From Phrase to Phrasing

A Classical Perspective

Jan Willem Nelleke

De Muzyk zy er toe bestemd, ons gestadig, op eene streelende wyze, orde voor te houden, in te prenten en tot derzelver liefde meer en meer te ontvonken.
(Jacob Wilhelm Lustig – Inleiding tot de Muzykkunde, 1751)

Music is destined to continually, and mellifluously, present us with order, impress it unto us and more and more kindle the love for said order.
(translation Jan Willem Nelleke)

Introduction

This paper aims to put phrases at the centre of performance practise, an approach that is, in my opinion, long overdue. The research question on which it is based, 'What can we learn about musical phrases from period sources?' is an open question, and therefore this paper will be more like an exploration. I have been studying many treatises, mainly from the Classical period, about composition (concerning topics related to the structure of a phrase) and performance (on how to give shape to a phrase as a performer). By exploring this information in relation to scores, I hope to bring theory and practice together, and raise interesting and maybe unexpected aspects of the subject.

Why is this research necessary at all? Probably no-one will disagree that good phrasing is essential. One could even argue that phrasing almost seems to define musicality: someone may play a score perfectly and precisely but a lack of phrasing will demonstrate without fail that he or she has not 'understood' or 'felt' the music. Phrasing thus encompasses understanding and feeling, and is therefore not an embellishment but fundamentally at the heart of music.

But where is the problem? We all know how the phrases go, don't we? It is my impression that we often take phrasing for granted; we know, or think we know, where a phrase leads because we feel it, but is that really all there is to it? Surely if phrasing makes music 'understandable' it implies that it is an agent in clarifying how music is structured; it is likely that a better understanding of phrase structure will enhance our playing. This is the main reason I chose this subject.

The focus will be on music from the Classical period which I define, rather arbitrarily, as from 1750 to 1800. The dates are not crucial but the style is, with its emphasis on melody and well-balanced structure. These structures were prominent within this time frame but not limited to it; we find them sometimes earlier but definitely later like in present day commercial music. In that sense they are truly 'classic'.

The Classical period was chosen because this well-organized music seemed a good starting point for looking at fundamental principles in phrases and phrasing; but also because the period is interesting as a meeting point of different performing traditions, on modern and period instruments. Though trained on the modern piano, I have experience on period instruments as well and I have found the difference in approach intriguing. It has forced me to reconsider musical certainties and has triggered an interest in basic concepts in a historical context, hence the choice for period sources.

Some further clarifications: I am not a music theorist. I have had the basic training of any professional musician but I have no special qualification. I am a performer doing research to inspire and inform performance and teaching; for music theory specialists my discussion of the theoretical aspects might be too basic.

The show cases and examples other than from treatises, are chosen from compositions I encounter in my capacity as pianist, coach and accompanist. The gamut is therefore limited but the principals behind it not.

Conventions

Words like phrase, period, sentence, etc. have both a general and a musical meaning, but even in a specifically musical context these terms are not unequivocally defined. I will use these words according to eighteenth-century practice with a strong relation to punctuation in language. I want to emphasize that I do **not** use these terms as defined in later times by for example Arnold Schoenberg; therefore a *period* does not necessarily have an antecedent-consequent form, and to prevent confusion I will completely avoid the use of *sentence* as a musical term.

The following terms and definitions will be used, see also Fig. 1 (after an example by A. Reicha[1]):

Phrase – The shortest passage of music that expresses a more or less complete thought.
Phrase-member – A part of a phrase, an idea that needs to be elaborated.
Period – A group of phrases that reaches a conclusion.
Section – A main part of a movement, usually formed by a group of periods except in shorter pieces.
Phrase-length – The length of a phrase as related to the number of bars (4 in the example).
Phrase-rhythm – A higher level of rhythm created by alternation of phrase-lengths (4 + 4 in the example).
Cadence-point – The beat where the phrase wants to land (not necessarily the last note of a phrase).
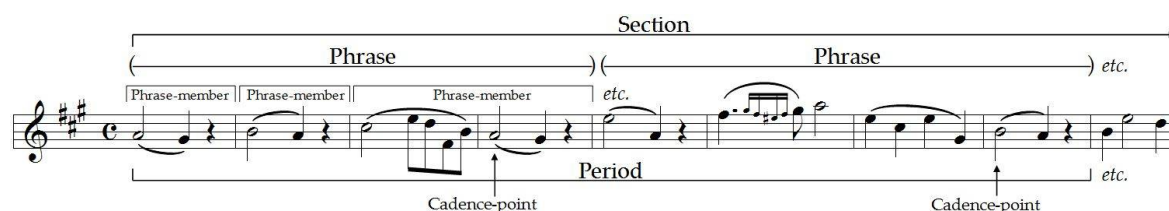

Figure 1: Terminology

These terms and definitions have been chosen in an attempt to translate and correlate treatises from different authors. There is an abundance of words for identical concepts and, confusingly, the same word can mean different things with different authors. Appendix 1 contains a list of terms I have encountered during my research, categorised according to the terminology used here.

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1   Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 351.

Unless stated otherwise, all translations are mine.
Unless indicated otherwise, all modernised type-setting of musical examples is mine, with occasional additions or clarifications in square brackets [ ].

Chapter 1 – Prelude: Playing with Style

Rather than making a doomed attempt at defining 'Classical style', I would like to explore the style from within. When asked to characterize Classical, most of us would probably come up with something akin to 'melodious' and 'well-proportioned'. But what would that mean to a musician of the period? Or, to turn it around, what was considered to be **not** a proper melody, or a **not** well-balanced composition? Anton Reicha (1770-1836) provides an example of a sequence of tones without melodic sense:[2]

Figure 2: A nonsensical melody by Anton Reicha.

He is right of course, but why? Heinrich Christoph Koch (1749-1816), one of the most important music theorists of his time, defines a proper melody as a sequence of notes that:

(*a*) is taken from alternating steps of the key it is based on,

(*b*) is arranged according to a time signature,

(*c*) contains certain *repose-moments* (Koch's beautiful description is *Ruhepunkte des Geistes* meaning 'moments where the mind can come to rest'), by which

(*d*) it can be subdivided into individual parts.[3]

We can check:

(*a*) The key is C major, only the F# is not from the scale but it is the most common one to be added. (Resolving the F# upwards would have been more elegant but as it stands, it is strangely reminiscent of the alpenhorn theme from Brahms's First Symphony.)

(*b*) It neatly fits in **C** or **₵**.

(*c*) There are some long notes, surely your mind could repose there.

(*d*) Here is a problem. At a pinch it would be possible to make divisions but none feel obvious or satisfying. This means a long note is not necessarily a repose-moment; the repose needs to create a sense of completeness so we can perceive the previous notes as belonging together.

Before this repose is reached there is only expectation of what a string of tones might want to say; we need some sort of decline in the music (*Abfall* as Johann Philipp

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2   Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 590.

3   Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802), s.v. Melodie.

Kirnberger (1721-1783) calls it[4]) that allows the ear enough rest to unite the previous notes in meaning—in other words: to create *phrases*.

The repose-moment is therefore a key-concept. Basically it is a feeling but at the same time it is a describable musical phenomenon that allows us to be more specific and, for lack of a better word, objective.

Next an example of an unbalanced composition. Joseph Riepel (1709-1782) criticises this minuet by his fictional student ('not even worth a sniff of good pipe tobacco'):[5]
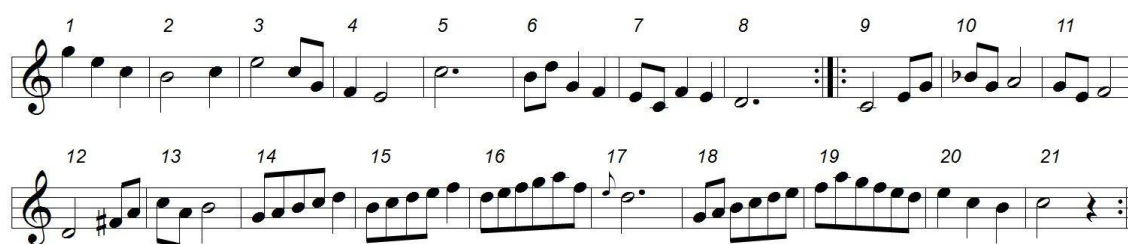
Figure 3: An unbalanced minuet, according to Joseph Riepel.

A summary of his main objections:

(*e*) Only bars in even numbers are pleasant to the ear (there are 21).
(*f*) A minuet usually has 8 + 8 bars (instead of 8 + 13).
(*g*) The beginning, or theme, should have recognizable divisions in two or four bars (not clear enough).
(*h*) There should be a clear separation between bar 4 and 5; both need to be rhythmically differentiated.
(*i*) Do not use 'dead' notes (i.e. without movement as in bar 5), except at cadences.
(*j*) Use only a limited amount of faster scale-like passages.
(*k*) A minuet should mainly have alternating bars with 'perfectly- and imperfectly' moving notes (*vollkommen- und unvolkommen erhebende Noten*). This means bars with notes on (at least) every beat, should alternate with bars containing a minim (stretching two beats).[6]

Figure 4: Unvollkommen- and Vollkommen erhebende Noten, as illustrated by Joseph Riepel.

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4   Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik aus sicheren Grundsätzen hergeleitet und mit deutlichen Beyspielen erläutert*, 2 vols (Berlin, 1776), II–I, 138.

5   Joseph Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst: De Rhythmopoeïa oder von der Tactordnung*, 7 vols (Regensburg and Vienna, 1752), I, 1.

6   Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst - Tactordnung*, I, 5.

(*l*) There must be a thematic relation between both sections of the minuet.
(*m*) Often there is an ascending tendency in the first section, and a descending in the second (cadences excepted).

What emerges is an attempt at describing a sophisticated sense of proportion and balance. Though Riepel's starting point is not primarily melodic, there is much in common with Koch. For example in the focus on clearly recognizable divisions as in (*f*) (*g*). But also in (*j*) where continuous fast notes could obscure these divisions, and (*k*) where the alternation of perfect and imperfect movement creates divisions of two bars. Riepel does not mention repose-moments but since 'dead' notes are only allowed at cadences (*i*), they appear at end of sections where you would expect something to come to rest. Likewise (*m*) where one could conjecture that if ascending means gaining energy, and descending losing energy, this would enforce the greatest repose to be neatly created at the end of the piece.

Having started the chapter with the assumption that bad examples could clarify Classical style, we can try to change Reicha's nonsensical melody into something more Classical. Here is a my attempt:
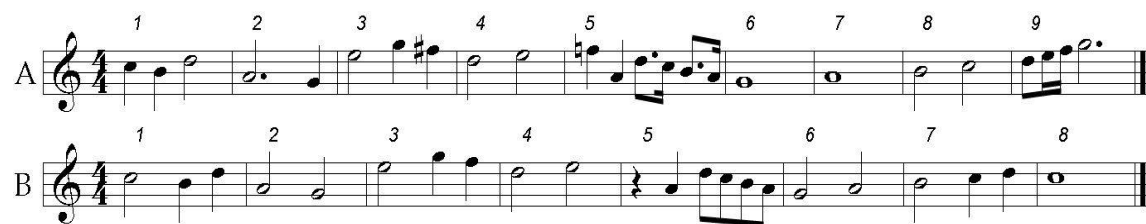

Figure 5: (A) Reicha's non-melody, (B) my attempt at improvement.

- Bar 1-2 has been made rhythmically symmetrical to bar 3-4 (*g*); the symmetry makes the bars easily recognizable as 2 + 2, emphasised by a feeling of release (or slight repose) at the end of bar 2 and 4. This is why I based the symmetry on bar 3-4 rather than on bar 1-2.
- The F# was changed to F to strengthen the key of C (*a*), alternatively bar 4 could be changed to start with a G, resolving the F# as a neighbour note, improving its melodic function.
- I removed the first note of bar 5 to emphasize the division (*h*), and simplified the rhythm to not stand out from the rest.
- The 'dead' notes in bar 6 and 7 have been removed, condensing the original nine bars into eight (*e*). Conversely a dead note was created in the final bar (*i*), now ending on the note C to better emphasize the key (*a*).

Most of the pitches have been kept in place but the structure is much clearer, and paradoxically the rhythmical adaptations have made it sound more melodious. It is not a great melody yet (that requires more than rules, as Reicha, Koch, and Riepel would

acknowledge) but that is not the point, the process is important. I set out to get into a more Classical mindset and by playing with the music I think I have done that.

It is remarkable that both Koch and Riepel focus primarily on rhythmical aspects rather than pitch organisation, and they are far from unique; almost all authors, when discussing phrases, give examples on one stave, thus explicitly not involving harmony. As Reicha states, melody almost always indicates the harmony it requires, but harmony by no means indicates a true melody; if you start with harmony you will usually remain a *médiocre mélodist*.[7]

Mission statement

I will summarize and explore the theory relating to the repose-moments as I understand it from eighteenth-century treatises. This should enable us to create better grounding for choosing phrases. Furthermore, the length and rhythm of phrases, and the cadences will prove to be agents in appreciating the beauty in balance and order in Classical style.

But balance is not static: you can not create balance where there is no movement. Therefore the theory can also inspire us to discover different ways of shaping these phrases (i.e. phrasing). Punctuation, breathing, language and rhetorical constructions are among the agents to transmit life into this beautiful order. Phrases are there to be creative with.

I have sought to integrate performing practice with case studies that illustrate how phrase theory sits at the heart of every aspect of music making. Though the subject matter might at first suggest a quest to quantify what is 'correct and historically justifiable', my ultimate goal is exactly the opposite: I want to inspire musical performance through deep affinity with the source material of music itself.

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7   Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 585.

Chapter 2 – Cadences and Punctuation

The musical phenomenon associated with the repose-moment is the *cadence*. Nowadays we tend to think of cadences as chord sequences but the concept as it emerges from the treatises is much broader: a cadence is **any** tone formula that creates the feeling of a complete rest point.[8]

A cadence can therefore be just a melodic closing formula and the earliest description in English[9] by Thomas Morley in 1597 is essentially that: 'A Cadence wee call that, when coming to a close, two notes are bound togither, and the following note descendeth.'[10] This is of course from an earlier musical style, nowadays we would probably call this a *clausula* rather than a cadence, but still the description is of a melodic- rather than an interval-based pattern.

Figure 6: (*left*) A cadence as illustrated by Thomas Morley, (*right*) a clausula.

More than two hundred years later, some of Reicha's examples of melodic cadences still look remarkably similar:[11]

Figure 7: Melodic cadences by Anton Reicha.

We could argue that cadential harmonies are implied in the melody but that does not diminish the point: a melodic formula, recognized as such, can signal the end (or coming to a rest) of the phrase. Compare for instance some of the trills traditionally added in Baroque music; in unaccompanied solo sonatas they literally signal the end of a phrase. (In older French treatises a trill is habitually called a '*cadence*'.)

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8   Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, s.v. Cadenz, see Tonschluss.
9   according to the Oxford English Dictionary: 'Cadence, N.', *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com.access.authkb.kb.nl/view/Entry/25947> [accessed 19 March 2016].
10 Thomas Morley, *Plaine and Easie Introduction on to Practicall Musicke* (London, 1597), 73.
11 Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, II, 361.

