PHRASE AND CADENCE: A STUDY OF TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITION

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The terms *phrase* and *cadence* are so common we tend to take their definitions for granted. We all know what *phrase* means and what a cadence is without defining exactly what musical phenomena we are referring to. Or do we? Anyone who has taught a beginning form or analysis course knows how difficult it is to define and explain these terms to a novice who has not already been initiated into the mysteries of musical terminology. Instead of giving a precise definition of phrase, for example, teachers tend to illustrate the concept by giving copious examples of musical events that they, through experience, have learned to label as phrases. Students are expected to learn intuitively, as did their teachers. By watching a teacher point out phrases, students learn to identify phrases on their own. Even well-prepared and intelligent graduate students, who necessarily have had different teachers, can have very different opinions concerning the appropriate application of *phrase* and *cadence.* Little wonder that Apel defines phrase as "A natural division of the melodic line, comparable to a sentence of speech," and then immediately apologizes for the inadequacy of his definition: "The term is used with so little exactness and uniformity that a more specific description can scarcely be given" (Apel, 1944, pp. 572-73). His view some 25 years later is, if anything, even less encouraging: "There is no consistency in applying these terms [period, phrase, half-phrase, double phrase, etc.] nor can there be, in view of the infinite variety of situations and conditions found in music" (Apel, 1969, p. 668).

Yet, if we do indeed know what *phrase* and *cadence* signify—and we continually use the terms as if we did, even though we may disagree about specific applications—then surely the task of defining them more explicitly should not be impossible. One obstacle to a clearly defined system of musical terminology is applying terms rather loosely. In writing or speaking, the use of synonyms, for example, is highly desirable, and we carry that into musical discussions as well. Synonyms make the language more colorful and interesting, but potentially more

dangerous. *We* know what we mean when we explain musical facts to our students, but we often fail to explain what we somehow *know*, at least in a way a novice can immediately understand. Unfortunately, there are no ready answers, and the reader who expects to find the indisputable TRUTH about *phrase* and *cadence* here will be disappointed. This discussion is, instead, intended as an orderly beginning of a dialogue that may eventually lead to more precise definitions.

EXISTING DEFINITIONS

Existing phrase and cadence definitions, taken from basic textbooks, would seem to be an appropriate starting point. These books might be variously intended for music fundamentals, theory, music appreciation, history, composition, or form-and-analysis courses. Reference books or music dictionaries are another source. For most current musicians and musically educated listeners, these are typical of the books from which we—and our teachers before us—learned fundamentals. Of the eighty-one books I examined that contained a definition of either phrase or cadence, approximately one-third are freshman-sophomore theory textbooks; one-third are music appreciation textbooks; and the remainder include form and analysis, music composition, 20th-century music, and beginning music theory. The median publication date is about 1970. The characteristics of the definitions in the two groups do not differ significantly. (Percentages of occurrences of elements included in cadence and phrase definitions are shown in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.)

Examining various definitions provides ample evidence of the difficulties of adequately defining these deceptively simple terms, regardless of when the definitions were written or the audience for whom they were intended. The main differences are the number of elements included. Definitions in music appreciation books contain the fewest different elements, theory texts typically contain more, and form texts include the most. Most of the definitions are woefully imprecise, and some are excellent examples of a fatal logical flaw: *phrase* and *cadence* being defined circularly. Over 20% of all the definitions examined were circular, but the percentage was even higher (25%) for theory and form books. The most overtly circular definition is found in Bockmon and Starr's book: "The words 'phrase' and 'cadence' are best defined in terms of each other. A *phrase* is a unit of musical structure terminated by a cadence. A *cadence* is an effect of temporary or permanent conclusion marking the termination of a phrase" (Bockmon

and Starr, 1962, p. 193). Other authors generally make at least some attempt to obscure the circularity of their definitions. And, as do classroom teachers, many authors evade the problem by giving examples but not formulating comprehensive definitions. A typical approach is to give a four-measure segment of a well-known song, followed by a brief comment such as: "This is a phrase. Notice that it has a cadence at the end." Other writers give more examples and somewhat more explanation but still never quite arrive at giving definitions.

Table 1. Elements of Cadence Definitions

Element	Before 1970	After 1970	All
Harmony, chord progression	77	63	70
List of cadences (P.A.C., etc.)	54	68	62
End of phrase	57	51	54
Conclusion	51	56	54
Melody	57	49	53
Rest, pause	43	49	46
Rhythm	46	37	41
Language, punctuation	29	49	39
Formula	40	22	30
Relaxation	31	27	29
Formal indicator	14	34	25
"To fall"	20	24	22
Recognizes other styles	23	15	18
Other elements	3	7	9
Confirm tonality	6	7	7
Completion of structural unit	9	2	5

Table 2. Elements of Phrase Definitions

Element	Before 1970	After 1970	All
Musical unit of thought	38	56	48
Terminated by cadence	41	54	48
Structural unit or division	44	46	45
Language	41	41	41
Melody	41	30	40
4 bars	35	44	40
Motives	38	39	39
Rhythm	32	22	27
Comes to a stop; relative repose	6	20	13
Harmony	9	15	12
Perception limits	18	5	11
Singing	12	7	9
Not entirely self-subsistent	6	2	4
Other styles	6	2	4
Other elements	3	2	3

A primary assumption in many of the existing definitions is that the music under consideration is tonal, Western European, from the so-called "classical" period. This assumption is especially clear in discussions of *cadence* that may consist primarily of lists and examples of the usual harmonic formulas—e.g., perfect authentic, perfect plagal, half cadence. Perhaps there are kinds of music to which the terms *phrase* and *cadence* do not apply, but most of these authors do not address that question.

