

## Canons of Melodic Punctuation in the Works of Lithuanian Composers

### Annotation

Melodic punctuation and its relation with rhythmic and harmonic parallelism stand as continuous essence of the sound map of Western European romantic aesthetics which impacts the creative processes of present-day music too. Through the syntax of musical components' (motif, phrase and so on) individual or recurrent and predictive sounding result appears. The individual solutions of melodic punctuation are determined by conscious and compositionally consistent selection of distant epochs and/or current – atonal musical structures.

**Keywords:** punctuation, syntax, caesura, cadence.

If we were to apply the linguistic understanding of punctuation (Latin *punctuatio* < *punctum* – a point)<sup>1</sup> to music, we might speak of punctuation in the general sense, reflecting not only a dividing element of sound itself in musical pieces – such as phrases<sup>2</sup>, motifs, etc. – but also as a diving element of changing emotional states (tension–release), as well as an element used in order to highlight a narrative of a piece or its parts (continuation–completion). Punctuation is perceived as a standardized syntactic and structural elements, sequences that are created with words (in language) on a tonal or atonal basis (in music). The sequences of language and melody are based on combining elements or structures (a sound, a sequence of several sounds, a sequence of many sounds, etc.)<sup>3</sup>. If language is a kind of expression of a conceptual and structural reference that is based on the pairing of nouns and verbs (“who did it”, “did it to whom”, etc.) and clearly or seemingly clearly described meanings in pieces of a metaphorical nature, then musical sounds combined with vocal musical content provide additional predications, thereby giving a piece a new semantic dimension or structural change. But in vocal music, the basic elements of punctuation are more in line with literary text rather than separated, this way emphasising the narrative of a piece as the whole (there are examples of absence of narrative; pieces of more conceptual examples of contemporary music where text does not function as a dominant element of meaning but rather as a new source of timbre, e.g. *Melika*, *Cantus Magnificat* by Julius Juzeliūnas<sup>4</sup>) and the compositional expression of a structural idea (e.g. *There Are Numerous Stars in the Sky* by Jonas Jurkūnas<sup>5</sup>).

Example 1. Julius Juzeliūnas. *Melika* (1973) for soprano and organ. Part II “Judabra”, fragment  
(Example from the Music Information Centre Lithuania database)

However, in instrumental music predication is much more related to a freer content or, to be more precise, prediction/foresight about the content, which determines more liberal structural forms of complete phrases, sentences, or parts of bigger forms. Therefore in this paper, examples of instrumental music were more of a choice. Comparative analysis (music–language) may reveal interesting moments about the functional architecture of both fields (music and language), similarities, which began to receive more intense analytical attention from the year 2000<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Tarptautinių žodžių žodynas*, Vilnius, 2001, p. 618. Retrieved from: <http://www.zodynas.lt/tarptautinis-zodziu-zodynas> [2015-08-02].

<sup>2</sup> Glenn Spring, Jere Hutcheson. *Musical Form and Analysis: Time, Pattern, Proportion*, McGraw-Hill Education, 1995, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Sandra P. Rosenblum. *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music (Music: Scholarship and Performance)*, Indiana University Press, Paperback – November 22, 1988, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Gaidamavičiūtė, R. Muzikos ir teksto jungčių prasminė bei funkcinė įvairovė XX a. II pusės lietuvių kompozitorių kūryboje. *Menotyra*, 2004, Nr. 1 (34), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> The vocal text is a series of numbers. [*Auth. note*].

<sup>6</sup> Patel, A., Gibson, E., Ratner, J., Besson, M., & Holcomb, P. (1998). Processing syntactic relations in language and music: An event-related potential study. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 10, 717–733.

The punctuation of a melody and its relation with the parallels of rhythm and harmony are a continuous presence of the Western European map of romantic aesthetics<sup>7</sup> that still affects the creative processes of the present day. Elements of musical syntax (motif, phrase, etc.) create individual or repetitive and predictable results of sound. The latter are illustrated by symmetrical solutions of melodic syntax and traditional usage of caesurae that reflect the directions of canons and traditions<sup>8</sup>. Such examples are abundant in both: works of romantic post-war composers and modern works of Julius Juzeliūnas, Eduardas Balsys and Vytautas Barkauskas. The individual punctuation of a melody is determined by the conscious and compositionally consistent selection of atonal musical structures of past and/or the present.