Figure 8: Trills signalling cadences: G. P. Telemann, Fantasy for flute solo, TWV 40:9.

Reicha makes the interesting observation that rhythm alone can create cadences. Hearing a drum play the following would not cause any problems in understanding the structure by hearing moments of repose.[12]
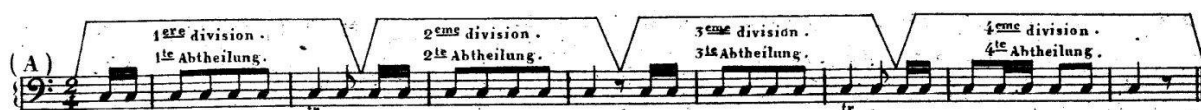

Figure 9: Cadences created by rhythm only, example by Anton Reicha.

In practice it will be the interaction of melody, harmony, and rhythm that makes us aware of a repose-moment and therefore we should look at all three elements when considering a cadence.

Structural function and punctuation

Almost all treatises compare music to language when structuring a composition: in language we also need repose-moments to understand a discourse. The most noticeable reposes would be reserved for the main paragraphs/sections, whereas the lesser ones will divide these further into sentences and clauses. Basically we are talking about punctuation.

Likewise in a good composition one would reserve the greater degrees of repose for bigger sections, and the lesser to divide these further. Musical phrases are then separated by colons or semicolons, phrase-parts by commas, and a group of associated phrases (i.e. a musical period) is terminated by a period (dot). (See chapter 6 for problems in comparing language and music.)

It follows that repose-moments need to be variable in strength with weaker cadences acting like commas, and stronger cadences marking important endings.

Hierarchies of strength

The amount of repose can be changed by varying the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic proportions of the cadence. For each we could set up a sort of hierarchy of cadence-strength, though obviously a 'feeling' of repose can never be reduced to a rigid system.

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12 Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, II, 363.

Harmonic aspects

Figure 10: A perfect cadence by A.F.C.Kollmann.

- The *perfect cadence* (Fig. 10) is strongest, it creates so much repose that it closes the piece or at least a very big section. For some, like Augustus Kollmann (1756-1829)[13] the added seventh is required to be called perfect, others are not so strict.

- The *full cadence* is any other V-I that is not strong enough to close the piece, usually for melodic reasons.

- A *half cadence* (ending on V) is one degree weaker and always needs to be followed by at least one other phrase.

- *Plagal* (IV-I) and *mediant* (chords a third apart) relations are weaker still. In Classical style they cannot close a phrase, though they can punctuate phrase-members.

- *Deceptive* (or interrupted) cadences create minimal repose, or rather deny repose, forcing a phrase to continue.

- Inversion of chords makes cadences weaker than in root position.

- Generally a leap in the bass makes the cadence feel stronger than when reached stepwise. Koch even differentiates between a leap downwards (stronger) and a leap upwards (weaker).[14]

Melodic aspects

Melodic cadences are basically melodic formulas that end on the first, second, third, fifth, or seventh note of the scale—relating to an (implied) full- or half cadence.

- The cadence is strongest if the melody ends in the octave of the chord, (*a*) and (*b*) in Fig. 11. Only this so-called *octave-cadence* can create a perfect cadence. A third (*c*) or fifth (*d*) in the melody makes the cadence progressively weaker and unfit for the perfect cadence.

Figure 11: Identical harmonic cadences in decreasing order of strength, example by Kollmann.

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13 Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollmann, *An Essay on Musical Harmony according to the Nature of That Science and the Principles of the Greatest Musical Authors* (London, 1796), 57.

14 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802), s.v. Tonschluss.

- Some consider the melodic cadence stronger when reached descending (*b*), others claims the opposite (*a*). Riepel wisely states that context should decide.[15] It is interesting to know the word 'cadence' is derived from the Italian *cadere* (to fall, to drop, to decline); also the German word for cadence, *Schlussfall* (literally 'enddrop'), relates to this.
- If the melody jumps into the endnote it is considered less strong than when reached stepwise (i.e. the opposite effect as with the bass).
- Adding an appoggiatura increases the strength because the added tension leads to more repose in the subsequent release.

Rhythmical aspects

- The cadence-point usually has a longer note value than the preceding notes as to create a feeling of landing somewhere. Longer values will create more repose.
- There is often a pause after a cadence, notated or implied, to increase the repose of the cadence before. Without it, or immediately followed by moving notes, the amount of repose is reduced.
- Ending in a single 'dead' note, what Riepel calls *unbeweglich* (motionless) makes for a stronger cadence than having a subdivision in several notes (*beweglich*). This clashes with the rule that appoggiaturas strengthen the cadence. For Riepel an appoggiatura is not really part of the melody: written as an ornament it qualifies as *unbeweglich* and therefore stronger than when written out in normal values.[16] This feels rather contrived, unless he implied a chord change in the *beweglich* bar.

Figure 12: *Unbeweglich* and *beweglich*, as illustrated by Joseph Riepel.

- When subdividing on the cadence note, a long-short division is usually considered stronger than short-long.
- Rhythmical movement in the accompaniment takes away from the strength of the melodic cadence.
- Context also plays a part. If cadences appear at regular intervals, it becomes predictable where you are supposed to feel repose. (See also phrase-rhythm in chapter 3.)

On the other hand, Beethoven's First Symphony opens with a perfect cadence, but since we are only at the beginning of a substantial piece it is not perceived as an ending. Or the other way around: Haydn's 'Joke' quartet ends with a perfect cadence in bar 166,

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15 Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst - Tactordnung*, I, 14.
16 Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst - Tactordnung*, I, 19.

but the listener, teased by the many G.P.'s that Haydn added, does not perceive it as an ending any more—allowing for the punchline four bars later (see Fig. 13).

Figure 13: Joseph Haydn's 'Joke' quartet, op.33,2, final bars of the last movement. Edition Eulenburg, [Fine] added by me.
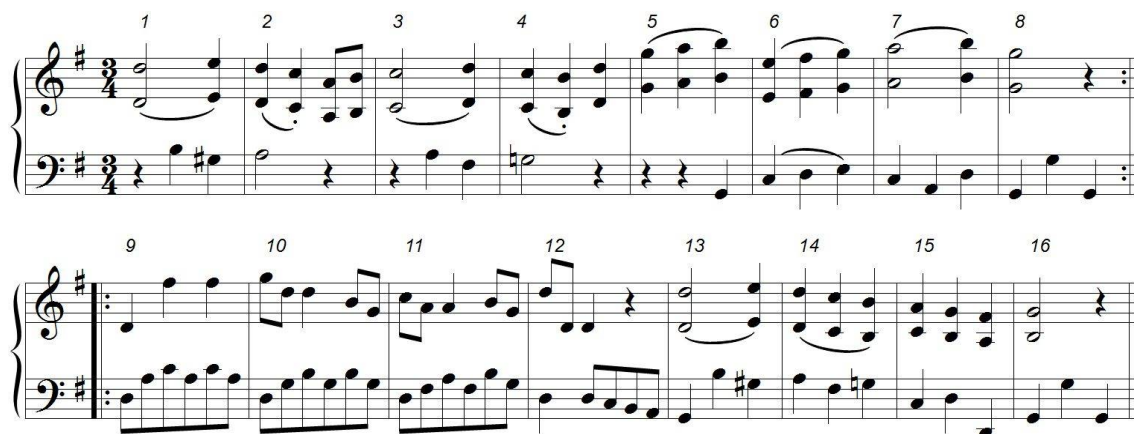
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Case study 1: Mozart, Minuet K.315a,2

Figure 14: W.A.Mozart, Minuet K.315a,2.

I chose a minuet not only for practical reasons (short and simple) but also because many authors recommend the study of minuets. According to Riepel composing a minuet is no different from composing a concerto, aria or symphony.[17]

We might not immediately consider bar 2 as having a cadence but melodically it conveys the right formula, helped by the left hand coming to rest, followed by a pause. It confirms with Riepel's rule for having a clear division at the beginning in either 4 or 2 + 2 bars. It is not a very strong cadence though; using the hierarchies we can increase the feeling of repose by, for instance, creating pauses in the melody (Fig. 15, I added the left hand notes to prevent an empty moment.)
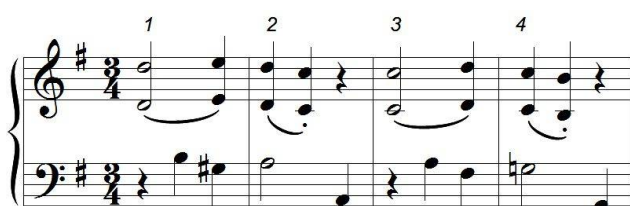

Figure 15: Increasing repose by adding pauses.

Figure 16: Decreasing repose by adding rhythmic 'unrest' and harmonic instability.

Conversely the cadence could be weakened by, for instance, creating more rhythmic 'unrest' (displacing the expected bass note in bar 2 to the second beat, and delaying the appoggiatura in the melody to an unimportant moment between beats), and by adding harmonic instability (see Fig. 16). Incidentally, the cadence in bar 4 is relatively stronger now by leaping into the final bass note.

The cadence in bar 4 is stronger than in bar 2 anyway by virtue of being on the tonic,

17   Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst - Tactordnung*, I, 1.

the slight harmonic instability created by the G# in bar 1 comes to rest here in the keynote, and the expectation of a cadence here (created by the symmetry of bar 1-2 and 3-4) increase the feeling of repose.

A cadence at bar 6 is carefully avoided: there is harmonically a IV, no rhythmic variation, and melodically no specific formula—the imitation between top and bass undermines the possibility of coming to rest in the same spot even further. In bar 8 follows the strongest cadence till now with an *unbeweglich* octave-cadence and a bass 'falls' on the tonic with a leap.

However, the cadence of bar 8 cannot be the strongest in the piece, that should rightfully be reserved for the end of the piece. Compared to bar 16, the cadence in bar 8 is weakened by the avoidance of a proper V-I ; an F# in the melody (bar 7) would probably have caused too definite an ending (Fig. 17).
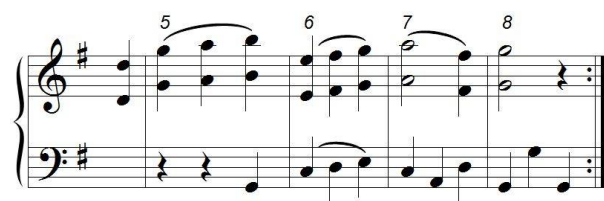

Figure 17: Making the cadence too strong.

Also context makes this bar 16 more powerful: by the absence of a strong cadence in the previous 8 bars (this could be the reason why the rhythm remains so active in bar 12), and not to forget the expected release after 8 + 8 bars (symmetry).

Taking the relatively simple cadence theory seriously, illustrates the beauty and ingenious structure of a simple piece like this.

In tweaking cadences we are actually playing with musical punctuation. For Mozart's minuet we could chart the punctuation as follows:
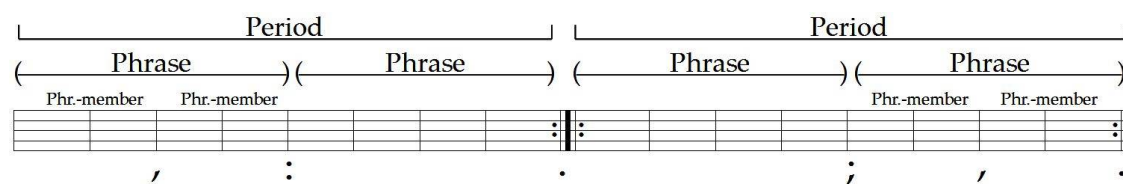

Illustration 18: Possible punctuation of Mozart's minuet.

More interesting than the exact names and hierarchy is the fact that it is not a rigid system and leaves room for interpretation. Georg Simon Löhlein (1725-1781) gives an example of a punctuated minuet where he, as the composer(!), leaves you a choice to treat bar 1-4 as either a short period or a phrase (Fig. 19 at (*a*)).[18]

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18 Georg Simon Löhlein, *Clavier-Schule oder kurze und gründliche Anweisung zur Melodie und Harmonie*, 2nd edition (Leipzig and Züllichau, 1773), 181.

Figure 19: Löhlein's punctuated minuet.

The ambiguity is of course caused by the relatively strong cadence; had it been a weaker cadence on the dominant there would be no doubt it was a phrase instead of a short period:
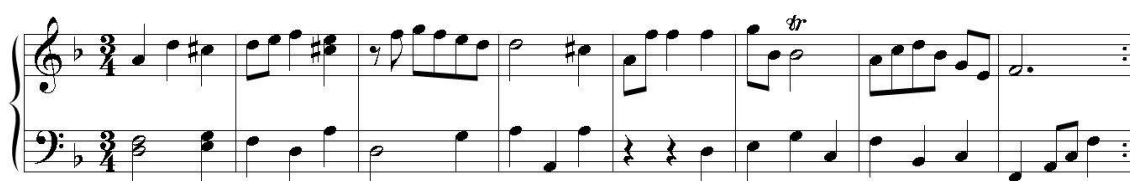

Figure 20: Cadence in bar 4 weakened by going to the dominant.

Likewise in Mozart's minuet I perceive bar 14 as a weak cadence, but strong enough to create a comma, helped by the thematic similarity to bar 1-2. In performance I would support the comma coming across by making the most of the absence of a slur in bar 15, maybe exaggerating a staccato touch to set it apart from the previous bar. You could as well argue the cadence is so weak (or even non-existent) that the last 4 bars have to be taken together, the absence of a slur just being short-hand notation for an implied slur similar to bar 14—or one could even reason the slur in bar 14 to be mainly structural, indicating the third beat is not an upbeat like in bar 2.

This freedom does not imply that punctuation is any less essential or even arbitrary. Daniel Gottlob Türk (1750-1813) gives an example in his piano tutor to prove the point: *Er verlor das Leben, nicht nur sein Vermögen* as opposed to *Er verlor das Leben nicht, nur sein Vermögen* ('He lost his life, not only his wealth' as opposed to 'He lost his life not, only his wealth'.) In this case the comma is literally a matter of life and death. Less life-threatening but 'equally unclear, or rather false, will the performance of a musical thought become by incorrect punctuation.'[19]

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19 Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende* (Leipzig und Halle, 1789), 340.

Löhlein brings up another interesting point. The phrase-member at Fig. 19 *** gets a special mention requiring continuation like a double dot (*duo puncta*), so basically it is a comma which functions like a colon. Therefore a comma can separate (like Fig. 19 *) or connect. It is tempting to think of punctuation as only creating separations but it also serves the other side of the coin: linking. As defined by McArthur, punctuation is 'the practice in writing and print of using a set of marks to regulate texts and clarify their meanings, principally by *separating or linking* words, phrases, and clauses, and by indicating parentheses and asides' (my italics).[20]

Three examples from his book:

Period: 'There was no truth in the accusation. The other problem was why they had not been warned.' – greatest separation, creating strong and distinctive statements.
Colon: 'There was no truth in the accusation: they rejected it utterly.' – more connected, one thought leads to a conclusion.
Semicolon: 'There was no truth in the accusation; it was totally false.' – continuity of thought by linking the two related statements.