In slightly more than half the *cadence* definitions, the discussion includes the prescription that a cadence is the musical phenomenon that is located at the end of a *phrase* or other structural division point, while prominent in the other half is the statement that a phrase is the musical phenomenon terminated by a cadence. Although the individual pairs of definitions are not circular, they clearly attest to a perceived close relationship between *phrase* and *cadence.* Some authors prefer to define *cadence* first, and others prefer to begin with *phrase,* but—in either case—many eventually define the second word in terms of the first. The result is a kind of "chicken-or-egg" problem.

PHRASE AND CADENCE

Which comes first, phrase or cadence? Or should they, in fact, be defined in terms of each other at all?

Phrase is often described as a musical thought or unit of thought, sometimes designated as a complete musical thought, particularly in brief definitions. Correspondingly, *cadence* is often specified as the destination or conclusion of musical ideas or, less often, as a point of relatively less tension. Analogies to language are frequently used to help clarify the definitions, although there is much disagreement about which language elements correspond. *Cadence* is frequently compared to the use of punctuation, usually without specifying a particular punctuation mark. Comparisons with pauses, sometimes including references to the lowering of the voice at the ends of sentences or clauses in spoken language, are also common, as are references to the derivation of *cadence* from the Latin *cadere*, to fall.

The musical elements that comprise a phrase are often not specified, although melody is mentioned most frequently. *Cadence* is associated most closely with harmonic elements, with melodic and rhythmic aspects also included in many definitions. Several authors mention that cadences tend to be used as standard formulas in a given musical style or period, implying that it would be possible to specify what would constitute an acceptable cadence in a particular style. No comparable notion regarding phrase formulas is expressed, though perhaps the closest is an attempt to establish general principles of phrase construction; but some authors are careful to emphasize that it would be impossible to make an exhaustive list of all the possibilities (e.g., Christ, *et. al.*, 1972, Vol. I, pp. 77-78).

One additional determining factor in some phrase definitions is length. Four measures is often considered normal, although frequently great care is taken to explain that length varies, depending on such factors as tempo, meter, and style. Explanation of the limits to phrase length range from the amount of music that can be sung in one breath (including the listener's need for such a breath even in non-wind instrumental music) to the listener's perceptual limits.

TOWARD WORKING DEFINITIONS

If the designation of phrases and cadences is not to be merely a matter of opinion or intuition, then all musical aspects pertinent to the decision-making process should be taken into account. The essential problem is that *phrase* and *cadence* are not simple terms but, in fact, represent relatively complex concepts that are extremely resistant to clear definition.[1] Perhaps copious examples and descriptions of some

typical characteristics of phrase and cadence are the only way we can make the concepts less abstract for our students. Yet, the result in these books—and in our classrooms—is an apparent narrowness in the attempts at definitions, a narrowness that may inadvertently appear to exclude perfectly good but less obvious examples of *phrase* and *cadence.* Consequently, although students may be able to locate straightforward examples in some kinds of music, they may very well lack a general understanding of the broader conceptual base.

In the strictest sense, of course, describing or explaining the exact meaning of "a general notion or idea" by listing its properties may seem to constitute a logical paradox. The effort, however, should bring us closer to a real understanding of the meanings of these concepts, meanings that can be expressed perhaps as working definitions that will provide a starting point for future clarification. To be useful, each working definition should include those attributes that distinguish the term or concept from all others, and general enough to include all musical phenomena that we might want to identify by the term. We should also keep in mind the difference between definition and description—explaining the concept rather than merely listing typical examples in the hope the reader will thereby understand intuitively the concept these examples represent. In addition, any hint of a circular definition should be rejected, including circularity disguised by the use of synonyms (e.g., "musical idea" used as a substitute for *phrase;* or "conclusion" used instead of *cadence*). Perhaps the two terms are somehow fundamentally linked, but we have no way to examine the relationship objectively so long as *phrase* and *cadence* are defined in terms of each other.

The most useful scope of the definitions is another question: what style(s) or period(s) should be included? Based on the published definitions examined, the appropriate scope would appear to be primarily tonal music of the Viennese classical period. Some authors do discuss "contemporary" cadences (although often as modifications of traditional tonal cadences), and several authors refer to cadences in older, pre-classical styles. Only one of the books directly addresses the idea of phrase in contemporary music, and the authors note a relative lack of "clearly defined phrases" (Christ, 1972, Vol. II, p. 434). If possible, however, it seems desirable to make the phrase and cadence definitions of equal scope, encompassing all styles of music. Given what appears to be an inescapable linkage between the two concepts, it seems unlikely that a kind of music containing musical events identifiable as cadences would not also include phrases, even though both might be very different from their traditional counterparts.

The following, then, is an attempt to formulate broad comprehensive definitions containing the vital elements that distinguish each of these terms from every other kind of musical phenomenon. The definitions are intended to apply to any type of music, from the earliest to the most recent. Whether or not music from all eras actually contains phrases and/or cadences is another question, but at least the possibility is left open.