The caesura is a part of fundamental and normative classical syntax; it perfectly demonstrates the main difference in punctuation between music and language. In the classical meaning, caesura has a linguistic character because of its punctuation, periodicity and convenience. However, the level of “emanation” is different in music, where the caesura is viewed as both form and content at the same time. And this is not characteristic of prose (perhaps even poetry) because the caesura is a phonetic, syntactic and semantic *recreational*, breathing space. In classical music the perception of it is more fragmented. Holderlin stated the multi-functionalism of caesura: it covers everything from the poetic to the dramatic, especially in the philosophical category. Such multi-functionalism is imminent in music. From a philosophical perspective, Holderlin’s<sup>9</sup> attitude towards the caesura enables him to break free from its empirical nature (the caesura as a disruption of continuation, as believed by Meyer<sup>10</sup> and Narmour<sup>11</sup>). Modern theory states that the caesura is a kind of artificially created dismantler of music. From the perspective of punctuation evolution in literature, Adorn sees it as not only an element of style or fashion<sup>12</sup>, but of a culture as well. Such parallelism can be applied to contemporary examples of modern music, where atypical notational presentation is especially significant.

The canons of melodic punctuation and a constant search for new leads code an easier or more difficult perception of interpreted textual corpus, a narrative sequence as a whole or in parts. In some cases the canons of punctuation are pronounced in examples of traditional notation, and in other cases – non-traditional. The same can be said of the tendencies to break free from the canons of melodic punctuation: there are examples of original punctuation in traditional music and pieces that have been written in special notation. The aforementioned ‘square’ of melodic punctuation, certain aspects of canon and new expression links to the musical narrative, and musical dynamism that are reflected in the work of Lithuanian composers of various generations (Antanas Rekašius, Vytautas Montvila, Algirdas Martinaitis, Nomedla Valančiūtė, etc.).

**A** Canons of melodic punctuation in traditional notation

**B** Canons of melodic punctuation in non-traditional notation

**C** Examples of original punctuation in traditional notation

**D** Examples of original punctuation in non-traditional notation

As mentioned before, the punctuation of melody in classic and romantic literature is connected to the caesura, a certain metro-rhythmical pause that exists, once again, in poetry, prose and music, and is perceived as a boundary between two musical elements. The boundary is linked to a logical interruption in music and has a more meaningful aspect than silence or a pause, and is perceived on the level of cadence. Cadence is etymologically understood as a ‘fall’ – *cado*<sup>13</sup> in Latin – and it is an important boundary of thought and possibly the melodic or harmonic completing element of a whole piece or longer parts of its form that is resolved either traditionally or canonically: the strike of a melody or chord – pause – movement. For this reason, many examples of Lithuanian music were omitted (virtually up to the beginning of the 1970s), and one of the most interesting discoveries in melodic analysis could be the rarely occurring continuous syntactic elements of

<sup>7</sup> Nietzsche R. Nietzsche, *Aesthetics and Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 224.

<sup>8</sup> Spitzer M. Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven’s Late Style (Musical Meaning and Interpretation), 2006, p. 228.

<sup>9</sup> Gosetti-Ferencei J.A. Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language: Toward a New Poetics of Dasein, Fordham Univ. Press, 2004, p. 200.

<sup>10</sup> Meyer, L. B. 1956. Emotion and Meaning in Music. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. [5–8, 10, 18, 21].

<sup>11</sup> Narmour, E. 1990. The Analysis and Cognition of Basic Melodic Structures: The Implication-Realization Model. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press. [8, 16].

<sup>12</sup> Popova Maria. Theodor Adorno on the Art of Punctuation. <https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/09/11/theodor-adorno-punctuation-marks/>

<sup>13</sup> The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, Vol. 6, 1843, edited by George Long and published by Charles Knigh, p. 99.

melody (the transition in the prelude of S. Vainiūnas' Concerto No. 4; when the last sound of the first part becomes the first of the next). Therefore an interesting endeavour may be to take a more profound view at the most significant trends in melodic punctuation and how they are reflected in later works of professional Lithuanian music an interesting endeavour.

**II**

Example 2. Stasys Vainiūnas. *Piano concert No 4* (1975) for piano and string orchestra. II part fragment (Example from published piano scores: Leningrad: Muzyka, 1977)

Vytautas Montvila's melodic punctuation is expressed by contrast. In the piano cycle, *Mirages* small punctuation bookmarks or separations are applied to smaller numbers of sound and larger separations are applied to larger numbers. The composer also sets up a contrast between various rhythmic sizes and tempos or, in the case of the *Gothic Poem*, the decrease of tempo, in *sutartinė* material (syncopation) eliminates punctuational 'hearing' (in the C category in both cases).

Example 3. Vytautas Montvila. *Gothic Poem* (1970) for symphonic orchestra (44–47 bars) (Example from published scores: Sovetskij kompozitor, 1973)

Close to Vytautas Montvilas' generation, composer Antanas Rekašius, in his piano preludes *Atonica* (1, 2, 3), and *Wind quintet No 2*, presents symmetrically arranged punctuation ideas with a clearer syntactic moments (even though cluster, pointillism and other elements of sound effects are applied). Bar lines become an expressive element of punctuation here, related to the periodical repetition of rhythmic accents (strong – weak part of bar). Punctuation moments are almost always traditional yet atonal (except for collages such as *Music*).