But punctuation not only clarifies structure (like phrases in music), it is also an agent in the delivery of these phrases (like phrasing in music), marking especially the pauses where breath should be taken. In one of the first textbooks on the English language, the *Orthoepia Anglicana* (1640), Simon Dains specifies 'a small pause for the necessity of breathing' for a comma, a double pause 'yet very small' for a semicolon, and double again for a colon. A period after which a new sentence starts gets double the pause of a colon, but a period that ends an 'integrall part' gets even four times the pause of a colon. He teaches his pupils to count in their reading, just as he was once taught to count by his 'singing-Master'.[21]

Additionally punctuation can also be responsible for the more subdued delivery of a subordinate clause as opposed to a principal clause, the raising of the voice towards an exclamation mark, etc.

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20 McArthur, Tom, *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language* (Oxford, 1998), s.v. punctuation.
21 Simon Daines, Margarete Rösler and Rudolf Brotanek, *Simon Daines' Orthoepia anglicana (1640)*, Neudrucke Frühneuenglisher Grammatiken (Halle a.S., 1908), III, 70.

Chapter 3 – Phrase-length and Phrase-rhythm

Before continuing it is important to point out some exceptions where the theory does not apply. In random order:

- Characteristic dances can have cadence-points that are not on the first beat (e.g. Polonaise), or rhythms that prevent complete repose (e.g. Scottish dances).
- Recitatives have a form that is completely determined by speech rhythm, therefore they are irregular in respect of cadences, phrases and phrase-rhythm. Vocal forms tend to be less regular anyway because the meaning and grammar of the lyrics can not be interfered with.
- Fugues and pieces in similar style are constructed by different principles where imitations and the continuous weaving of independent voices overrule the need for regular phrases.
- Fantasies and other improvised music do not necessarily have bar lines, let alone regular phrases. But they need to be judged carefully: some fantasies are regularly structured although notated without bar lines, and free fantasies often contain perfectly regular melodic and thematic sections for contrast.

Phrase-length

Most authors agree that four bars is by far the most common, useful and agreeable length for a phrase. Counting bars seems easy but there are some issues.
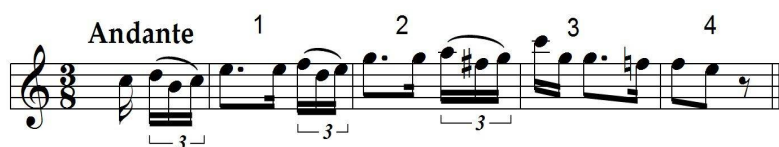

Figure 21: An upbeat makes the phrase look too long, example by Koch.

Upbeats can cause confusion. In Fig. 21 the upbeat takes more beats than left over in bar 4, but upbeats may be neglected when counting bars.[22]

Figure 22: A late entry instead of an upbeat, example by Koch.

In Fig. 22 the opposite case: the bass proves the phrase starts before the melody. Since it is therefore not a real upbeat but rather a late entry, the first bar needs to be included in counting.[23]

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22 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1787), II, 368.
23 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1787), II, 370.

A more surprising issue is the relation between metre and bar count. Theory dictates the cadence-point to fall on the first beat of the last bar of the phrase, counted in *simple metre*. This is a metre with either 2 or 3 for numerator. A $\frac{4}{4}$ is therefore really two $\frac{2}{4}$ measures notated in one bar, making Fig. 23 four bars long(!), as indicated by Koch. The proof is in the fact that the cadence-point is then on the first beat of the fourth (virtual) bar.
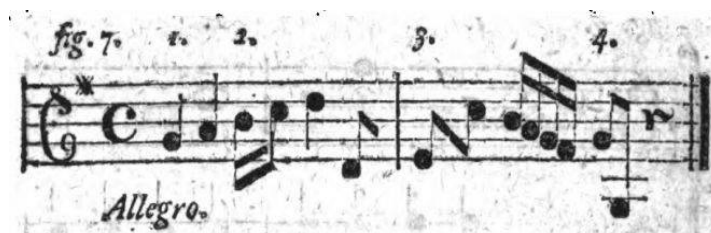

Figure 23: Cadence-point halfway the bar, example by Koch (vol.II, 372)

According to John Wall Callcott (1766-1821) 'the Caesure [cadence-point], in ancient Music, most frequently occurs in the middle of the compound Maesure, and thus appears to a modern view irregular and incorrect'—this was written in 1806.[24] This old-fashioned way of notating we often find with Haydn who frequently has the cadence-point on the third beat.

Early Classical style tended to move away from the compound $\frac{4}{4}$ towards simple $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{2}$, as stated by Johann Adolf Scheibe (1708-1776).[25] Later in the Classical period $\frac{4}{4}$ became more popular again, but with a difference.
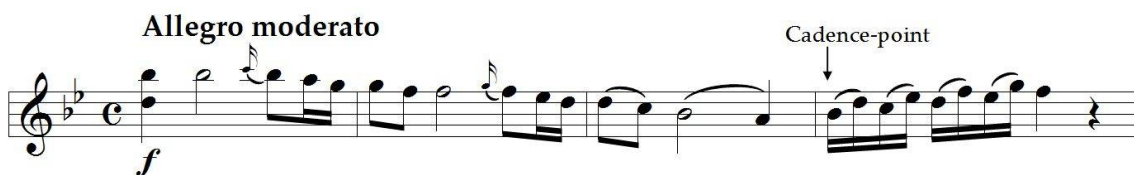

Figure 24: The opening bars of Mozart's Violin Concerto K.217 in 'new' 4/4.

Fig. 24 is a 'new' type simple $\frac{4}{4}$. The proof is the cadence-point at the beginning of bar 4. Koch would have argued that it should rightly have been written in (simple) $\frac{2}{2}$ and blames sloppiness and even ignorance of composers and publishers.[26] But a quick survey of scores by Mozart and Beethoven shows the new $\frac{4}{4}$ became standard notation. Almost all concertos by Mozart are in simple $\frac{4}{4}$ and could just as well have been written in $\frac{2}{2}$.

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24 Callcott, *A Musical Grammar, in Four Parts*, First American edition, from the last London edition (Boston, 1810), para. 509.

25 Johann Adolph Scheibe, *Über die musikalischen Composition*, im Schwickertschen Verlage (Leipzig, 1773), I, 205.

26 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1787), II, 295.

This may seem like a dry theoretical discussion but there are practical consequences. For instance in Mozart's Quintet for piano and wind, K.452:

Figure 25: Mozart, Quintet for piano and wind, K.452, Bärenreiter NMA edition. The metre indication in bar 1 is **C**.

Recognizing the cadence-point halfway the bar, we realize that there are two phrases of 4 (virtual) bars in $\frac{2}{4}$ instead of one 4-bar phrase. Seeing it as two phrases will have you experience two moments of repose, probably leading to a more relaxed tempo, clearer punctuation and maybe a more explicit delivery than when you would try to pace it as one phrase, arching over the break halfway towards the last bar. Dividing it into two phrases does of course not deny that the whole passage belongs together, punctuation also serves to link after all, it only gives a different scope and direction.

It is important to recognize that Fig. 23 and 24 are two different types of *Allegro* even though the tempo marking and metre are identical. The old type (like K.452) is characterised by the cadence-point halfway through the bar, often with quicker harmony changes and a more active bass line, and is usually played about twice as slow as the new type. It means we can not take metre and tempo at face value without relating it to phrase-length.

We can only speculate why Mozart did not write it in $\frac{2}{4}$. Maybe he felt the piece referenced an older style of music that warranted the more traditional notation. Maybe he felt that the many bar lines in $\frac{2}{4}$ would visually contradict the broader scope of the movement, making it visually too busy and active. (It is interesting that in his 18 piano sonatas Mozart uses a $\frac{2}{4}$ only one time in a first movement but 8 times for a 'finale' movement.) Maybe he wanted to indicate that the first and third (virtual $\frac{2}{4}$) bar were the important bars, which could be melodically true but is harmonically less convincing. Though the question can not be answered, it definitely has implications for

the way each of us phrases and plays the music.

Phrase-rhythm

Having cadences at regular intervals creates a higher level of rhythm, the *phrase-rhythm*, that is especially important in Classical music. Phrase-rhythm does not have to be constant but it does need to be in balance.

The usual Classical phrase is a 4-bar phrase, or *Vierer* in German, which I will abbreviate to 4-er. Other lengths are not impossible but they are typically used as a variation rather than the basic unit for a piece. (Antonio Borghese (*fl.*1777) is the only exception I found, explaining phrases by means of 3-ers.[27]) Even as late as 1885, Saint-Saëns still felt the need to clarify the use of 5-ers in the Scherzo from his Violin Sonata op.75.

Figure 26: 5-bar phrases indicated by Camille Saint-Saëns, Violin Sonata op.75, mov.2. (Manuscript)

Cadences appearing at regular intervals can become all too predictable (e.g. in Galant style) and Reicha argues strongly in favour of experimenting with different lengths because audiences have become bored by the current predictability of melodies.[28]

Johann Bernard Logier (1777-1846) illustrates how the 'spirited (*geistvoll*) and powerful expression' created in Mozart's Serenade K.388 by phrases of 5 + 4 + 3 bars, would be sacrificed if kept in a regular 4 + 4 + 4.[29]

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27 Borghese, *A New and General System of Music*, 11.
28 Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 554.
29 Johann Bernard Logier, *System der Musikwissenschaft und der praktischen Composition* (Berlin, 1827), 296.

Figure 27: Mozart's original irregular phrases.

Figure 28: Phrases made regular by Logier.

Indeed, it influences expression in a powerful way, but what about Classical balance? When changing phrase-rhythm general advice seems to be:

- Phrases with even numbered bars are still preferred over odd numbered bars.
- Use odd numbered bars in pairs to balance them into an even number again.

The phrase-rhythm in the aria 'Plaire au coeur de ce que j'aime' by Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816) is praised by Reicha for being 'varied in an ingenious way'.[30] According to his analysis the first period is 26 bars (5 + 5, 2 + 2, 2 + 2, 4 + 2 + 2), the second 18 (5 + 5, 2 + 2, 4). A final phrase has been added to close the aria with more character (3 + 3 + 2 + 2). The phrase-rhythm is definitely not regular but still highly symmetrical, every odd number paired with a *compagnion* (Reicha) to maintain balance.

He opposes this by the aria 'Ah! Que je fus bien inspirée' from *Dido* by Niccolò Piccinni (1728-1800) with a first period of 29 bars (3 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 7 + 5) and a second of 40 bars (6 + 6 + 3 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 5). Reicha claims the, otherwise well-composed aria, has a shaky, undecided melody that is hard to remember, and he blames lack of symmetry in phrase-rhythm for making the individual phrases appear unconnected.[31]

Phrase-rhythm is not just a theoretical concept. Especially Haydn is a master of irregular phrases and the phrase-rhythm adds spice and originality, but also more than

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30 Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, II, 426.
31 Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, II, 465.

that: the composer apparently needed to deviate from the norm to express something that could not be expressed within it. In order to bring that across in our playing we need to recognize the three techniques to vary the length of a phrase:

- Invent a melody that sounds completely logical and complete at this different length (Koch calls this a 'narrow' phrase, *eng*).
- Add more material to a standard 4-er (an 'extended' phrase, *erweitert*).
- Combine 2 phrases into a longer one (a 'compounded' phrase, *zusammengesetzt*).

Extended phrases

Repetition

The most common way to extend a phrase is by repeating a part of it. Looking at Paisiello's aria from Reicha's analysis, we see the first 5-er was created by repeating two halve bars from the original 4-er:

Figure 29: Paisiello's phrase of 4 bars extended into 5 by repetition.

There are many possibilities: you can repeat 1 or 2 bars literally, or embellish the repeat, or even repeat them at another step of the key. Two examples by Koch:

Figure 30: (A) Extended by 2-bar repeat on different step of the scale, (B) extended by repeating 1 bar embellished. Examples by Koch (II, 431 en III, 161)

Whereas the Paisiello example is an obvious repeat, the Koch examples are less easy to recognize. Sometimes it is hardly possible to decide whether a 4-er was extended or simply conceived as a narrow 5-er, like in Schubert's C minor Impromptu D.899,1. Is bar 3 a repetition? It can be left out after all (see Fig. 31).
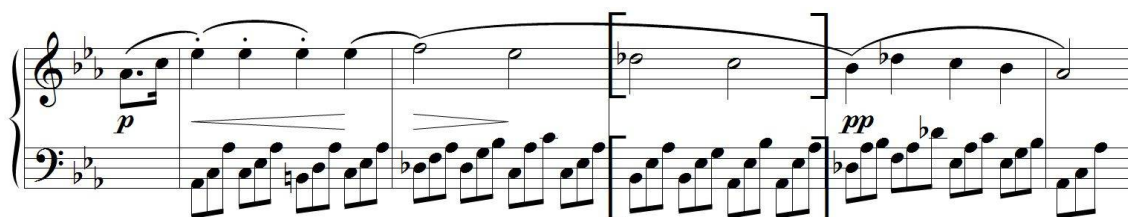

Figure 31: Schubert Impromptu D.899,1 - a narrow 5-er or an extended 4-er?

Whatever you call it, this 5-er (which follows eleven regular 4-ers) is one of the most beautiful changes in phrase-rhythm in the literature.

Importantly, repeating part of a phrase is more than a mechanical process. Koch states the repeated motif must be 'worthy' of repeating: it needs to represent the expression of the phrase in a high degree, or highlight a new aspect of it.[32] The Paisiello is an excellent example: the repeated passage has the text *de ce que j'aime* ('of the one I love'); a worthy subject to dwell upon. Musically a repetition can be highlighted by changing dynamics, adding embellishments, creating a new twist in the accompanying voices (harmony, texture), etc. Though Koch is writing for aspiring composers it is also inspiring advice for performers, really giving us a chance to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Repetition does not fundamentally change the proportions of a phrase because the repetition can be omitted. With added repetition, Reicha claims, a phrase usually still sounds even numbered instead of the odd bar count it looks. The inserted bar 'has something appealing because it adds originality and attraction'.[33]

Expansion

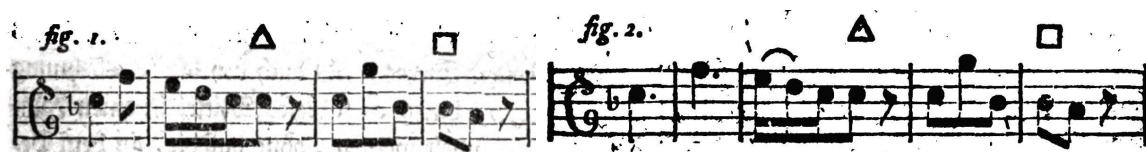By expansion one bar gets stretched into two like Koch illustrates:

Figure 32: (*left*) A narrow phrase, which is expanded into a 5-er (*right*). Example by Koch (III,171).

Expansions lend more weight to a phrase. Expansions at the beginning of phrases are typically found at the grand finale of a bigger composition, particularly oratorios. Expansions at the end of a phrase usually broaden the cadence to finish a section with more grandeur, often used in solo concertos. Reicha considers this *retard de la cadence* a pleasant way to break symmetry. In chamber music it is often notated with fermatas as in Fig. 33 (*a*), in concertos it is usually written out like (*b*).[34]

Figure 33: Retard de la cadence, examples by Reicha.