If *music* may be defined as an organized succession of sounds and silences, then:

> A **phrase** is a coherent and cohesive, though not necessarily complete, segment of music that is perceived as a single significant unit of musical structure. The phrase is the next higher, consistently structurally significant level of organization above the motive (the smallest identifiable unit of musical structure). [Notes: 1) Any musical element or combination of elements may contribute to our perception of a musical phrase (e.g., melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre); 2) Compositional devices such as repetition, variation, and contrast of musical ideas may help to establish the beginning or end of a phrase; 3) It may sometimes be useful to consider a phrase as comprised of two or more subphrases, or phrase components, but the subphrase does not constitute a consistently structurally significant level of organization.]

> A **cadence** is any musical element or combination of musical elements, including silence, that indicates relative relaxation or relative conclusion in music. ("Conclusion" is intended in the sense of "destination of ideas," as opposed to merely stopping with no indication of finality or direction.)

Admittedly, these definitions require a great deal of qualitative and, perhaps, subjective judgment to apply them to real musical situations. The reader must be able to recognize a coherent and cohesive musical event, for example, since no further definitions or guidelines for identifying such circumstances are provided. Similarly, the reader should have some prior notion of what constitutes a "unit of musical

structure," as well as how musical elements might "indicate relative relaxation or relative conclusion." In other words, the concepts of phrase and cadence are defined in terms of still other concepts that, for absolute clarity, would also require definition. Tracing each concept back to its ultimate roots (i.e., to a primary concept or term that can be defined without reference to other undefined concepts and terms) would be impossible within the scope of a single article—maybe impossible altogether. This brief discussion, however, does provide an instructive glimpse into the magnitude of the definition problems that we, as musicians, must solve if we are to develop a complete and orderly system of terminology in which each concept and term is defined precisely and carefully with necessary scholarly rigor.

Now that we have comprehensive, non-circular, working definitions of *phrase* and *cadence,* we may begin to explore the relationship between the two concepts more thoroughly. Implicit in the statement that a phrase "can be perceived as a single unit of musical structure" is the notion of boundaries. In order to perceive a given unit as a distinct entity, distinguishable from surrounding musical events, there must be some means of separating that particular musical event from the others. One easily identifiable boundary marker or divider is a cadence appropriate to the given style of music—i.e., a cadence may very well mark the end of a phrase.

If the existence of a cadence is not clear, we need to look for other musical clues in order to locate the boundaries of the unit. Just as the dividing line between units can be indicated by a clear ending in the form of a cadence, so it can be determined by a clear beginning. Once we perceive the existence of a new unit of musical structure, we realize in retrospect that the previous unit has ended. Musical clues might take the form of a repetition of the immediately preceding musical material, a variation, or a contrast.[2] The means of variation and contrast to indicate a new beginning point are limitless; they include any and all means of musical expression available to a composer writing in a given style. Note that the preceding phrase does not necessarily have to end with a cadence in order for the listener to perceive the beginning of a new phrase or other unit of structure if the musical indicators of separation—or of a new beginning—are sufficiently strong. (One obvious example is the elided cadence, in which the ending of one phrase and the beginning of the next overlap without any pause to mark the boundaries of the two phrases.)

The next step is to consider whether a cadence is necessarily located at the end of a phrase. Presumably, "relative relaxation or relative conclusion," as cadence was defined above, could be expected to provide some sense of separation of musical ideas. But is it possible for

a cadence to be weakened enough, or negated enough by other musical factors, that the listener perceives the cadence—but not the end of a phrase—at the point where the cadence is located? To some extent, the cadence answer may depend on a subjective judgment concerning the requisite strength of "relative relaxation or relative conclusion." But if a particular musical event satisfies these criteria in listeners' judgment, then they indeed perceive a cadence that indicates a separation of musical events and, most probably, the end of a phrase. In other words, it seems that a musical event which is perceived as a cadence according to the definition given above would also be perceived as ending a phrase. (Logically, it follows that the so-called deceptive "cadence" is not necessarily really a cadence, despite its label; depending on the musical context, a deceptive "cadence" may mark the end of a phrase or it may serve merely to extend the phrase through deceptive resolution thereby forcing—or, at least, implying—further continuation.)

It is also important to distinguish, more carefully than do most textbook authors, between the use of a cadential formula and the existence of a cadence. Do we necessarily have a cadence every time a cadential formula appropriate to a given style is used? Or is it possible to have a cadential formula that avoids "relative relaxation or relative conclusion?" One clear example is the repeated dominant-to-tonic pattern that frequently occurs at the ends of tonal compositions or major sections. Here, the actual cadence occurs at the end of a phrase or other structural unit, but then the cadence is often extended, by means of varied repetition. The individual formulas that comprise the extended cadence may fulfill all the usual stipulations concerning harmonic progression, metric placement, and melodic movement but, in this context, they are probably not heard as a series of individual cadences, each indicating relative relaxation or relative conclusion. Rather, each pattern is just one portion of a single larger musical event that concludes a composition or section.

