

The First-Movement Exposition of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony: Cadences, Form, and Voice-Leading Structure¹

The intention of this paper is to examine how various cadences organize the course of the music in the first-movement exposition of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony. These cadences are discussed from two perspectives: first, their formal functions and underlying Schenkerian voice-leading structures are studied, both in the local and broader contexts; second, this paper examines how the juxtaposition of the cadences and the possible uncertainty of their formal and structural functions affect the dramatic course of the music.

Different kinds of cadential gestures belong to the primary means to punctuate the unfolding of the music of the Classical era. On the local level cadential gestures articulate the division of music into phrases, and in the large-scale organization they help to draw the boundaries between main formal sections. The significance and hierarchical nature of cadential gestures were already noted by the Classical theorists. Johann Philipp Kirnberger, for example, wrote in 1771 that

'[j]ust as a paragraph in speech consists of segments, phrases, and sentences that are marked by various punctuation symbols such as the comma (,), semicolon (;), colon (:), and period (.), the harmonic [equivalent of the] paragraph can also consist of several segments, phrases, and periods.'²

The cadence is the strongest of these punctuating gestures. Heinrich Christoph Koch defined the cadence in 1782 as follows:

'A cadence or a tonal closure actually consists of three parts of the measure. The last of these, which constitutes the caesura of the tonal closure, must always occur on the strong part of the measure. In the bass of this caesura there is the tonic note, which supports a triad, and in the top voice there must be the octave of the tonic note. The weak part of the measure that precedes the closing note consists of a triad or a seventh chord on the dominant.'³

1 This paper was presented at the Eighth Conference of the Dutch-Flemish Society for Music Theory, Brussels, 24-25 February 2006.

2 Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *The Art of Strict Musical Composition*, trans. by David Beach and Jürgen Thym, New Haven 1982, p. 114 (German original: *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*, Berlin 1771-79, facs. Kassel etc. 2004).

3 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition, Erster Theil*, Rudolstadt 1782 (facs. Hildesheim 1969), pp. 240-41. Koch's notion of a cadence as a strong punctuating gesture has been discussed in Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1992, p. 279.

Thus Koch refers with the term cadence to the kind of closure that is nowadays often called a ‘perfect authentic cadence’: a progression in which a root-position dominant, which according to Koch must have either $\hat{2}$ or $\hat{7}$ in the top voice, proceeds into a root-position tonic with $\hat{1}$ in the top voice. In the Classical era such cadences were often considered as the only means to end larger sections that include definitive closure. Anton Reicha, for example, wrote in 1814 that

‘[t]he whole must be called a period, because it has a perfectly defined ending which evokes a feeling of fulfillment (...). Therefore, the period (...) always ends, without exception, with a perfect cadence.’⁴

Owing to their closing effect, cadences were understood to have a significant role in the large-scale organization of musical works. Heinrich Christoph Koch provides probably the most detailed discussion of sonata form from the Classical era (Koch does not yet use this term, however, which was introduced only in the mid-nineteenth century). He considers the entire exposition as one extended period, the closure of which is defined by a cadence in the secondary key. The cadence may be followed by material that further confirms the new key.

‘The first allegro of the symphony (...) has two sections (...) The first of these [i.e., the exposition] consists only of a single main period (...) Following the cadence [in the dominant key] a clarifying period is often appended that continues and closes in the same key in which the preceding one also had closed. Thus it is nothing else than an appendix to the first period and both united may quite properly be considered a single main period.’⁵

So this cadence in the secondary key can be understood as the tonal goal of the exposition. Prior to the cadence, the main articulation occurs, according to Koch, when the music halts on the dominant of the secondary key that prepares the second group, to use the modern terminology:

‘[O]ften, in the first period of [a symphony’s] allegro, a formal phrase-ending is not heard until the V-phrase [i.e., the half cadence] in the key of the fifth presents itself. This is seldom passed over, particularly because it is usually followed by a cantabile phrase.’⁶

In their recent study on the Classical exposition, James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy have presented a theory which is in several respects close to the ideas quoted above from Koch (see Table 1).⁷ Like Koch, they describe two primary punctuating events in the exposition, shown in Table 1a, which they term the ‘medial caesura’ and the ‘essential expositional closure.’ The former refers to the rhetorically reinforced gesture that divides the exposition into two parts, the latter to the perfect authentic cadence that functions

4 Anton Reicha, *Treatise on Melody*, trans. by Peter M. Landey, Hillsdale NY 2000, p. 16 (italics in the original; French original: *Traité de mélodie*, Paris 1814).