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32 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1793), III, 155.
33 Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 457.
34 Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 399.

The difference in notation demonstrates that in essence the phrase-rhythm has not been disrupted even though the bar count has. If the cadence is embellished we get a proper cadenza; this type of free cadenza again does not change the bar count.

Figure 34: Cadenza by Reicha over the previous example.

It is important to realize that the cadenza is not a 'stop', the phrase must still finish and Reicha warns that a cadenza should never be so long as to make the audience forget the resolution of the cadence 'that it rightfully so eagerly awaits.'

Other techniques

Repetition and expansion add melodic material 'from the inside'. Koch lists several other techniques that add on (usually) less substantial material. Their less distinctive features make it unlikely to upset the balance in phrase-rhythm.

- inserting/repeating a characteristic *rhythmic pattern.*
- using a *progression,* which is a sequence of the same material on different steps of the scale.
- using a *passage* which is basically adding unsubstantial passage-work. In this way you can easily create very long phrases.
- with an *interpolation* you can insert non-related phrase-parts into the phrase. They must however add meaning to the existing phrase.
- with an *appendix* (Koch: *Anhang*, Reicha: *addition*) you add material at the end of the phrase. An appendix can give more decisiveness to a cadence or, the opposite, move towards a cadence on a different chord. Often the appendix in its turn gets an appendix, which leads to another appendix, etc.; this can extend the material substantially. Or the appendix can be just an added bar in another instrument. as in this example by Reicha:

Figure 35: Appendix by added bars in orchestra, example by Reicha.

Reicha: 'If used well, the *addition* has such an appealing effect: it is like a hesitant lingering, almost taking breath to better comprehend what follows. Without the *addition* the melody in the example would be worn out and less appealing.'[35]

- A *prefix* usually acts like in introductory statement and is therefore not really a part of the melody and unlikely to upset the balance in phrase-rhythm.

Importantly, Koch acknowledges that some extensions cannot be described by a certain technique or reduced to a shorter original; they are simply created by the genius of the composer.[36]

The Mozart game

Despite the previous remark, Koch treats extensions under the heading 'About the art of connecting a melody according to mechanical rules'. This gave me the idea for an 'app' to play around with extensions. It is based on the first 2 phrases of Mozart's *Musikalisches Würfelspiel* (musical dice game) K.294d where a different minuet is 'composed' depending on how the dice roll.

Figure 36: Illustration from talkclassical.com

I have taken the game one step further by having the dice add extensions according to Koch's methodology. The first aim was to test how these extensions can work within phrases. But it also illustrates Koch's remarks about different genres requiring different kinds and amounts of extensions. Consequently by having the app add extensions, the minuet is taken away from its dance foundation and turned into something more akin to the opening of a sonatina. Besides clicking 'auto extension' it is also possible to experiment manually by clicking the check boxes. Of course the musical outcome of this mechanical experiment will necessarily be contrived but sometimes interesting examples appear. Try it at www.jwnelleke.nl/master/03-phraselength.htm#container
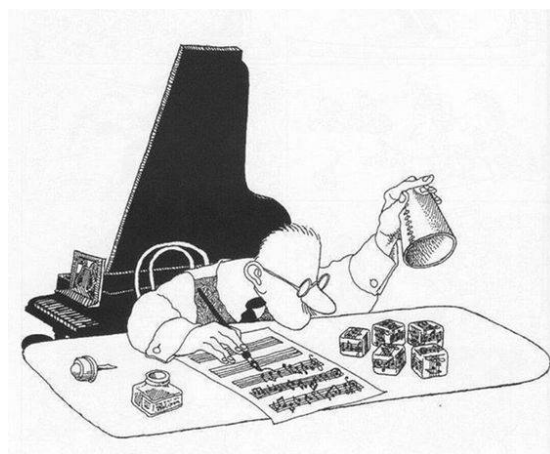
Compounded phrases

Where extensions vary the phrase-rhythm by changing the length of a single phrase, compounded phrases create a different phrase-length by connecting 2 (or more) phrases in such a way they seem to be only one. Basically there are two ways: bar suppression and denying completion.

Bar suppression

When the chord on which the cadence lands is identical to the opening chord of the

35 Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, II, 456.

36 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1793), III, 205.

following phrase you can often leave out one bar. The German word *Takterstickung* (bar suffocation), and the term 'interwoven',[37] are more graphic descriptions of the technique. Below two examples from Mozart's violin concertos, each with a completely different result.

The orchestral introduction of the G major concerto, K.216 shows two phrases clearly set apart:

Figure 37: Mozart Violin Concerto no 3 in G, K.216, bar 17.

Similarly we would expect at bar 72:

Figure 38: Mozart Violin Concerto 3 in G, K.216, bar 72 without bar suppression (my reconstruction).

but instead the fourth bar is suppressed, creating a smooth connection.

FIgure 39: Mozart Violin Concerto no 3 in G, K.216, bar 72 with bar suppression (original).

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37   Callcott, *A Musical Grammar, in Four Parts*, First American edition, from the last London edition (Boston, 1810), para. 567.

This is made possible by the identical chord and leaving out the upbeats. Riepel advises to omit upbeats in bar suppression anyway.[38] According to theory, you are supposed to count the bar where the suppression happens twice, so what could look like a 7-er still counts as eight (4 + 4), therefore balance is maintained and phrase-rhythm does not feel disturbed.[39]

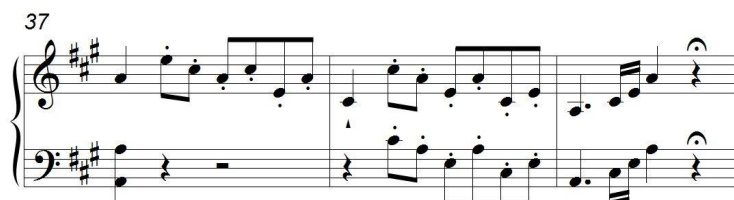In the A major concerto, K.219 the orchestral introduction ends with the following appendix after which the solo violin enters:

Figure 40: Mozart Violin Concerto no 5 in A, K.219, bar 37 appendix.

Mozart could have used a similar construction before the violin entrance in the development section:

Figure 41: Mozart Violin Concerto no 5 in A, K.219, bar 116 without bar suppression (my reconstruction).

instead he suppresses the bar before the entrance,

Figure 42: Mozart Violin Concerto no 5 in A, K.219, bar 116 with bar suppression (original).

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38 Joseph Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst: De Rhythmopoeïa oder von der Tactordnung*, 7 vols (1752), I, 58.

39 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1787), II, 454.

creating almost a shock effect—no smooth transition but rather a plunging into. In this case the chords are different, taking the conventional bar suppression to a different level, but the technique is essentially the same.

Denying completion

Another way to compound phrases is to deny completion by taking away the feeling of repose of the cadence, hence forcing another phrase to be added on. The most familiar and powerful way is by harmony with (the surprisingly apt named) deceptive and interrupted cadences.

But it can also be done by melodic means. In Fig. 43 the top stave has two regular phrases of 4 bars, the first divided into two phrase-parts. On the bottom stave the melodic cadence in bar 4 has been weakened: loss of completion now turns it into an 8-bar phrase with three phrase-parts.
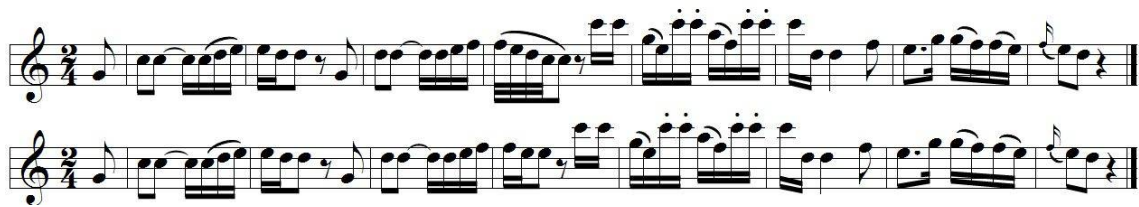
Figure 43: Top stave has two phrases of 4 bars, bottom stave one phrase of 8 bars by denying completion. Example by Koch, II, 459.

Chapter 4 – Case study 2: Haydn Hob.XVI:16

Though many Classical compositions are in fact quite clear-cut structurally I also want to tackle a more challenging piece. The music of Beethoven and late Mozart can be very complex but generally has a more regular foundation than the music of early Haydn and C. P. E. Bach. As a test case I decided on Haydn's Piano Sonata Hob.XVI:16. It is a quirky piece, maybe that is why its authorship is nowadays debated, and even the title is disputed, Sonata or Divertimento. Haydn or not, the piece seems to defy regularity. For a complete score of the first movement, see appendix 2.

My original point of departure was to apply the discussed theory but I found that to be insufficient for an in-depth view. I will bring in elements that are not mentioned in treatises but are based on studying scores and noticing recurring patterns. Of the books used, William Caplin's *Classical Form* deserves special mention.[40]

Figure 44: Haydn, Ho.XIV:16 - opening statement.

The opening statement has two repose-moments (bar 5 and 10), therefore there are two phrases but are they really two 5-ers? Bar 5 is both the end of the first and the beginning of the second phrase, suggesting bar suppression from something like:

Figure 45: Opening without bar suppression.

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40   William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*, New Ed edition (New York; Oxford, 2000).

The bar-suppression prevents an empty moment, but why actually? An empty moment can be of great effect, keeping tension and raising expectation. But here the rather bland material that follows cannot fulfil that expectation. We would either expect a new theme (but that would be too early in the piece) or a repeat. Repeating would create a conventional open-close, or question-answer structure. (I will refer to this common construction of two even parts as a *bicolon*, the background to this is explained in chapter 6).

Figure 46: Opening turned into a bicolon.

The composer did not choose this obvious solution: maybe due to the 'repetitive' character of theme itself he did not want to repeat it immediately, maybe he felt that the stable and conventional construction of the bicolon contradicted the exploratory character of the theme, or the composition would develop too quickly in relation to the length he had in mind. But in essence this bicolon is the foundation of the first section.

The bar suppression he actually wrote allows for less significant material to follow. According to Koch we count the suppressed bar double, but that would make the irregular but symmetrical 5 + 5 into an unbalanced 5 + 6. However, the first phrase feels almost too long and could well be considered an extended 4-er, repeating bar 2 at an other step of the scale (see Fig. 47). This repetition also explains aforementioned repetitive character.
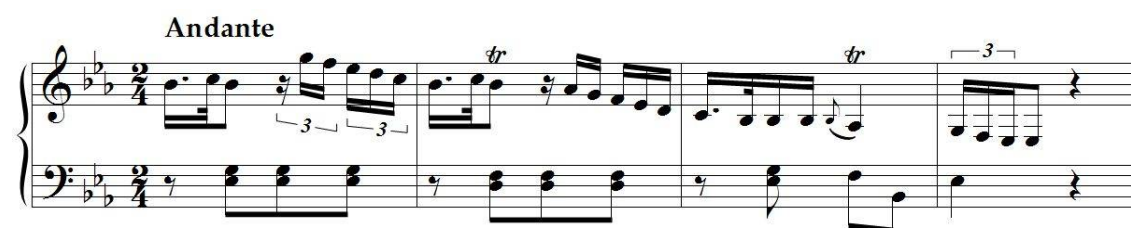
Figure 47: First phrase without extension.

The phrase-rhythm is thus theoretically an even 4 + 6 though this feels contrived to me,

and probably to the composer as well because bar 5-10 is so obviously in even bar numbers as if to compensate for the irregular beginning.

There is also another way of looking at this. Johann Friedrich Daube (1733-1797) uniquely does not even mention cadences in relation to phrases.[41] For him the melodic content shapes music into phrases (only 4-ers or 8-ers are allowed). In his examples he makes a fairly clear change every fourth bar by changing melody or texture without necessarily having the same regularity in cadences. I have found no specific source for using texture in structuring music but it often plays an important role. One of Mozart's favourite tricks is to seemingly break phrase-rhythm by changing texture too early.

Figure 48: Mozart, Violin Concert in D, K.218, mov.1. Texture changes one bar early.

We see something similar here in the Haydn where texture structures the music into 4 + 2 + 4 bars even though the cadences are at different places.

There is another reason the first phrase feels slightly aimless. Harmonically it is set up to lead to the dominant:
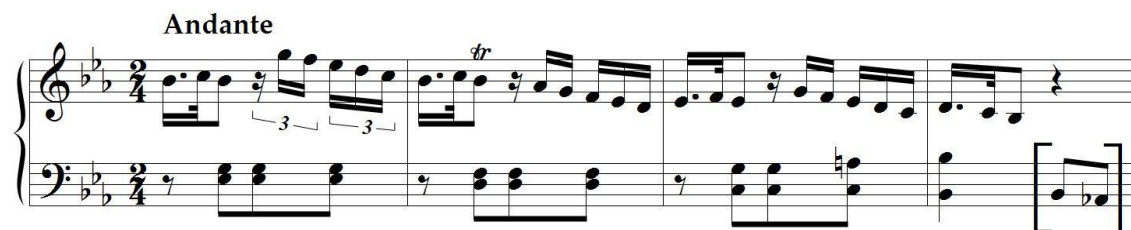

Figure 49: First phrase turned into a dominant-phrase.

This is a perfectly regular phrase and it would be easy to add a complimentary phrase leading back to the tonic—a conventional bicolon again. Instead of letting the phrase go to its obvious destination, he is now forced to add material because going to the tonic takes one step extra. This longer road explains that we tend to find extensions more often in tonic phrases than in dominant phrases. Another solution would be to

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41 Johann Friedrich Daube, *Anleitung zur Erfindung der Melodie und ihrer Fortsetzung*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1797), I.

distribute this longer road differently by making the harmonies move earlier. Thus we often see, with parallel tonic and dominant phrases, that the tonic one moves towards the cadence earlier than the dominant one, possibly like:
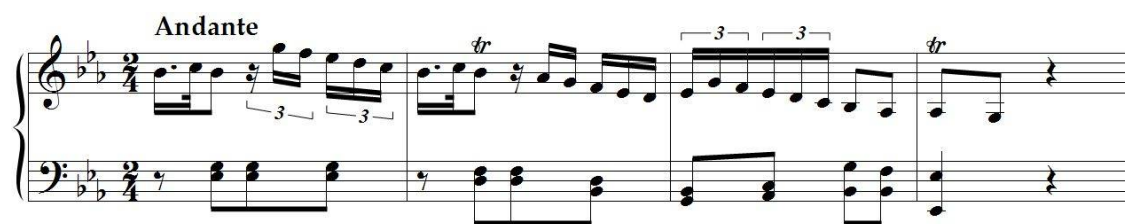

Figure 50: First phrase reshaped by change in harmonic rhythm.

Again, he did not choose this. Personally I like the quirkiness of the extension, it has a more recognizable character than the bland 4-er, and that is the point of course. If Koch says a repetition needs to be 'worthy' and represent the expression of the phrase in a high degree, the other side of the coin is that there must be a need to enhance the character: as if the composer felt he had not been clear enough—in that sense extensions can be viewed as rhetorical devices.