The formulation of good conceptual definitions of *phrase* and *cadence* is, of course, merely a first step. The immediate problem with these definitions is that, for the beginning music student, they are probably much too vague to be very useful. To learn how to apply the definitions appropriately, the novice needs concrete examples accompanied by detailed discussion and explanation of the principles involved. And therein lies the crux of the dilemma: how can teachers and authors convey the broad, conceptual meanings of *phrase* and *cadence* without implicitly limiting the scope of these concepts by means of selective, often unexplained examples of the practical applications? The task is undeniably a difficult one, especially since both teachers and students typically find dealing with abstract

concepts to be extremely challenging. Yet, with some well-defined basis for understanding the fundamental concepts, combined with a careful and systematic analysis of musical evidence, a cogent analysis should be possible. Although subjective judgments will probably always be a necessary factor, reliance on intuition *alone* can be minimized.

The various musical factors that may influence the listener's perception of phrases and cadences are perhaps best illustrated initially by musical examples that do not permit students—or teachers—to rely entirely on an intuitive understanding of these concepts. For the most part, experienced musicians' intuition serves them well, and although they may not be aware of all the musical data their mind processes, they no doubt rely on a variety of musical cues. In the absence of the formal indicators we are generally most familiar with, we are forced to examine the music closely to determine the musical evidence that indicates where phrases and cadences occur. In other words, beginning with a practical understanding of the possible implications of the broad conceptual definitions, teachers can gradually expand students' comprehension of the principles involved by considering music in which the identification of phrases and cadences is not immediately obvious. Or stated more concisely, students learn and understand more when forced to *think* as they practice solving real music analysis problems.

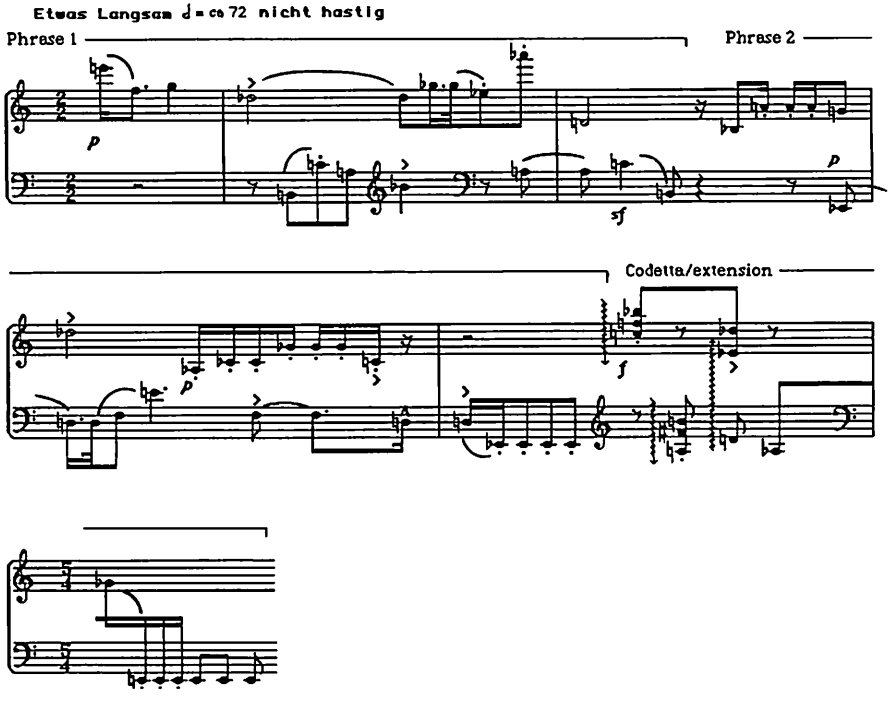
APPLYING THE DEFINITIONS

Figure 1 is the opening of the "Gavotte" from Schoenberg's *Suite for Piano*, Op. 25. Although the "Gavotte" is based on a twelve-tone row, the row analysis need not serve as the starting point for determining the identification of phrases any more than a chordal analysis of tonal music necessarily precedes phrase analysis. Instead, we will consider the entire spectrum of musical factors as they combine to indicate the phrase boundaries that the listener hears.

The first phrase is shaped by a variety of musical elements. Because of the characteristic rhythmic organization of a gavotte, phrases—including the first phrase—usually begin and end in the middle of the measure. Textural, harmonic, and rhythmic factors combine to focus attention near the end of the phrase with the short dotted rhythmic figure leading into the expanded range of the right hand and the strong dissonance of two pitches struck simultaneously (last eighth note of measure 1). The end of the first phrase is indicated by a return to consonance as well as a slowing of the rhythmic motion

from predominantly eighth notes to the dynamically emphasized and syncopated C quarter note in measure 2, which then cadences melodically on the B. The articulation (slur connecting C and B) is an important element of the melodic cadence. The sixteenth rest that follows, though only a very brief interruption of the movement, helps to reinforce the rhythmic closure. The rise and fall of the left-hand melody, accompanied by the rise and fall in dynamics, also help to unify and shape the first phrase.