5 Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition*, trans. by Nancy Kovaleff Baker, New Haven 1983, p. 199 (German original, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition, Dritter und letzter Theil*, Leipzig 1793).

6 Ibidem, p. 230.

7 James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, ‘The Medial Caesura and Its Role in the Eighteenth-Century Sonata Exposition,’ in: *Music Theory Spectrum* 19/2 (1997), pp. 115-54. The *Elements of Sonata Theory* by James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy (New York 2006) has been published after I finished this paper.

as the tonal goal of the exposition. Table 1b shows the four options for a medial caesura. The first, the most common, is the one described by Koch: a half cadence in the secondary key. The second, a half cadence in the tonic, is also quite frequently encountered. The last two, a perfect authentic cadence in either the secondary key or the tonic key, are rare, but the former of these is still occasionally found. This option of a perfect authentic cadence in the secondary key contains, however, a potential formal ambiguity: such a cadence functioning as the medial caesura might be confused with the essential expositional closure. Table 1c shows, finally, that the medial caesura prepares the secondary-theme zone and that the essential expositional closure is followed by a post-cadential closing zone.

Two-part exposition (Hepokoski and Darcy)

- a) Two primary punctuating events:
- Medial caesura (MC): brief, rhetorically reinforced break or gap that serves to divide an exposition into two parts, tonic and dominant (or tonic and mediant, in most minor-key sonatas).
 - Essential expositional closure (EEC): a clearly articulated tonal goal – usually the first satisfactory perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in the new key.
- b) Four options for medial caesura:
- Half cadence in the new key (V: HC or III: HC); most common.
 - Half cadence in the tonic key (I: HC); quite common.
 - Perfect authentic cadence in the new key (V: PAC or III: PAC); quite rare.
 - Perfect authentic cadence in the tonic key (I: PAC); extremely rare.
- c) The four zones of an exposition:
- Primary-theme zone (P): establishes the tonic key as a point of departure.
 - Transitional zone (TR): gain of energy, initiates often (but not always) the modulation to the secondary key, ends in the medial caesura (MC).
 - Secondary-theme zone (S): the beginning of the secondary key area, closes in a cadence, the essential expositional closure (EEC), may contain several thematic ideas (S¹, S² etc.).
 - Closing zone (C): post-cadential section that reinforces the EEC, often through a chain of cadential modules (C¹, C² etc.).

Table 1

In many short and simple sonata-form movements, the recognition of the medial caesura and the essential expositional closure may be quite a straightforward task: if there is only one viable candidate for each, the choice poses no problem. The situation may be considerably more difficult in more extended works, however, and the first movement of the 'Prague' Symphony is certainly such a work – in Charles Rosen's view this symphony is 'Mozart's most massive achievement in the symphonic genre.'⁸ One analytically problematic aspect of the exposition of its first movement is the interpretation of the formal and structural function of the several perfect authentic cadences in the secondary key, A major. These cadences are shown in Example 1, and numbered from 1 to 5 to facilitate their examination. (The boxed numbers in the subsequent examples refer to these cadences.)

8 Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, revised edition, New York 1988, p. 201.

95 97

p

VI II⁶ V₄⁶ — 5/3 I

PAC

110 112

p pizz. *p*

I₄⁶ II₄⁶ V I[#]

PAC

119 121

p *f*

I II⁶ V₄⁶ — 5/3 I

PAC
(OR IAC?)

128 129 135 136

f (etc.) *f* (etc.)

