The High-Classical German Instrumental Style as the Foundation of Anton Bruckner's Thematic Designs

Edward Jurkowski

Abstract

Anton Bruckner's symphonies have long been recognized as vital contributions to the canon of late-Romantic western art music. Yet this body of work has not been without controversy. One frequent criticism involves the vast length of his themes and the enormous size of each movement – features that have often been attributed to Bruckner's unremitting adulation of Wagner. Rather than situate Bruckner's art as a product of post-Wagnerian aesthetics, in this paper I argue that it is more profitable to examine Bruckner's melodic style as an expansion upon the instrumental themes of the high Classical German style, paradigms formalized in William Caplin's *Classical Form* (1998). By outlining the relationships between the thematic material from Bruckner's and Beethoven's works, I show that the foundation of Bruckner's melodic style is more reactionary than has been acknowledged. More specifically, I show that the themes from these works are enlarged – in Caplin's terms, loosened – versions of Caplinian theme types. Through the course of the discussion, I identify in Bruckner's symphonies comparable loosening techniques, suggesting stylistic conventions. I end with some remarks about further areas of inquiry with respect to the relationship between the thematic construction and formal designs in other symphonies by Bruckner.

Anton Bruckner's symphonies have long been recognized as vital contributions to the canon of late-Romantic western art music. Yet this body of work has not been without controversy. One frequent criticism involves the vast length of his themes and enormous size of each movement – features that have associated with Bruckner's unremitting adulation of Richard Wagner.[1] Concomitantly, a prevalent assessment found during Bruckner's day was that the composer's music was formless, judgments found in reviews by such varied critics as August Wilhelm Ambros, Eduard Hanslick, Max Kalbeck, and Gustav Dömke. The latter's 1886 Viennese review of the seventh symphony is not atypical: "Bruckner lacks the feel for the primary elements of musical formal shape, [but also] for the coherence of a series of melodic and harmonic components parts."[2]

Rather than situate Bruckner's music within the realm of post-Wagnerian aesthetics, in this study I argue it is more profitable to comprehend Bruckner's melodic style as an expansion upon the instrumental themes of the high Classical German style, paradigms formalized in Caplin 1998. At first, it would seem Bruckner's music would be an incongruent body of literature to associate with William E. Caplin's theoretical model – one that the author has primarily used to comprehend late eighteenth-century instrumental music. Yet as I explore below, underlying the expansive length of Bruckner's thematic material is a refined logic that can be reliably illustrated using Caplin's model. I begin with some examples from Ludvig van Beethoven, a composer that features prominently in Caplin's theoretical treatise. While illustrative, the choice of Beethoven is not accidental. As a touchstone for nineteenth-century Viennese composers, it would be typical for a broadly learned composer as Bruckner to know Beethoven's music intimately. For instance, Derek Watson (1975) describes that Beethoven's works were part of Bruckner's musical studies during his early years at Linz and would have been very familiar with at least half of the symphonies by no later than 1839, i.e., by the age of seventeen.[3] Further, Beethoven, along with Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert, and contemporaries such as Franz Liszt and Wagner remained close to Bruckner throughout his life. Given Bruckner's

1 For a summary of Bruckner's relationship with Wagner and late 19th-century Wagnerian politics, see Notley 1997.

2 Dömke, Gustav, *Wiener Abendpost*, 30 March 1886; citation appears in Korstvedt 2004: 170.

3 For another perspective of Beethoven's influence on Bruckner, see chapter 5 from Horton 2004.

knowledge of and penchant for this repertoire, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that, on some level, he would employ elements from this music in his own compositional work. William Carragan (2017), for one, has studied Beethoven's influence on the three-themed exposition in Bruckner's sonata designs. I then turn to Bruckner's work and illustrate how Caplin's theoretical model can explicate the logic of their design. For comparison, I will examine the main themes from seven various movements of Bruckner's symphonies. I end with some remarks about further areas of inquiry with respect to the relationship between the thematic construction and formal designs in other symphonies by Bruckner.

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In essence, Caplin conceptualizes form as a recursive system of formal functions. For instance, a piece in sonata form design consists of three large-scale functions – exposition, development, and recapitulation. However, each of these functions itself contains a series of functions. Continuing with sonata form, an exposition contains a main theme, transition, subordinate theme, and codetta function. And as Caplin has written extensively, themes themselves are constructed from constituent functions – as an illustration, the main theme function of our imagined sonata movement might be a sentence, containing presentation, continuation, and cadential functions.[4]

At the basis of Caplin's theory is that Classical themes are generated by the systematic ordered compilation of component functions. Themes typically are paradigmatically eight measures in length. At the heart of any theme is the "basic idea" (hereafter, "BI") – in essence, a two-measure cell that contains a characteristic melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and dynamic motive. An exhaustive survey of Caplin's various categories of themes is beyond the scope of the present study; however, page 63 in Caplin 1998 contains a useful summary.[5] Before we begin to explore some examples, let me state the obvious – namely, that there are likely as many non-eight-measured as there are eight-measured Classical themes. However, these variants alter in some way our expectation of a functional component within a normative eight-measure archetype. Further, themes that are multiples of eight measures are prevalent: for instance, a sixteen-measure period may be designed with antecedent and consequent phrases that are either a sentence or hybrid-type of theme.[6]

As means of departure to this study, let us look at four examples of Caplinian theme types using the thematic material from Beethoven's symphonies.[7] **Example 1** contains the main theme from the first movement of the fifth symphony. It is a model sentence: a BI, with its characteristic rhythmic motive and harmony asserting the tonic, is immediately followed by a second BI, formulating a "presentation phrase." The repetition of the BI is on the dominant, a category of repetition Caplin refers as "statement/response."[8] The second half of the theme – Caplin's term for the latter half of a sentence is the "continuation phrase" – incorporates two functions: a continuation function – one might appropriately view this as the area for some type of development process – followed by a cadential function. Note that sixteen notated measures in the excerpt equal eight real measures. By contrast, an eight-measure theme placed within an extremely slow tempo can encompass only four notated measures. Simply put, tempo can affect the number of notated measures that constitute an eight-measure paradigmatic theme.

Example 2 illustrates the opening theme of the third movement from the eighth symphony, displaying a traditional period theme type.

4 Along with Caplin (1998), Caplin, Hepokoski, Webster (2009) and Caplin (2013) contain useful summaries of formal function theory.

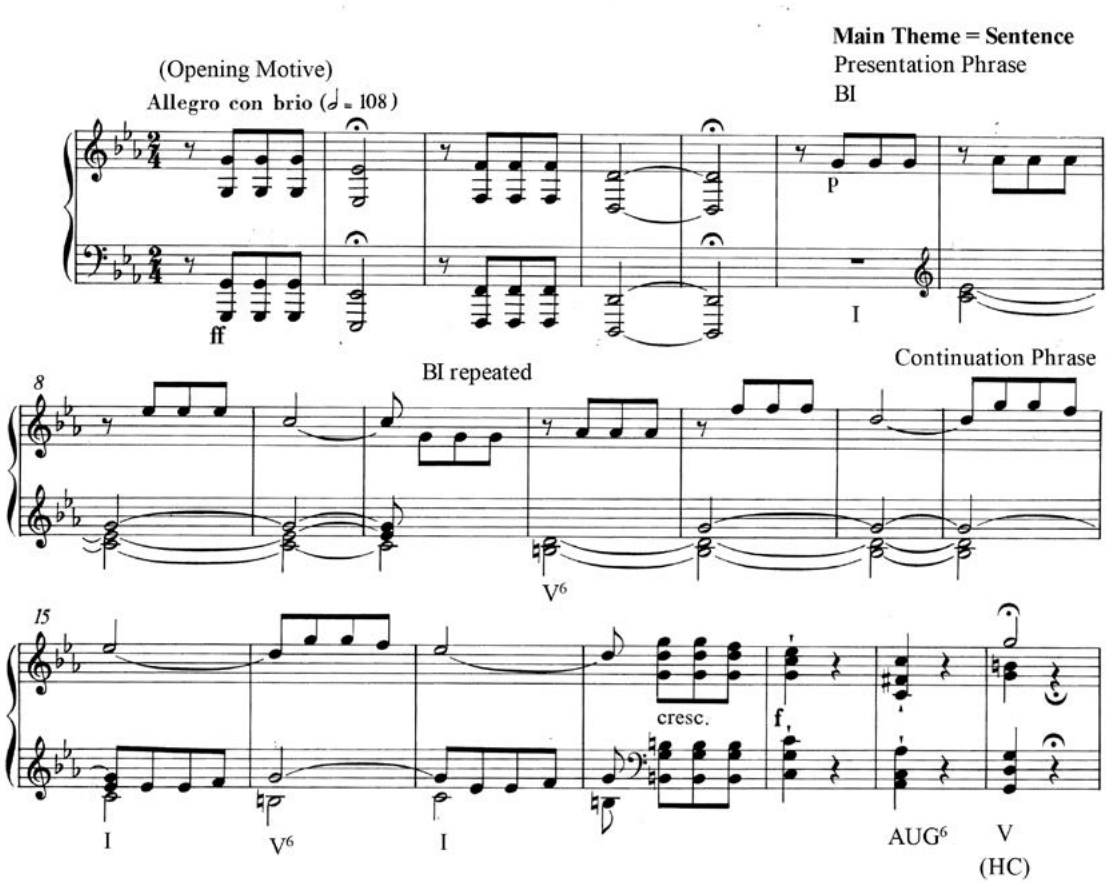
5 Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of Caplin 1998 contain extensive discussion about sentence, period, and hybrid theme types, respectively.

6 Chapter five from Caplin 1998 contains a survey of such large-scale themes.

7 For ease of reading all orchestral excerpts will appear in piano reductions: the Beethoven reductions are by Franz Liszt; all but one of the Bruckner reductions are by August Stradal, by many accounts Liszt's greatest pupil.

8 Caplin identifies three categories of repetition for the presentation phrase of a sentence: exact repetition, repetition on the dominant (labeled "statement/response"), and a catch-all third category, sequential repetition, for repetition on any other scale degree. See Caplin 1998: 39.

Example 1. L. Beethoven/Liszt: Symphony No. 5, Mov. 1, mm. 5–21.



Distinctive here is the antecedent phrase's two-measure BI that is followed by a two-measure contrasting idea (hereafter, "CI"). By definition, a weak cadence, typically a Half Cadence (HC), must appear in m. 4; a repetition of both the BI and CI leads to a stronger Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC), rounding off the consequent phrase.

