrases do not constitute a period.
- 3) The second phrase should have a more conclusive ending than the first, so the second cadence should be stronger than first. The most common patterns, then, are the following: HC-PAC, HC-IAC, IAC-PAC.

Periods never end with half cadences – half cadences do not provide a conclusive enough ending. A period will generally not have a PAC as a first cadence, as it is then impossible for the second cadence to be stronger.

The first phrase of the period is called the **antecedent phrase**. The second phrase is called the **consequent phrase**.

Example 1 from the previous set of notes is a period; mm. 1-4 form the antecedent phrase and mm. 5-8 the consequent.