## Phrase Rhythm and Phrase Structure

### Intro

➢ NEW TERMINOLOGY: *Phrase Rhythm, Hypermeter, Hypermeasure, and Hyperbeat.*

→ **Phrase Rhythm** is a term relating to:
1) the **length and structure** of a phrase,
2) the **function of the various segments** of a phrase, and
3) the **pattern and placements of metric accents** in a phrase.

→ The overall **hierarchy of accentuations** in a phrase is a fundamental aspect of phrase rhythm.

→ **Phrase Rhythm**: "The interaction of *hypermeter* with *phrase design*."[1]

➢ DEFINITION: **Hypermeter**:[2] *Large-scale meter*. Just as there is a hierarchy of emphasis for beats within a bar, there is a hierarchy of emphasis for bars (or portions of bars) within phrases. "Hypermeter is meter, with all its inherent characteristics, at the level where measures act as beats."[3]

➢ DEFINITION: **Hypermeasure:** Related to *hypermeter*, it is a large-scale metric unit (a group of bars) in which each bar is felt as one beat (called a "**hyperbeat**") of the larger grouping.

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• This chapter deals with three aspects of ***PHRASE STRUCTURE***:
1) **Phrase connections** (between phrases)
2) **Phrase expansions** (within phrases)
3) **Phrase contractions** (within phrases)

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→ Before exploring phrase *connections*, the chapter reviews the various ways in which phrases are *separated* (**phrase separation**); most of these (the first five) relate to a *reduction of activity at the end of a phrase* [N.B.: this is my expansion of the text's discussion]:

i. Rests following the last note of a phrase;
ii. Lengthening of note value for last note of phrase;
iii. Fermata on last note of phrase;
iv. Breath following last note of phrase, either written (e.g., a comma) or implied;
v. *Ritardando* indication (or equivalent) at end of phrase, followed by "a tempo";
vi. Phrasing slurs (which can be problematic, as they often represent editorial determinations, which may not match the composer's intentions, or, more generally, even if they are in agreement with a composer's intentions, they may not concur with a performer's or listener's sense of the phrasing);
vii. Cadences.

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➢ DEFINITIONS:

- **Afterbeats** are "rhythmic continuations at a point of cadence that elaborate and group with the cadential harmony." See ex. 4.1
- **Anacrusis**: An **upbeat** that begins a new phrase.
- **Upbeat:** weak-beat ("pickup") that groups with a subsequent strong beat.
- **Extended Upbeat:** The perception of anacrusis is longer than a single beat; may be multiple bars in length; can be felt as an "out of time" pickup, like a mini-cadenza within a fermata.
- **Elision:** See below.
- **Interpolation:** See below.
- **Contraction:** See below.

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[1] Term coined by William Rothstein in *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York, 1989), p. 12.

[2] Term coined by Edward T. Cone in *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: Norton, 1968).

[3] Neal, Jocelyn, Charles K. Wolfe, and James E. Akenson (eds.) (2000). "Songwriter's Signature, Artist's Imprint: The Metric Structure of a Country Song", *Country Music Annual 2000*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.

**1. Phrase <u>Connections</u>** can be achieved in different ways, of which there are **four** main approaches:

1) **Elision**: The end of one phrase is the beginning of the next; normally occurs on a strong beat. Overlap is usually one note, but can be more. It is important to note that only a portion of a bar is considered to be the end of a previous phrase, whereas the entire bar is usually considered to begin the next phrase. 3 examples:
   1.1) Bach, *Invention* in d (p. 29, bar 18)
   1.2) Handel, *Unto Us a Child is Born* (pp. 53-54, bar 7)
   1.3) Chopin, *Waltz*, op. 69, No. 2 (p. 61, bar 9)
2) **Melodic links, aka "phrase links"** (including bass-line links): A connection between the end of one phrase and the beginning of another. Melodic links refer to the continuation of the melody, and occur within the cadential bar. They may be understood as *extended upbeats* or *afterbeats*, connecting the two phrases. Other voices will often drop out, as in Chopin example on p. 61. For **bass line link**, see Tchaikovsky *Nutcracker* ex. on p. 45.
3) **Continuation** of accompaniment: For an accompaniment figure that **continues across two phrases**, see *Minuet* of Mozart, *Symphony 41* on p. 48. An important point to consider from a perceptual viewpoint is whether a phrase link is heard as part of the *preceding* phrase, or as an *expanded upbeat* and *lead-in* to the next phrase.
4) **Overlapping** of lines, or *Phrase Overlaps*, are less frequent than elisions and phrase links, and occur most often in contrapuntal textures, especially imitative ones such as ex. 4.3 (p. 62), from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

**2. Phrase <u>Expansions</u>**

• These are predicated on the idea that *some part(s) of a given phrase (usually one or more bars) can be perceived as **additions** to the basic phrase*.

• Expansions can happen at the beginning (**introductions**), middle (**internal expansions**, often in the form of **interpolations**), and end (**extensions**).