**ATONIKA (1970)**  
12 preliudų fortepijonui  
ANTANAS REKAŠIUS  
(1928)

Example 4. Antanas Rekašius. *Atonic* (1970) for piano, fragment  
(Example from Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, MILC 013, 1998)

Example 5. Antanas Rekašius. *Wind quintet No 2* (1976), Part I, fragment  
(Example from the Music Information Centre Lithuania database)

In Part I of Bronius Kutavičius' vocal series *On the Shore*, the melody is conjunctive. The three consonants in the line *Naktis eina gilyn ir gi-lyn, gi-lyn* create an optical illusion of punctuation, however, this moment of punctuation can become unperceived/unclear through interpretation due to the alto accentuations placed in between. Thus, the vertical sound and the moment of transition in the phrase is redrawn. This example illustrates category D. In Part IV of the same piece, a more traditional example of punctuation is predominant,

reflecting the link with combinations of chords that are held longer in tonal cadences, when a chord is used for completion (category B).

**Lento. Allo stesso modo**

The image shows a musical score for a soprano and four violas. The tempo is marked 'Lento. Allo stesso modo'. The soprano part has lyrics: 'Nak...tis ei...na', 'gi...lyn ir gi...lyn,', and 'Tik...tai aš gu...liu'. The dynamics are marked 'pp' and 'p'. There are arrows pointing to specific notes in the viola parts.

Example 6. Bronius Kutavičius. *On the Shore* (1972) for soprano and 4 violas, fragment (Vilnius, printed editions: Vaga, 1973)

The punctuation of *Erotics* is highlighted by separate lines of the staves where each line is equal to one longer syntactic structure. Due to the repetitive and fragmented melodic nature, the sum of the syntactic structure is equal to the phrase-sentence (as in baroque music with indivisible/non-caesurian sentence-period; category C).

I

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is for Flauto (flute) and the bottom staff is for Corno (horn). The tempo is marked 'Lento'. The flute part has markings: 'rubato', 'piu mosso', and 'p. m.'. The horn part has markings: 'p. m.' and 'ff'. The dynamics range from 'p' to 'ff'. There are also some numerical markings above the staves: '1 2 3 4 5 6' and '1 2 3 4 5 6'.

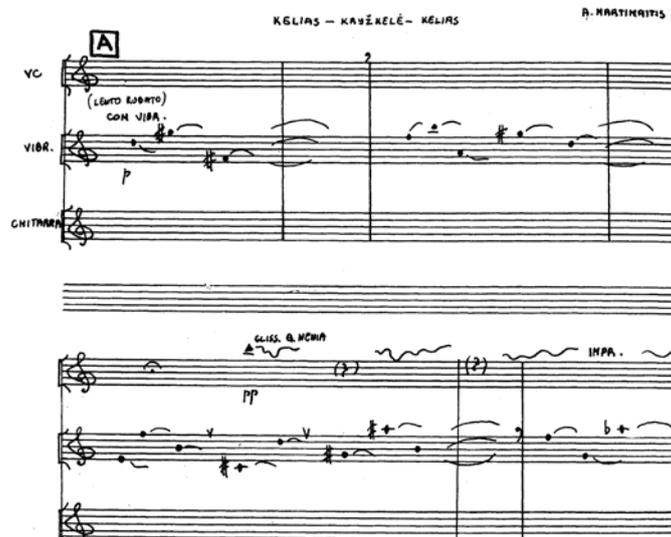
Example 7. Bronius Kutavičius. *Erotics* (1997) for recording flute, horn female voice (tape), fragment (Example from the Music Information Centre Lithuania database)

Unique examples of punctuation can be found in Bronius Kutavičius' *Last Pagan Rites* and parts II, III and IV of the *Magic Circle of Sanskrit* oratorio, which places the emphasis not on the ending, but on the renewing beginning (as the new voice joins in). Repetitive and canonical terraces create an impression of concentric dynamism and the smooth flow of transitions between parts – an original punctuation for tonally sounding flickering (category D).