A hybrid related to a period can be witnessed in the main theme of the first movement of the seventh symphony, shown in **Example 3**.[9] Caplin (1998) views these eight measures as the "A" section of a small ternary (mm. 67–96), the entirety of which constitutes the main theme.[10] Like the prior example, a BI is followed by a CI; the BI/CI complex repeats itself and ends with a PAC. Caplin makes a distinction between a period and a hybrid such as the current example by the nature of the cadence found at the end of the CI of the first BI/CI complex. More specifically, the distinguishing feature between the BI/CI complex here and the antecedent phrase of a period is the absence of a cadence in m. 4, generating what Caplin terms a "Compound Basic Idea" (hereafter, CBI).[11]

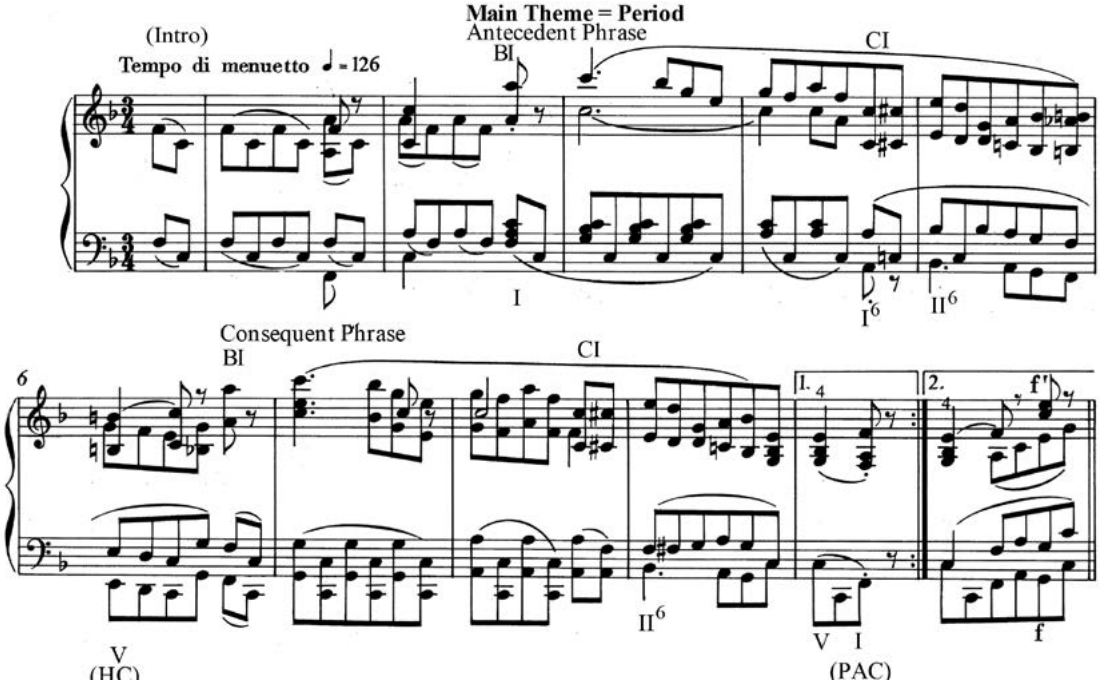
As noted above, there are many themes that do not conform to the expectations of an eight-measure, in Caplin's terms, "tight-knit," theme – and are, instead, "loosened." Since these labels are essential to the ensuing discussion, let us pause for a moment and briefly characterize the descriptive

[9] Caplin refers to this category of hybrid theme as a Hybrid-4. Chapter 5 from Caplin 1998 explores these categories of hybrid theme types.

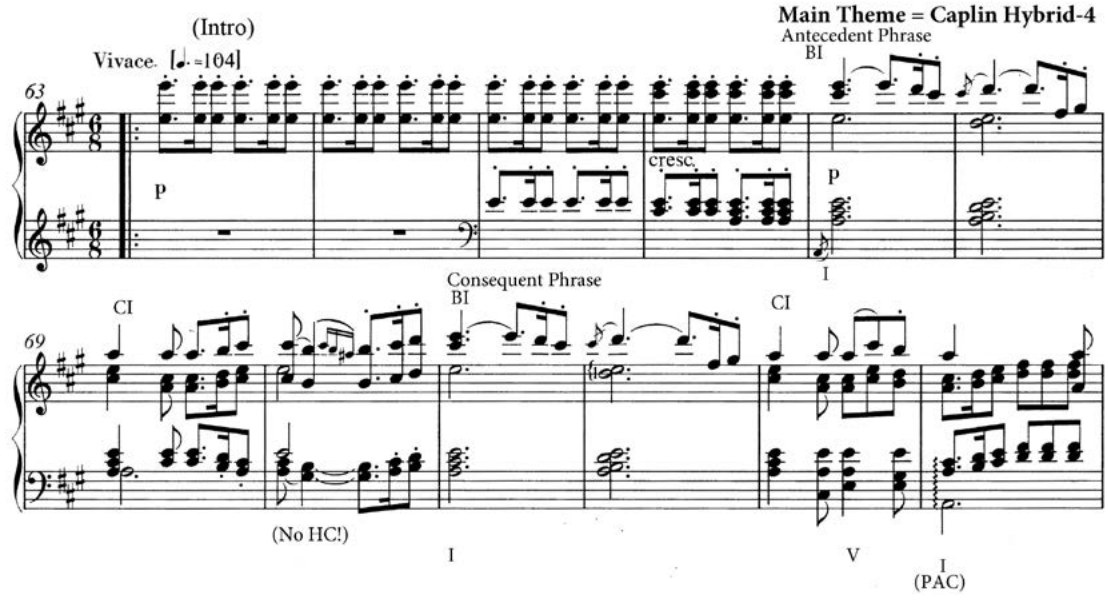
[10] See Example 6.9 from Caplin 1998.

[11] See Caplin 1998: 61 for a detailed explanation of a Compound Basic Idea.

Example 2. L. Beethoven/Liszt: Symphony No. 8, Mov. 3, mm. 3–10.



Example 3. L. Beethoven/Liszt: Symphony No. 7, Mov. 1, mm. 67–74.



terms tight-knit and loose-knit. Caplin's definition of tight-knit identifies "a formal organization characterized by the use of conventional theme-types, harmonic-tonal stability, a symmetrical grouping structure, form-functional efficiency, and a unity of melodic-motivic material." (Caplin 1998: 257). Conversely, loose-knit is a "formal organization characterized by the use of non-conventional thematic structures, harmonic-tonal instability (i.e., modulation, chromaticism), an asymmetrical grouping structure, phrase-structural extension and expansion, form-functional redundancy, and a diversity of melodic-motivic material." (Ibid.). There are three crucial points to make here. First, no one characteristic is less valuable than the other; said differently, a theme possessing one loosening attribute is not necessarily more or less tight-knit than a second theme possessing a different loosening characteristic. Second, these loosening features need not work in isolation; in fact, different characteristics frequently work in tandem. Third, it is important to recognize that looseness is not a pejorative term; rather, it describes deviations from the normative expectations of a given style.

As illustration of a loose-knit theme, consider the main theme from the first movement of the first symphony, shown in **Example 4**. Underlying this twenty-one-measure theme is a sixteen-measure enlarged sentence – that is, an eight-measure presentation phrase consisting of a four-measure CBI that is repeated, followed by an eight-measure continuation phrase containing both continuation and cadential functions. Here, Beethoven's theme is loosened in four ways. First, instead of a two-measure BI followed by a two-measure CI, the BI is itself expanded to four measures, generating a six-measure CBI. The six-measure CBI is repeated via sequential repetition with a focus on D-minor. In short, a normative eight-measure presentation phrase is loosened through expansion to twelve measures. Second, the four-measure expanded BI and two-measure CI generates an asymmetry to the CBI, which normatively is a two-plus-two design. Third, rather than the continuation and cadential functions appearing successively in the continuation phrase, here both functions appear at the same time in the continuation phrase, forging what Caplin terms an "Expanded Cadential Progression" (ECP).[12] Finally, as the result of the loosening elements in the presentation and continuation phrases, the asymmetrical twelve- plus nine-measure design disrupts the archetypical symmetry of two eight-measure phrases.

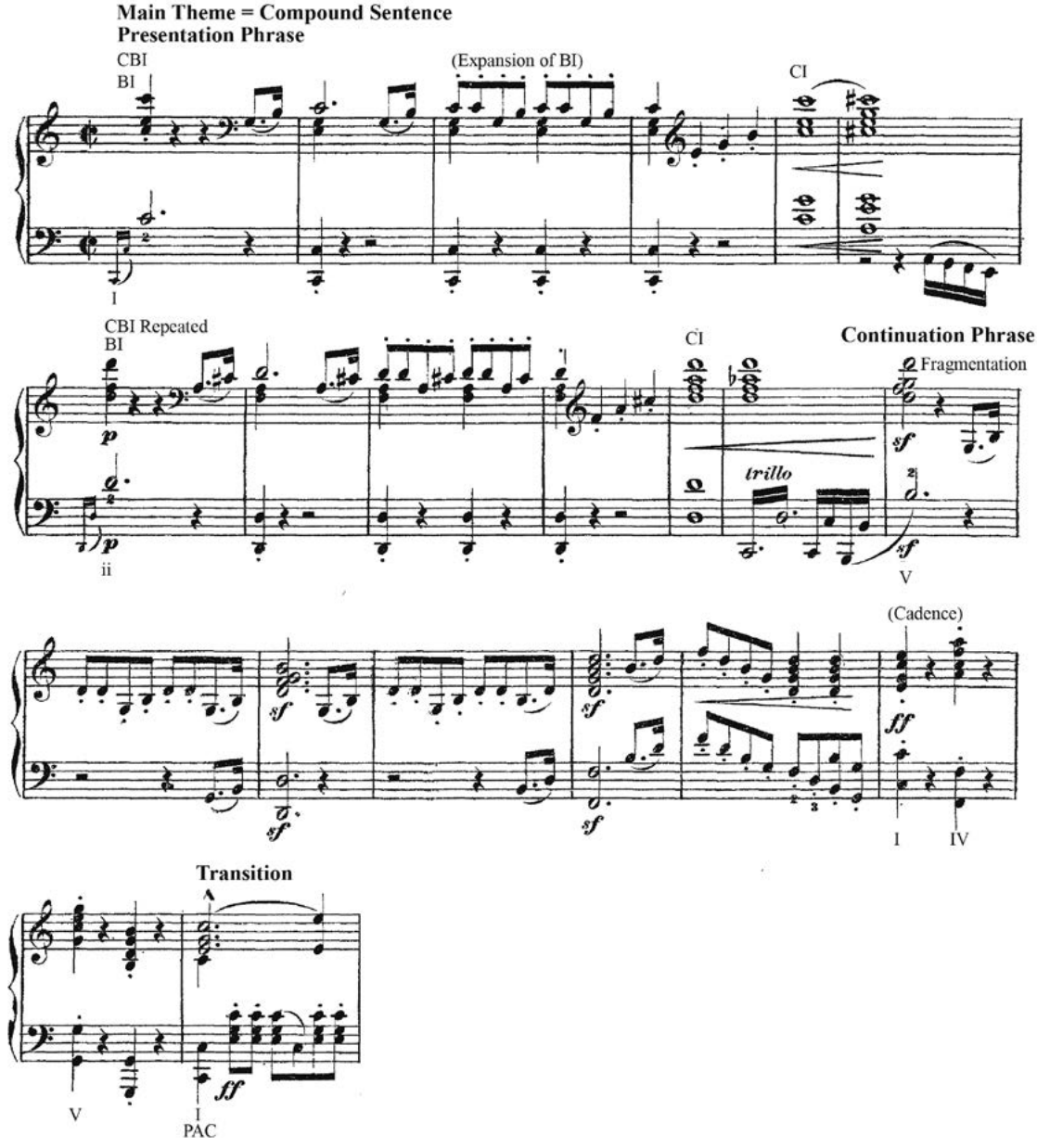
With illustrations of four Caplinian theme types, let us now turn to a few examples of how Caplin's model can explicate the underlying design of a Brucknerian theme; we begin with the third movement from his seventh symphony. **Example 5** is the initial "A" portion of the ternary designed scherzo (the movement itself is a ternary design – i.e., a scherzo-trio-scherzo). The eighty-nine measures are quintessential Bruckner: extensive motivic repetition, presented in an aggressive, motoric rhythmic style with many sequential passages. As my analysis suggests, these measures underscore a large compound sentence theme type. Here, the presentation is a compound basic idea (BI followed by a CI), which asserts the tonic A minor and repeats exactly. However, the presentation function is loosened by the sequential repetitions of the second CI. The continuation portion of the theme begins in m. 29, signaled by the change in dynamic level (the abrupt *piano* from the *forte* in the preceding measures) and return to the motivic material from the BI. Two model/sequences follow. The first, mm. 29–40, contains three, four-measure units connected by the rising chromatic sequential material. Interestingly, fragmentation, a compositional technique typically used to identify the outset of a continuation function is not associated with this first model/sequence, but only with the second beginning in m. 41, which introduces two-measure units that drive towards the cadential 6/4 harmony in m. 53 using one-measure fragments derived from this second model/sequence. Delaying fragmentation in the continuation phrase until after the statement of a model/sequence is one compositional technique Caplin (1998) identifies to loosen a continuation function.[13] It is a strategy we will observe in other Bruckner themes.

