

“So, you want to write a Minuet?”—Historical Perspectives in Teaching Theory*

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ABSTRACT: The article discusses the applicability of Joseph Riepel's *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst* (1752–1765) to today's music theory classroom. Riepel's treatise, a lively dialogue between a teacher (*Præceptor*) and a student (*Discantista*) transcends historical boundaries, allowing students to gain hands-on experience with concepts that otherwise remain abstract. In the spirit of Riepel's treatise, I do not merely discuss how Riepel's *Præceptor* teaches the student to write minuets, but I describe how I use these instructions in the music theory classroom while providing a sample of my teaching materials.

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[1] It has been my experience that many of my students do not feel bound to the rules of common practice tonality. Students actually seem to prefer parallel fifths, unresolved leading tones and other violations of the voice leading rules *not* because it is easier to work without rules, but because these rules often have no bearing on the music with which they are most familiar. As one way to answer to this challenge, I have found it useful to create hands-on experiences with the theory of the common practice period. Inspired by Glenn Gould's playful *So You Want to Write a Fugue?* and my interest in eighteenth-century compositional theory, I have been teaching the composition of minuets within a historical context, based on W. A. Mozart's early minuets and Joseph Riepel's compositional theory.⁽¹⁾

[2] In the following essay, I discuss the beginning of Joseph Riepel's *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst* (*Fundamentals of Musical Composition*) and its application to today's music theory classroom.⁽²⁾ Riepel's *Anfangsgründe* seems especially well suited for use in a theory class, because both the structure and the content of the treatise suggest a hands-on approach to musical composition. The different chapters of the *Anfangsgründe* resemble actual lessons in composition, unfolding as lively discussions between a teacher, the *Præceptor*, and his student, the *Discantista*. Because the beginning of the *Anfangsgründe* focuses on very basic musical issues, it does not require an extensive theoretical introduction. In each lesson a student and a teacher discuss the basic musical features of mid-eighteenth century style. I have been using Riepel's instructions on how to compose minuets as a way of providing second semester theory students with a workshop that highlights the practical nature of concepts which might otherwise remain abstract. In order to grasp such concepts as tonicization and modulation, students recognize, analyze, and write mid-eighteenth-century minuets, in which these concepts are important constituents of the form.

[3] While stylistic composition assignments are not uncommon in theory classes, the use of historical models and sources, especially one as lively as Riepel's *Anfangsgründe*, provides a number of advantages.⁽³⁾ First, the historical distance helps

students to set aside their own preferences and engage with the past. Since the objective is to recreate a historical sound, students do not need to conform to a textbook notion of what sounds “good” in a composition assignment. They learn to evaluate their own efforts in light of specific models and acquire style-specific knowledge on the side. Second, instead of asking students to write isolated phrases or chord progressions, students learn to write a complete composition, which means that they learn to understand specific compositional processes. In addition, since the compositional instructions emphasize the functional aspects of minuets, the assignments do not require compositional ability, but an understanding of a minuet’s basic building blocks. In the spirit of Riepel’s treatise, I will not merely discuss how Riepel’s *Præceptor* teaches the student to write minuets (Part I), but I will describe how I use these instructions in the music theory classroom (Part II) while providing a sample of my teaching materials (see “[Instructions on How to Write a Minuet in the Galant Style](#)”). I present Parts I and II separately in order to offer readers the possibility of moving directly to my discussion of the classroom teaching and the worksheets. However, Riepel’s discussion of the minuet in the opening pages of the *Anfangsgründe*, which I discuss in the first part, has been the starting point for my exploration of the minuet and students gain much by reading and discussing the original treatise in the classroom.⁽⁴⁾

Part I: Riepel’s Minuet Instructions

[4] Riepel’s *Præceptor* begins the first lesson by asking his new student to write a sample composition so that he may find out if the *Discantista* has “sufficient knowledge of the proper structure of melody (*ordentlichen Eintheilung des Gesanges*). For whoever wants to build houses must have the materials to do so.”⁽⁵⁾ The *Discantista* confidently presents the minuet reproduced in **Example 1**, which occurs in the text with numbers underneath each measure to facilitate the *Præceptor*’s comments and corrections.

