

Chapter 9: On the Sections and Caesuras of Musical Rhetoric

1. This theory on incisions, which one also calls distinctiones, interpunctationes, posituras, etc., is the most essential in the whole art of composing melody, and is called diastolica in Greek; however, it is so neglected that hitherto only the smallest rule has been given thereupon or the slightest instruction; indeed, one does not even find it in the most recent musical dictionaries.
2. Some years ago a great German poet thought he had made the unique discovery that music is almost exactly the same in this regard as rhetoric. How amazing! Musical masters, especially those who want to and should instruct others in composition, should really be ashamed that they have been so negligent with these things: for though here and there one or another of them may have come upon salutary thoughts, purely from common sense: the good gentlemen have as yet remained only on the periphery and have not been able to penetrate to the central point, much less bring the thing to its proper technical form, neither overtly nor covertly.
3. Now in order to redress this deficiency as well as many others, even to some extent, we must go to the trouble to take up beloved grammar in a certain way, as well as esteemed rhetoric and worthy poetry: for without having the pertinent information on these fine disciplines in particular, one undertakes the work unaware of other endeavors, quite unprepared and virtually in vain.
5. Every idea, be it verbal or written, consists then in certain word-phrases, or periods; but every such phrase also consists in smaller caesuras up to the close with a period. A whole structure or paragraph is developed from such phrases, and from various of these paragraphs a main part or a chapter is finally developed. That very briefly is the stepwise outline or climax of all that which can really be spoken, written, sung, or played.
6. In melody, as in musical speech, we usually employ only one paragraph at a time, a whole structure and section, which commonly forms the bounds of an aria, and, as stated, must consist of and join together at least two different smaller sentences or short statements. Though occasionally there is an exception in pedagogy, if clarity requires it.
9. A period however, which we describe as a word-phrase in classifying it, is a brief statement which includes a complete idea or an entire verbal concept. Whatever does not do this but contains less is not a period, no sentence; and that which does more is a paragraph, section, or structure, which can consist of several periods, and by all rights should.
14. The concept of a period obliges me not to make a formal close in the melody before the sentence is finished. But the concept of a paragraph prohibits me from using a full cadence anywhere except at the end. Both cadences are formal: but the first is not full.

80. As now in the whole of nature and all creation not a single body can be properly understood without analysis: thus I want always to be the first who analyzes a melody and examines its parts in an orderly way. A little minuet is to serve first as an example here, so that everyone may see what such a little thing consists of, when it is not a monster....

81. If a melody of a minuet is only sixteen measures long ..., then it will have at least some commas, a semicolon, a few colons, and a few periods in its make-up. Many a person would scarcely think that; yet it is true.

82. At some places, if the melody is of the proper type, one can even clearly perceive the emphasis; not to mention the accents, question marks, etc., which are not lacking. The geometric relationship as well as the arithmetic are indispensable for melodies filled with motion, and gives them the proper measure and form. In the minuet here we want to show such an example, which can serve as a model for analysis of all the others.

83. Here now is a complete melodic paragraph (Paragraphus) of 16 measures, which become 48 if one performs them completely. This paragraph consists of two simple phrases or periods, which, like the following caesuras, are increased by a third of the whole, through repetition, and are marked with three points () under its final notes; though the conclusion of the whole, as the final period, is indicated with the sign

84. In this paragraph there is not only a colon or member; but also a semicolon, or half member: Which one can recognize by their usual signs set under the notes. One also encounters three commas, which become nine, and which are indicated with the familiar little comma. But the threefold emphasis has been indicated with just that many asterisks. The geometric proportion is 4 here, as always with good dance melodies, and there are this many little crosses as indicators. The rhythms of the first and second measures are used again in the fifth and sixth. The other ones, stated later in the ninth and tenth measures, are heard again immediately in the eleventh and twelfth, wherefrom arithmetic uniformity springs. And that is the entire analysis in eight parts: The first determines the 2 periods; The second the colon; The third a semicolon; The fourth the 9 commas; The fifth the emphasis; The sixth the geometric; The seventh the arithmetic proportion; and finally the eighth the final cadence.