

Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, trans. David Beach and Jurgen Thym. New Haven-London: Yale Univ. Press, 1982. *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*. Berlin-Königsberg, 1776-79, rep. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968.

from vol. 2, part 1, chap. 4 (page nos. in square brackets refer to the translation and Olms reprint, respectively)

On "Rhythm," defined as "a phrase or segment"

[403/137] The flow of the melody is divided into larger or smaller phrases [*Sätze*] by the rhythm...each of these phrases has its special meaning, like phrases in speech. ... [404] Anyone with an average ear will have noticed that the greatest power of melody comes from rhythm. It unites both the melody and the harmony of several measures into a single phrase that is immediately grasped by the ear; and several small phrases are again combined as a larger unit to form a complete sentence with a rest point at its end, which allows us to comprehend these individual phrases as a unit.

[404/138] In speech one comprehends the meaning only at the end of a sentence and is more or less satisfied by it depending on whether this meaning establishes a more or less complete statement. The same is true in music. Not until a succession of connected notes reaches a point of rest at which the ear is somewhat satisfied does it comprehend these notes as a small unit; before this, the ear perceives no meaning and is anxious to understand what this succession of notes really wants to say. However, if a noticeable break does occur after a moderately long succession of connected notes, which provides the ear with a small rest point and concludes the meaning of the phrase, then the ear combines all these notes into a comprehensible unit. This break or rest point can be achieved either by a complete cadence or simply by a melodic close with a restful harmony, without a close in the bass.

[405/138] The musical statement that is complete and ends with a formal cadence we will call a *section* [*Abschnitt*] or *period* [*Periode*]; but the incomplete one that ends only with a melodic break or a satisfying harmony we will call a *phrase* [*Einschnitt*] or a *rhythmic unit* [*Rhythmus*]. One can easily understand that every good melody must consist of various periods and these in turn of several phrases.

[405/139] A musical period, then, is a succession of connected notes that concludes with a complete or formal cadence. ... A series of such periods, none of which but the last closes in the main [406] key, forms a single composition.

[416/151] Everthing that I have said to this point about rhythm concerns its external and somewhat mechanical nature. Now I must say something about its internal nature. [152] The invention of a single melodic unit or phrase which is an intelligible statement from the language of sentiments and which produces in the sensitive listener the frame of mind that has generated it is simply a work of genius and cannot be taught. [417] ...since the entire rhythmic character of a piece is generally more the result of a refined sensitivity than a definite theory, I advise young composers to play diligently through the works of the greatest masters in order to acquire the feeling for this important aspect of composition.