In short, the "A" section of the scherzo is closely modeled after a classical scherzo:

[12] For discussion about the Extended Cadential Progression, see Caplin 1998: 61 and 254.

[13] Caplin (1998: 99–101) discusses model/sequence preceding fragmentation as a particular loosening strategy in a continuation phrase.

Example 4. L. Beethoven/Liszt: Symphony No. 1, Mov. 1, mm. 13–33.



underlying these eighty-nine measures is a large sentence theme type, a design typically found in similar-styled High-Classical Viennese movements, albeit smaller in scope. However, here every aspect of this sentence theme is expanded and loosened, including the twenty-one measures that articulate the minor mediant harmony of the codetta function. Further, what upon first hearing may seem like a colorful series of sequential harmonies in fact plays a vital role as a developmental process within the theme's continuation function.

While an enlarged sentence is a frequently encountered foundation for the "A" section of Bruckner's various scherzi, occasionally other strategies are employed. Consider, for instance, how an asymmetrical period forges the design of the opening "A" section, mm. 1–48, from the second symphony's third movement scherzo (see **Example 6**). To begin, the underlying structure is a sixteen-measure period, where the constituent antecedent and consequent phrases are eight-measure sentences.[14] Here, the antecedent phrase is a twelve-measure sentence: following the four-measure presentation function (the presentation contains a statement/response design) is an enlarged continuation phrase loosened by the expanded cadential function. More significant, though, is the loosened consequent phrase, a thirty-six-measure expanded sentence. The phrase is loosened by a third statement of the BI in m. 17, which is itself expanded, and then subsequently followed by enlarged continuation and cadential functions. Note the PAC articulating the minor dominant in m. 48 that concludes this theme; this modulating period is altered in the recapitulation, where the PAC articulates the tonic C minor.

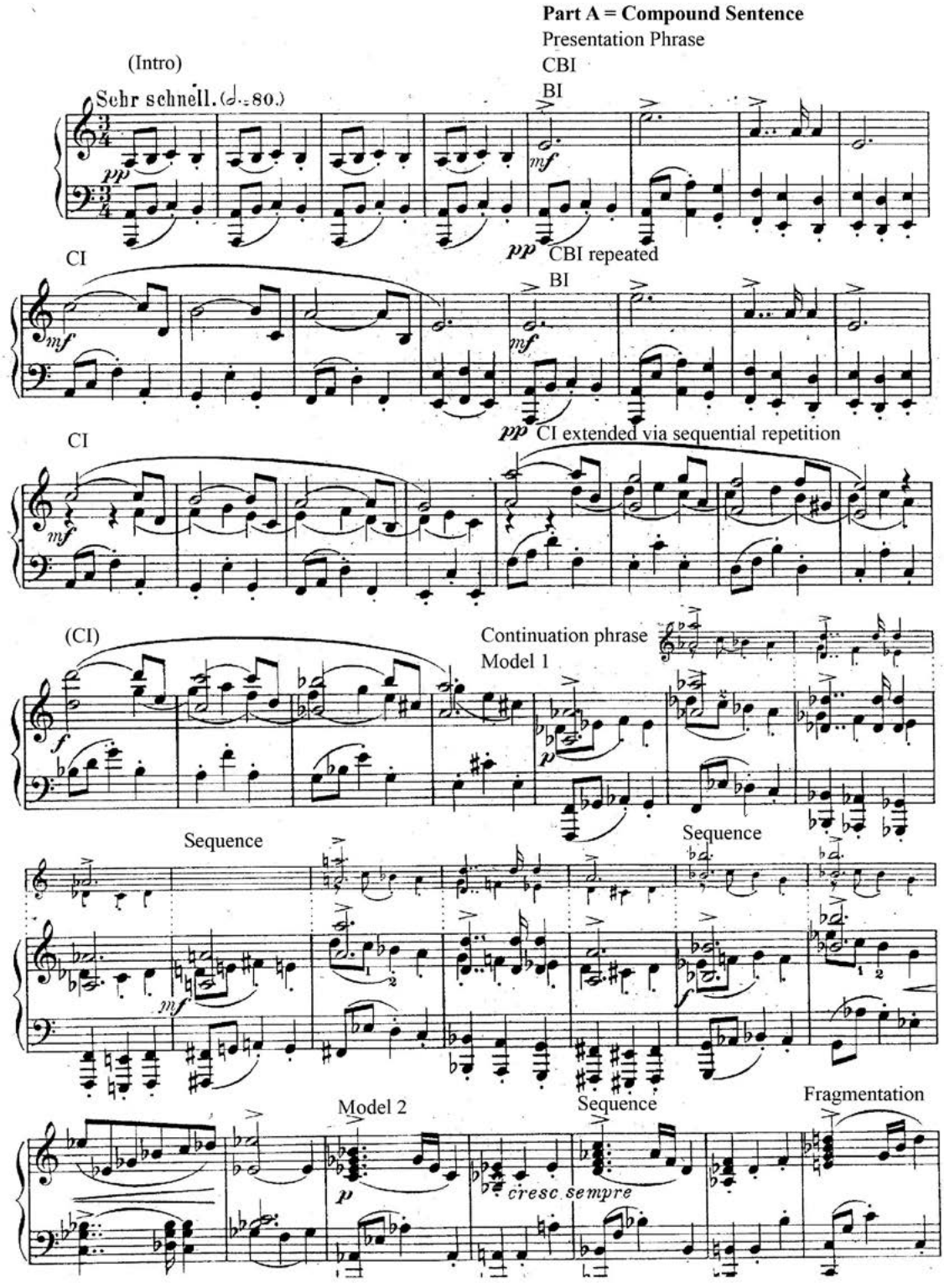
The two Bruckner examples illustrate how enlarged themes correspond with a high-level formal function – that is, the formal unit of a movement. Let us now turn to a lower-level formal function, one corresponding with a portion of a formal section – and, specifically, the main theme of a sonata design. As a first example, consider the main theme from the final movement of the first symphony, shown in **Example 7**. Here we find a relatively tight-knit eight-measure sentence: an initial two-measure BI is repeated exactly (albeit with some minor surface variants), leading to a two-measure continuation function, followed with a two-measure cadential function that ends the theme on a half cadence. The cadential dominant harmony in m. 8 dramatically dissipates in dynamic level and rhythmic energy, and over the span of the following fourteen measures there is a gradual increase in these two parameters, segueing to the transition beginning in m. 23, which leads to the subordinate theme at m. 42. To sum, this is a relatively tight-knit theme, whose expanded length of twenty-two measures can be understood by the substantial loosening of the cadential function.

As a next illustration, consider the main theme from the final movement of the seventh symphony, shown in **Example 8**. In essence, the theme is an eight-measure sentence slightly enlarged into a nine-measure theme via a couple of interesting ways. The presentation phrase begins conventionally with a two-measure BI that asserts the tonic E Major. A sequential repetition of the BI shifts the harmonic focus to VI. Things become interesting in m. 4 – specifically, fragmentation and a model/sequence begin before the temporal conclusion of the second statement of the BI, generating a type of functional elision, explicating the expansion of the continuation function. Finally, the theme ends with a clearly articulated A-Flat Major via a PAC, appreciably loosening the theme's initial tonal focus of E Major. The choice of harmony is noteworthy: the transition begins in m. 10 with the dominant harmony of B Major, and over the course of the ensuing twenty-four measures, orients itself towards A-Flat harmony via a series of harmonies related chromatically, the harmonic focus of the subordinate theme beginning at m. 35.

