

Some Rules for Phrasing (It's a rule if it works 50.01% of the time)
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1. Change makes motion.

One keeps the musical phrase in motion (shows direction) by changing things. Volume, the time, (i.e. rubato) tone color, vibrato, articulation, etc. When musical material is repeated try to vary something.

2. Phrases must have audible direction to and from a destination.

The destination in most phrases or groups, or the point in a phrase or group with the most gravitational pull, is one or more of the following:

- The highest note or region.
- The longest note.
- The most dissonant note or region.

3. Dissonances should not be separated from their resolutions.

Such as appoggiaturas, suspensions, retardations etc. Take the resolution of dissonances into account when grouping notes and planning breathing.

4. Big intervals take time.

The larger the interval the longer it takes.

5. Fast notes go slow, slow notes go fast.

Play fast music as slowly as possible, without slowing down the tempo. Subdivide slow music so that it continues to move.

6. Pieces of music are organized from small to large.

Starting with the smallest parts, which are groups of notes, the music must have motion from one destination to the next.

- Groups of notes within the phrase (a group = two or more notes)
- Individual complete phrases
- Phrase periods of sections
- Sections of movements
- Individual movements
- Entire work

7. Phrases must have nuance *and* LINE.

A phrase may have several ups and downs on the way to and from its ultimate destination. One must keep all the nuances, shapes, and note groupings contained within a sense of line.

8. Markings in the music must be interpreted.

A hairpin (or any other dynamic or character marking) is there for a reason. Your job *is not* to do a hairpin or an accent or whatever, but to figure out why it is there. What is its function in the context of the music at hand?

9. If you can't think of anything else to do:

Get louder when the notes go up, and softer as they go down. (This is the most elementary phrasing technique.) Make a crescendo or sustain before breaking a phrase for a breath.

10. When in doubt play beautifully. Self explanatory.