

I. Inherently Irregular Phrases

Irregularity in phrases results either from reaching the cadence a bit too soon, or by an unequal association of melodic members (i.e., 2-measure group plus 3-measure group resulting in a 5-measure phrase.)

A. Three-Measure Phrases

Two musical examples of three-measure phrases. The first is by Mozart, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2-measure group followed by a 3-measure group. The second is by Beethoven, showing a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time with a similar 2+3 measure structure.

B. Five-Measure Phrases

Four musical examples of five-measure phrases. The first is by Haydn, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+3 measure structure. The second is by Schubert, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+3 measure structure. The third is by Beethoven, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+3 measure structure. The fourth is from St. Anthony Choral, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+3 measure structure.

C. Six-Measure Phrases

Four musical examples of six-measure phrases. The first is by Haydn, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+4 measure structure. The second is by Carey, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+4 measure structure. The third is by Schubert, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+4 measure structure. The fourth is by Beethoven, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+4 measure structure.

D. Seven-Measure Phrase

One musical example of a seven-measure phrase by Mendelssohn, showing a melodic line in 3/4 time with a 2+5 measure structure.

II. Irregular Phrases: Extensions at the Beginning

Extensions at the beginning of the phrase: an extension which occurs before the phrase proper has begun but is part of the phrase rather than independent of it. Generally, careful listening will reveal where the phrase proper actually begins.

A. Anticipation of the melody (smaller notes indicate the anticipations)

1 Haydn



2 Beethoven



3 Beethoven



4 Beethoven



5 Beethoven



B. Establishment of the accompaniment pattern (Small notes indicate the introduction)

1 Mendelssohn



2 Bartók



3 Bartók



III: Irregular Phrases: Extensions in the Middle

Extensions within a phrase: these can be confusing, unless the ‘regular’ design of the phrase is carefully examined. At any inserted extension, the phrase may be (figuratively speaking) pried apart to admit the insertion. Therefore, a litmus test of such an extension is to hear the phrase *without the extension* and ensure that it still makes sense (allowing for octave transpositions that may take place during the extension.)

A. Exact (or slightly modified) repetition of a figure—either a single measure, or more or less than a measure

1 Haydn

2 Haydn

B. Sequence of a figure—either a single measure, or more or less than a measure.

3 Haydn

4 Mendelssohn

C. Prolongation of a tone or chord

5 FOOTAGE/STUDIO/1

Example 5: Musical score in 2/4 time, key of D major. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. The word "cresc." is written below the first two measures, and "dim." is written below the third measure, indicating dynamic changes. The score ends with a double bar line.

6 Mendelssohn

Example 6: Musical score in 12/8 time, key of B-flat major. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. A long slur is placed over the right hand's melody from the third measure to the end, indicating a prolonged tone or chord. The score ends with a double bar line.

D. Rhythmic expansion of a figure

7 Brahms

Example 7: Musical score in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes. The left hand plays a bass line with chords. A long slur is placed over the right hand's melody from the first measure to the end, indicating a rhythmic expansion of a figure. The score ends with a double bar line.

IV. Irregular Phrases: Extensions at the End of the Phrase

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between extensions at the end and those within a phrase. It will prove helpful to remember that in most instances the extensions at the end occur *after* the actual or expected cadence. Since every extension at the end is terminated by a cadence, it may seem that where the extension occurs after the actual cadence there may be two cadences to the phrase. This, of course, is impossible since each phrase has only one cadence.

A. Repetition of the last half of the phrase

1  Mendelssohn

2  Mendelssohn

3  Mozart

B. Repetition of the last member of the phrase

4  Beethoven

 Mendelssohn

C. Sequence of the last half of the phrase (fairly rare)

5 Beethoven

sequence

Detailed description: This musical example shows a sequence of the last half of a phrase. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation consists of a series of chords and melodic fragments. A bracket labeled 'a' spans the final two measures of the sequence. The word 'sequence' is written below the staff.

D. Repetition of the cadence group (exact, or with rhythmic or melodic modifications)

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cadence

Detailed description: This musical example shows a cadence group. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation consists of a series of chords and melodic fragments. A bracket labeled 'cadence' spans the final two measures of the group.

Haydn

Detailed description: This musical example shows a cadence group by Haydn. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation consists of a series of chords and melodic fragments. A bracket labeled 'cadence' spans the final two measures of the group.

7 Mendelssohn

cadence

Detailed description: This musical example shows a cadence group by Mendelssohn. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation consists of a series of chords and melodic fragments. A bracket labeled 'cadence' spans the final two measures of the group.

8 Haydn

cadence

Detailed description: This musical example shows a cadence group by Haydn. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation consists of a series of chords and melodic fragments. A bracket labeled 'cadence' spans the final two measures of the group.

E. Lengthening of the final chord.

9 Schubert

Detailed description: This musical example shows lengthening of the final chord by Schubert. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation consists of a series of chords and melodic fragments. The final chord is lengthened.