

Stable Norms and Salient Deviations: Multilayered Listening in Jazz and Common-Practice Music

PART I: CONCEPT

Introduction

A substantial portion of undergraduate music theory involves sensitizing students to the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and formal norms of tonal music, enabling them to perceive the expectations created by these norms as well as the significance of deviations from them. Many of these same norms are operative in tonal jazz as well. However, due to the formal repetitions that undergird jazz improvisations, norms and deviations are more directly juxtaposed, making this topic ideal for discussion using jazz examples. These formal repetitions create an additional layer of normativity (and concomitant expectation) in jazz, which can be pedagogically exploited to enrich the process of learning to perceive norms in music of the common-practice era (CPE).

In [other work](#), I have discussed salience and stability mostly in terms of pitch space. In this essay, I extend the scope of these concepts to the realm of hypermeter and phrase rhythm, aiming to provide readers with a means to help students hear these rhythmic phenomena in CPE repertoire. In order to accomplish this, I will present four sets of hypermetric conducting exercises involving different combinations of genre, scope, phrase structure, and rhythmic character. In all exercises except for the last set, hypermetric structure and underlying phrase structure generally align, and thus I will sometimes use these terms interchangeably.

Hearing Phrase Structure in CPE Music

There are at least two distinct issues students grapple with when learning to hear phrase structure in CPE music: syncopation and irregular phraseology. On the one hand, students may have difficulty processing local-level syncopation in a passage and therefore fail to recognize that the underlying phrase structure is normative (i.e., occurring in powers-of-two units). On the other hand, students may be deceived by phraseology that is irregular (i.e., *not* occurring in powers-of-two units), failing to recognize it as such. This irregular phraseology may exist at the outset of a piece, or may occur as a normative phrase is subsequently transformed into an expanded, non-normative version. One may also encounter syncopation and irregular phraseology occurring simultaneously. (For the remainder of this essay I will use the terms “phrase structure” and “phraseology” interchangeably.)

In order to fully understand phrase structure in CPE music, students must become sensitized to deviations from (hyper)metrical norms by developing an intuitive sense of normativity strong enough to remain accurate amidst the rhythmic fray of syncopation, metric displacement, tempo fluctuation, rubato, and microtiming. However, since CPE repertoire often combines regular and irregular phrase structure, is only sometimes syncopated, and is frequently performed with tempo fluctuations and rubato, it can be challenging to find good examples with which to engage students who are struggling to develop this skill. By contrast, although many jazz compositions do contain unusual phrase lengths, there is a plentiful supply of jazz compositions—and recordings of them by many different artists—that employ a high degree of regularity with respect to several of these parameters. Specifically, many jazz compositions employ powers-of-two phraseology throughout (e.g., standard 32-bar AABA song forms); jazz itself is nearly always syncopated, if only by virtue of the emphasis on beats 2 and 4; mainstream, studio-recorded jazz generally makes less use of true rubato and tempo fluctuation (though in both genres, solo and chamber music may use these devices more); and in mainstream jazz microtiming is usually superimposed over the form (see below), and therefore does not affect the tempo. For these reasons, jazz provides an expeditious way of isolating syncopation and normative phrase structure for study.

Hearing “The Form” in Jazz

Mainstream jazz performances typically consist of a presentation of the head (the composition itself), a series of improvised solos following the harmonic (and sometimes melodic) structure of the head, and lastly a restatement of the head. The structure of the head is often referred to by musicians as “the form,” because it is repeated throughout the performance and is one of the few relatively fixed formal elements. Other formal aspects—such as intros, outros, length and order of solos, the possibility of trading fours, (partial) omission of the head or outhead, tags, and so forth—are often decided on an ad hoc basis before or during the performance.

Due to its generally fixed nature, the form in jazz may be regarded as stable. In addition, the form is somewhat concrete in that lead sheets usually exist, which contain chord symbols, melodic lines, cadences, and so forth. Performances, however, can be abstract in the sense that the form may never literally be played, or played in a straightforward manner—especially if the composition is well-known, as in the case of standards. Musicians nonetheless keep track of the form in performance, their collective awareness of it binding their playing together.

