

Hearing Phrase Structure—Introducing Hypermeter Concept in Intermediate-Level Piano Study

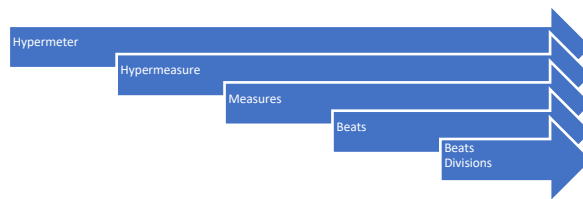
Zhenyu Gao (zhenyug@email.sc.edu)

Abstract

Exploring music's rhythmic elements is a significant process to understand and accurately perform it. Beyond basic rhythmic principles like time signatures and steady beats, students may struggle with distinguishing and deconstructing musical structures as a continuous content. Techniques like counting, conducting, and utilizing hypermeter offer valuable tools for comprehending phrase structures, analyzing music, and perceiving rhythm. This project advocates an analytical approach using hypermeter to help students enhance their grasp of phrasing nuances and distinctly apprehend rhythmic fluctuations within musical compositions.

Terms and Definitions

- Hypermeter: a sounding meter in which the grouping of tactus spans more music than the grouping of beats indicated by the notated time signature and barlines
- Hypermeasure is composed of measures; beats; beats divisions
- Tactus: one pulse layer that distinguishes itself in which we choose to conduct or count



Please explore the musical example analysis using hypermeter with the QR code below.



Further Applications that may use hypermeter

- The method serves to enhance students' mastery in conducting.
- This approach finds applications beyond the music major area, such as in ballet classes. In these settings, ballet instructors often utilize hypermeter to group the tactus, focusing on the rhythmic pulse rather than adhering strictly to the notated time signature.

Selected Reference:

- Berger, Anna Maria Busse. "The Evolution of Rhythmic Notation." In *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen, 628-656. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Huron, David, and Matthew Royal. "What is Melodic Accent? Converging Evidence from Musical Practice." *Music Perception* 13/4 (1996), 489-516.
- Rothstein, William N. *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music*. New York: Schirmer, 1989.
- Santa, Matthew. *Hearing Rhythm and Meter: Analyzing Metrical Consonance and Dissonance in Common-Practice Period Music*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2019.