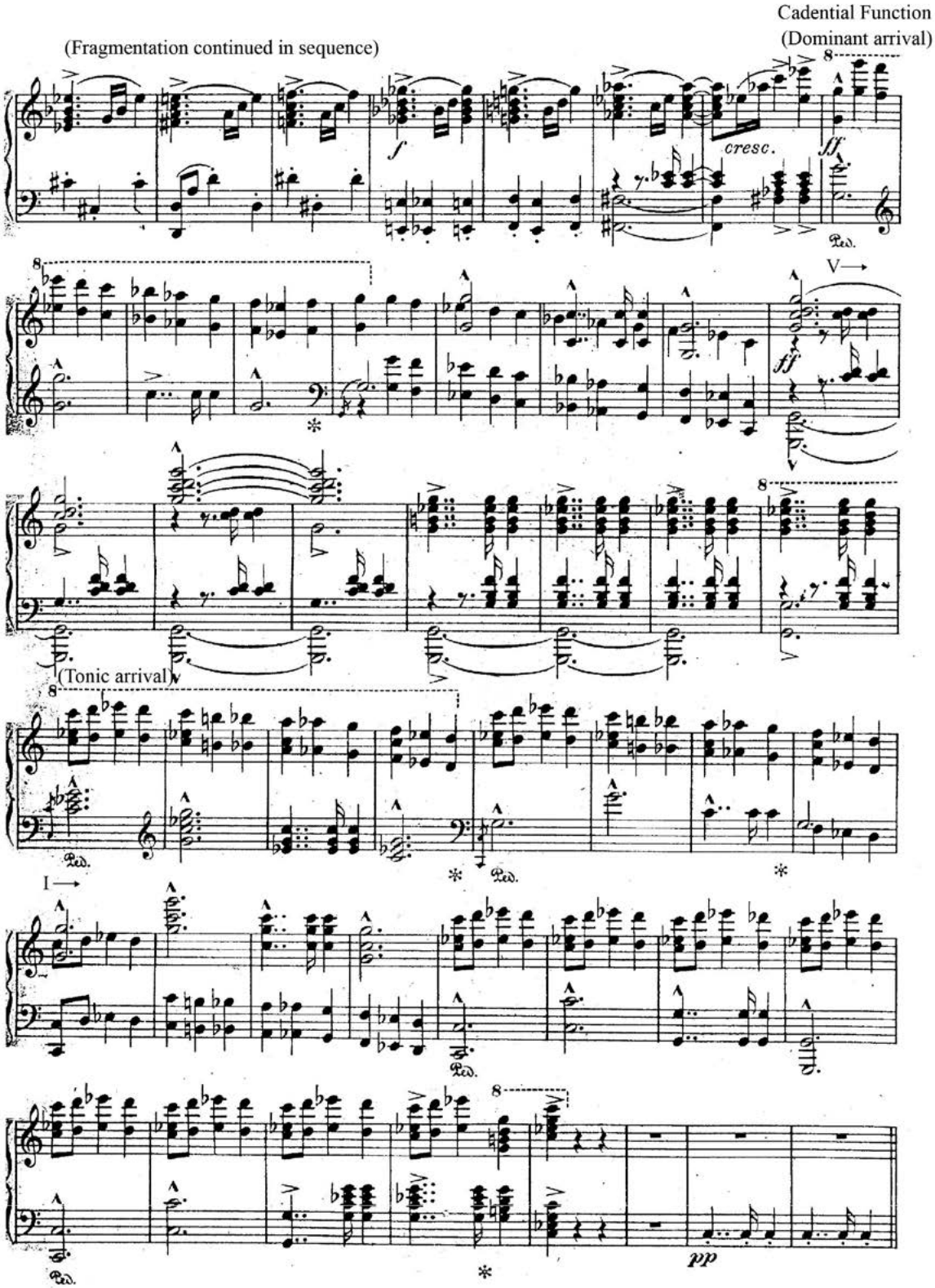
Example 9 presents the main theme from the first movement of the fifth symphony (the exposition follows the extensive introduction in mm. 1–50). Underlying this theme is a sixteen-measure enlarged sentence. Here, the scope of the presentation aligns with conventional classical design – i.e., a 4-measure CBI (a two-measure BI and CI) that is repeated sequentially in the relative major. By contrast, the continuation phrase is considerably loosened, primarily through two model/sequence elements, both of

[14] See Caplin 1998: 65–69 for a survey of compound period strategies.

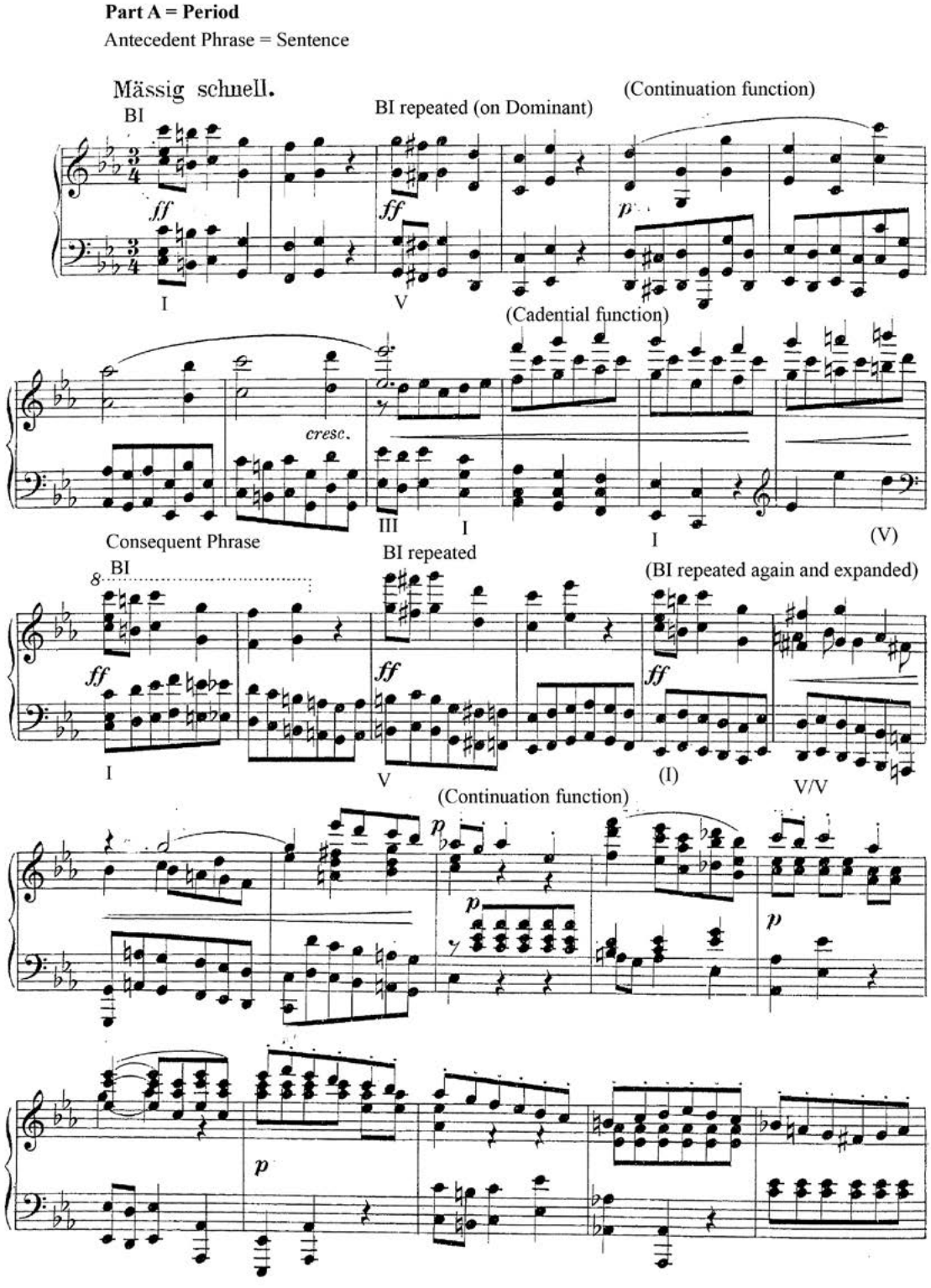
Example 5. A. Bruckner/Hynais: Symphony No. 7, Mov. 3, mm. 1–89.