IV — II⁶ V₄⁶ — 5/3 I II⁶ V I

PAC PAC

Example 1

Mozart, Symphony in D major, K. 504, I, cadences in the dominant key.

The main analytical difficulty of the exposition before the cadence of mm. 96-97 concerns the formal and structural function of mm. 69-71. In m. 69 there is an emphatic half cadence in the main key. In m. 71 the dynamic level drops to piano, and at the same time the exposition's opening theme is heard in the dominant key, A major. The formal prob-

m. 94, the texture changes, a change that is highly significant. Example 3 (p. 170) is a voice-leading sketch of mm. 81-101 – from the arrival at the II^\sharp via the first cadence in the dominant key to the opening measures of the thematic idea beginning in m. 97. I interpret the A-major sixth chord of m. 94 as the opening harmony of an auxiliary cadence. (The beginning of a new hypermeasure and the change of texture underline this harmony, justifying the interpretation that sees m. 94 as the beginning of a goal-directed cadential progression. The hierarchy of the harmonic progression is somewhat obscured by the F^\sharp -minor harmony of m. 95, a chord that is stressed in the foreground rhetoric in spite of its decorative voice-leading function.)

Reading mm. 94-97ff. as an auxiliary cadence has several important consequences. First, in spite of the clear cadential arrival⁹ at the tonic of A major, the cadential progression itself, the auxiliary cadence, is a local phenomenon. That is, the V-I motion in mm. 96-97 does not close a long-range harmonic progression. Second, the top-voice A of m. 97, the $\hat{1}$ ending the perfect authentic cadence, is basically an inner-voice note. Hence the emphasized seventh of the preceding dominant, the $\hat{4}$ in the dominant key, gets registral continuation only in m. 101, as indicated by the beams in Example 3. Consequently the top-voice tension is carried beyond the cadential arrival in m. 97.¹⁰ The cadence of mm. 96-97 is affected by the metrical situation as well (see the metrical analysis below Example 3b). In m. 97 there is a metrical reinterpretation: this measure both ends the preceding hypermeasure and begins a new one (this reading is clarified by the uppermost staff of Example 3b, which shows the two conceptually separate measures which overlap in the actual music). Owing to the metrical reinterpretation, the A-major chord of m. 97 is understood both as a goal and as a starting point of new motion. All these factors suggest that the cadence of mm. 96-97 does not function as an unequivocal closure, notwithstanding its local significance. Hence one gets the impression that another cadence is still needed to close the exposition in a satisfactory manner. This impression is enhanced by thematic factors: the thematic unit beginning in m. 97 starts with an upbeat, which further stresses the air of continuous musical flow past the cadence.

- 9 I use the notion of 'cadential arrival' as defined by William E. Caplin to denote the arrival of the closing harmony of a cadence (a tonic in the case of a perfect authentic cadence). See Caplin, 'The Classical Cadence: Conceptions and Misconceptions,' in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57/1 (2004), pp. 51-117, p. 77.
- 10 The top-voice motion is quite unusual in this exposition. Usually the background $\hat{2}$ is supported by the structural dominant, and the fifth-progression descending from the $\hat{2}$ occurs in its entirety in the second part of the exposition: see Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, New York 1979 (German original: *Der freie Satz*, 1935), pp. 135-136. As Example 3 indicates, in the 'Prague' exposition the $\hat{2}$ appears only above the II^\sharp , since the second note of the fifth-progression, the seventh D, is added to the dominant in m. 88. Consequently the structural dominant that opens the exposition's second part, more locally the tonic of A major (m. 97), supports the third note of the fifth-progression, C^\sharp , rather than the usual $\hat{2}$. Although an unusual procedure, the 'Prague' Symphony is not the sole work in the Classical repertory where this occurs. Rather similar voice leading underlies, for example, the first movement of Haydn's Symphony No. 97 in C major. After the slow introduction the opening tonic is prolonged with a chromaticized voice exchange (mm. 14-52), and the II^\sharp arrives in m. 53, supporting the top-voice $\hat{2}$ (as in the 'Prague', the V appears here as a passing harmony within the voice exchange). In m. 70 the seventh – the second note (C) of the fifth-progression descending from the $\hat{2}$ – is added to the II^\sharp . The background V – supporting the third note (B) of the fifth-progression – arrives in m. 76. Limited space makes a discussion of the highly original formal organization of this exposition impossible.

a)

b)

Example 4
Voice-leading sketch of mm. 97-112.