The second phrase has been extended as well, the first 2 bars can be left out without any problem:
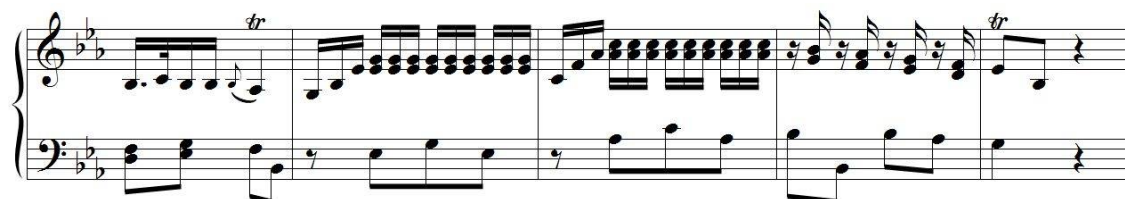

Figure 51: Bar 5-6 can be cut out.

But this would make it sound like an appendix rather than a new phrase, the similarity of the left hand rhythm emphasizes that even more. We could indeed read the 6 bars as 2 appendices (2 + 4 bars) to the first phrase but the strong cadential move into the sub-dominant seems to imply it is a phrase though. The interpolation of (the original) bar 5-6 is therefore functional: it favours a phrase-feeling by having the character of something new opening up, helped by the move away from triplets and left hand rhythm. The 2 phrases compliment each other: searching versus stabilizing—except for the unusual last cadence. The I^6 undermines the expected perfect cadence and associated close of a period: a significant change in punctuation! It announces that what follows is not a repeat of the beginning as bar 11 might suggest, but rather a continuation like a semicolon, confirmed by a modulation to the dominant.

This third phrase gets extended significantly in bar 15-17, leading to the dominant of the new key using the repetition of a rhythmical motif (trill). Two bars would have been

enough though, making it an even 4 + 2 bars:

Figure 52: Bar 14 with minimal extension.

Instead he expands the cadence, adding weight to it by adding a bar. The use of chromatics contributes further to a feeling of weightiness, the quick succession almost causing an implied ritardando.

From here he could have cut straight to bar 18 but he adds another extension in the form of a cadenza, further raising the level of expectation. The cadence looks free but is essentially structured and could have been written out as a normal 4-er with an expansion again at the cadence.
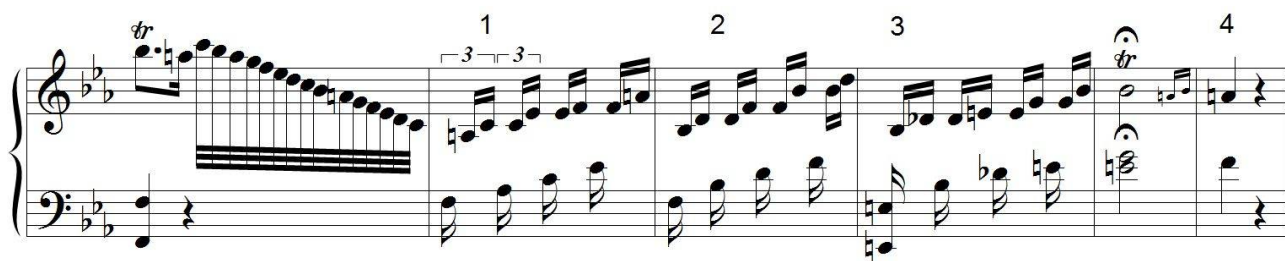

Figure 53: Cadenza written out as a phrase.

After so much delay it would have been a damp squid if the cadence was simply resolved. Instead, he suppresses the resolution bar and plunges into completely different material. Indeed, after a build up like that we need such a big contrast that even a tempo change is warranted—a sort of alla breve. Suddenly we are in the realm of 3-ers, three in a row, the third one being a variation of the previous two with the melody in the bass and added figuration.

But if these are 3-ers, where are the cadences to indicate the end of a phrase? Regular 3-ers would have been like the example below,

Figure 54: Regular 3-ers with cadences.

but as it stands there are no cadences, hence no repose-moments. Theoretically you can presuppose bar suppressions but that seems an artificial way of making the theory fit.
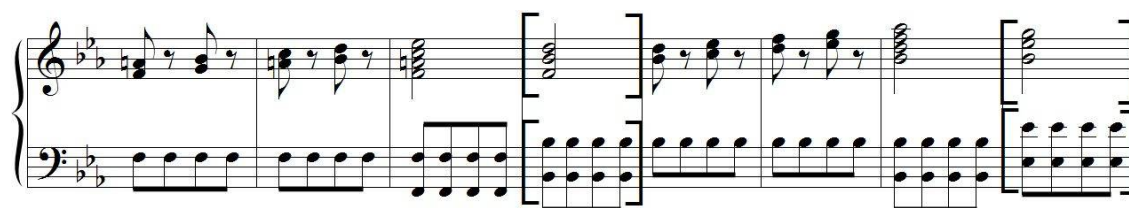
Figure 55: Bar 18-23 with hypothetical bar suppression.

Though, without going so far as bar suppression, it is an interesting point that some of the dominant tension is probably released into the next bar.

We can also decide that texture determines these to be 3-ers, or we could even declare these bars to be a string of appendices. Koch's examples show series of appendices that are far longer than the phrases they prolong but here they are far too important thematically to be considered as such.

I would like to look at this section in a different way. Having introduced the bicolon before, I now want to add the *tricolon* (more about this in chapter 6). This is the almost archetypal Classical construction of the tripartite Bar form, or short-short-long. I find it peculiar that none of the treatises specifically recommends this construction or gives it a name, though many if not most of their examples have this shape. Bar 18-31 is fundamentally a tricolon which is clearer when simplified.

Figure 56: The tricolon at the heart of bar 18-31.

The advantage of looking at it this way is that the length of the individual 3-ers is now defined in relation to a bigger shape rather than by their individual identity: essentially one phrase with three phrase-members. Simplifying it one step further, incorporating the supposed tempo change in notation, shows the perfectly regular foundation (Fig. 57). Two beats have been cut out to create 3-ers, with great musical impact, and the penultimate bar has again been expanded.

Figure 57: Tricolon in hypothetical regular bar structure.

The changes in phrase-rhythm are remarkable, maybe even a step too far, and need to be stabilized. In the next bars even numbers are back in abundance: a 4-er in the form of a progression, followed by a 2-er to confirm the key, and 2 added chords to confirm

the end of the section. Since a progression by nature can keep continuing, the choice for 4 bars is probably deliberate to restore balance; it could just as easily have been 3 or 5 bars (see below).
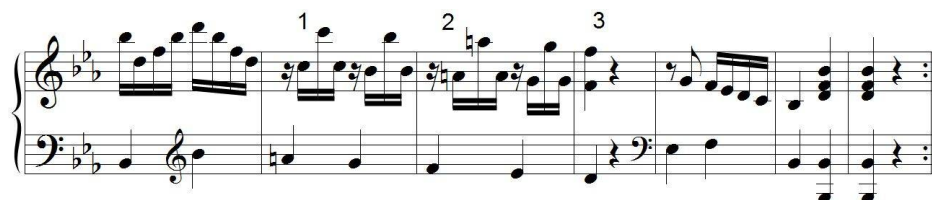

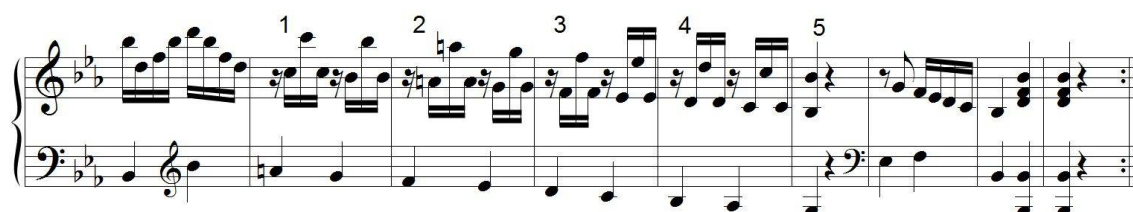Figure 58: With possible 3-bar progression.

Figure 59: With possible 5-bar progression.

The next section is surprisingly regular. It starts with two times 2 bars, a sort of modulating sequence in the form of a bicolon. From bar 42 he could have cut to bar 47, instead he attached a 4-er: the descending sequence balancing out the previous ascending sequence. If we would embellish the fermata that would provide even an extra extension.

Next (bar 47) a 5-er that includes an extension by a repeat (bar 49), and a series of appendices identical to the first section. The last section is identical to the second, only in the tonic this time. With all these extensions I was not surprised that the first section counted a very odd 41 bars (I count the cadenza as written out) but the almost identical number of bars in each section (20 + 21 + 19 + 21) seems remarkable to me—with a little cadenza in bar 48 it could even be made into a symmetrical 20 + 21 + 21 + 20.

Chapter 5 – Notation and Performance

Whereas in language there is an age-old system of punctuation marks, in music we only have implied notation through cadences. But there have been instances where composers felt the need to indicate phrases explicitly, inventing their own symbols.

Symbols

François Couperin (1668-1733) kept a direct link with language, using a comma to mark the end of melodies or harmonic phrases. He explains 'the separation should be almost imperceptible, but its absence would make persons with taste feel that something in the performance is missing—it is like the difference between those that read everything through and those who make stops at commas and periods.'[42]

Figure 60: Couperin: Le Carillon de Cithére from the Third book of harpsichord pieces, first edition (1724).

Michel Blavet (1700-1768), in his Flute Sonatas op.2 (1732), uses a small *h* (for *haleine*, breath) to indicate places to breathe. A breath mark is not the same as a phrase indication but as he writes in his preface: 'I have often noticed with students that as a consequence of difficulties in catching one's breath, they mix up one phrase with another, or interrupt a melody that should pass in one breath. To prevent this confusion I have put the letter *h* on the spots where one should take a breath; above all in melodious pieces ... where all charm depends on the arrangement of phrases.'
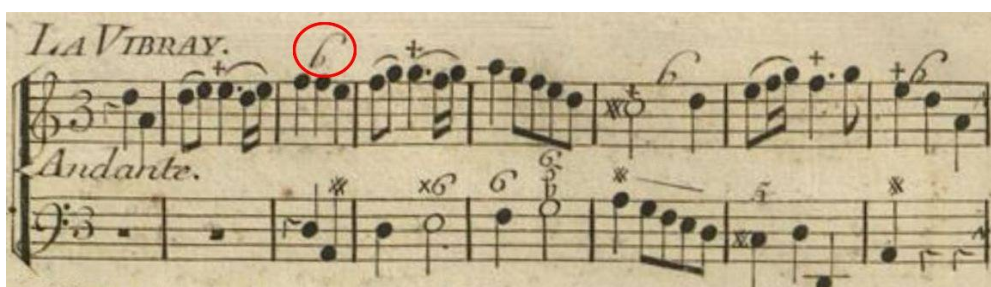

Figure 61: Blavet: from La Vibray, op.2,2 (1732).

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42 Couperin, *Troisième livre de pièces de clavecin*, first edition (Paris), preface.

In works with an educational purpose I have found various symbols for breath marks like ' or * or = or ; or ^.

In some composition treatises we find symbols indicating phrase structures. Riepel uses ■ for a tonic phrase-ending (*Grundabsatz*), and □ for all other phrase-endings (*Änderungsabsatz*).[43] Koch copied Riepel's □ as a general symbol for phrase endings, and added Δ to indicate phrase-parts.[44]

Türk is, as far as I know, the first to propose a dedicated new symbol to mark repose-moments in a composition.[45]
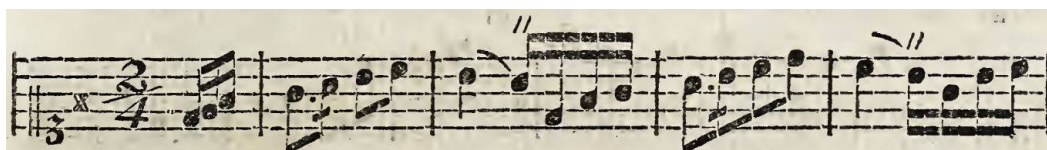

Figure 62: Türk: example from his *Klavierschule*.

He calls this // an *Einschnitt* (incision), adding to the confusion whether a term relates to the phrase-part itself (in German often called an *Einschnitt*) or to the point of separation. Türk places his symbol **on** the last note of the phrase and not between phrases, thus giving it the appearance of an articulation mark. He invites other composers to follow his lead and counters expected criticism: 'to everyone who claims it is unnecessary to indicate phrases in music, I ask why we have introduced it in writing and still use it even in books aimed at learned people.'

But even if the composer goes as far as to indicate the phrases, there is still the performer who, as a unique musical individual, has to give shape to his or her understanding of the music. This personal aspect is too specific for the treatises; usually they only mention that good phrasing is essential and can be developed by listening to good performers, especially singers. Good advice as this may be, it is impossible to bring those performances back to life, and we have too little knowledge of the actual use of the voice to make present-day singing a reference.

On the other hand, authors have written about what you could call 'skills' related to phrasing. Türk, for instance, describes separating two phrases by lifting the finger off the key, causing 'a little pause which should come in the time of the last note of a phrase. The end of the phrase will be even more noticeable if you lift the finger softly from the key, and mark the first tone of the next phrase a bit stronger again'.[46] In Fig. 63

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43 Joseph Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst: Grundregeln zur Tonordnung insgemein*, 7 vols (1755), II, 41.

44 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1787), II, 361.

45 Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehere und Lehrende*, 342.

46 Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende* (Leipzig und Halle, 1789), 341.

an example in notation:

Figure 63: Examples by Türk: (A) as notated, (B) as played, (C) added by me according to Türk's text.

I would like to classify these notations as:

(*a*) *implicit* – a notation where we have to deduce the phrase-ending from the strength of the cadence.

(*b*) *implied* – a notation where the phrase-ending is implied from how the end of a phrase is supposed to sound—softer and shortened.

(*c*) *explicit* – a notation that indicates where the phrase-ending is.

In essence the three notations are identical, except for the degree that the composer draws your attention to the phrase-ending. I want to stress that notation (*a*) does **not** prohibit any pause or tapering off of the phrase. The fact that the phrase-ending is not explicitly written out, or implied by notation, does not change the fact that it is needed there: the phrase structure demands it.

Türk further explains the amount of finger lifting is determined by context: separation between periods needs to be bigger than between phrases, and those require more again than between phrase-members. Phrases in the same character need less separation than phrases of a completely different character.[47] Therefore implied notation is not to be taken literally; the crucial thing is that the final note is shortened and softer, not that it is exactly half the value, nor that it is only one written degree softer. In other words, punctuation is the guide, not the notation.

Since smaller repose-moments need a more delicate sensitivity to detect, the more 'meticulous' (Türk) composers show phrase-members in their beaming patterns:

Figure 64: Examples by Türk of phrase-members indicated by beaming patterns.

47   Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende* (Leipzig und Halle, 1789), 342.

For unbeamed note values like crotchets, minims, etc., he recommends a notation like *(b)* or *(c)*:

Figure 65: Türk's examples of implied notation (B and C) when beaming patterns are not possible (A).