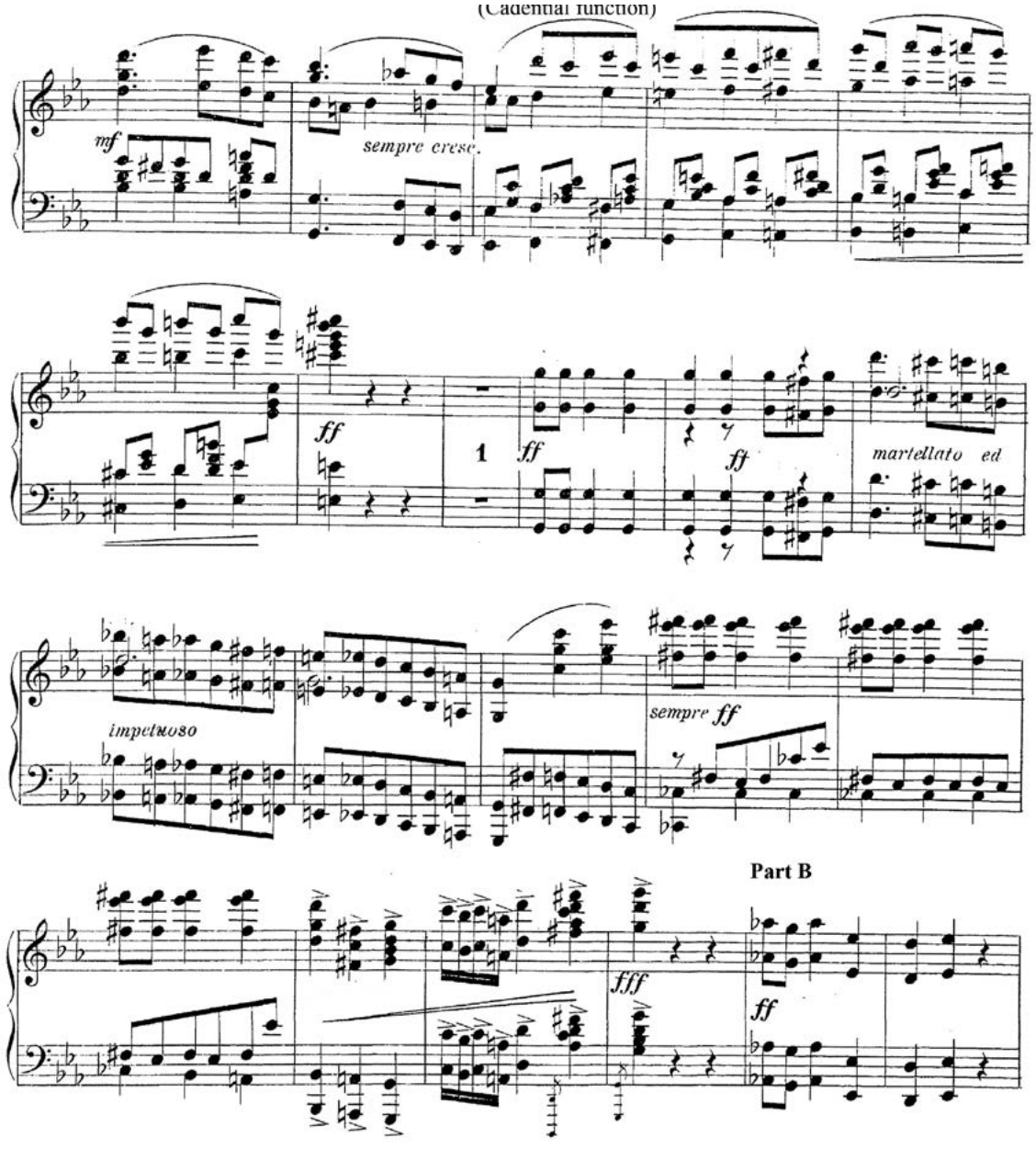
Example 5, continued



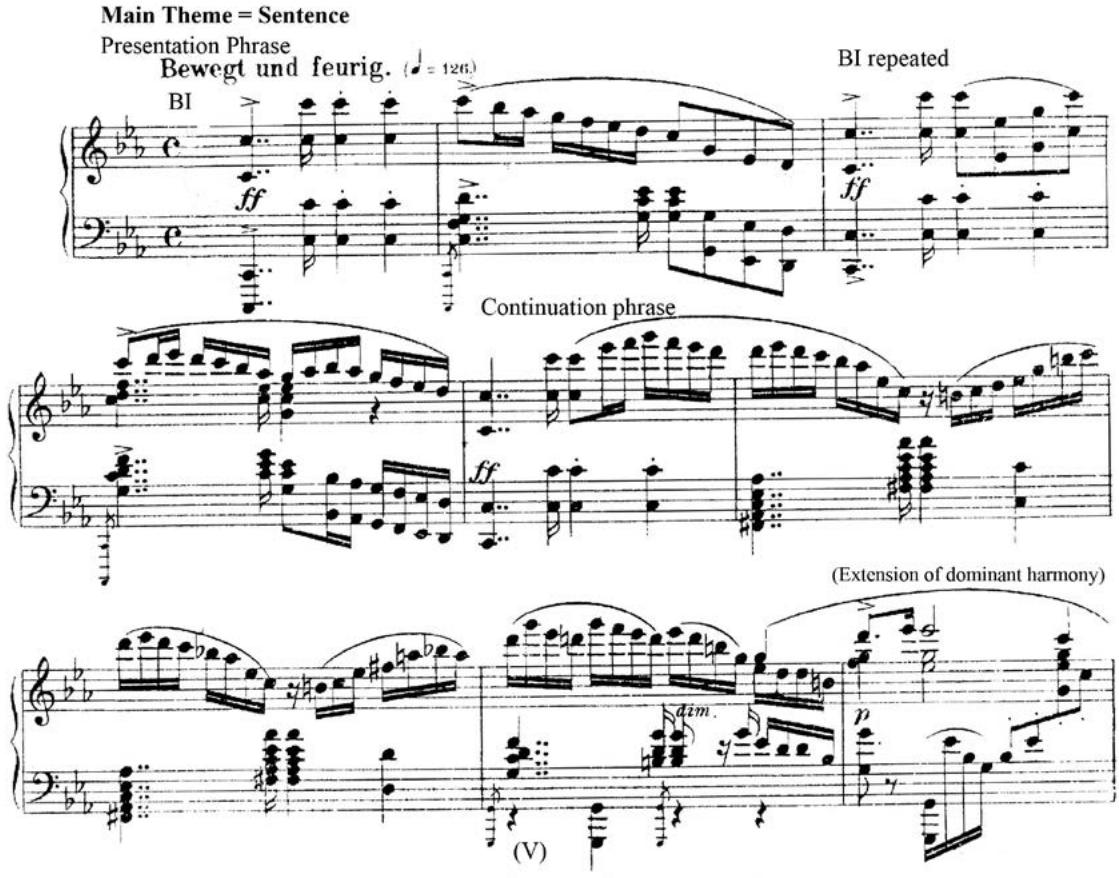
Example 6. A. Bruckner/Stradal: Symphony No. 2, Mov. 3, mm. 1–48.



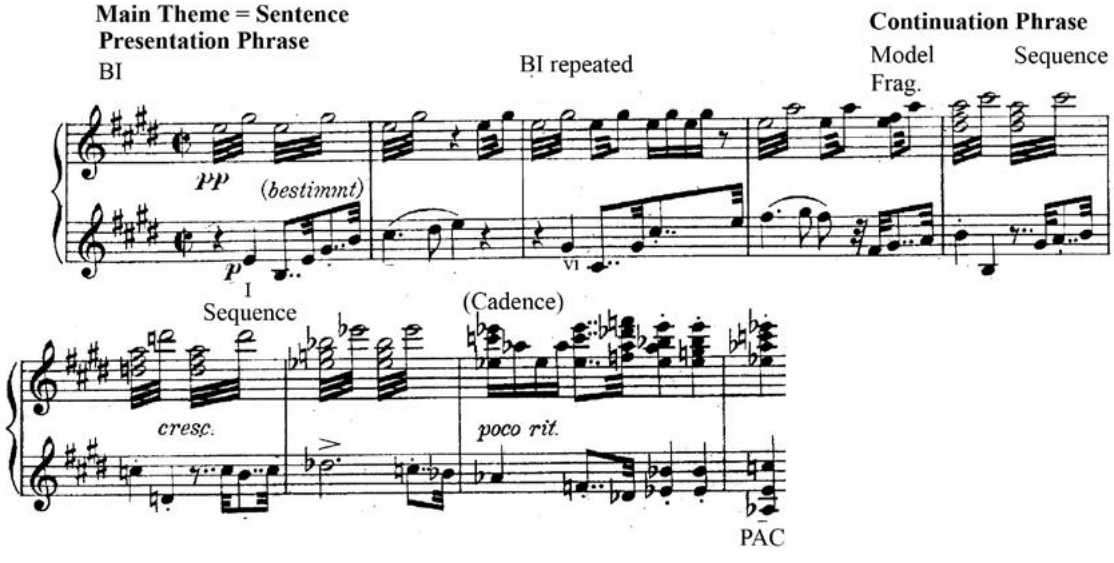
Example 6, continued



Example 7. A. Bruckner/Stradal: Symphony No. 1, Mov. 4, mm. 1–8.



Example 8. A. Bruckner/Hynais: Symphony No. 7, Mov. 4, mm. 1–9.



which contain extensive fragmentation, and an enlarged cadential function. Once again a model/sequence initiates the continuation phrase and appears distinct from fragmentation, which emerges later in the theme, generating a loose-knit quality to this portion of the phrase by this criterion. In short, the initial portion of the theme is tight-knit, but the continuation and cadential functions enlarge the theme from the expectation of sixteen to twenty-four measures. Finally, the asymmetry of a presentation/continuation phrase design of eight vs. sixteen measures generates an overall loose-knit quality to the theme.

Let us now turn to the main theme from the first movement of the sixth symphony, seen in **Example 10**. Like the prior example, an enlarged sixteen-measure sentence underlies the theme's design of the twenty-two measures (a two-measure introduction precedes the onset of the main theme). The presentation portion of the theme in this case, though, is slightly loosened: the two-measure CI of the CBI is repeated in each instance, expanding the presentation into a twelve-measure phrase rather than its normative eight measures. Analogous with the expansion of the BI from Beethoven's first symphony in Example 4, here the repetition of the CI generates an asymmetry in the CBI – a two-plus-four construct rather than the normative two-plus-two. As contrast, the remainder of the theme is enlarged from eight measures to ten: specifically, the continuation portion contains one model/sequence pattern leading to the cadential arrival on the dominant in m. 21, which extends this harmony for three measures until m. 24. Once again, the asymmetry of a twelve-measure presentation phrase placed against a ten-measure continuation phrase engenders a subtle looseness to the theme overall.

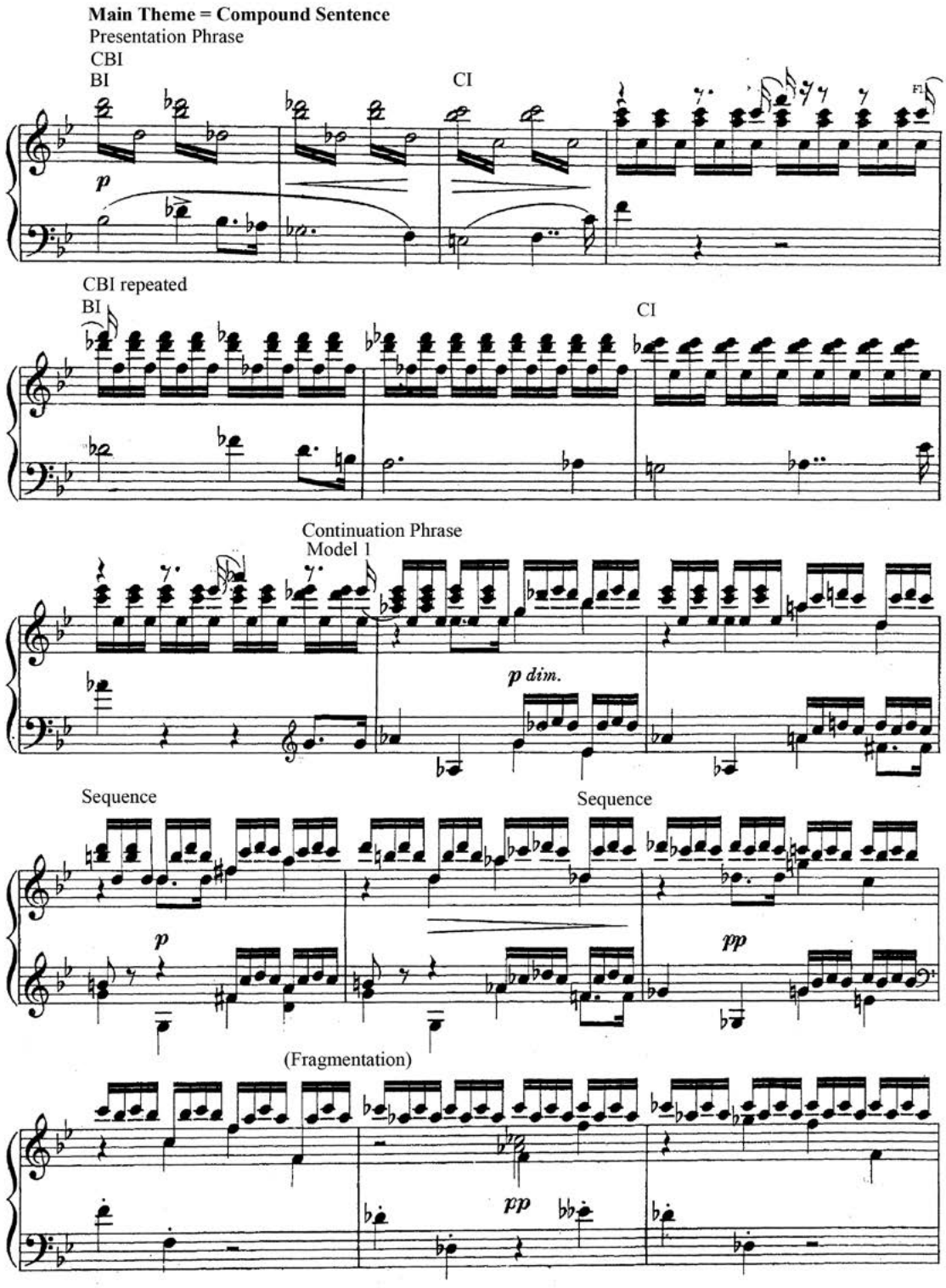
As a final illustration, **Example 11** displays the main theme from the first movement of the eighth symphony. Once again, an enlarged sixteen-measure sentence serves as the foundation for the twenty-measure theme (the opening two measures serve as introductory material). The presentation phrase is intriguing. The opening CBI consists of a BI articulating a iv harmony, which is responded by the CI confirming its dominant. In the sequential repetition of the CBI, the III harmony of the BI is answered with a minor mode version of its iv harmony. Although the next eight measures contain the melodic and rhythmic material that maintain the rhetorical gestures of the preceding CBIs, I interpret the model/sequence in m. 9 initiating the continuation phrase. Further, the harmonic material is unstable and consists of a series of chromatic harmonies linked by common tones. The underlying strategy is found in the bass: the C-Flat of the A-Flat minor harmony in m. 8 is reinterpreted as B-natural and chromatically rises over the next eight measures to arrive as the third of the G-Major dominant harmony in m. 16, initiating the cadential function, leading to the implied PAC in m. 20.