With examples of each category in Bronius Kutavičius' work, we encounter symmetrical versions of structures, and the rearrangement or multiplication of sorts. Algirdas Martinaitis' works demonstrate a predominant asymmetrical arrangement of syntactical structures, which due to the metro-rhythmical change and variety of rhythmic formulas does not allow the listener to feel a consistency of punctuation. "The same and a little bit different" (category C) could serve as a summary of punctuation in the *Arma Christi* composition, and in the first brace of the second page of the manuscript, there is an example of bar-based punctuation that may often be seen in contemporary musical notation. It is these repeating sequences of chords that become the pronounced rhythmic-harmonic beats of punctuation that contrast with the downward slipping chromatic line of melody and continuous transition to B hyper-measure. Examples of modulating punctuation also exist. In the composition *Road-Crossroad-Road*, individual sounds and the aleatoric systems are modulated into traditional notational expression with its characteristic caesurae.



Example 8. Algirdas Martinaitis. *Arma Christi* (1996) for trombone, piano, double bass, marimba and siren, fragment (Example from the Music Information Centre Lithuania database)



Example 9. Algirdas Martinaitis. *Road-Crossroad-Road* (1980) for electric guitar, electric cello and percussion, fragment (Example from the Music Information Centre Lithuania database)

The works of two composers, Nomeda Valančiūtė and Loreta Narvilaitė, can be attributed to category C. The punctuation solutions of the latter author are related to modality and horizontal multi-layered writing. Thus, if excluding the structure "melody + accompaniment" and instead forming "the rising sound with a melody + melody x" structure (when one voice stops, another continues), traditional and clearly pronounced

punctuation disappear in the vertical lining of sound (*Morning Dew Was Falling*, bar 65; string quartet *The Wall*). The bookmarks of punctuation in Nomedra Valančiūtė's pieces *Reflectionsnebel* (*Fragment from the Hospital Park*) in between the repeated sound formulas are created as a dynamic progression (from large structures and longer separations between increasingly smaller elements). The sensation of a consistent transition and contrast depends on the performer's interpretation, thus the sound result can be seen as similar to tradition or continual speech 'with no full stops'.

**FRAGMENT FROM THE HOSPITAL'S PARK**  
for string quartet  
(1998)

NOMEDA VALANČIŪTĖ  
(1961)

Example 10. Nomedra Valančiūtė. *Fragment from the Hospital Park* (1998) for string quartet, fragment (Example from the Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, MILC 023, 1999)

**RYTO RASA KRITO**

Loreta NARVILAITE

♩ = 72

Example 11. Loreta Narvilaitė. *Morning Dew Was Falling* (1996) for flute, violin, viola, cello, piano, fragment (Example from the Lithuanian Music Information and Publishing Centre, MILC 031, 2000)

In summary, the conclusion can be made that even though punctuation is rather linked to traditions of tonal music<sup>14</sup> and a certain accompanying background – larger rhythmic values and the simultaneous melting of a melody and chord into cadence – non-traditional examples of punctuation can be found even when avoiding the aesthetics of tonal music.

<sup>14</sup> Brown C., Norrington R. *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice, 1750–1900*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 139.

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## Melodijos punktuacijos kanonai lietuvių kompozitorių kūryboje

### Santrauka

Melodijos punktuacija ir jos santykis su ritmo bei harmonijos paraleliškumu – tęstinė Vakarų Europos romantinės estetikos garsinio žemėlapio esatis, veikianti ir šių dienų kūrybinius procesus. Pasitelkus muzikos sintaksės dėmenis (motyvus, frazes ir pan.) gaunamas individualus arba kartotinis bei nuspėjamas skambesio rezultatas. Pastarąjį geriausiai iliustruoja simetriniai melodijos sintaksiniai sprendimai, cezūrų šablonai, kurie reflektuoja kanono ir tradicijos kryptis. Individualius melodijos punktuacijos sprendimus lemia sąmoninga ir kompoziciškai nuosekli nutolusių epochų ir (ar) dabarties atonalių muzikinių struktūrų atranka. Melodijos punktuacijos kanonai ir naujovių siekiamybė užprogramuoja lengviau ar sunkiau suvokiamą bei interpretuojamą tekstyną, jo visumos ar atskirų dalių dramaturginę seką. Vienu atveju punktuacijos kanonai išryškėja tradicinės notacijos pavyzdžiuose, kitu atveju – netradicinės notacijos kūriniuose. Tą patį galima pasakyti ir apie išsilaisvinimo iš melodijos punktuacijos kanonų tendencijas: originalių punktuacijos pavyzdžių esama tradicine ir specialia notacija sukurtuose kūriniuose. Minėtas melodijos punktuacijos „kvadratas“, kanono ir naujos raiškos aspektai, sąsajos su muzikinės dramaturgijos visuma bei kūrinio dinamika atsispindi įvairių kartų lietuvių kompozitorių (Antano Rekašiaus, Antano Montvilos, Algirdo Martinaičio, Nomedos Valančiūtės ir kt.) kūriniuose.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** punktuacija, sintaksė, cezūra, kadencija.