As an implied notation (*b*) is clear, (*c*) is more confusing to modern eyes. Since Türk (like many Classical authors) does not differentiate between a dot and a wedge ('both have the same meaning; though some use wedges to indicate a shorter *Absetzen* "setting apart" than by dots'[48]), he achieves the same as in (*b*)—namely, the dot/wedge shortens the note by approximately half its value. Using an articulation mark this way explains probably why his // sign is also placed **on** the note instead of in between. The notation definitely does not mean the notes with wedges should be accented as this would be counter to the idea of reaching a (however small) repose-moment. Türk explicitly warns against it: 'many players have the false idea that a staccato note should always be *abgestossen* "pushed off" with a certain vehemence.'

Again we may conclude that music is phrased by the intrinsic nature of music, not by the outward appearance of notation; notation can clarify but does not create the music itself.

Emphasis

Apart from tapering off, Türk also mentioned starting a phrase with some emphasis. He specifies stronger emphasis at the beginning of periods, and progressively smaller emphasis for phrases and phrase-members.[49] Fig. 66 demonstrates the degree of emphasis by the amount of pluses. (One '+' would be the normal bar accent.)

Figure 66: Türk indicating different degrees of emphasis.

The example shows emphasis should be made regardless of dynamics; it does of course not mean that similar emphasis in a different dynamic should be equally loud. The one important exception is the upbeat (marked °) of which the emphasis must be

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48 Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende*, 353.
49 Daniel Gottlob Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehere und Lehrende* (Leipzig und Halle, 1789), 336.

transferred to the following first beat. Despite the forte marking, the upbeat must not yet be played as strong as the first beat—the passage as a whole should be stronger than the previous one though.

In his discussion of flute tonguing, Johann George Tromlitz (1725-1805) hints at a similar tapering off and a more marked beginning. In a nutshell, a tone is articulated with 'ta' for a stronger and clearer attack, or 'da' and 'ra' for a softer and lighter one. To emphasize the separation of phrases he recommends 'ra' at the end of phrases, and 'ta' at the beginning.[50]

Figure 67: At NB the end of a phrase is articulated with a soft 'ra', the beginning of the next with a clear 'ta'. Example by Tromlitz.

With regard to upbeats it is interesting that Tromlitz still prefers the strong articulation 'ta', even if a weaker 'ra' is used on the first beat.[51]

Shaping

Domenico Corri (1746-1825) makes the remarkable statement that 'a phrase in music is like a sentence in language, with this difference, that one word will not form a sentence, but one note can form a phrase in music.'[52]
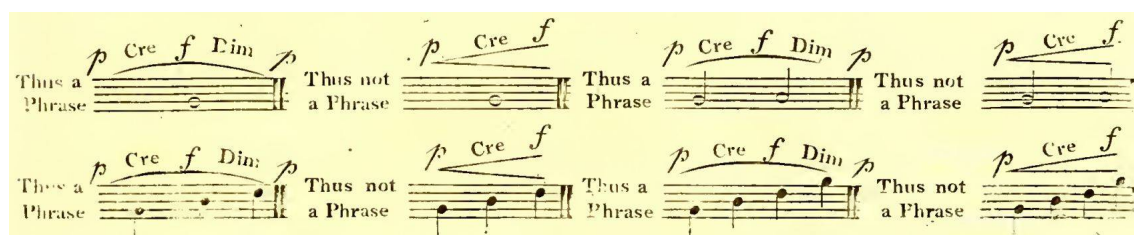
Figure 68: Examples with cresc.-dim. are marked 'Thus a Phrase', the ones with cresc. only are marked 'Thus not a Phrase' (from Corri).

For Corri a phrase is any passage were the voice 'falls' by a diminuendo, which, I suppose, could qualify as an other interpretation of cadence or *cadere*. Contrary to all the discussed theory where cadences are decisive, Corri, as a singer, focuses purely on the melodic shape and for him completion can be created by way of performing.

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50 Tromlitz, *Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen*, 170.
51 Johann George Tromlitz, *Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen* (Leipzig, 1791), 167.
52 Corri, *The Singer's Preceptor*, I, 65.

We don't have to take his advice too literally; what counts is the **idea** of a diminuendo: rather the feeling of a decline than a dynamic effect. Looking at his second Solfeggio, Corri would have wanted a diminuendo at the end of the first phrase (bar 4) which makes sense with the appoggiatura there; but the second phrase looks contrary to his advice, with a crescendo towards the end of that phrase (bar 8).[53]

Figure 69: Opening bars of the second Solfeggio by Corri.

Corri does not offer an explanation but some tapering off is musically almost unavoidable in bar 8, and the typical minimalistic dynamic indications of the period do not contradict it: a diminuendo hairpin in bar 8 would have meant going back to piano which probably is too extreme an effect, and a diminuendo hairpin with a mf sign, or something similar, is simply contrary to Classical notation practice. A similar reasoning holds true for the melody. From a phrasing point of view, I think it is more important to create a convincing punctuation (connecting or separating phrase 2 and 3 in such a way that it fits the narrative of the music) than creating a dynamic contrast for its own effect.

Corri continues with another difference between language and music, 'A sentence [in speech] is seldom or ever broke in the midst by taking breath, whereas, in a musical Phrase you are frequently compelled to do so'. And when taking breath '[one] should always contrive to do so by a dying or diminuendo of the Voice, because the Break will then be less perceived.'[54] In the previous Solfeggio we can probably conclude bar 6 to have a small diminuendo before the breath, and bar 2 to have a diminuendo even if it would not have been indicated. (The diminuendo is probably explicitly notated here to give more effect to the deceptive cadence.)

Legato

Fig. 68 is also interesting because Corri uses an arched slur as symbol for a phrase; this at a time when slurs were not yet used to indicate phrases. It suggests a basic legato

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53 Corri, *The Singer's Preceptor*, I, 54.
54 Domenico Corri, *The Singer's Preceptor, Or Corri's Treatise on Vocal Music*, 2 vols (London, 1810), I, 65.

attitude, confirmed by the singing treatises of Johann Adam Hiller (1728-1804)[55] and Corri, but how that actually sounded will always be speculative by lack of recordings.

Probably legato in those days would have been more nuanced than nowadays where it seems to be almost on a par with vibrato: it is either 'on' or 'off'. An example by Johann Peter Milchmeyer (1750-1813):[56]

Figure 70: Slurs within phrases, example by J. P. Milchmeyer.

Three phrases are marked (*1*,*2*,*3*), each one subdivided by slurs. Milchmeyer demands absolute legato within these slurred subdivisions: breaking the slurs would be like 'taking a breath in the middle of a word'. But after each subdivision (slur) the finger should leave the key.

Türk approaches the subject from the opposite side, in Fig. 71 it would be wrong to play (*a*) like (*b*).[57] Curiously he uses the same metaphor as Milchmeyer for a different phenomenon—breaking between the slurs would be like taking a breath in the middle of a word.

FIgure 71: (*a - top stave*) Slurs and (*b - bottom stave*) how not to play them. Example from Türk's Clavierschule.

But this does not mean we should sacrifice the individual slurs to an overall legato. Türk and Milchmeyer only seemingly contradict each other: Milchmeyer breaks the legato between slurs but he does so to create shaping within the phrase. It is a form of articulation rather than breaking the line; whereas Türk's notation in Fig. 71(*b*) suggests breaking the line and therefore he warns against it.

As a consequence of this articulated way of playing, authentic keyboard fingerings give little conclusive evidence of phrasing. If a fingering allows for perfect legato, it does

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55 Johann Adam Hiller, *Anweisung zum musikalisch-zierlichen Gesange* (Leipzig, 1780).
56 Johann Peter Milchmeyer, *Die Wahre Art Das Pianoforte Zu Spielen* (Dresden, 1797), 5.
57 Türk, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende*, 340.

not mean there couldn't have been a comma anyway; if a fingering does not allow legato, this could indicate articulation just as well as phrasing. We must not confuse phrasing with articulation.

Breathing

Singing, like wind playing, requires breathing which divides music into units and therefore has a direct relation to phrasing. Ideally phrase structure and breathing overlap but difficulties arise where one feels phrases are too long and without any obvious space to breathe. Wind players and singers often feel compelled to stretch their breath beyond normal human capacity in order not to break the line, but would composers really not have left enough time to breathe? That would be a beginner's mistake with which they would be confronted every time they rehearsed their compositions.

It is my impression that historically musicians took breaths more often and aimed for a shorter way of phrasing. Consequently, it might be that nowadays in our fear of 'breaking the line' we are sacrificing clarity and expression.

I particularly like this quote from the 'Méthode de Flûte du Conservatoire' (1804) by Antoine Hugot and Johann Georg Wunderlich: 'Generally you don't acquire the art of good phrasing by playing in one breath for a long time, but by knowing how to breathe in time, and at the places indicated by the harmony in the phrases.'[58] Also Tromlitz warns never to play until the end of your breath; lack of power will make your performance sound frightened whereas if you keep adding breath at suitable places, it will not impair your delivery.[59]

So, breathing within a phrase is allowed, sometimes recommended even. But it still creates divisions in a phrase, so what are the most logical places to breathe? Hiller[60] and Tromlitz[61] are the ones who discuss the issue most methodically and I summarize their advice:

- Regarding lyrics: you cannot breathe in the middle of words or at grammatically illogical places. You are always allowed a breath at a punctuation mark or at the end of a (poetic) verse line. In long melismas a breath is also allowed though, even if this means breaking a word.
- An appoggiatura, either abbreviated or written in full, is never separated from its main note, nor are two slurred notes ever separated.
- You can always take a breath at a rest, or at an implied rest like before a syncope.

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58 Antoine Hugot and Wunderlich, *Méthode de Flûte du Conservatoire* (Paris, 1804), 15.
59 Johann George Tromlitz, *Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen* (Leipzig, 1791), 330.
60 Johann Adam Hiller, *Anweisung zum musikalisch-zierlichen Gesange* (Leipzig, 1780), 14–22.
61 Tromlitz, *Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen*, chap. 13.

Figure 72: Possible breaths (after note with ') at syncopes, example by Hiller.

- You can breathe after a longer note with a tie. In faster tempo you can even leave the tied note out as Tromlitz demonstrates (Fig. 73 lower stave).
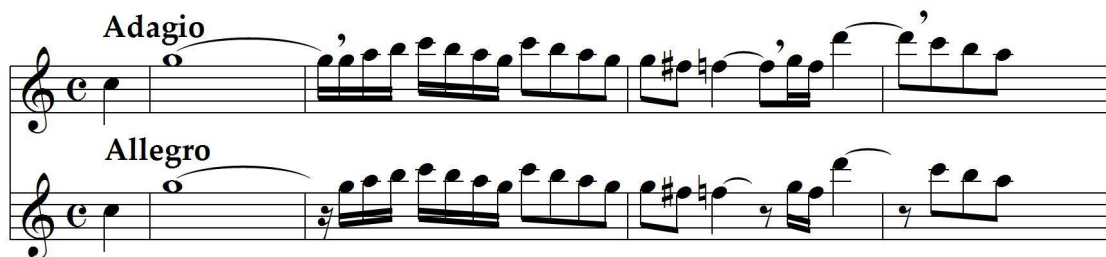

Figure 73: Breathing after tied notes in slow (*top*) and fast tempo (*bottom*), a (slightly adapted) example by Tromlitz.

- Since a dotted note is essentially shorthand notation for a tied note, you can also breathe after dotted notes, provided only part of the dot is cut out.

Figure 74: Dotted notes (*A*) notated as ties (*B*) and possible breathing at (*C*), example by Hiller.

In extreme cases Hiller suggests the following adaptation:

Figure 75: Splitting a tied note for breathing, example by Hiller.

- As a rule of thumb you don't take a breath before the bar line, except before a very long note or before a long passage. In both cases one should not hesitate to breathe in the middle of a word. (The breath in the next examples is again indicated by a stroke on the note.)

Figure 76: Breath (after note with ') at the barline before a long note (*a*), and before a long passage (*b*). Examples by Hiller.

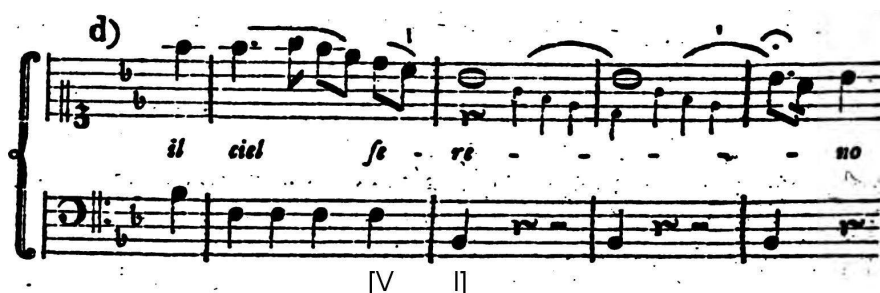Even more interesting is the next example where a word is broken twice.

Figure 77: Breathing before barline and fermata, interrupting a word twice. Example by Hiller. (V-I indication added by me).

According to Hiller one should have no qualms breathing before the long note, thereby breaking the word and splitting two notes that 'should not be broken for harmonic reasons' (i.e. cadence). He recommends taking another breath before the fermata since it requires embellishment.

- In extreme long passages neither Hiller, nor Tromlitz are against leaving out notes.
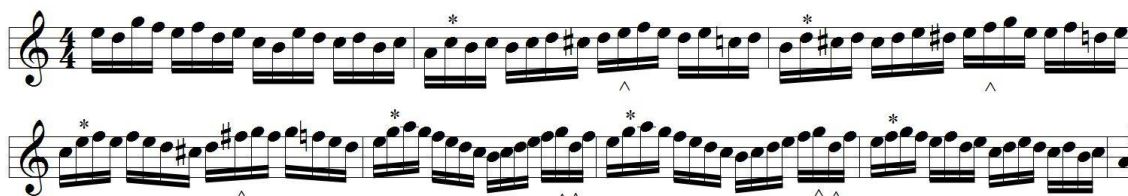
Figure 78: Leaving out notes for breathing, example by Hiller.

For the example in Fig. 78 Hiller suggests leaving out either the *-notes (version 1), or the ^- notes (version 2), though preferably not all the omissions of a version.

Tromlitz has a similar example that I have abridged in Fig. 79 to show taking quick breaths (at comma), leaving out a note (at *), or adjusting rhythm to create breathing space (in ossia).
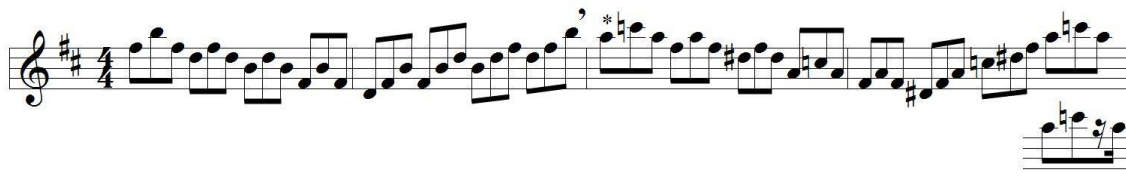

Figure 79: Leaving out notes for breathing, (abridged) example by Tromlitz.

- Hugot und Wunderlich specifially mention the possibility to suppress a repeated note for breathing.[62]

Figure 80: Suppressing a repeated note to breath, example by Hugot-Wunderlich.