In order to follow the form (as listener or performer), one must continually hear beyond a thicket of events that may be salient but which frequently mask, or conflict with, the stable underlying structure. For example, the stability of the harmonic structure may be obscured by extensions and alterations, the stability of cadential closure may be obscured by emphasis on less stable harmonies, the stability of the meter may be obscured by syncopation and metric displacement, and the stability of the phrase structure may be obscured by hypermetric displacement and improvisational phrasing across hypermetric barlines. The constant comparison of two simultaneously occurring layers—stable norms and salient deviations—throws the contrast between the two into relief. (If one is not following the form on some level, then this expressive contrast will not be perceived.) As we will see, the model of multilayered listening I have described here also applies to CPE repertoire, though less frequently and less directly.

The more salient a deviation is, the more it challenges our ability to perceive the form. For instance, a drum fill that ends with a loud “hit” in a deviant (hyper)metric location will obscure the form more than snare drum “chatter,” which may be heavily syncopated but occurs at a lower dynamic-level and involves only one part of the drum kit. (Normative ride cymbal, hi-hat, and bass drum patterns may occur simultaneously.) The most skillful jazz musicians are capable of creating salience-based illusions so powerful that even very experienced listeners may have difficulty following the stable underlying form.

PART II: EXERCISES

In the exercises that follow, students will conduct hypermetrically through four different sets of examples. First, they will sharpen their perception of syncopation and hypermeter through jazz exercises with normative phrase structure (sets 1 and 2). Then, they will study analogous examples from CPE repertoire (set 3). Finally, they will explore CPE examples containing non-normative phrase structure (set 4).

Overview of Exercise Sets

Each of the four sets of exercises involves a different combination of genre, scope, phrase structure, and surface-level rhythmic character, as summarized in the following table:

Set	Genre	Scope	Phraseology	Rhythmic Character
1	Jazz	Passages of Trading Fours	Normative (surface-level and underlying)	Highly Syncopated
2	Jazz	Complete Performances	Normative (underlying)	Syncopated (intrinsically, at minimum)
3	CPE	Isolated Sections to Complete Pieces	Normative	Syncopated
4	CPE	Opening Passages	Non-Normative	Unsyncopated (mostly)

1) Jazz: Trading Fours / Normative Phraseology (surface-level and underlying) / Highly Syncopated

Jazz musicians sometimes trade solos of short duration with one another. Four bars per solo is typical, although there are many other possibilities. Thus the term “trading fours” is common. Recordings of this practice offer a relatively controlled way to study rhythmic complexity: these solos, especially the drum solos that frequently occur in this context, can be extremely rich in syncopation, but the soloists must adhere to the phraseology of the underlying form (although there may be unusual subphrases, and solos sometimes overlap with one another). Working through these examples will stimulate students to hear complex rhythms and metric aberrations in terms of regular hypermetrical units, even when the hypermetric downbeats are not overtly articulated.

The structure of trading fours is such that learning about rhythm and meter from them is elegantly simple: by keeping track of the (hyper)meter, we are of necessity mentally processing the complex surface in terms of regular underlying units, although this task can be quite difficult in some cases. Note that the aim here is not to simply observe that the trading is occurring, nor to intuitively feel or guess when the next solo will begin, but rather to actually count through the performances precisely, thus consciously perceiving the disparity between metric norms and the local-level deviations entailed by syncopation.

2) Jazz: Complete Performances / Normative Underlying Phraseology / Syncopated

Trading fours is a special circumstance. When not operating under such confines, soloists often avoid clearly and predictably aligning with the regular phrase structure of the form. (This is also a stylistic matter, and later genres of jazz tend to be more fluid in this way.) The form continues to go by, but soloists are free to superimpose their own phrase structure over it. Rhythm section players are also free to either clarify or obscure the form. Following the form through a complete improvisation or performance is therefore a very different exercise than tracking hypermeter in passages of trading fours. Here, we not only have to process local-level syncopation in terms of metric norms, but also must process complex surface-level phrasing in terms of normative underlying phrase structure. Fortunately, the form is often easier to follow at first but becomes progressively more difficult to track throughout the performance, and/or during each soloist's improvisation, creating a conveniently graded pedagogical structure.