Figure 1. Schoenberg: Gavotte from Suite for Piano, Op. 25



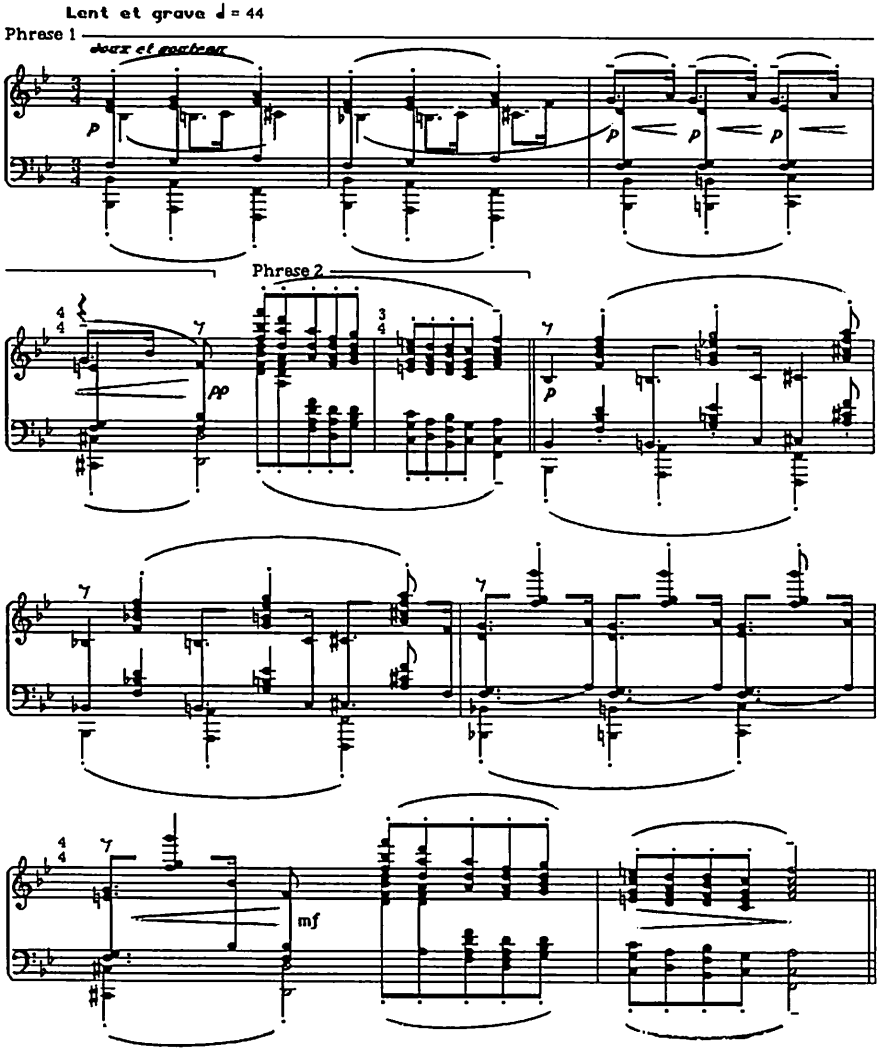
The opening of the second phrase is an exact inversion of the beginning of the first phrase, with both patterns leading to a relatively long accented D-flat on the downbeat of the following measure. This varied return of the opening material also helps to confirm the point of division between the first two phrases. As in the first phrase, the melodic rise and fall in the left hand helps to unify the phrase while at the same time delineating the boundaries of the phrase. The descending melodic line, the return to a single voice, and the repeated eighth-note E-flats signal the close of the second phrase. Again, the D-to-E-flat slur (which corresponds to the C-to-B slur at the end of the first phrase) contributes to the melodic cadence, but the difference in rhythm and the repeated ending notes make this cadence seem more conclusive than the previous one.

The sudden change of range, dynamics, and texture, along with the entrance of a new musical idea in the middle of measure 4, reinforces the closure of the preceding phrase. The varied repetition (measure 5) of the distinctive ending of the second phrase links this new segment to the preceding material and contributes to the listener's identification of this unit as a codetta-like structure that functions as closure to the first two phrases. The continuation of the strict eighth-note movement from the last three notes of the second phrase into the codetta also helps to tie this unit to the preceding material. The arpeggiated chords (which are used elsewhere in this composition as preparation for closure), the continuous *forte* marking, and the rhythmic extension of the final repeated notes help to emphasize the relatively conclusive qualities of this passage. The eighth rest—the longest rest so far—also helps to enhance the feeling of closure. The larger downward leap at the beginning of measure 5 also contributes to a more definite closure than that found at the end of the second phrase.

This one-measure codetta-like segment does not fulfill the definition of *phrase* in that it does not constitute a distinctively separate unit of structure. Rather, it is an extension of the preceding material, serving as an extension of the cadence that closes the first period (the first two phrases).

Although specific usage of the row in this composition may or may not be perceived by the listener, it should be noted that analysis of the row usage supports the phrase designations discussed above. Each of the first two phrases corresponds to one complete, although segmented, presentation of a row form (Phrase 1: P^{O}; Phrase 2: I^{6}), with the row elements used very similarly in the two phrases. The one-measure cadential segment is another complete row presentation (P^{6}).

Figure 2. Debussy: "Danseuses de Delphes"



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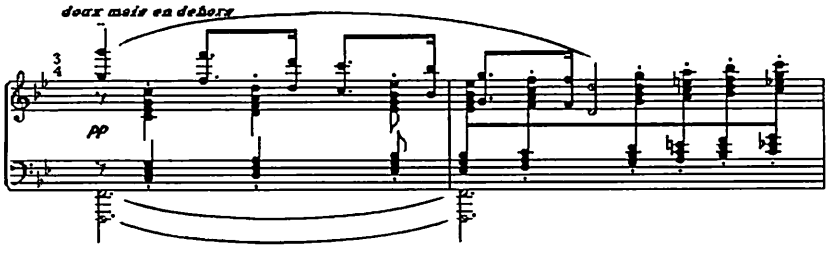


Figure 2 is from "Danseuses de Delphes," *Preludes*, Book I, by Debussy. The first major separation point is at the double bar between measures 5 and 6, where a varied repetition of measures 1-5 begins. This similarity of material helps to confirm the location of the division. In addition, the end of the second segment, again marked by a double bar, is clearly indicated by the contrasting material that follows in measure 11.

