

Deviational Phrase Types in the Compositions of Maria Schneider

Recent work on phrase rhythm in jazz explores how various parameters interact with hypermeter. Despite the importance of hypermetrical regularity, however, deviations in phrase length do occur, and the exceptions warrant exploration. This paper addresses hypermetrical deviation in the works of active jazz composer Maria Schneider.

I posit that Schneider enters into a dialogue with tendencies of phrase rhythm established through the century-long jazz tradition. As James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy have argued regarding music in the decades surrounding 1800, works are placed into “a dialogue with a community-shared pool of preexisting works, probably including some well-known ones, that formed the new work’s context of understanding.”¹ Rather than comprising some body of previous works, I take the “context of understanding” for Schneider’s music to be the normative eight-bar phrase.

My argument centers around two claims: (1) the normative phrase design from the jazz tradition at large is Schneider’s most common compositional choice, and (2) most of Schneider’s deviatonal phrases dialogue with the norm directly. A corpus study of 24 works composed between 1984 and 2007 confirms that 61% of phrases conform to the norm, and another 31% of phrases dialogue with the norm directly. This paper establishes the characteristics of the normative phrase, describes the analytical procedure, and summarizes the evident deviatonal phrase types.

¹ James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 9.

Additional Materials

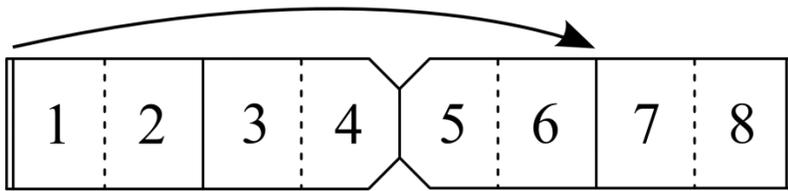


Figure 1 Visual schema for a normative eight-bar hypermeasure

(a)

(b)

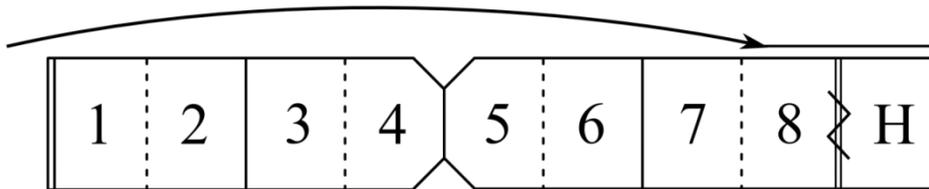


Figure 2 Held bar deviation in *Wyrzby* 6:13 / m. 152

Table 1 Summative corpus data from the piece *Evanescence*

02 Evanescence		Deviation (code)	Count	Time
Number of bars	322	Compression (c)	2	00:22
Number of phrases	52	Elision (l)	1	00:05
Number of 8s	27	Empty Bars (e)	1	00:11
% 8s (s-phrase count)	52%	Free Meter (f)	5	01:17
Average bars per phrase	6.85	Held Bars (h)	1	00:11
Average time per phrase	12.68	Misleading metric cues (m)	0	00:00
Average Tempo	135	Mixed Meter, Deviational (d)	6	01:35
Total Time	10:59	Rubato (r)	N/A	00:00
Total Time (no rubato)	10:59	Subphrase (p)	12	01:22
% Rubato	0%	Surge (s)	0	00:00
Time 8s	06:24	Ternary S-Phrase (t)	0	00:00
% 8s (absolute time)	58%	Unfulfilled subphrase (u)	7	00:54