• Exactly *where* and *how* they occur is "often a matter of interpretation." (P.62)

2.1 **Introductions** can occur in three common ways:

**2.1.1** ACCOMPANIMENT FIGURES THAT INITIATE A PHRASE in preparation for the entrance of the melody (there are many examples of this – see p. 63 for just a few);

**2.1.2** MOTIVIC ANTICIPATIONS, of which perhaps the most famous is the opening to Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. A motive from the main theme that is to follow is introduced in isolation from that theme;

**2.1.3** EXTENDED ANACRUSIS, OR ELONGATED UPBEAT: a gesture whose function is the same as an upbeat, but which lasts longer than one beat. It can feel like an elaborated upbeat with a fermata. This is relatively common; see pp. 64-65 for two examples.

2.2 **Interpolations**: Occur within a phrase (internal expansion), in three ways:

**2.2.1** Often, "the initial statement of the phrases establishes a model, making the expansion clear in the repetition." (ex. 4.9a).

**2.2.2** Also possible are phrase segments that are part of the model phrase (first presentation), but which nonetheless may be perceived as expansions of an underlying, simpler phrase. These usually produce asymmetrical phrases (ex. 4.9b).

**2.2.3** An **evaded cadence** is another technique used to expand a phrase; see discussion below:

➢ DEFINITION 1: **Evaded Cadence:** An expected cadence, typically PAC, is evaded.

→ E.g., instead of an expected PAC, V - V $^{4}_{2}$ - I$^{6}$, or a DC, or V – iii, or an unexpected modulation, etc.

→ Note that in this definition an expected cadence *type* is evaded, but not necessarily a *cadence*. Consider, by way of contrast, the following definitions:

- DEFINITION 2: *An **evasion of the cadence** takes place when an additional one or more measures follow what would otherwise have been a cadential progression. The cadence following the evasion is often in another key.*[4]
- DEFINITION 3: *An evaded cadence... results when an authentic cadential progression does not reach the root position, tonic harmony, but is interrupted by reiteration of the cadential progressions and usually its thematic content. The repetition and interruption of the cadential progression may occur one or more times, eventually reaching the point of cadence.*[5]

→ Note that the first two definitions appear to describe different things:
- In the first, an *evaded cadence* is any cadence other than an expected PAC. This definition of the term seems poorly chosen, since the cadence itself is not necessarily evaded.
- The second definition describes an *actual* evasion of the cadence, although perhaps another way of looking at it is that the expected cadence is *delayed*, and so the evasion is temporary.

→ The third definition comes from the Mathes text, and appears to include *both* possibilities from the previous definitions. That is, it describes an interruption in the arrival of a PAC though repetition of cadential progressions (such as an IAC where a PAC is expected), but also specifies the *eventual* arrival to "the point of cadence," presumably a PAC.

→ The three examples cited in the subsequent text discussion in the text (4.8b, 4.10a, 4.10b) appear to illustrate different things.
- In the Verdi, the opening two-bar segment is a cadential formula ($I^6$ – vi – IV – V) that might reasonably be expected to arrive at I, but it doesn't; instead, the two-bar segment is repeated, and it arrives at $I^6$ both times. These are clearly examples of our *first* definition of evaded cadence, above, because the expected PACs are turned into IACs instead.

→ In the Brahms, the third bar is unnecessary – the harmony and rhythmic flow of the phrase work fine without it – and so it might be regarded as an *interpolation*. On the other hand, if the third bar is kept there is a reasonable expectation that the fourth bar would conclude the phrase with a cadence, but it doesn't, so from this perspective it could constitute an example of our second definition: an additional bar is added where the cadence might be expected, thus *delaying* (or *temporarily evading*) it.

2.3 **Extensions**: Most readily perceived when cadential progressions are *repeated* or *prolonged*, and there are three common ways in which this is done:

**2.3.1** **Repeated V-I** progressions (ex. 4.8a).

**2.3.2** **Repetition of tonic** (ex. 4.8b).

**2.3.3** **Echo** (ex. 4.8c): *The repetition of the final bars of a phrase, often in another register instrument, or voice.*

## 3. Phrase Contractions

- These refer to the shortening of phrases by removing material (usually from the middle).
- Like interpolations, they may be regarded as contractions either *in relation to an initial presentation of a basic phrase* (like 2.2.1 above), or *because an initial presentation of the phrase is shorter than might reasonably be expected* (like 2.2.2 above).
- The first example (4.11a: Haydn, Symphony 104, I) in the text seems problematic; the second 8-bar phrase ends *exactly* where you would expect: on the downbeat of the 8th bar. The subsequent phrase (new thematic material) begins a bar earlier than expected, which is why Mathes is calling the second 8-bar phrase a contraction – we don't hear the expected *completion* of the 8th bar – but to me it seems a pretty straightforward case of an elision. Perhaps it is both, but a contraction is easier to identify if the material is removed from the middle of a phrase.
- The second example (4.11b: Verdi, *Aida*), may be *initially* confusing because *the antecedent phrase is in a different chapter!* See 3.8c, p. 43 for the antecedent phrase. THEN it makes sense!
- The two Verdi examples are joined together below:

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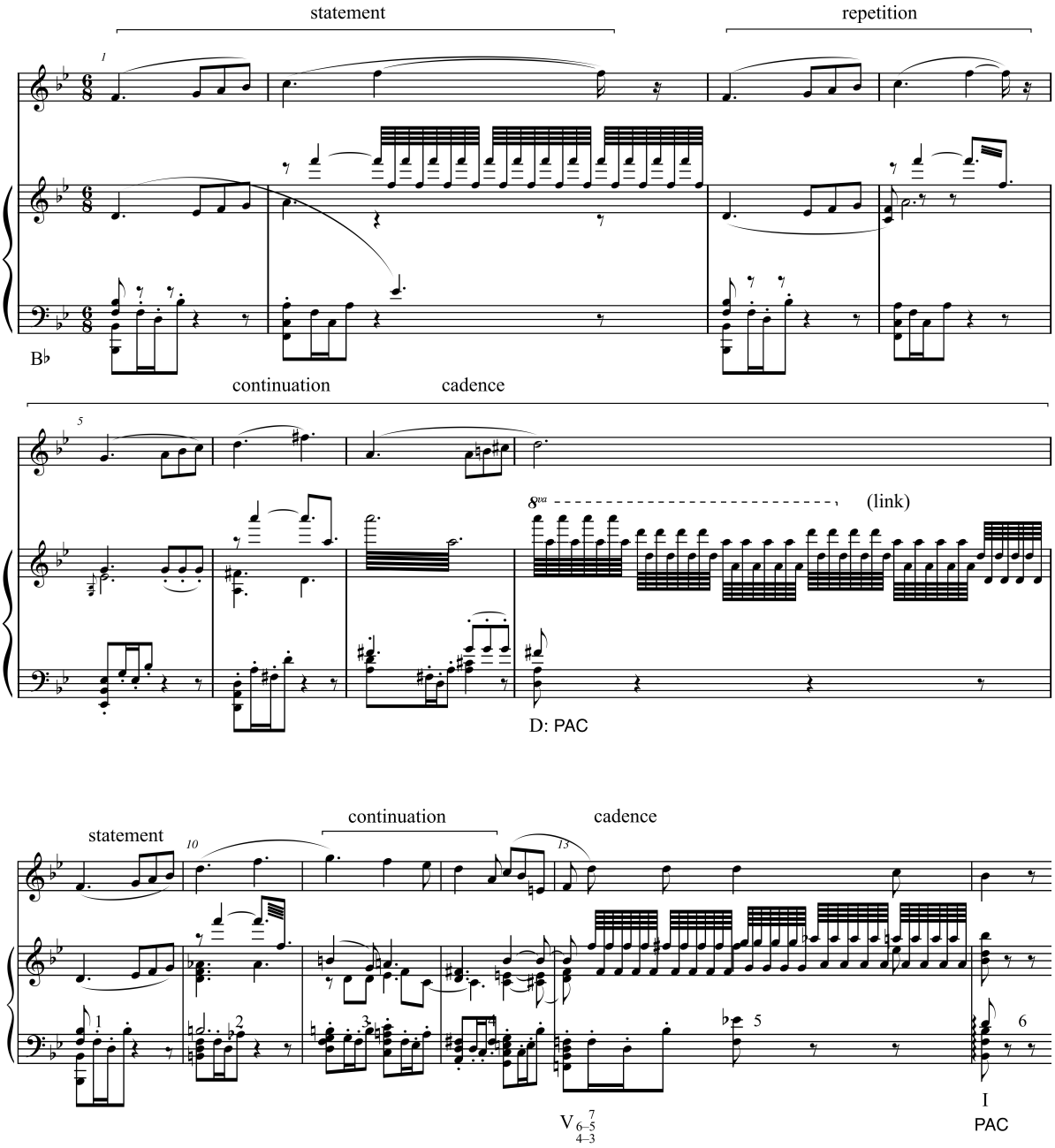
[4] Stein, Leon, *The Analysis of Musical Forms* (Summy-Birchard, 3rd ed., 1979), p. 16.

[5] Mathes, p.70.

b. Verdi, *Aida,* "Celeste Aida," mm. 1-14. (compare antecedent (1-8) with consequent (9-14)




***And finally...***

• Become familiar with **all** of the new terms from this chapter. They are essential terminology for your future analyses.

• **Phrase structure** refers to *thematic design*, such as ***period*** (including all subcategories, such as *symmetrical* or *asymmetrical*, *parallel* or *contrasting*, *double*, *repeated*) or **sentence** forms, but also to the *role* of the various segments *within* a phrase, such as *statement*, *repetition* or *restatement* (including *elaboration*), *sequence, contrast, restatement* (following contrasting ideas), *continuation*, *response*, *complement*, *cadence*.

• **Phrase structure** also includes other models of construction, such as *fortspinnung* and *ritornello* models.

• It also relates *the way in which individual phrases are expanded or contracted*, including treatment of cadences (are they delayed, or unexpected in some way?).

• **Phrase rhythm** is also part of phrase structure, and refers to the larger-scale metric organization of the phrase (see more detailed explanation at the beginning of this chapter summary).