I will have more to say about these first movement main themes shortly. For now, though, let us turn our attention to the transitions that follow the latter five themes we have examined. Returning to Examples 7 through 11, in four instances the transition to the subordinate theme repeats the opening material in similar format at a louder dynamic and thicker texture (the exception is the main theme from the final movement of the Symphony no. 7). In their writings, James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy refer to such a transitional strategy as a "Dissolving Consequent."[15] The repetition of the opening presentation initially suggests a large-scale antecedent/consequent structure. However, the continuation portion of this consequent veers from the design of the main theme, ultimately evoking the respective modulation to the subordinate key area.

Figure 1 lists the theme type of the main themes and the transitional strategies from the first movements of Bruckner's nine numbered symphonies, plus the early "Null" D minor symphony. Clearly, interesting patterns emerge. In six of the ten symphonies, the main theme is an enlarged compound sentence. The remaining four symphonies are enlarged hybrid-3 themes – in Caplin's terms, a theme that begins with a CBI complex and is followed by a continuation phrase. In short, either a sentence, or some sentential-like design underlies the first-movement main themes in all Bruckner's symphonies. The transitions are also remarkable: all but two are of the dissolving consequent type. The fourth symphony contains new melodic material but utilizes a rhythmic

[15] The dissolving consequent transition is discussed in Hepokoski, Darcy 2006: 101–111.

Example 9. A. Bruckner/Stradal: Symphony No. 5, Mov. 1, mm. 55–78.



Example 9, continued

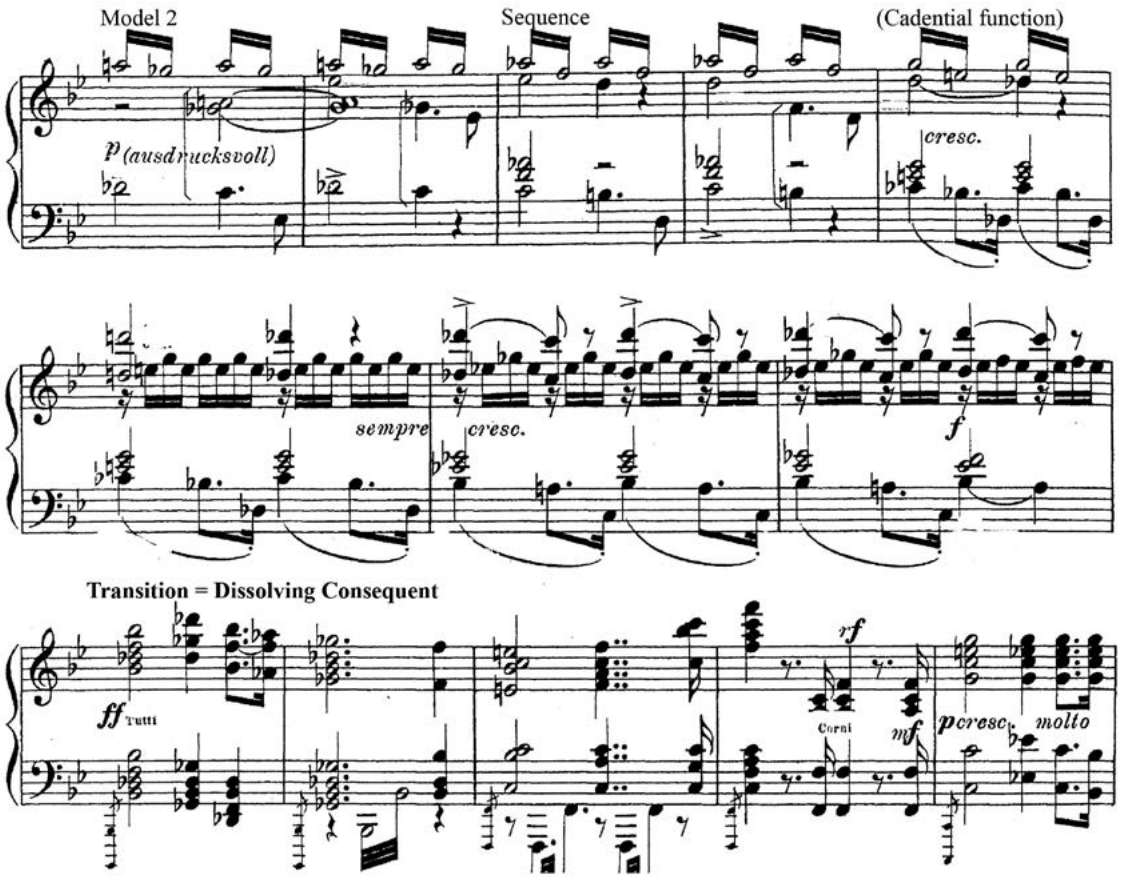
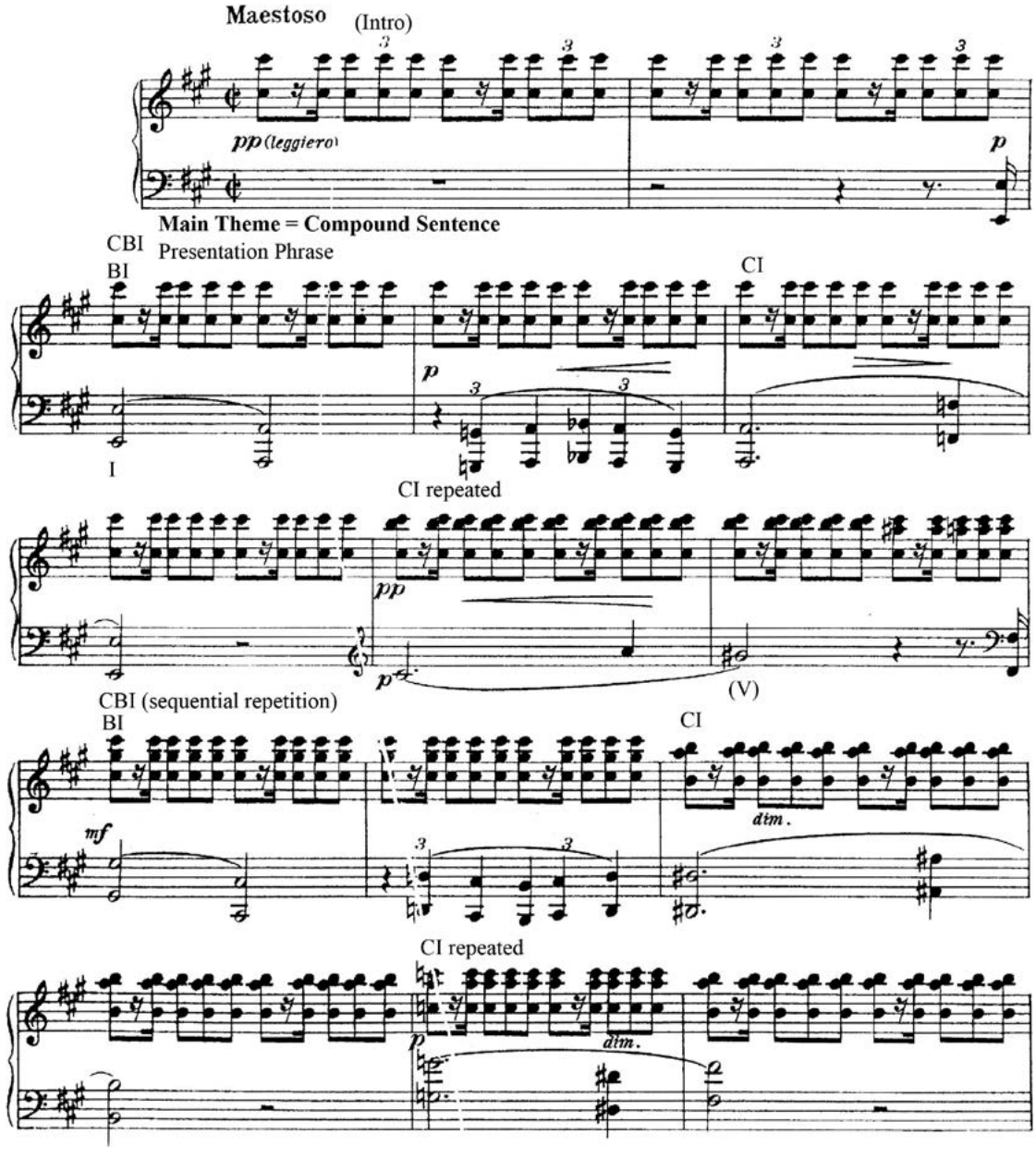