M. 97 begins a clearly defined thematic unit, which closes in mm. 111-112 with the second of the perfect authentic cadences shown in Example 1. This thematic unit consists of a parallel period (see Example 4). The antecedent closes in m. 104 on the dominant; the consequent, which is in the parallel minor, in a cadence in mm. 111-112. The top voice descends from the $C\sharp$ of m. 101 ($\hat{3}$ in A major) to the $\hat{1}$ of the dominant key that closes the cadence. But again the cadence does not create the impression of a final closure. As in the preceding cadence, there is a metrical reinterpretation suggesting continuity beyond the tonic of m. 112 (see the metrical analysis below Example 4b). Furthermore, the thematic material that starts the new unit in m. 112 again includes an upbeat, repeating motivic ideas of the preceding parallel period. The metrical reinterpretation, upbeat, and thematic repetition underline the music's continuity.

The situation is interesting. So far the music has had two clear perfect authentic cadences in the dominant key, yet one is still waiting for a cadence that would create unequivocally the impression of closure – i.e., suggest that the structural goal of the exposition has been reached. The lack of definitive closure also affects the interpretation of the voice-leading structure. Owing to the air of expectancy which still governs the music, I do not read the A in the uppermost voice of m. 112 as the deep-level $\hat{1}$ that would close the exposition's underlying structure. Rather, as the beams in Example 4 indicate, I read it as an inner-voice note. As a result the $C\sharp$, a $\hat{3}$ in A major, still governs the top voice. Hence the music must again start to seek a cadence that would finally complete the top-voice motion to $\hat{1}$.

The new phrase starting in m. 112 leads to yet another cadence in mm. 120-121, the third of the perfect authentic cadences shown in Example 1. Example 5 is a voice-leading sketch of mm. 112-121. Mm. 112-115 consist of a four-bar hypermeasure that establishes E as the main top-voice note (see the metrical analysis below Example 5b). After this hypermeasure, the symmetrical metrical structure is disturbed: mm. 116-118 form a three-bar metrical unit, and a similar unit is heard in the following mm. 119-121. In mm. 116-118 the top voice begins to descend from E, reaching D in m. 117 (the significance of D is stressed by the orchestration: the two horns sound a D in mm. 116-117 – the first time brass instruments are heard since m. 95). D becomes the seventh of the dominant in m. 118, so it has a strong tendency to descend into $C\sharp$, the $\hat{3}$ that governs the top voice at deep structural levels. However, as the parentheses in Example 5 indicate, this resolution of the seventh does not occur in the uppermost voice when the tonic is regained in m. 119.

The tonic of m. 119 begins a harmonic progression leading to the cadence in mm. 120-121. In spite of the avoidance of an explicitly stated $C\sharp$ in m. 119, $\hat{3}$ clearly begins the top-voice motion of the cadential progression. Example 5b indicates that it initiates a third-progression leading in m. 121 to A, $\hat{1}$ in A major. But again there are several factors that deny a strong closure in m. 121. First of all, a metrical reinterpretation takes place (see the metrical analysis below Example 5b). The metrical situation is now somewhat more complicated than in the preceding cadences, however, because mm. 116-121 consist of two asymmetrical three-bar metrical units. The impression of m. 121 as a strong structural goal is further weakened by the $C\sharp$ played by the oboe and second violins in m. 121, that has been superimposed above the goal-note of the cadence. Even though the A and $C\sharp$ belong conceptually to different measures (see the uppermost staff above example 5b, where the metrical reinterpretation has been removed), the $C\sharp$ nevertheless denies a strong closure. Moreover, this $C\sharp$ has been prepared by a subsidiary top-voice line descending from E (see the asterisks on the uppermost staff in Example 5b). Mozart is thus still playing with the listener's expectations: he has again prepared and executed a strong cadence, but once more also denied it the status of a structural closure.