Focusing attention now on measures 1-5, what musical cues delineate the unit or units of structure within this segment? Given the very slow tempo, this segment appears to be divided, at least superficially, into two-measure units. Measure 2 is an almost exact repetition of measure 1, and then the musical material changes somewhat in measures 3 and 4. The contrast in the middle of measure 4 is so much stronger, however, that the effect retrospectively is to coalesce the preceding material into a single unit. The insertion of the sixteenth-note F at the end of measure 2 also serves to continue the momentum of the first two measures and to connect the inner-voice motivic line with the upper-voice melody in measures 3 and 4.

The musical cues that indicate the beginning of new material in measure 4 include a sudden drop in dynamics to *pianissimo*, changes in texture and range, the use of consonant harmonies instead of primarily dissonant harmonies, less stepwise motion, and a rhythmic change from the dotted-eighth and sixteenth-note pattern to steady eighth notes. In addition, strong cadential cues indicate the end of the preceding material. The chromatic motive that begins in measure 1, in an inner voice, is lengthened and switched to the bass in measures 3 and 4, and it finally resolves to the half-note D at the point of cadence in measure 4 (beat 2). The B-flat chord, although its inversion perhaps indicates continuation, is the first consonant chord since the opening chord in measure 1 and its repetition at the beginning of measure 2. The fact

that all three consonant chords are B-flat major triads helps to tie the unit together as well as to emphasize the return to consonance at the point of cadence. The melody in the top line beginning in measure 3, with the repeated dotted-eighth and sixteenth-note G-to-A pattern, expands melodically in measure 4 to conclude on the F, again at the point of cadence. The loudest dynamic level (the end of the longest crescendo) of the first six measures also coincides with the ending point indicated by the other musical cues. The meter change in measure 4 is a reflection of the change in rhythmic organization and momentum although, in fact, the motivic conclusion on the half-note D results in another measure of 3/4 meter, despite the overlapping beginning of the next phrase. All these musical elements combine to create a sense of relative conclusion, i.e., a cadence, which ends the first phrase.

The end of the second phrase (measure 5), as already noted, is followed by a return to a variation of the opening material. The musical cues that mark the beginning of the second phrase are again present, with contrasts in dynamics, harmony, texture, range, type of melodic motion, and note-value patterns. As at the end of the first phrase, various musical elements combine in a cadence to mark the end of the second phrase. The last chord is of longer duration, with the *tenuto* marking further emphasizing the difference. The simultaneous melodic leaps upward in the top line and downward in the bass stress the importance of the F as an arrival point. The chords in the second phrase are all consonant, but the only other major chords in root position are the C chord at the beginning of measure 5 and immediately preceding the final chord. The perfect-fifth root relationship (dominant to tonic), with its tonal implications enhanced by the relationships among the other chords in measure 5 and even, to some extent, in measure 4, helps to establish the F-major chord as the harmonic goal. The diminuendo from *pianissimo* also supports the feeling of relative relaxation and conclusion. We have, then, strong musical evidence that there are two clearly delineated phrases, each ending with a cadence.

The familiar Introduction to Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (please consult a score) is quite different from the other examples in almost every musical aspect. The entire Introduction, which consists of 136 measures in 6/8 meter, is tonic harmony. After 48 measures of only tonic-chord pitches, eighth-note non-chord tones that imply dominant harmony are introduced, and the number of these non-chord tones (eighth notes or sixteenth notes) gradually increases throughout the remainder of the Introduction. The harmony, however, remains tonic and static. As a result, there are no harmonic cadences in the Introduction. Similarly, there are no clear rhythmic or melodic

cadences. Rhythmic and melodic patterns are repeated again and again, switched to different instruments, and periodically replaced by new patterns, but individual patterns do not arrive at a point of relative relaxation or conclusion. Dynamics do not rise and fall; tempos do not increase and decrease. Given the programmatic nature of the Introduction—music representing a flowing river—it seems likely that Wagner intentionally attempted to hide the structural division points that are evident in most musical composition.

The lack of cadences and other clues does not mean, however, that there is no structure to this work or that structural units such as phrases cannot be located; rather, it indicates we cannot rely on the traditional clues used to locate phrases. The music can be divided into distinct structural units on the basis of instrumentation and/or textural changes, and melodic pattern repetitions or changes. Viewed from this perspective, most of the phrases—even though none ends with a cadence—are clearly delineated.

The first phrase (measures 1-16) begins with the double basses playing the tonic. In measure 5 they are joined by the bassoons playing the fifth of the tonic harmony. (The dynamic markings remain unchanged until measure 129, where crescendos are introduced. Until then, each part is marked *piano* with increases in dynamic level resulting from the gradual addition of instrumental parts.) The end of the phrase is indicated by the beginning of new musical material and the addition of a new instrument (horn) in measure 17. The second phrase (measures 17-24) is eight measures long and includes two presentations of an ascending melodic idea that prominently features the third of the tonic chord as well as providing some rhythmic motion.