3) CPE: Normative Phraseology / Syncopated

Having honed students' comprehension of syncopation and hypermeter with jazz exercises, the focus now turns to CPE repertoire. These examples all feature normative phrase structure and syncopation, and some contain other rhythmic complexities such as hemiola, polyrhythm, and metric displacement as well. They therefore are analogous to the jazz exercises above, and the multilayered model of stable norms and salient deviations applies.

4) CPE: Non-Normative Phraseology / Mostly Unsyncopated

This set of exercises contains CPE pieces exhibiting irregular phrase and/or hypermetric structure. In previous exercise sets, hypermetric structure and underlying phrase structure generally aligned, but here they do not always do so. For example, in some cases the phrase structure is arguably regular, but a measure-sized elision occurs that produces an irregular hypermetric structure (e.g., 4+4 expressed as 7).

In Exercise Set #2, unusual surface-level phrase structure was superimposed over normative underlying phrase structure. In this set of examples, unusual phrase structure alters normative phrase structure rather than coexisting with it. However, the former often takes on meaning by virtue of its relationship to the latter. This is particularly the case when a regular-length phrase is expanded, but also occurs when regular phrase structure is suddenly interrupted by an irregular-length phrase. The model of multilayered listening I describe is still applicable in these examples (though less directly) in that we compare deviant phrases to their original versions, or to normative versions that could have been composed instead. Having developed a more deeply engrained feeling for normative phrase structure in the previous exercises, students will be better equipped to make these comparisons.

General Instructions

Instructors have a range of options as to how to use the exercises, depending upon time available, students' level of experience, teaching style, and so forth. For example, given limited time, less experienced students, and a traditional teaching style, an instructor might choose to prepare selected exercises and lead the class in conducting through them. With more time, more experienced students, and a more exploratory teaching style, an instructor might first demonstrate how the exercises work, then let students or groups of students choose exercises to study on their own, and finally have students perform or lead the class in conducting the exercises they have chosen. Allowing them to choose exercises could provide a way for students from different backgrounds to learn from one another; for example, jazz students taking the traditional core classes could demonstrate how to navigate the more difficult jazz examples, and string students familiar with the CPE repertoire could help elucidate the more challenging quartet/quintet examples.

Some options that may be used by instructors or student presenters/leaders as appropriate:

- Instructors or leaders can snap their fingers to reinforce conducted beats.
- Instructors or leaders may count out loud a higher level of hypermetric structure as it passes by. For example, “1...2...3...1...” could be spoken—one number for each four-measure hypermetric downbeat—in a twelve-measure jazz form.
- If some students do not have sufficient conducting ability, they might opt to simply count quietly to themselves, tap beats quietly on their leg or with their foot, or count hypermetrical units on their fingers. However, the exercises themselves are a good way to increase conducting ability.

In order to provide the instructor with sufficient options, I have supplied a number of different examples—of varying degrees of complexity—for each exercise type. The examples have been classified as “easy,” “medium,” or “difficult,” and within each category they have also been organized, as much as possible, by increasing level of difficulty.

Exercise Set #1:

Jazz: Trading Fours / Normative Phraseology (surface-level and underlying) / Highly Syncopated

Instructions / Suggestions for Use:

Each example has specific conducting instructions for the instructor or student presenter/leader to follow. In most cases, one will conduct in a medium or medium-fast four, which will correspond to a hypermetric two-bar grouping. (I will refer to this as conducting in “hypermetric 2.”) The contrast between the stable conducting pattern and the deviant surface will increase as one progresses through the playlist. Jazz, like CPE music, is not performed metronomically, and one must therefore actively engage with the soloist’s ideas and react to tempo fluctuations, microtiming, or other rhythmic subtleties in order to successfully perform the exercise.

An option is to conduct larger beats corresponding to whole measures, subdividing each beat in order to embody the cut-time meter, thus conducting four measures in one pattern. It is more difficult to be precise while subdividing; snapping may help.

Note that the track-times listed indicate when the trading begins, though it may be necessary to first listen to the head, or to begin listening sometime before the trading occurs.