a)

b)

1 2 3 4, I 2 3 4, I

Example 6

Voice-leading sketch of mm. 121-129.

a)

b)

1, 1 2 3 4 5 I 6, I

Example 7

Voice-leading sketch of mm. 129-136.

underline the cadentially confirmed tonic that has finally arrived; it indicates that, after several unsuccessful attempts, an unequivocal cadential confirmation of the secondary key – which the listener knows will arrive, owing to the conventions of the Classical era – finally has been reached now.

The phrase starting in m. 130 returns to the opening thematic material of the Allegro. It also sums up, as it were, the structural events underlying the preceding A-major cadences (Example 7). In m. 134 C# (3̂ in A major) is shifted above the structurally primary top-voice note A. The uppermost voice descends back to A in m. 136, in the fifth of the perfect authentic cadences shown in Example 1. The unproblematic top-voice third-progression of mm. 134-136 can be understood as a recollection of the preceding third-progressions, several of which were unable to firmly establish the top-voice A, 1̂ in A major. Now this final third-progression seems to celebrate the fact that the 1̂ has been secured in m. 129 by repeating the route that led to it.

Now that we have examined the five perfect authentic cadences shown in Example 1 from the perspective of voice-leading and phrase structure, we can return to the question of the formal organization of the exposition. I suggested earlier that one of the analytical problems of the exposition is the interpretation of m. 70: whether to read it as the medial caesura or not – i.e., whether to read it as the punctuating gesture dividing the exposition into two parts. If it is taken as the medial caesura, the secondary-theme zone would begin in m. 71. Such an interpretation would also affect the reading of the function of the five cadences. If m. 70 is taken as the medial caesura, then the cadence of mm. 96-97 would be the first option for the essential expositional closure. If, by contrast, m. 70 is not taken as the medial caesura, then m. 97 would begin the secondary-theme zone, in which case we would have a V:PAC medial caesura in mm. 96-97.

Example 8 shows my reading of the overall organization of the exposition. The transitional zone begins in m. 51, first in piano, rising only later into a more vigorous texture. The first goal of the transitional zone is the tonic half cadence in m. 69. As Example 8 indicates, I do not take this measure to be the medial caesura, in spite of the fact that as a gesture this half cadence at first probably suggests such a function. My reason for rejecting the medial caesura interpretation lies in the continuation. The dominant key starting in m. 71 does not get cadential confirmation; instead, the transitional activity is resumed, and a strong II# arrives in m. 81. Hence the A-major chord of m. 71 is not an initiating element, an impression supported by the voice-leading structure, where I read this harmony as occurring within a chromaticized voice exchange. Therefore I interpret m. 70 as a 'medial caesura declined,' a designation used by Hepokoski and Darcy to describe situations where a gesture first suggests a function of a medial caesura, a function that is retrospectively rejected.¹² I read only m. 97, the place where the first perfect authentic cadence in A major is heard, as a medial caesura, and, at the same time, as the onset of the secondary-theme zone.¹³

12 The notion of 'medial caesura declined' is discussed in Hepokoski and Darcy, 'The Medial Caesura,' pp. 138-145.

13 In *Elements of Sonata Theory*, Hepokoski and Darcy briefly discuss the secondary-theme zone of this exposition, referring to m. 97 as its beginning (pp. 152 and 162-63). It would be possible to read this exposition as an instance of the 'mid-expositional trimodular block', an exposition model described in 'The Medial Caesura', pp. 145-150. In personal communication, however, Hepokoski has informed me that he finds a reading of mm. 71-129 as a trimodular block acceptable. According to this interpretation, mm. 71-81 would be the TM₁, mm. 81-97 the TM₂, and the TM₃ would begin in m. 97. My reason for observing an extended tran-

Example 8

Overview of the exposition.