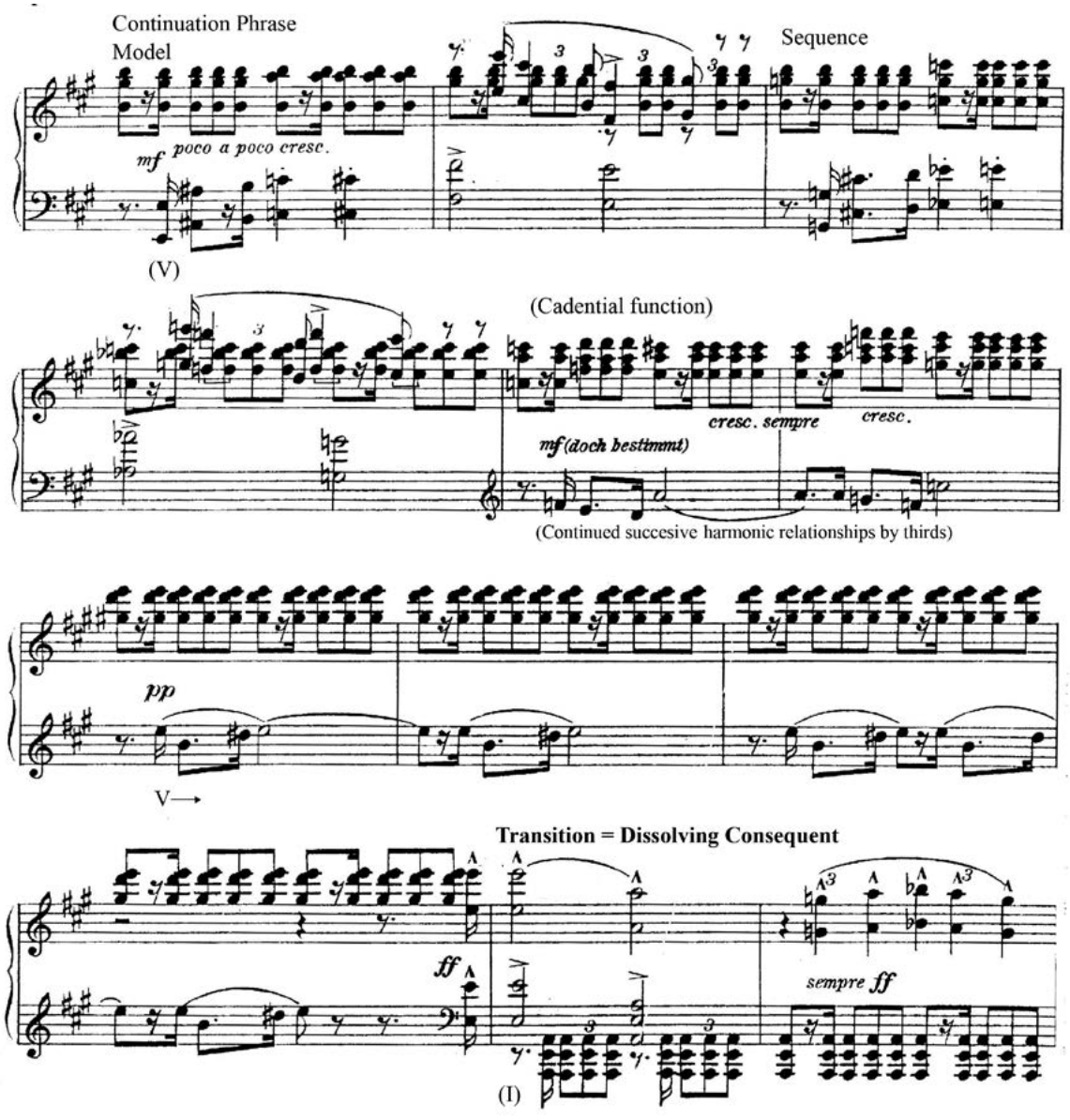
Figure 1. Design of Main Themes and Transitions in the First Movements of A. Bruckner's Symphonies.

Symphony	Main Theme Category	MT measure nos.	Transition Category	Tr measure nos.
"Null"	Sentence	1–16	Dissolving Consequent	17–32
1 (1885/86)	H3 (CBI + continuation)	1–27	Dissolving Consequent	28–45
2 (1877)	H3 (CBI + continuation)	1–25	Dissolving Consequent (abridged)	25–62
3 (1889)	H3 (CBI + continuation)	1–67	Dissolving Consequent (abridged)	68–100
4 (1874)	Sentence	1–51	Transition based upon final motivic idea from MT	52–70
5	Sentence	51–78	Dissolving Consequent	79–100
6	Sentence	1–24	Dissolving Consequent	25–48
7	Sentence	1–24	Dissolving Consequent	25–50
8 (1890)	Sentence	1–22	Dissolving Consequent	23–50
9	H3 (CBI + continuation)	1–75	Transition based upon new melodic material	76–96

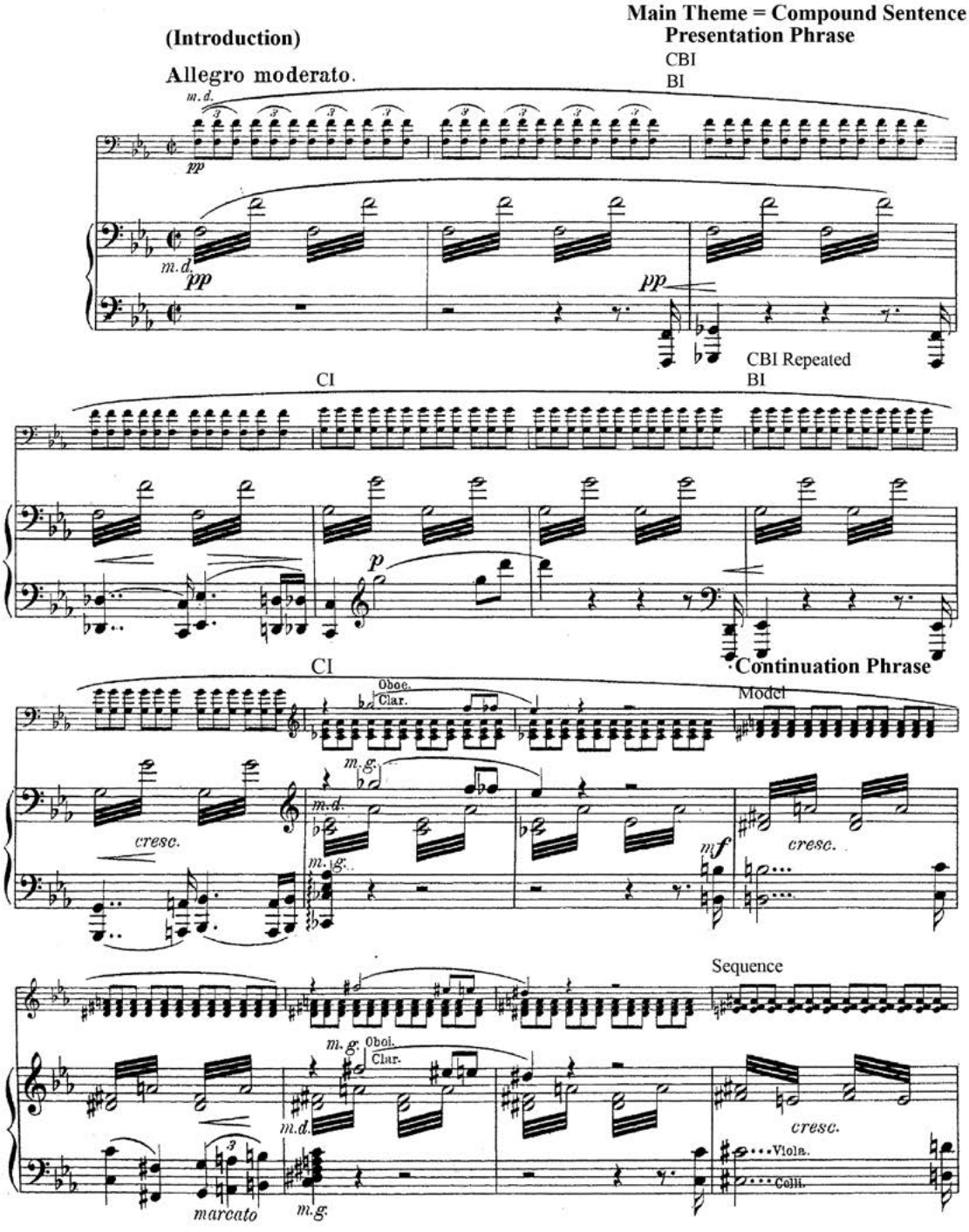
Example 10. A. Bruckner/Stradal: Symphony No. 6, Mov. 1, mm. 1–24.



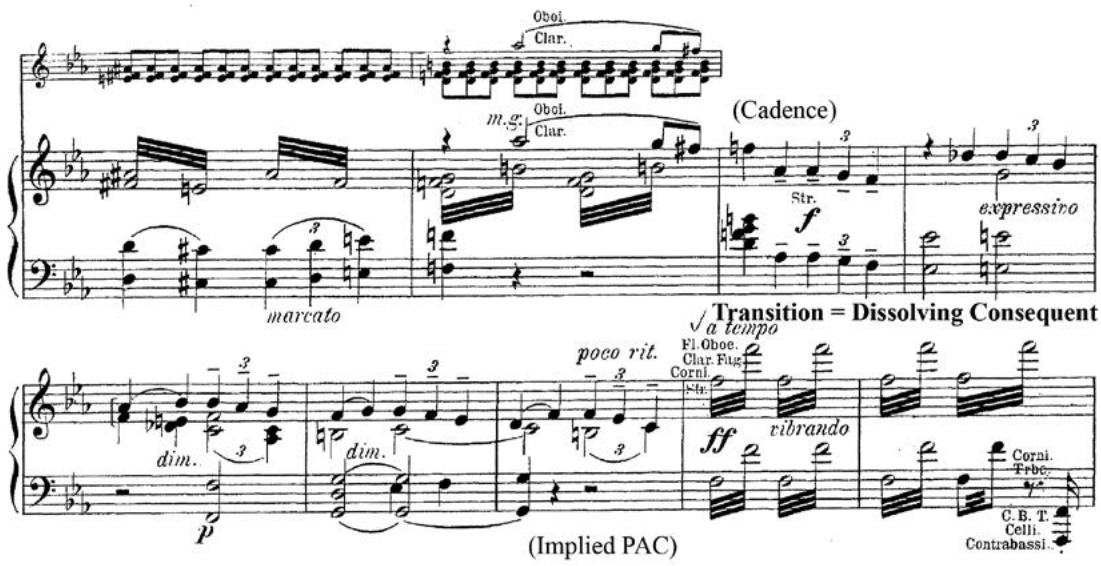
Example 10, continued



Example 11. A. Bruckner/Stradal: Symphony No. 8, Mov. 1, mm. 1–20.