In these virtuoso passages, most examples appear to favour breathing after the first note in the bar which seems a safe bet, not inadvertently breaking a cadence.

I want to stress that neither Hiller nor Tromlitz qualify these adaptations 'for beginners only'; if your breath is not long enough you simply create places to breathe. I am not denying the need for good breath control but if I hear recordings where performers somehow manage these endless runs without breathing I, as a listener, feel out of breath. Maybe the aim was to be impressive, but I certainly don't think it is expressive. Every human being can, from birth, relate to the natural span of breath; to strain that relationship somehow makes me feel uncomfortable. It is also in my opinion alien to the Classical period with its emphasis on a natural and language based style.

Case study 3: 'An thou were mine ain thing'

Figure 81: From Corri, The Singer's Preceptor, vol. III, 98 (National Airs).

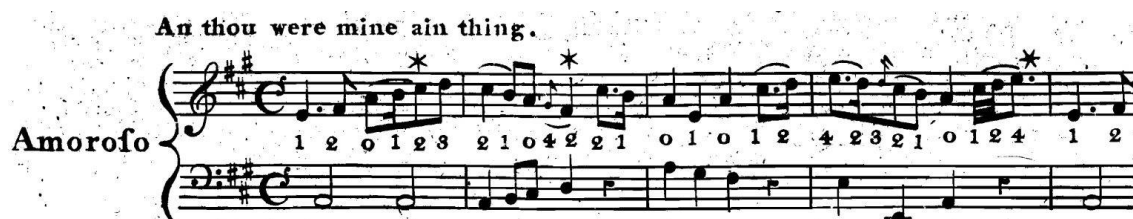62 Hugot and Wunderlich, *Méthode de Flûte du Conservatoire*, 18.

Figure 82: From Gunn, 40 Favorite Scotch Airs for Violin, Flute, or Cello.

This Scottish song appears in both Corri's Perceptor and Gunn's cello tutor, and may serve as an example for shorter phrases than we are used to.

Corri uses two symbols: a * for a breath equal to a comma, and an asterisk with a dash on top for an imperceptible breath (i.e. not related to punctuation).[63] There is no textual reason to breath in the first bar (*ain* means 'own'), nor would anyone run out of breath there, even in slow tempo. Also with Gunn there is no technical reason for the cello (sounding an octave lower) to break the phrase here. It does add to the expression though, specially in combination with the slurred notes before. It could be that this was a recognized, traditional phrasing for this song (both authors had a relation to Scotland). But the Austrian composer Joseph Haydn would not have know that. He set the song twice, for Thompson and Smythe, and in both settings the broken beams in the instrumental parts suggest a similar phrasing (the breaking of the beam in the voice line is conventional notation to clarify the placing of syllables).

Figure 83: An thou wert mine ain thing, as set by Haydn for Smythe, Henle edition, vol.XXXII,5 no 413. Top to bottom: violin, voice, piano, and cello. Tempo: Larghetto amoroso.

In Thompson (Fig. 84) the violin does not have a similar beam break but the string crossing would cause a little interruption anyway, moreover the sudden unison between violin and voice creates a new colour, setting it apart from the previous phrase-part. It all adds extra expression but in the recordings I found, no singer took a breath.[64]

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63 Domenico Corri, *The Singer's Preceptor, Or Corri's Treatise on Vocal Music*, 2 vols (London, 1810), I.

64 (1) Jamie MacDougall with the Haydn Trio Eisenstadt, (2) Laura Skuce with the Chamber Music

Figure 84: An thou wert mine ain thing, as set by Haydn for Thompson. Henle edition, vol.XXXII,3 no 168. Top to bottom: violin, voice, piano, and cello. Tempo: Larghetto.

An thou wert mine ain thing, O I wou'd love thee,

Chapter 6 – A not so Classical view

The previous chapters contain the research as I envisaged it at the beginning of this project. But gradually I have come to recognize the need to address topics not mentioned in the sources. With the help of modern authors I would like to add some observations that made me look at phrases in a different way.

Language in music, music in language

Initially I had thought to use the parallel between language and music as a stepping stone for this paper, till someone alerted me to T. W. Adorno's essay 'Music and Language: A Fragment'.[65] The first paragraph already states 'Anyone who takes music for a language will be misled' and it made me give up my original design. I could of course sidestep the issue by arguing that the sources for my research take the relation between music and language as axiomatic, but that feels too easy.[66]

Music and language are not identical but resemble each other. Both are 'temporal sequences of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds' (Adorno). These sounds refer to something, they express, they communicate. But language references things outside the language itself. Words are coded information for something else. Language is (after Helmuth Plessner) double-layered: the layer of sound can be separated from the layer of meaning, that is why one language can be translated into an other. Music only references itself, meaningful units are created anew in every composition. It is therefore singe-layered; it still has meaning of course but the meaning is of a different order—'you could not even order a pizza with it'.[67]

This interferes with the traditional concept of punctuation. Simplified: punctuation in language uses meaning to create units, punctuation in music uses units to create meaning. Cadences operate on the level of music to indicate punctuation, punctuation in a text acts on a higher level than the words.

But this fundamental difference does not necessarily prohibit further discussion. Language conveys more than just information. In poetry, for instance, we find an emphasis on the 'musical' qualities of language: sound patterns, rhythm and a highly formalised structure in verse lines. These can rightly be called musical because they do not carry 'coded' meaning and their frame of reference stays within the single layer of sound. Rhyme creates a structure independent from grammar or meaning. Admittedly this is only a minor part of punctuation (we cannot determine the amount of closure) but when Riepel states that cadences of phrase-ends 'rhyme' with each other, he has an

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65 Theodor Adorno, 'Music and Language: A Fragment', in *Quasi Una Fantasia, Essays on Modern Music*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (London, New York, 1956).
66 Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, II, 342.
67 Andreas Luckner, 'Andreas Luckner: Musik - Sprache - Rhythmus', 2007, 42 <http://www.links.linse.uni-due.de/sprache-und-weitere-zeichenmodalitaeten/andreas-luckner-musik-sprache-rhythmus.html> [accessed 20 January 2017].

interesting point.[68]

Also syntax differs fundamentally between language and music. According to Manfred Bierwisch: musical syntax is time dependent, and language syntax is dependent on conventions.[69] Therefore repeating something in speech does not really impart more information; in music repeating a motif creates the musical form itself. Again this only holds true if language would convey only information. In poetry rhythm creates patterns in the metrical feet, length of phrases, caesuras and enjambments; like in music these patterns give shape to time and create their own 'meaning'. Many rhetorical figures use repetition to make the message come across more strongly; in that sense repetition does create more information about character, build-up, tension, release, etc.

Moreover, in a highly stylised tonal music like the Classical, chords start acting like recurring ciphers, reappearing in identical functions, sequences, and stock melodic figures.[70] Tonality can at least claim a form of conventional syntax.

A recent study by Kunert et al. (2016) demonstrates that the grammatical structure of sentences (as opposed to their meaning) and harmonic sequences (as a determinant of tonality and musical phrase) are processed by the same part of the brain—thus proving that, specifically, syntax processing in language and music originate in the same part of the brain..[71]

Bicolon, tricolon

Without denying the fundamental difference between language and music, there are still good reasons to make and use parallels between language and music, especially in Classical style. Rhetorical figures are a case in point, like the *bicolon* and *tricolon*.

The bi- and tricolon are constructed from two or three parts that are more or less equal in structure, length, and rhythm. In short form they are popular because they are catchy:

> *'I came; I saw; I conquered' (Julius Ceasar, tricolon)*

In more elaborate form they are successful by emphasizing a point in a memorable and pithy way:

> *'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.' (John F. Kennedy, bicolon)*

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68 Joseph Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst: Grundregeln zur Tonordnung insgemein*, 7 vols (1755), II, 43.

69 Manfred Bierwisch, 'Musik und Sprache : überlegungen zu ihrer Struktur und Funktionsweise', 74 <http://publikationen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/frontdoor/index/index/docId/12535> [accessed 20 January 2017].

70 Adorno, 'Music and Language: A Fragment', 2.

71 Richard Kunert, Roel M. Willems and Peter Hagoort, 'Language Influences Music Harmony Perception: Effects of Shared Syntactic Integration Resources beyond Attention', *Royal Society Open Science*, 3/2 (2016), 150685.

These powerful devices can work in language and music alike because they have to do with style, order and delivery rather than content; they are mainly based on correspondence in length, sound/rhyme, and rhythm.

A musical equivalent of the bicolon would be a bipartite structure like question-answer, or open-close; of the tricolon it would be a tripartite structure like the bar-form. I will use bi- and tricolon for these musical structures as well.

Structuring in twos and threes is of course nothing new, but why are these figures so powerful? As rhetorical figures they are designed to have an effect. The symmetrical structure of the bicolon makes the second part easier to process by the created expectation. As Thomas S. Kane puts it, 'Balance and parallelism do not communicate meaning by themselves, but balanced and parallel constructions do reinforce and enrich meaning'.[72] Dividing things into two is a powerful device because the brain will try to find a connection, a simile, an opposite (basically any pattern) because two suggests a relationship.

If two sets up a pattern, then a third element can confirm or break that direction. The tricolon is basically a list, a simplification of complexity; opposed to a list of four or more elements, three has a sense of completeness. Churchill said he had 'nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat' but four doesn't work and everybody remembers the line as in the tricolon 'blood, sweat and tears'.[73] As Mark Forsyth demonstrates, tricolons often sound especially good when the third element is longer than the preceding two, like in 'Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness'.[74] You could argue the specific order in meaning makes the last element more noticeable (from general to specific[75]) but for the musical ear the third element stands out because it provides a place of landing for the direction the previous elements have taken.

Bi- and tricolons create shapes for phrasing as well. If you speak a bicolon aloud it has a natural up-down intonation pattern. The tricolon has a natural up-up-down pattern with the ups raising the expectation that the down confirms. We are back where we started: bicolons, which through parallelism confirm expectation; and tricolons, by reaching completion of a list, create repose-moments.

In a way the bicolon stands at the basis of the antecedent-consequent form. Adding a contrasting idea to each 'colon' brings us close to a modern definition of a period, as found with Schoenberg and others. (I write **modern** definition because like the 1 + 1 + 2 construction it is not really described as such in the sources though obviously present in a lot of Classical music.)

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72 Thomas S. Kane, *The New Oxford Guide to Writing* (1994).
73 Mark Forsyth, *The Elements of Eloquence*, Icon Books Ltd, 2013, 87.
74 Mark Forsyth, *The Elements of Eloquence*, Icon Books Ltd, 2013, 85.
75 Danyal Freeman, 'Tricolon', *Vernacular Discourse*
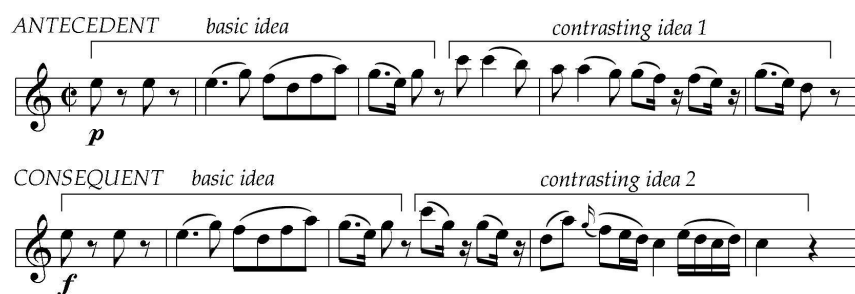   <http://www.vernaculardiscourse.com/tricolon.html> [accessed 11 December 2016].

Figure 85: Period after Caplin: Mozart, *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K.525, mov. 2.

This example by William E. Caplin[76] is like a bicolon in which each part has been qualified like in the famous:

> *Morning has broken, like the first morning.*
> *Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird.*[77]

Balance and parallelism give bicolons a more static nature; in music they are often also perceived like that.

Similarly the tricolon can be said to be at heart of the modern sentence. The archetypical example is by Beethoven, Piano Sonata op.2,1, mov.1:[78]
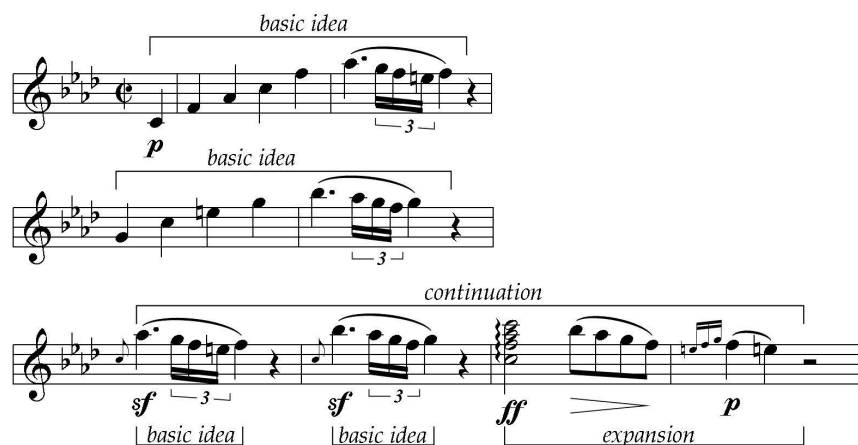
Figure 86: Sentence after Caplin: Beethoven, Piano Sonata op.2,1, mov.1.

Two shorter statements culminating in a longer (and stronger) third one make it a tricolon, in this case the third part is a tricolon in itself (added indication in Caplin's example by me). Tricolons have a more developing nature since they are based on a list reaching completion, and in music they are perceived likewise.

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76 William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*, New Ed edition (New York; Oxford, 2000), 12.

77 From the song 'Morning is broken', lyrics by Eleanor Farjeon, made popular by Cat Stevens.

78 Caplin, *Classical Form*, 10.

Caplin makes many more interesting observations and goes on delving into hybrid types and exceptions. Personally I find the bi- and tricolon sometimes more helpful in their fundamental simplicity because they feel related to the way I hear and play music; as a string of thoughts that leads to something bigger (additive), rather than a bigger construction that gets divided in smaller parts (divisive). Although there is of course the bigger idea we want to get across, the art of rhetoric is in shaping our phrases in such a way that, step-by-step, we convince our audience. In that sense it adds meaning with every phrase and that idea appeals to me as a performer.

Development in a phrase

If repose-moments determine the end of a phrase, it implies that, when listening to music, we only construct in hindsight how a phrase goes. Or as A. Luckner puts it, 'Musical form constitutes itself in essence only in the fading away of sound, it can only exist where and if, the anticipation of "Gestalt" finishes.'[79] Anticipation is the keyword: if we can shape anticipation, we can convey a sense of order even before a phrase actually finishes. Phrase rhythm, bicolon, and tricolon are clear examples of that, but we also find it in the development in and over phrases.