According to Hepokoski and Darcy, the first cadence in the secondary-theme zone usually functions as the essential expositional closure, the structural goal in Classical expositions.¹⁴ In the exposition of the first movement of the 'Prague' Symphony, such a straightforward interpretation would be problematic, however. As we have seen, the cadential arrivals in mm. 112 and 121 are not conclusive, and for this reason I have not interpreted them as completing the deep-middleground fifth-progression descending from the background $\hat{2}$ arrived at in m. 81. For the same reason I feel that the cadential arrivals in mm. 112 and 121 do not constitute the essential expositional closure, a cadence that would lead to the post-cadential closing zone in a satisfactory manner. Rather, since these cadences fail to bring an unequivocal closure, the music must begin

sitional zone leading to the secondary-theme zone in m. 97, instead of a trimodular block, is the length of the section beginning in m. 97. Owing to the avoidance of a closing cadence, the section extends all the way to m. 129. The interpretation of the section beginning in m. 97 as the last block in a trimodular organization would seem to undermine, in my view, its size; the size which becomes apparent only when the music just continues without arriving at a satisfactory cadence. Ultimately, however, my interpretation does not differ very much from a trimodular reading: the differences concern mainly the relative emphasis on certain elements and sections.

14 Similar emphasis on the first cadence is suggested by William Rothstein, whose approach is fundamentally Schenkerian: see *Phrase Rhythm*, pp. 115-118. According to this view the deep-middleground fifth-progression (in major-mode sonatas) descending from the background $\hat{2}$ is completed in the first cadence. The completion of this fifth-progression is at times postponed to later portions of the exposition, however, as is evident in Example 8, which shows that in the 'Prague' Symphony the closure of the fifth-progression arrives only in m. 129. Such postponements have been interpreted occasionally in the published literature. In his well-known analysis of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony Schenker reads four fifth-progressions descending from the background $\hat{2}$ in the first movement, and takes only the last as fundamental: see Heinrich Schenker, *The Masterwork in Music Vol. 3*, ed. by William Drabkin, trans. by Ian Bent, Alfred Clayton, and Derrick Puffet, Cambridge 1997 (German original: *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik III*, 1930), pp. 14-23. Carl Schachter reads in the first movement of Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony only the fourth fifth-progression descending from the background $\hat{2}$ as the one bringing the definitive local $\hat{1}$ to the top voice: see 'Mozart's Last and Beethoven's First: Echoes of K. 551 in the First Movement of Opus 21,' in: *Mozart Studies*, ed. by Cliff Eisen, Oxford 1991, pp. 227-251 (esp. pp. 238-241).

to search for clear closure anew. I read the essential expositional closure finally in mm. 128-129, at the moment when the deep middleground $\hat{1}$ of A major arrives. The closing zone thus begins in m. 130. The references to the opening theme of the Allegro underline the closing effect of this material.

Conclusion

The first-movement exposition of the 'Prague' Symphony plays in several ways with the listener's expectations, created to a great extent by Classical conventions. In the exposition's first part m. 70 initially suggests that the medial caesura might occur here. This reading is rejected, however, by subsequent events, so the dimensions of the exposition become larger than one initially expects. A similar process of enlargement, or deferral, occurs in the second part. The music attempts several times to attain a cadence that would close the exposition's voice-leading structure and bring the essential expositional closure, initially without success. Only after two failed attempts, a successful one finally takes place in m. 129.

This gradual revelation of the true – and huge – dimensions of the exposition is one of its most thrilling aspects. One listens to the music with the same kind of suspense one reads a detective story. The music gives all kinds of clues, and only after having initially followed them one notices that some of them are false. This exposition clearly is the work of a masterly opera composer. Sometimes the characters of Mozart's operas do not know what will happen, and this uncertainty is clearly reflected also in the music – for example when Leporello is disguised as Don Giovanni, or when Cherubino hides behind the chair when the Count enters Susanna's chamber. Similarly, when listening to the 'Prague' Symphony one is held in suspense of how the exposition will unfold. As in the operas, in the symphony the deferral of the resolutions greatly heightens the music's dramatic effect.