In the third phrase (mm. 25-36), canonic treatment of the melodic idea from the second phrase begins. The listener, without the information provided by the score, would not notice a change (i.e., would not realize phrase 2 had ended) until the second horn (horn part 7) enters in the third measure of the phrase. From the analyst's perspective, however, the structural beginning of the third phrase is in measure 25, signalling the end of the second phrase in measure 24. These canonic entrances at two-measure intervals (for 4 measures) are followed by canonic entrances at one-measure intervals (for another 4 measures) with all eight horns joining the canon one by one. Although this twelve-measure unit could be considered as three separate phrases consisting of four measures each, it seems reasonable to designate it as one twelve-measure phrase instead. The only difference among the three segments is the time interval of the canonic entrances; in the context of the Introduction as a whole, this distinguishing feature seems relatively insignificant.

The next phrase begins with eight measures of the canonic treatment of the horn melody with entrances on every strong beat (mm. 37-44). The following four measures (45-48) are, in the context of this composition, almost cadential. There is some sense of relaxation created by the gradual ending of the canon in each horn part, followed by a melodic descent on the tonic-triad pitches in longer note values (at least a dotted half-note duration value for each pitch). The descending line (the first in this piece) and written ritard, along with a less complex texture, indicate some degree of relaxation and perhaps conclusion, even though trombone, bass clarinet, and Wagner tuba enter on long sustained notes.

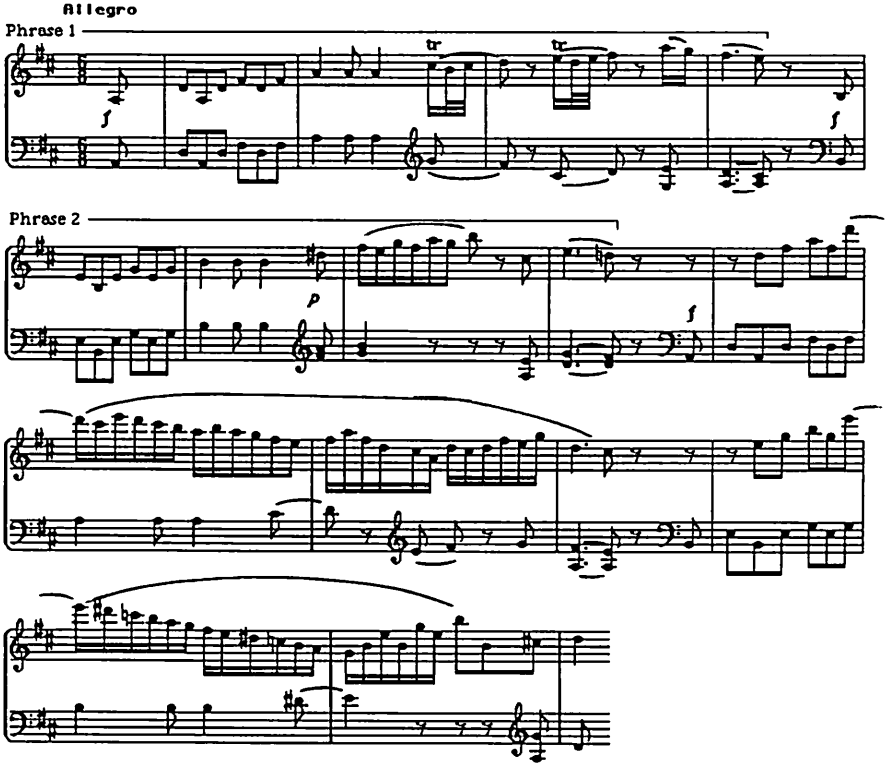
At this point (m. 49) the entrance of the next phrase (and the end of the cadential measures of the preceding phrase) is marked by a new melody in the bassoons and an arpeggiated running figure in the cello part. The Introduction continues in a similar fashion, with the addition of new instruments and new melodic ideas, or variations of old ones, indicating the division points between phrases. Beginning in measure 81, some of the continuing patterns are shifted slightly (this result is achieved initially by extending one of the ongoing melodic patterns by one measure). From that point on, the various patterns—and, consequently, the phrases into which the patterns are grouped—overlap one another. It is still possible to identify phrases in individual voices, or sometimes in groups of voices, but points of division in the texture as a whole constantly conflict with each other. In other words, Wagner succeeds in making the last part of the Introduction relatively seamless although, as is usual in a contrapuntal texture, the component voices themselves do have identifiable points of separation.

In the opening movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata, K. 576 (Figure 3), the first unmistakable indication of a structural-division point is the rest in both hands in measure 4, followed by a return of the opening material transposed up a step. The question here is whether these first four measures constitute a single phrase or whether they are comprised of two phrases, each two measures long.

On the sixth eighth-note beat of measure 2, the change in musical material clearly contrasts with the preceding two measures. Melodically and texturally, measures 1-2 consist entirely of the arpeggiated pitches of the tonic triad played in octaves. The triad (D-F-sharp-A) occurs on consecutive strong beats with each pitch emphasized by the anacrusis which immediately precedes it. On a larger level, the pitches D and F-sharp function as an anacrusis to the A in measure 2, thereby making the upward movement, and consequently the arrival point, even stronger. The A is further

reinforced rhythmically by its quarter-note duration, an interruption of the ambient eighth-note movement, and by its repetition. The result is a cohesive unit of sound—a short, relatively uncomplicated, easily remembered pattern.