I am stating the obvious when I say that Classical phrases tend to develop towards their ending, but why is that? We can often recognize a pattern where a phrase starts by an exposition of thematic material, followed by an intensification that comes to rest in the cadence.
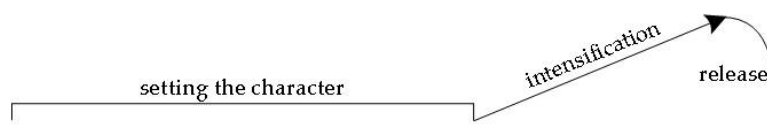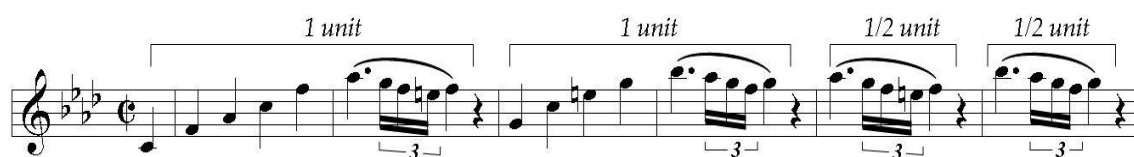
Figure 87: Schematic development of a phrase.

In it simplest form this would be 2 bars of melodic character, a change in bar 3 with rhythmical- and harmonic drive that releases itself in the cadence of bar 4. But we also find this outline over groups of phrases. Through this intensification we not only feel a bigger release afterwards, it also signals the approach of an ending and gives us a sense of where we are in the development of a phrase or group of phrases. Recognizing what contributes to this development will probably make for better phrasing and an increased sensitivity for relations between phrases.

One powerful agent is *fragmentation* (after Caplin). He defines it as the 'process of shortening the units'.[80] It is very obviously present in the previous Beethoven sentence:

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79 Andreas Luckner, 'Zur Philosophie des Rhythmus (Abstract)', *Lebenswelt und Wissenschaft* <http://www.dgphil2008.de/programm/sektionen/abstract/luckner.html> [accessed 20 January 2017].
80 Caplin, *Classical Form*, 41.

Figure 88: Fragmentation in Beethoven's sentence.

It creates a feeling of added movement, development, as if increasing the drive towards the end—and it can consequently be expressed in phrasing. The tricolon within a tricolon is therefore an often found construction: intensification within expectation.

Fragmentation does not necessarily require taking a fragment of the preceding melody, as demonstrated in the previous period by Mozart:

Figure 89: Fragmentation in Mozart's period.

Often slurs are carefully indicated to confirm this principle. For instance, without the first slur (marked *) there would be an upbeat feeling for the G. I think Mozart wanted to prevent precisely that, making the first phrase an undeniable long unit so the fragmentation afterwards could work stronger.

Similarly the notation of rests is often more precise than expected. In the previous example the notated semiquaver rests in the final bar are superfluous because two slurred notes would be played like that anyway; but it does force attention to the shortening of units.

Usually *harmonic activity* increases during the intensification. An example from Mozart's Horn Concerto, K.447, mov.2.

Figure 90: Opening of the second movement of Mozart's Horn Concerto, K.447.

It is a bicolon in two phrases with an obvious increase in the number of chord changes towards the end of each phrase. But in the bigger picture we also find that the second phrase uses stronger harmonic connections than the first, recognizable by the jumps in the bass. This helps to create the expectation of the stronger (perfect) cadence in the tonic phrase as opposed to the half cadence in the preceding dominant phrase. In Mozart's keyboard parts the left hand is usually carefully worked out to support this principle, where at the beginning of phrases bass notes are often notated short and with rests (i.e. lighter), changing into full length notes (i.e. heavier) at the stronger harmonic changes at the end of the phrase. Unfortunately many pianists blur this with the pedal.

And what about the beginning of a phrase? Koch uses again a parallel with language that I find intriguing (see Fig. 91). He compares a phrase to a subject (bars 1-2) and predicate (bar 3-4), in the sense that the predicate gives direction and destination to the subject.[81] A subject can thus have many different predicates, and if an extension is added it further defines the predicate.

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81   Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1787), II, 352.
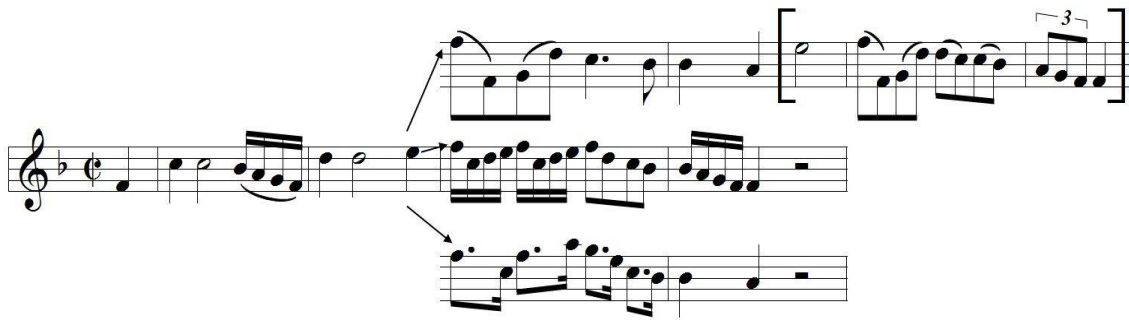
Figure 91: A subject with 3 different predicates, the top one extended to further define the predicate. Examples by Koch.

This is of course not literally true but it indicates a flexible interaction within phrases that gives life to the musical structure. It confirms the general observation that, in Classical phrases, melody and character/expression often determine the beginning, to be taken over by a more rhythmic and harmonic drive towards the end. Maybe it can even be argued that a phrase is initially lead by melodic interest (content) and towards the end more by harmonic interest (syntax).

Without wanting to turn this into a template it is worth noticing that this notion is often supported by the sub-dominant which frequently only appears at the end of a phrase—almost acting as a pivot point after which the phrase is forced to tip over towards a cadence.

Awareness of above mentioned principles have made an important difference in phrasing for me.

Chapter 7 – The Performer as Composer

Apart from influencing phrasing, phrase theory can also be helpful in situations where the performer gets close to being a composer himself. Some real-life examples.

Figured bass

Figured bass practise was still very much alive in Classical repertoire (specially in songs) and phrase theory can be helpful. For instance, top notes are influential in determining the strength of a cadence and hence punctuation. This is particularly important when playing with lower instruments and voices, where the right hand accompaniment is forced to play the highest note of the chord, on top of the melody. More in general, awareness of punctuation can be a guide towards filling in 'gaps' in the melody, and awareness of the development in a phrase can be supported by pacing the activity of the right hand.

Ornamentation

Koch and Reicha recommend never to have two identical cadences following each other, to prevent uniformity and lack of clarity in punctuation. If forced to repeat the same harmonic cadence it must be at least melodically and/or rhythmically different, as demonstrated by Koch in Fig. 92.[82]

Figure 92: Two different phrase endings on identical harmony, example by Koch (abridged).

The point I want to make is that, when embellishing, we should take care not to accidentally make endings too similar, as I did on purpose in Fig. 93.

Figure 93: Koch's previous example, badly ornamented by me, creating too similar phrase endings.

Also Reicha warns that in embellishing, phrase-rhythm and cadences should never be changed.[83] In his examples of lavishly decorated arias (copied down from famous singers) the end of a phrase is almost never changed. Occasionally a *conduit* (lead in) is

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82 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Komposition*, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1793), III, 67.
83 Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale*, Czerny edition, 4 vols (Vienna, 1824), II, 497.

added to the next phrase but it always leaves a pause for punctuation.

Figure 94: Original version (*top*), and ornamented with a lead in (*bottom*), example by Reicha.

The only place where a phrase ending gets significantly embellished and changed is at a *point d'orgue* (fermata) but by then we have crossed into the realm of the cadenza.

Case study 4: Creating song introductions

Many Classical songs have no piano introduction, forcing the singer to pick the first note out of the air. Since this was an age where performers routinely improvised preludes to introduce a composition (Hummel[84]), it seems highly unlikely they would allow for such an abrupt start of a song. In church services this is still a regular practice.

Nowadays the postlude is often used as a prelude in order to stay as close as possible to the original composition. That doesn't always work well. In the early Schubert song 'An den Mond', D.259 (1815) it would create:

Figure 95: Schubert's *An den Mond*, D.259, using the postlude as introduction.

Though I've heard it performed like this, some things don't sit well. (*1*) The first chord is dissonant, which is not impossible but usually reserved for a special effect. (*2*) The dense harmonic rhythm suggests an ending rather than an opening; melodically and harmonically it comes to a close. Also it would be unlikely for a composer to give away the most special chords at the beginning of a piece. (*3*) The construction of the phrase with its one bar phrase-members and tricolon suggests fragmentation (and therefore a continuation) though there is nothing yet 'to fragment' or to continue; if we look at the song itself it shows the postlude is indeed the continuation of a phrase (bar 9-12) rather

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84   Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practisch Anweisung zum Piano-Forte-Spiel*, second edition (Vienna, 1827), 465.

than an appendix.

The usual written-out preludes in Classical songs are either original inventions, something musically neutral, or a combination of the opening and final measures of the song. Original inventions fall outside the scope of this paper but a neutral opening could be something like:

Figure 96: Schubert's *An den Mond*, two possible neutral introductions.

Both are possible but quite boring. The second example needs two bars to keep an even bar count, in the first example the chord doesn't really participate in the song yet and therefore one bar can be enough.

Combining the opening and end measures of the song would produce something like this:

Figure 97: Schubert's *An den Mond*, combining opening and final bars - version 1.

Bar 3-4 are melodically rather wild compared to 1-2. This often happens: by the nature of things opening measures are usually simple whereas the end measures conclude a certain development. I would therefore reduce the energy of the second part by limiting the compass of the melody line and simplifying the rhythm:

Figure 98: Schubert's *An den Mond*, combining opening and final bars - version 2.

Case study 5: Writing cadenzas

To cover this topic extensively would fall outside the scope of this paper. My aim here is to to demonstrate the usefulness of phrase theory by means of a simple template I made. It is definitely not a historical model or a manual to create cadenzas, though it can serve as a foundation to elaborate on.

Rather than trying to string melodic ideas from a concerto together, I would suggest to start with a basic lay-out of phrases: an introductory phrase, a melodic phrase and a concluding phrase. Though historically you are not obliged to use themes from the concerto, it is often easier than inventing something new. But I would advise using the material in a very free way, just to trigger ideas and stay in style. Being literal normally does not work because the original material is made to fit the development of the piece, whereas the cadenza has its own development.

It makes sense to start at the end because it is fixed: always I^6_4-V-!. A basic phrase would suffice, four bars with some harmonic acceleration towards the end:
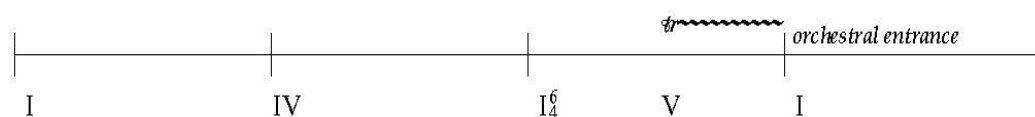
Figure 99: Outline for a basic final phrase of a cadenza.

We can add some chords in between to increase harmonic rhythm, thereby making clear we reach the conclusion of several phrases. Expanding the cadence would also be appropriate:

Figure 100: Outline for a more elaborate final phrase of a cadenza.

You would usually fill this with scales and passage-work for a virtuoso finish. To illustrate I will use Mozart's Flute Concerto no 1 in G, K.313 as an example:

62

Figure 101: Final phrase filled in.

We can easily lengthen the cadenza by putting a melodic phrase before it, pinching some melodic intervals from a theme and turning them into a bicolon. Harmonically I-V-V-I or I-V is enough, with a bridge to the (already composed) next phrase.

Figure 102: Melodic phrase filled in.

Now we still need an introductory phrase. Starting with an upbeat is always a good way to get going; using scales and chords on alternating I and V would be enough to 'start exploring'. Finishing on the dominant can properly introduce our melodic phrase:
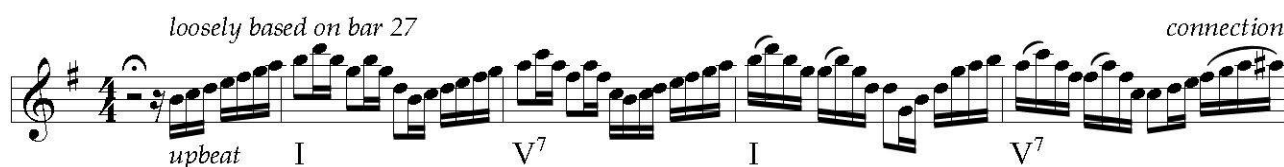
Figure 103: Introductory phrase filled in.

Of course this needs to be polished, and more phrases can be added or extended, but at least a proper framework is in place that will yield results quicker than stringing one's favourite melodic bits together and hope for the best.

Appendix I – Terminology

PHRASE	PHRASE-MEMBER	PERIOD	SECTION	PHRASE-RHYTHM	CADENCE-POINT
Borghese – A new and general system of music, english edition (1786)					
Phrase		Period			
Callcott – A Musical Grammar, First American edition (1810)					
Section	Phrase	Period	Strain	Musical rhythm	Caesure
Czerny – Reicha's Compositionslehre, translated by Czerny (1832)					
Glied, Glied einer Periode, (incidentally: Phrase)	Umriss, Melodischer Entwurf, Phrase	Periode		Rhythmus	
Daube – Anleitung zur Erfindung der Melodie und ihrer Fortsetzung (1797)					
Abschnitt					
Holden – An Essay towards a Rational System of Music (1770)					
Strain, phrase					
Kirnberger – Die Kunst des reinen Satzes (1776)					
Einschnitt, Rhythmus	Cäsur	Periode, Abschnitt	Haupttheil	Rhythmus	
Koch – Versuch einer Anleiting zur Komposition, vol.2 (1782)					
Absatz	Einschnitt	Periode	Hauptperiode	Rythmus	Cäsura
Kollmann – An essay on Musical Harmony (1796)					
Strain	Ceasure	Period	Section		
Logier – System der Musikwissenschaft (1827)					
Halbe Periode	Einschnitt, Section	Periode			
Löhlein – Clavierschule, second edition (1773)					
Rhytmus, Absatz, Numero, Numerus sectionalis	Einschnitt	Periode			
Lustig – Inleiding tot de muzykkunde (1751)					
Zinscheidingen		Periode			
Marpurg – Anleitung zur Singcomposition (1758)					
Absatz, Rhytmus	Einschnitt	Periode			
Milchmeyer – Die wahre Art das Pianoforte zu spielen (1797)					
Gesangssatz	Gesangsabschnitt				
Momigny – Cours complet d'harmonie et de composition (1806)					
Vers	Hémistiche	Période	Reprise		
Reicha – Traité de haute composition musicale (1824)					
Membre, Membre d'un Période, (incidentally: Phrase)	Dessin, Dessin mélodique, Phrase	Période		Rhytme	
Riepel – Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst - Rhythmopoeïa (1752)					
Absatz	Einschnitt				
Tans'ur – A new musical grammar (1746)					
					Close
Türk – Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende (1789)					
Rhythmus	Einschnitt, Cäsur	Periode, Abschnitt	Hauptabschnitt		

Appendix 2 – Sonata (Divertimento?) in Eb Major, Hob XVI:16

My typesetting of the score is a composite based on several editions. All editorial suggestions have been removed and any minor contradictions solved by my judgement, none which change the structure though.

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Türk, Daniel Gottlob, *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende* (Leipzig and Halle, 1789)

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