

## PHRASING AND INTERPRETATION

Music is a series of notes that the composer fits together in tonal and rhythmic patterns to express his thoughts and feelings. Performance of the music can be dull and uninteresting, or it can sparkle with enthusiasm, conveying warmth, love, sadness, gaiety, etc. Hundreds of moods can be expressed through your instrument. The "key" is for the student to recognize the moods desired by the composer, respond to them, and through his own interpretation, project these feelings to the listener. **Phrasing, then, is the expressive quality of music.**

### THE PHRASE IN MUSIC

One of the primary objectives in the study of the Vocalises is to learn to play by phrases — to recognize a phrase and to respond to its mood. Just as we speak in thought patterns, we play music in pitch and rhythm patterns. To project the expressive quality of the music, notes are played in groups, or patterns — not one note at a time. These patterns form phrases in music.

In these studies a phrase is usually 4 measures in length, and through its pitch and rhythm patterns expresses a unit of musical thought. A 4-measure phrase sometimes expresses a complete musical thought, but most often, it is dependent upon another 4-measure phrase for completion. (Occasionally, additional phrases are required to complete the thought.) All phrases end with a cadence, or close, which may be compared to the rise or fall of the voice in speaking. The last note of a phrase is the cadence tone, and determines whether a phrase is dependent or independent. If this note is of short duration, or ends on a pitch that suggests unrest, it is called an "incomplete cadence", and another phrase is required to complete the musical thought. Often, the first phrase seems to ask a question, which is answered by the second phrase. The second phrase may be a repetition of the first phrase, ending with a different cadence (as in Ex. 1 below), or it may be a contrasting phrase involving changes in the pitch and rhythm patterns (as in Ex. 2 below).

To feel the two types of cadences, play the following two phrases. Then play just the cadences as indicated. (The first phrase is built on the development of a "figure" which is discussed on Page 15.)

Complete Musical Thought

Dependent Phrase				Independent Phrase		
Figure		Figure		Figure		Complete Cadence
Figure		Figure		Figure		Figure

Solo Study No. 4

*mp*

To aid the student in thinking and playing phrase-wise, the line scheme of the Vocalises follows the phrase scheme as closely as possible, with breath marks indicated at the end of each phrase (unless the phrase ends with a rest).

At the completion of each musical thought (whether it is 4 measures or 8 measures) there is usually a change of mood. It may be slight, or it may be a very contrasting change. The transcriber has added rehearsal numbers at these mood changes. This will not only guide the student by pointing out how different pitch and rhythm patterns create changes of mood in these studies, but it will also aid him in recognizing and responding to changes of mood through changes in pitch and rhythm patterns in all the music he will play.

Sometimes the notes in a phrase are grouped into two patterns. These patterns are called "half-phrases" and are usually 2 measures in length. Quite often a rest separates the two half-phrases. The following is an example of a complete musical thought in which the first phrase is divided into two half-phrases. In this example, the first half-phrase establishes a rhythm pattern which is repeated in the second half-phrase. The second 4-measure phrase completes the musical thought.

Complete Musical Thought

Dependent Phrase				Independent Phrase		
1st Half Phrase		2nd Half Phrase		Figure		Complete Cadence
Figure		Figure		Figure		Figure

Solo Study No. 6

*mp*

You will notice that the above two examples of phrases contain different melodic and rhythmic patterns or groups. These patterns within a phrase indicate its movement and interpretive weight. Correct response through the elements of phrasing — emphasis, dynamics, and articulation — are the "key" to projecting the mood of the phrase.



# Allegro con Brio

Allegro con brio ♩=112

10

Piano *f*

*poco rall.*

① *a tempo*

*mf*

②

③ *mf*

④



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# Allegretto Grazioso

Allegretto grazioso  $\text{♩} = 100$   
Piano

13 *mp* *delicato* *dim.*

① *p* *delicato*

② *mp*

③ *p*

④ *mp*

⑤



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## Allegro Moderato No. 2

Allegro moderato  $\text{♩} = 112$   
Piano

20

*mf*

①

*mp*

②

③ *a tempo*

④ *mf* *piu mosso*

⑤

⑥ *a tempo*

*mp-*

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# Andante Cantabile No. 3

33

Andante cantabile ♩ = 69

11

*mp*

①

*p*

②