[Spotify playlist for Exercise Set #1](#) (hyperlinks are also embedded in each individual example)

Easy:

1) [Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington – “It Don’t Mean a Thing \(If It Ain’t Got That Swing\)”](#)
([Ella and Duke at the Côte D’Azur](#))

- 2:33 – vocalists and saxophone trade fours and eights in various combinations
- conduct in a medium 4 (hypermetric 2)

2) [Miles Davis – “Four”](#) ([Workin’ with the Miles Davis Quintet](#))

- 5:47 – trumpet and drums trade fours
- conduct in a medium 4 (hypermetric 2)

3) [Hank Mobley – “Split Feelin’s”](#) ([Soul Station](#))

- 3:31 – saxophone and drums trade fours
- conduct in a medium-fast 4 (hypermetric 2)

4) [Max Roach – “Ezz-Thetic”](#) ([Max Roach Plus Four](#))

- 6:29 – saxophone, trumpet, and drums trade fours
- conduct in a fast 4 (hypermetric 2)

Intermediate:

5) [Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Stitt, and Sonny Rollins – “Eternal Triangle”](#) ([Sonny Side Up](#))

- 12:44 – trumpet and drums trade fours
- conduct in a fast 4 (hypermetric 2)
- famous “tenor battle” of trading solos at 6:21, though perhaps less appropriate for our aims here

6) [Hank Mobley – “No Room for Squares” \(*No Room for Squares*\)](#)

- 5:00 – saxophone, trumpet, and drums trade fours
- conduct in a medium-fast 4 (hypermetric 2)

7) [Buddy Rich and Max Roach – “Figure Eights” \(*Rich versus Roach*\)](#)

- drummers Rich and Roach trade eights for entire performance
- conduct in a medium 4 (hypermetric 4)
- structure begins to breakdown at 3:38, when two beats appear to be added between solos

8) [Oscar Peterson and Clark Terry – “Shaw ‘Nuff” \(*Oscar Peterson and Clark Terry*\)](#)

- 2:36 – trumpet and piano trade eights with no accompaniment (duo album)
- conduct in a very fast 4 (hypermetric 2)
- Part of the humor and drama of this trading eights passage is the dialog the musicians have around tempo: Peterson pushes and Terry pulls back (sometimes in extreme fashion!); one must adapt to these fluctuations in conducting through the passage.

Difficult:

9) [Snarky Puppy – “Lingus” \(*We Like it Here*\)](#)

- 8:12 – synthesizer and ensemble trade eights and then fours
- conduct in a fast 4 (hypermetric 1, according to transcription below)
- a transcription of the synthesizer solo and bass pattern by Yehezkel Raz can be downloaded [here](#), and may be a useful tool
- note the extended pickup (one and a half measures) keyboardist Cory Henry plays leading into his penultimate four-measure solo—the trading fours structure is unaffected by this
- viral video of the live-audience studio recording [here](#) (Cory Henry solo begins at 4:17)

10) [Brad Mehldau – “It Might as Well Be Spring” \(*Introducing Brad Mehldau*\)](#)

- 4:36 – piano and drums trade fours, in 7/4
- one measure of 7/4 is equivalent to one measure of the original tune
- conduct in a medium-fast 4: eighth subdivision = 4+4+3+3 (hypermetric 1)
 - technically the 7/4 is 4/4 + 3/4—with the 3/4 felt in 2, as in a jazz waltz—but for these pedagogical purposes it is simplest to think of 4+4+3+3

- performance begins 2+2+3 / 2+2+3 but later settles into 4+4 / 3+3

11) [Bill Evans – “T.T.T. \(Twelve Tone Tune\)” \(*Blue in Green: The Concert in Canada*\)](#)

- 0:34 – (beginning of solo section): drums, bass, and piano trade choruses (twelves), each unaccompanied
- conduct in a medium-fast 4 (hypermetric 2)

Exercise Set #2:

Jazz: Complete Performances / Normative Underlying Phraseology / Syncopated

Instructions / Suggestions for Use:

As before, there are specific conducting instructions for each example. Most of the examples are well-known, and therefore this exercise set also serves as an introduction to some canonical jazz literature. Below are various options that the instructor or student leader/presenter may wish to consider.