Figure 3. Mozart: Piano Sonata, K. 576



In measures 3-4, the melodic movement is stepwise, with ornamentation in the right hand. The two hands also move in contrary motion to each other in a more contrapuntal texture. The rhythmic motion is primarily anacrusis to strong beat, in contrast to the steady eighth-note movement of measure 1, although that eighth-to-strong-beat melodic movement might be considered as ornamentation of an

essentially anacrusis-to-strong-beat melodic movement. The melodic shape is different and the harmony is no longer limited to tonic as it was in measures 1 and 2. The end of this segment is indicated harmonically by a half cadence and a melodic cadence here, both enhanced by the rhythmic cadence in measure 4. The closure is reinforced by the eighth rest and the return of opening material.

Clearly, measures 1-4 consist of two different components, but are the two components distinct enough to justify classifying each one as a coherent, cohesive structural unit? The relatively greater strength of the division point in measure 4 (compared to measure 2) supports the identification of measures 1-4 as a single unit, or phrase, despite the apparent contrasts between the two-measure segments. I can find additional evidence of the over-all unity of measures 1-4 in the treatment of the opening material when it returns in measures 9-12. Here, the main melodic ideas are in the left hand, which begins with an exact repetition of measures 1-2. The melody (left hand) continues with an unornamented version of the melody (right hand) from measures 3-4. The removal of the ornamentation makes the continuity of the anacrusis-to-strong-beat rhythmic pattern more obvious. In addition, in the return (measure 9), the setting is contrapuntal from the beginning of the right-hand entrance, with the sixteenth-note runs (which are an ornamented version of the left-hand melody from measures 3-4) also helping to tie the two-measure segments together. In short, the analysis of measures 9-12 verifies that measures 1-4 do indeed constitute one phrase—a single coherent and cohesive structural unit.

The boundaries of the second phrase in measures 5-8 are much easier to locate once the first phrase has been identified. The same arguments apply to measures 5-8 (and to the corresponding return in measures 13-16). The eighth rest in both hands in measure 7 is not a pause indicating any significant structural separation but, rather, it serves to heighten the listener's anticipation of the full harmonic cadence and the melodic cadence in measure 8. Once again, the longer held note on the downbeat helps to slow the motion and contributes greatly to the sense of relative relaxation and conclusion at the point of cadence. The return of opening material following the eighth rest in measure 8 reinforces the sense of conclusion provided by the cadence. Thus, we have two four-measure phrases, each ending with a cadence. The treatment of the next two four-measure phrases (phrases 3 and 4), which are a varied repetition of the first two phrases, verifies the boundaries of the opening phrases.

These few examples illustrate how the definitions of phrase and cadence can be used to help guide the determination of the boundaries of phrases and the locations of cadences in musical compositions. The detailed discussions, which would probably be unnecessary after the initial introduction of these concepts, should help the student recognize the broad range of musical factors that might be relevant to the task of locating phrases and cadences. Clearly, the student will need to develop some skill in applying these definitions since the musical concepts involved in the decision-making process are relatively complex. The qualitative judgments necessary in any kind of musical analysis cannot be avoided here. However, the definitions and resulting analytic processes, based as much as possible on a careful consideration of musical evidence, can begin to replace the more intuitive, purely subjective feelings that we so often rely on and that are so difficult to convey to students. Reasonable people may very well disagree with these phrase analyses, but at least the objections can be based more on comparative factual grounds and less on vague, unexplainable opinions.

CONCLUSION

These definitions of phrase and cadence, along with the identification process illustrated above, are only a beginning. I do not presume to have the definitive solution to the problem. Perhaps even such common terms simply cannot be defined "in a definite or precise sense." Yet, only by attempting to "make the obvious explicit"[3] can we be certain that all of us, including our students, recognize the same things as being "obvious" and comprehend the "obvious" in the same way. Moreover, only then can we begin to address, and perhaps reconcile, the differences between our varied opinions and perceptions concerning the categorization of musical events. As for my proposed working definitions, other musicians can and no doubt will dispute the necessity for including—or for omitting—particular elements in each definition. If this attempt encourages such a dialogue, then it and the questions it raises represent the initial steps toward the establishment of useful, comprehensive definitions of these two basic concepts.

In the context of developing a complete musical lexicon consisting of precise definitions of every pertinent term and concept, this beginning may seem small indeed. It is, nevertheless, a place to begin building a logical, coherent framework of analytic concepts that the novice can learn to apply in solving musical problems and answering musical questions. Of course, no matter how well organized and how completely

delineated the conceptual system is, intuition (in the sense of integrating and drawing from all our past experiences) will certainly continue to play an important role in music analysis. To the extent, however, that we can minimize the influence of unexplainable factors and maximize the application of logical and intelligent reasoning, we will add to our collective knowledge of music and musical processes. And that, after all, is what music theory is all about.

NOTES

[1]A *term* is "A word or phrase used in a definite or precise sense" while a *concept* is "a general notion or idea" (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971).

[2]I would like to thank Professor Henry L. Cady (University of Delaware) for suggesting the importance of these three musical clues in determining musical structure.

[3]"Make the obvious explicit" is Professor William Poland's (The Ohio State University) often-repeated directive that orginally inspired this study.

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