Example 11, continued



motive from the cadential portion of the main theme. In fact, it is only the ninth symphony that contains a truly different thematic/rhythmic character in the transition. It should be noted that not only does the ninth symphony contain the shortest of any of these transitions, but likely as compensation for this short transition, its main theme is also the longest of any of these ten symphonies – seventy-five measures in total.

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A major premise of this paper has been to illustrate the foundation of Bruckner's melodic style is not an unending, formless series of melodies; rather, by using Caplinian theme types as the basis for the above analyses, the underlying design of Bruckner's melodies is highly rationalized, but more reactionary than has been acknowledged. More specifically, we have seen the themes from these works are loosened versions of Caplinian theme types that can be traced to paradigms found in the thematic strategies of High-Classical instrumental music. Further, through the course of this study, I have identified in Bruckner's symphonies comparable thematic designs and loosening techniques in the works we have explored, suggesting stylistic conventions. I end this study with suggestions for further areas on inquiry.

First, as Darcy (1997) has discussed, one fascinating aspect of Bruckner's symphonies is their rotational organization. In addition, Caplin (1998) has observed the consistent use of modular model/sequence practice in various theme types, as well as the core areas of a development from a High-Classical sonata.[16] Since, model/sequence plays such a characteristic role in Bruckner's themes – for instance, we have observed how model/sequence appears as the initial compositional technique following a presentation phrase, regardless of whether it is accompanied with fragmentation – it would be pertinent to study the evolving role of model/sequence activity within the various themes from each rotation.

As we have seen in this study, the typical Brucknerian theme is a loosened version of some Classical theme type. Yet there can be various degrees of looseness. As a simple illustration, one theme may contain two different loosening strategies while another theme may contain five different strategies. Another area of inquiry, then, would be to compare the degrees of looseness between the typical three-themes

[16] See chapter 10 from Caplin 1998 for discussion about this topic.

from an exposition, in order to generate some hermeneutic narrative across both an exposition and any subsequent rotation within a movement. Further, such an interpretation might elicit interesting comparison with other scholars who have examined the dynamic qualities of Bruckner's music. Ernst Kurth is an obvious starting point here.[17]

Finally, there is the issue of multiple versions of these symphonies, one of the more challenging areas of Bruckner scholarship. To give some sense of the challenge at play, during Bruckner's lifetime alone there were twenty-one different versions of these ten symphonies; and by 1925 there were another ten performing editions, generated by well-meaning musicians.[18] The modifications range from wholesale reconstruction of thematic material to the addition, deletion, or rearrangement of entire formal sections. Many of these versions were generated by Bruckner himself; some were undertaken by his students and sanctioned by the composer. Using Caplinian theme types as a modus operandi, it would be instructive to compare the various versions of which Bruckner himself had a role, to study how the thematic designs and their associations between each other may have changed, with respect to looseness of thematic construction, thus providing possible insight into the rationale for these alterations.

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[17] Rothfarb 1991 contains valuable translations from Kurth's 1925 monograph on Bruckner.

[18] For a study of the various editions of Bruckner's symphonies, see Carragan 2020.

Klassikalise instrumentaalmuusika stiil Anton Bruckneri teemade vormilise alusena

Edward Jurkowski

Anton Bruckneri sümfooniaid on pikka aega peetud hilisromantilise lääne kunstmuusika kaanoni oluliseks esindajaks. Samas ei ole need teosed vabad vastuoludest. Sageli kritiseeritakse helilooja teemade ning teoseosade ebatavalist pikkust, mida peetakse Bruckneri püsiva Wagneri-imetluse tagajärjeks. Bruckneri eluajal valitses arusaam tema teoste vormitusest ja sellist hinnangut kohtab paljude erinevate kriitikute, näiteks August Wilhelm Ambrise, Eduard Hanslicki, Max Kalbecki ja Gustav Dömke kirjutistes.

Selle asemel, et paigutada Bruckneri muusika postwagneriaanliku esteetika konteksti, on minu arvates palju tulemuslikum käsitleda helilooja kompositsioonistiili William Caplini 1998. aastal formaliseeritud kõrgklassikalisele instrumentaalmuusikale iseloomulike teematüüpide valgusel. Esmapilgul võib tunduda, et Bruckneri muusika ei peegelda Caplini teoreetilisi mudeleid, mida ta kasutas eelkõige hilise 18. sajandi instrumentaalmuusika analüüsimiseks. Samas peitub Bruckneri pikalt väljaarendatud teemade taga ka omalaadne rafineeritud loogika, mis võimaldab neid Caplini mudelitega usutavalt seostada. Ma alustan paari näitega Ludwig van Beethoveni loomingust, mida Caplin oma teoreetilises töös palju käsitleb. Kuigi vaid illustreerivad, ei ole Beethoveni näited juhuslikud. 19. sajandil Viinis tegutsenud ja seal hariduse saanud helilooja jaoks nagu Bruckner oli Beethoveni loomingu sügav tundmine enesestmõistetav. Arvestades Bruckneri teadmisi ja sümpaatiat sedalaadi repertuaari vastu, ei ole põhjendamatu oletada, et mingil tasandil kasutas ta beethovenlikke elemente ka oma muusikas. Seejärel käsitlen Bruckneri teoseid ja näitan, kuidas Caplini mudelid võimaldavad esile tuua nende vormiloogika. Võrdlemise eesmärgil analüüsin seitsme eri teoseosa peateemasid.

Käsitluse lähtekohana vaatlen ma Caplini nelja teematüüpi Beethoveni sümfooniate temaatilise materjali põhjal. **Näide 1** on peateema helilooja 5. sümfoonia esimesest osast, mis vormiliselt esindab suurt lauset. **Näide 2** illustreerib 8. sümfoonia kolmanda osa avateemat ja esindab vormiliselt perioodi. Perioodiga lähedalt seotud hübriidteema avaldub 7. sümfoonia esimeses osa peateemana ning on ära toodud **näites 3**. Lõpetuseks on **näites 4** illustreerimise eesmärgil ära toodud arendatuma struktuuriga 21 takti hõlmav 1. sümfoonia esimese osa peateema, mis on 16-taktilise lause laiendatud variant.

Olles toonud näited Caplini nelja teematüübi kohta, näitan, kuidas tema mudelid võivad olla abiks Bruckneri teemade vormilise struktuuri mõistmisel. **Näide 5** on 7. sümfoonia kolmanda osa kolmeosalises vormis komponeeritud Scherzo esimene (A) alaosa (kogu osa tervikuna on samuti kolmeosalise struktuuriga, Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo). Mittekvadraatne periood on ka 2. sümfoonia kolmanda osa Scherzo esimese alaosa (taktid 1–48) vormiks, vt. **näidet 6**.

Nimetatud kaks näidet demonstreerivad, kuidas laiendatud teemad vastavad vormistruktuuri süvatasandi funktsioonidele, s.t. käsitletava teoseosa vastavatele vormiüksustele tervikuna. Edasi käsitlen ma aga vormifunktsioonide avaldumist vormi madalamal tasandil, täpsemalt mingi vormiosa, antud juhul mõne sonaadivormi peateemat moodustava alaosa puhul. Esimese näitena vaatlen ma 1. sümfoonia finaali peateemat, mis on ära toodud **näites 7**. See on võrdlemisi klassikaline kaheksataktiline suur lause. Järgmise juhtumina käsitlen ma 7. sümfoonia finaali peateemat, mis on ära toodud **näites 8**. Tegemist on kaheksataktilise suure lausega, mis on laiendatud üheksataktiliseks teemaks. **Näites 9** demonstreerin ma 5. sümfoonia esimese osa peateemat (ekspositsioonile eelneb siin ulatuslik sissejuhatus taktides 1–50). Selle teema vormiliseks mudeliks on 16-taktiline laiendatud lause.

Siis vaatlen ma **näites 10** ära toodud 6. sümfoonia esimese osa peateemat, mille 22 takti on 16-taktilise lause laiendatud variant. Selle esitusosa (*presentation*) lahkneb siiski pisut konventsionaalsest esitusest. Viimase, **11. näitena** toon ma 8. sümfoonia esimese osa peateema. Analoogiliselt võib ka siin vaadelda 20-taktist teemat 16-taktise lause laiendatud variandina.

Näidetes 7–11 põhineb sidepartii neljal korral peateema materjali kordusel, mis kõlab nüüd valjemalt ja täisorkestri esituses (erandiks on 7. sümfoonia finaali peateema). Tegemist on vormilise strateegiaga, millele James Hepokoski ja Warren Darcy viitavad kui „hajuvale järellausele".[1] Selle puhul näib peateema

[1] „Hajuva järellausena" komponeeritud sidepartiid on käsitlenud Hepokoski ja Darcy (2006: 101–111).

suures ulatuses kordamine sidepartii alguses viitavat perioodilisele, s.t. eel- ja järellausest moodustuvale struktuurile. Perioodiline struktuur aga ei realiseeru, sest oletatava liitperioodi järellause (*consequent*) teine pool (*continuation*) hälbib peateema struktuurist ning päädib lõpuks hoopis modulatsiooniga kõrvalhelistikku.

Joonis 1 reastab Bruckneri üheksa sümfoonia (ja lisaks ka varase d-moll, nn. nullsümfoonia) esimeste osade peateema tüübid ja sidepartiis kasutatavad vormilised strateegiad. Siin ilmnevad selgelt huvitavad jooned. Kuues sümfoonias kümnest avaldub peateema liitlausena (*compound sentence*, *16-measure sentence*). Ülejäänud sümfooniad esindavad laiendatud Caplini hübriidi nr. 3. Kokkuvõtlikult saab öelda, et kõigi Bruckneri teoste esimeste osade peateemasid esindavad kas laused või lausesarnased hübriidteemad. Sidepartiid on samuti märkimisväärsed: kahe erandiga esindavad need kõik hajuva järellause tüüpi.

Selle artikli peamiseks eesmärgiks on näidata, et Bruckneri teemade stiil ei väljendu lõpmatute ja vormitute meloodiate järgnevusena. Kasutades Caplini kirjeldatud teematüüpe, saab väita, et Bruckneri teemade vormiline alus on ratsionaalne, kuigi need eemalduvad mõnikord klassikalistest mudelitest suhteliselt kaugele. Täpsemalt võib Bruckneri teemasid käsitada Caplini kõrgklassikaliste teematüüpide vabamate variantidena. Selles käsitluses vaadeldakse Bruckneri teemade vormi ja seda, kuidas klassikalisi konventsioone vastustatakse ka stiililist konteksti silmas pidades.