- The instructor or leader may choose to call out formal sections (“A,” “B,” etc.) as they occur.
- The instructor or leader may choose to indicate the beginning of each chorus as it occurs, visually and/or verbally.
- An alternative to hypermetric conducting would be to project a lead sheet of the composition and point to the chord changes or measures as they go by.
- Another option is to project a transcription of the performance or assign it for study. However, note that while it can be revealing to study transcriptions, their quality varies greatly, and even an excellent transcription constitutes only a guide to listening, as it is not equivalent to a score. When available, information on suitable transcriptions has been provided below. (Full citations may be found in the bibliography.) Note that piano chords tend to be the least reliable element of transcriptions. (Students could potentially take part in transcription activities themselves, but be aware that transcription work is often more time-consuming than anticipated, particularly for those who are new to it.)
- Yet another alternative is to play the chord roots on the piano as they occur (in the form), thus clarifying the stable harmonic (and rhythmic) underpinnings provided by the form. This is effective because roots are frequently deemphasized in jazz, even by bassists. Furthermore, even when roots are clearly present, the chord changes during solos are essentially presented contrapuntally—the soloist’s eighth notes and the bassist’s quarter notes create 2:1 counterpoint. (Comping chords are not always present, or may be sparse, ambiguous, complex, or themselves

presented linearly.) Playing roots on the piano in effect analyzes the surface, the aural equivalent of stemming noteheads or providing Roman numerals. The difficulties of hearing the chord changes in jazz are similar to the difficulties of performing a harmonic analysis of a two-voice contrapuntal piece. A chief difference is that in jazz, the “analysis” more or less already exists in the form of lead sheets.

[Spotify playlist for Exercise Set #2](#) (hyperlinks are also embedded in each individual example)

Easy:

1) [Charlie Parker – “Scrapple From the Apple” \(from *Jazz Masters* compilation\)](#)

- conduct in a medium 4 (hypermetric 2)
- 32-measure AABA form (chord changes based on “I Got Rhythm”)

2) [Miles Davis – “All Blues” \(*Kind of Blue*\)](#)

- conduct in a slow 4 (hypermetric 2)
- 12-measure form
- 8-measure intro (vamp)
 - head/form starts when trumpet enters
- full transcription of the album is available from Hal Leonard

3) [Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane – “Nuttty” \(*Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane*\)](#)

- conduct in a medium-slow 4 (hypermetric 2)
- 32-measure AABA form
- piano drops out shortly into Coltrane’s solo

Intermediate:

4) [Hiromi \(Hiromi Uehara\) – “Sicilian Blue” \(*Place to Be*\)](#)

- one introductory chorus played freely, followed by vamp/intro, then head
- conduct in a medium-slow 4 (hypermetric 2)
 - but must adjust at the end of each chorus due to seven-measure phrase
- AABA form (8+8+14+7)
 - fourteen-measure bridge divided 8+6
- additional points of contact with CPE examples (sets 3 and 4)
 - type of syncopation used in the vamp/intro/outro and bridge
 - greater use of true rubato
 - an irregular phrase length produced by elision at the end of the form (end of bridge also irregular)

- transcription of the head by A-len Yue available [here](#)
- a simpler option is to conduct in 2 throughout (hypermetric 1)

5) [Wynton Kelly Trio with Wes Montgomery – “Impressions” \(*Smokin’ at the Half Note*\)](#)

- conduct in a fast 4 (hypermetric 2)
- 32-measure form (AABA)

6) [John Coltrane – “Countdown” \(*Giant Steps*\)](#)

- conduct in a very fast 4 (hypermetric 2)
- 32-measure form (AA)
- order of events (form gets *easier* to hear as performance progresses):
 - one chorus of drum solo, plus four extra measures
 - saxophone solo enters on downbeat of new chorus
 - piano and bass do not enter until later
 - head is only presented at the end
- saxophone transcription is available from Hal Leonard

7) [John Coltrane – “Resolution” \(*A Love Supreme*\)](#)

- solo bass introduction (head starts at 0:21)
- conduct in a medium 4 (hypermetric 2)
- for this example, simply keep track of the eight-measure hypermetric units (four conducted measures) and do not be concerned with the larger formal structure
 - the low fifths in the piano often occur on the downbeats of these eight-measure hypermetric downbeats
- during the solos, the chord changes of the head are not followed
 - rather, a modal approach is taken, based on E-flat Aeolian, with increasing amounts of outside playing (playing notes outside of the mode) as each solo progresses
- saxophone transcription of the album is available from Hal Leonard

8) [Thelonious Monk: “Evidence” \(*Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane at Carnegie Hall*\)](#)

