Questions of William Rothstein's *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*

Q1) Pages 3-9: What is the definition of a phrase, in Rothstein's opinion?   What point is he making about phrases and hypermeasures in "The Blue Danube"?

Rothstein defines a phrase as a musical unit that contains a complete tonal motion, moving from "one tonal entity to another" (5). He also invokes a similar definition by Roger Sessions, who states that a phrase is "a constant movement toward a goal–a cadence" (4). But Rothstein also takes pains to describe a phrase in terms of what it is *not*, i.e. it is not a certain number of measures.

In using the example of Strauss's "Blue Danube" waltz, Rothstein shows through durational reduction how every four bars of the piece, at least in the beginning, can be compressed in a 3:1 ratio down to a single bar of hypermeasure. Thus, Rothstein concludes that the four-bar segments are metrical units, not phrases (8). What Rothstein also makes explicit here, and which is also something that other authors do not seem to emphasize, is that for a certain grouping of bars to become a hypermeasure, there has to be some sort of strong-weak alternation that mimics the beat level strong-weak accents in a typical measure; this insight may seem obvious, but it more clearly qualifies what a hypermeasure is (and is not). The "Blue Danube" waltz example also helps evince how a four-bar segment, potentially considered a phrase by some, may very well have limited tonal motion and can therefore not properly be termed a phrase. Moreover, Rothstein carefully establishes hierarchies to the relative structural importance of each cadence in this passage, as some cadences are more defining of phrase limits than others. Finally, Rothstein wants us to see hypermeasures and phrases as distinct entities: hypermeasures are akin to higher levels of L&J's meter, whereas phrases relate to L&J's grouping structures.

Q2) On pp. 28-30, Rothstein discusses the possibility of the idea of "upbeat" and "afterbeat" patterns; explain briefly what is meant by these terms.

Both "upbeat" and "afterbeat" patterns are terms used to describe situations where the phrase structure is out-of-phase with the hypermeasure structure, again harkening to L&J with their description of out-of-phase groups versus meter. The "upbeat" case, for example in the "Blue Danube" waltz, exists when the phrase begins before the downbeat of the hypermeter (29). The "afterbeat" situation, conversely, occurs when the phrase begins after the downbeat, as in the opening theme to J.S. Bach's Invention No. 1 (29). Rothstein does not, however, consider the case where the phrase might begin equally offset from the beginning of one hypermeasure and the end of the other, an instance where phrase and hypermeter would be 180° out-of-phase (neither a upbeat nor an afterbeat; or rather, both?).

Q3) Pages 33-37: Rothstein discusses the possibility of regarding non-duple phrases as variants of normal ones. What does he think about that possibility? What points is he making about examples 2.13 and 2.14?

Rothstein's basic premise on non-duple phrases seems to be that while many non-duple phrases can be understood as elaborations or prolongations of duple models, "some non-duple structures do not depend on duple models but must be understood in other ways" (34). Therefore, by allowing for naturally-occurring non-duple phrases, Rothstein is going a bit against the prevailing background duple notions of Schenker, Schachter and Riemann. In his examples 2.13 and 2.14, Rothstein shows two ways in which such native non-duple phrase structures could

arise. For instance, in Example 2.13, a five-bar phrase results from a simple string of five bass tones, each of which is given its own measure (34). In Example 2.14, Rothstein demonstrates how elision or overlap can cause phrases of odd measure number lengths to hide within larger groups of even measure number lengths. As well, the hypermeter tends to be suspended in such instances, lending further credence to Rothstein's argument against some sort of pervasive duple paradigm.

Q4) In pp. 44-56, Rothstein introduces the important concept of phrase overlap. *Sometimes overlap results in an irregularity in the hypermeter; sometimes it does not. List one example Rothstein gives of each of these cases, and comment briefly on them.*

Certainly, if phrase overlap exists in a musical work, this can occur seamlessly without disrupting the hypermeter, or a change in the hypermeter may occur. Rothstein labels this latter event as a *metrical reinterpretation*, something that seems to only arise (although not necessarily) when there is an overlap in phrases (52). Rothstein contrasts excerpts from two Beethoven piano sonatas to show both distinct cases. Using the example of the Beethoven Piano Sonata op. 2/3, Rothstein posits that the cadence in bar 12 is extended to overlap the new phrase in bar 13; Beethoven could just have easily completed the cadence in bar 12, therefore this extension renders no change to the existing hypermeter. In his Piano Sonata op. 2/2, however, Beethoven, begins a new phrase while the previous phrase cadences on an even measure, thus creating an overlap that in effect deletes a measure from the overall pattern of hypermeter and causes a shift in strong-weak hypermetrical alternations.

Q5) In chapter 3, Rothstein explores phrase expansion: The process whereby a basic phrase (normally 4 or 8 measures) can be expanded into a longer one. The "suffix" is an especially important case of this. Find an example of a suffix from a classical piece; photocopy the relevant page and turn it in, marking the suffix in the score.

See attached

Q6) Rothstein also talks about expansions within *a phrase. Several of his examples–3.15, 3.16, and 3.19–are essentially similar in terms of* where *the expansion occurs. Explain.*

In these three Rothstein examples, the expansion of the phrase occurs just before a strong cadence. Such pre-cadential expansions are thus internal expansions or, as Rothstein might call them, parenthetical insertions (87). Each expansion is manifested in slightly different ways, however. For example, the Beethoven example of 3.15 merely repeats and overtly prolongs a cadential $^6_4$ chord. In the Mozart concerto (3.16), an applied diminished-seventh chord acts as a harmonic expansion before the deceleration of the harmonic changes and surface acceleration of figuration. With example 3.19, the Haydn string quartet, a true parenthetical insertion occurs, showing an apparent tonal motion, but one that merely bridges the previous dominant to the following final tonic.

WORKS CITED

Rothstein, William. *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1989.