- conduct in a medium 4 (hypermetric 2)
- 32-measure AABA form
- highly syncopated theme
 - consult [lead sheet](#) for assistance (also available from Hal Leonard in *Thelonious Monk Fake Book*)
 - drums enter on the downbeat of measure 2 of the head (after piano intro)

Difficult:

9) [Chick Corea: “Steps” \(*Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*\)](#)

- solo piano introduction (free) (head starts at 0:47)
- conduct in a very fast 4 (hypermetric 2)
 - for an added challenge, conduct in a medium-slow 4 (hypermetric 4) (this will conflict with the melodic structure of the head, but works during the solo section)
- twelve-measure form
 - head: minor blues chord changes (4+4+4), but melodic structure is 6+6
 - solo section is generally felt 4+4+4
- the beginning of the second chorus of piano solo is clearly marked with the snare drum, and the beginning of the third chorus is clearly marked with the bass drum
- “Steps” essentially ends at 5:04, where an extended drum solo begins that segues into another composition, “What Was”
- piano transcription of the album is available from Schott

10) [Brad Mehldau: “All the Things You Are” \(*The Art of the Trio, Volume 4: Back at the Vanguard*\)](#)

- four-chorus piano introduction, head at 2:08
- conduct in a medium-fast 4 (hypermetric 2)
- in 7 (4/4 + 3/4), as with the previous Mehldau example
 - except here one measure of 7 is equivalent to two measures of the original tune
- eighth subdivision = 4+4+3+3
 - this is most consistently articulated by the bass
- AABA with twelve measures in last A section (36-measure form)
- one could also conduct this in a medium 3 (hypermetric 2), feeling a 2+2+3 quarter-note subdivision of the meter (this is harder in that the conducting is slower, but is easier when the bass walks quarter notes rather than articulating the 4+4+3+3 eighth-note subdivision)
- transcription of piano solo by Tom Hewson available [here](#)

11) [Robert Glasper: “G&B” \(*In My Element*\)](#)

- AAB 48-measure form (16+16+16), mixed meter
 - head is played twice in the beginning and once at the end, preceded each time by a sixteen-measure vamp that closely resembles the A section (overall form is shown below)
- listening to the bass is helpful in following the form in this example
- conduct in a gently lilting 4 throughout (hypermetric 4)
 - conduct A sections in a medium-slow 4 (4+5+5+4) (hypermetric 4)
 - conduct B sections in a medium 4 (4+3+4+3) (hypermetric 4)
- overall form of performance:

vamp
head (AAB)
vamp

head (AAB)

piano solo over AAB form (begins with two unaccompanied A sections)

vamp

outhead (AAB)

outro

- supplementary metric explanation (not necessary to successfully perform exercise):

- A sections are in 9: $(4/4 + 5/4) / (5/4 + 4/4)$

- 8th subdivision: $4+4+3+7 / 3+7+4+4$

- quarter subdivision: $4+5 / 5+4$

- B sections are in 7: $4/4 + 3/4$

- same 7/4 groove as in the Mehdau example

- 8th subdivision: $4+4+3+3$

- quarter subdivision: $4+3$

- an option is to conduct in a very fast 4 throughout (hypermetric 2), following the 8th-note subdivisions shown

Exercise Set #3:

CPE: Normative Phraseology / Syncopated

Instructions / Suggestions for Use:

The instructor (or student leader/presenter) in many cases will find it helpful to consult a score for these examples, especially in the case of complete pieces or movements where I have noted isolated instances of irregular phrase structure. IMSLP links have been provided for each example, and excerpts can be easily located using the page numbers given, which are IMSLP (PDF) page numbers. However, it is suggested that these examples be presented to the class aurally, at least at first, in order to reinforce connections between the two genres and to create continuity with the previous sets of exercises. Proceed according to the specific conducting instructions given for each example, focusing awareness on the relationship between the syncopated surface and the regular hypermetric structure, and drawing attention to the connections between these examples and the jazz examples.

[Spotify playlist for Exercise Set #3](#) (hyperlinks are also embedded in each individual example)

Easy:

1) [Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, op. 57 \(“Appassionata”\) \(II\)](#) –variation I (1:37, p. 16, m. 17) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, two beats per measure (hypermetric 2)

2) [Mendelssohn, String Quartet E minor, op. 44, no. 2 \(I\)](#) – opening theme [Score](#)

- conduct in four, two beats per measure (hypermetric 2)

3) [Schumann, String Quartet in A Major, op. 41, no. 3 \(I\)](#) – second theme (1:24, m. 46) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, one beat per measure (hypermetric 4)

4) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in C minor, K. 457 \(III\)](#) – opening theme (p. 12) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, one beat per measure (hypermetric 4)

5) [Brahms, Intermezzo in A Major, op. 76, no. 6](#) – A section [Score](#)

- conduct in four, two beats per measure (hypermetric 2)
- rubato and extensive use of polyrhythm

Intermediate:

6) [Brahms, Quartet in C minor, op. 51, no. 1 \(II\)](#) – B section (2:14, p. 16, rehearsal E (m. 29)) [Score](#)

- conduct in three, three beats per measure (hypermetric 1, due to tempo)
 - could conduct larger downbeats every other measure to reinforce hypermetric regularity
- also possible to conduct in a very slow, subdivided two, one beat per measure (hypermetric 2)
- note the use of polyrhythm

7) [Schubert, String Quintet in C Major, D. 956 \(II\)](#) – B section (4:47, p. 20, m. 29) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, four beats per measure (hypermetric 1, due to expansiveness of meter)
- simply conducting the meter is sufficient for this exercise (actual phrase structure or hypermeter does not need to be considered)

8) [Beethoven, Piano Sonata in Ab Major, op. 110 \(II\)](#) – entire movement (p. 7) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, one beat per measure (hypermetric 4)
- consult score regarding ritardando in mm. 33-35
- note three “extra” measures near the end of the large B section (mm. 72–74) (it could be argued that mm. 73–75 are the extra measures, but for our purposes conduct a hypermetric

downbeat at m. 75)

9) [Haydn, String Quartet in D Major, op. 20, no. 4 \(III\)](#) – Menuetto (p. 18) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, one beat per measure (hypermetric 4)
- 4+4 / 8+4
- note sequence with imitation and hemiola, containing eight (!) beats per iteration, during the B section (the rhythmic complexity in this example would in fact more properly be described as “hemiola” than “syncopation”)

10) [Beethoven, String Quartet in Bb Major, op. 18, no. 6 \(III\)](#) – A section of Scherzo (p. 11) [Score](#)

- conduct in four, one beat per measure (hypermetric 4)
- extensive use of hemiola
- B section used in exercise set #4

Difficult:

11) [Brahms, Capriccio in C Major, op. 76, no. 8](#) – entire piece [Score](#)

- conduct in two, one beat per measure (hypermetric 2)
 - or conduct in four, two beats per measure (hypermetric 2)
- first ending is an extra measure; however, the second ending is a hypermetric downbeat (measures 9–11 might be considered as a three-bar unit, but for the purposes of this exercise it is simplest not to do so)
- measures 27–29 form a three-bar unit
- extensive use of hemiola, rubato, and tempo fluctuation

12) [Brahms, Capriccio in D minor, op. 116, no. 1](#) – entire piece [Score](#)

- conduct in four, one beat per measure (hypermetric 4), except:
 - conduct measures 53–58 in hypermetric 3
 - measure 131 is an extra bar
 - conduct measures 164–75 in hypermetric 3
- extensive use of metric displacement and hemiola

13) [Brahms op. 116, no. 1](#) (again), Vinnitskaya recording – entire piece

- included for extra challenge (greater use of tempo fluctuation and rubato)

Exercise Set #4:

CPE: Non-Normative Phraseology / Mostly Unsyncopated

Instructions / Suggestions for Use:

One might begin working through this playlist without telling students what they are listening for. Their instinct to conduct or think hypermetrically will hopefully cause them to notice the unusual phrase structure of the initial examples without specifically listening for it. If instructors are adopting a more student-centric approach, they could at that point have students choose examples from the list to later present to the class, using whatever combinations of (hypermetric) conducting, measure counting, score projection, etc. they wish. Another option is to intersperse examples of regular phrase structure among these examples (or give students the option of presenting such examples) to keep the class listening even more critically. The Spotify playlist could still be used, as it may be copied and then customized, adding and removing examples as desired. Also note the following:

- The relevant passages occur at the opening of each work, so one can simply play from the beginning of each track in the playlist.
- Annotations are given only in general terms, and have been included simply to provide the instructor with a quick overview of the examples. I do not define phrases strictly here, and numbers sometimes represent subphrases or hypermetric structure. Students may discover other viable interpretations, but should be asked to defend or explain them.
- Overall, the difficulty designations here are more subjective. Among other considerations, I regard the harder examples to be those that contain syncopation, that are at slower tempos (where phrase structure can be more difficult to perceive), and where the irregular-length phrases—the deviations—are *less* salient and therefore sound more “natural” (e.g., due to a measure-sized elision).

[Spotify playlist for Exercise Set #4](#) (hyperlinks are also embedded in each individual example)

Easy:

1) [Beethoven, Symphony no. 8 in F Major, op. 93 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- 4+4+3 (with elision)

2) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 309 \(III\)](#) (p. 11) [Score](#)

- 8+11 (with extension and what [William Caplin](#) refers to as “accompanimental overlap” (not

elision) at m. 19)

- for a more clear example of an accompanimental overlap, see
Haydn, Piano Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI, no. 35 (I), m. 8 [Score](#)

3) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 279 \(III\)](#) (p. 10) [Score](#)

- 4+6

4) [Haydn, String Quartet in G Major, op. 76, no. 1 \(III\)](#) (p. 18) [Score](#)

- 4+6

Intermediate:

5) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in F Major, K. 533 \(III\)](#) (p. 15) [Score](#)

- 6+6 (3+3 subphrases)

6) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 309 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- 7+7+3+3 (with elisions)

7) [Schubert, Twelve German Dances, D. 790, no. 1 in D Major](#) [Score](#)

- 10+10 at m. 33

8) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in G Major, K. 283 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- 4+6+6 (with hemiola)

9) [Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major, K. 311 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- 3+3 / 4+6 / 4+3 (with elisions)

10) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in A Major, K. 331 \(II\)](#) (p. 11) [Score](#)

- 4+6 (cadences occur on beat 2)

11) [Haydn, String Quartet in F minor, op. 20, no. 5 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- 4+(5) (with elision)

Difficult:

12) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in C Major, K. 279 \(II\)](#) (p. 7) [Score](#)

- 6 (3+3)

13) [Mozart, String Quartet in F Major, K. 590 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- 3+3 / 5+4 / 3+... (STA₁ almost replicates FTA's 3+3)
- mm. 1, 4, and 7 may be heard as hypermetrically weak

14) [Haydn, Piano Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: 50 \(III\)](#) (p. 12) [Score](#)

- 3+4+? (with elision)

15) [Mozart, String Quartet in D Major, K. 499 \(I\)](#) [Score](#)

- elision at m. 20

16) [Mozart, String Quintet in G minor, K. 516 \(II\)](#) (p. 9) [Score](#)

- 4+5+4 (with syncopation and elision)

17) [Mozart, Piano Sonata in Bb Major, K. 333 \(II\)](#) (p. 9) [Score](#)

- 4+4+5 (with accompanimental overlap at m. 8)

18) [Beethoven, String Quartet in Bb Major, op. 18, no. 6 \(III\)](#) (p. 11) [Score](#)

- 4+4 / 7+7
- extensive use of syncopation and hemiola
- A section used in exercise set #3

19) [Haydn, Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI, no. 51 \(II\)](#) (p. 6) [Score](#)

- conduct in hypermetric 2 through entire movement, adjusting as necessary due to frequent “extra” or “missing” single measures
- extensive use of syncopation

Conclusion

Following the form in jazz requires the listener to perceive both stable norms and salient deviations from them. Doing so is aural training of the highest level, and exercises in jazz listening offer an efficient path towards the acquisition of important general skills. In addition, they stimulate the mind in a unique way, may be easily incorporated into a traditional theory or aural skills classroom, and heighten our sense of both the similarities and differences between the classical and jazz idioms. Finally, though this essay has focused on matters of phrase structure and hypermeter, other aspects of the multilayered jazz listening model I have described may be utilized to help traditional music students hear harmonic implications in contrapuntal music, or music that employs extended harmony.

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Works Cited

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