Before writing down the minuet, the *Discantista* confidently states, “In my opinion, there is nothing in the world that it easier to compose than a minuet. I even trust myself to swiftly write down a whole dozen one after another.”⁽⁶⁾ However, this confidence soon disappears when the *Præceptor* answers his student not with praise, but with a tirade of criticism. “Heaven, you cannot even tell the notes apart,” he exclaims, “Let it please whom it may, I for one would not even give you a pipe-load of evil-smelling tobacco for it.”⁽⁷⁾ Indeed, the teacher’s criticism, which I have summarized below, seems overwhelming.⁽⁸⁾ The *Præceptor* demands that

1. A composition, and especially a minuet, should always consist of an even number of measures (the second part of the student’s minuet is thirteen measures long).
2. Each part should consist of no more than eight measures (again, the second part of the student’s minuet consists of thirteen measures).
3. The beginning or theme should be set off by clearly recognizable *Zweyer* and *Vierer*; that is, two- and four-measure units (measures 2 and 3 in the student’s minuet each begin with a half-note, making it difficult to hear measure 3 as the beginning of a second two-measure unit).
4. Except at the cadence, a minuet should always proceed in quarter-notes, which Riepel calls “perfectly or imperfectly rising notes” (the student’s minuet uses a dotted half-note not only at the end of the first and second part, but also in measure 5 (part one) and measure 9 (part two). Also, it contains three measures (measures 8, 10, and 11) in which there are only eighth notes)
5. The second part of the minuet should employ material that already has been presented in the first part (the second part of the student’s minuet has hardly any resemblance to the first).
6. A minuet should, if possible, rise in the first part and fall in the second (the student’s minuet does the opposite).
7. Measures 4 and 5 should be written with a recognizable difference. This would enable the listener to perceive measure four as the end of the first four-measure unit and measure five as the beginning of a second (however, measure 5 in the student’s minuet consists only of one dotted half-note and measures 5 to 8 show no resemblance to measures 1 through 4. Thus, not only does measure 5 start with a closing gesture but it also is difficult to perceive measures 5 to 8 as a second four-measure unit).

The *Præceptor*’s first three objections seem repetitive, since the second one will automatically yield the first: if every part contains eight measures then the whole minuet can only consist of an even number of measures. Riepel, however, not only makes a point about the overall length of a composition (2) and then deals with aspects of rhythmic and metric coherence in a composition (1 and 3), but also begins his criticism by noting the large-scale issues first, similar to the way that he first presents a complete minuet which he then dissects.⁽⁹⁾ Objection four addresses the note values within a measure, while five through seven again concern larger issues, i.e. (5) overall coherence, (6) registral shape, and (7) contrast between measures 4

and 5. The *Discantista*, truly horrified by the great number of problems identified by his teacher, immediately begs the *Præceptor* to teach him the essential concepts so that he can make the necessary changes at once.

Zweyer, Dreyer, and Vierer (Tactordnung)

[5] The *Præceptor* begins his instructions by explaining to his student the basics of *Tactordnung*, that is, how measures are grouped together to create larger units.⁽¹⁰⁾ The *Præceptor* first defines *Zweyer*, or *Binarius* (two-measure groups), *Dreyer*, or *Ternarius* (three-measure groups), and *Vierer*, or *Quaternarius* (four-measure groups), which appear not as isolated measure groups but rather in pairs.⁽¹¹⁾ Riepel emphasizes this by labeling his first example of a *Zweyer* as “first” (*erster*) *Zweyer* and “another” (*anderer*) *Zweyer* (**Example 2a**). The *Præceptor* explains: “A *Zweyer*** [Footnote: **Binarius] consists of two measures which are mostly similar in motion to the following two measures, for example.”⁽¹²⁾ The *Præceptor* further demonstrates that the correspondence between the *Zweyer* does not have to be literal. He illustrates this with two examples which exhibit small rhythmic variations. The harmonic and melodic orientation of these variations, however, is not different from Example 2a: measures 1–2 move towards F, measures 3–4 towards G, and they retain the same melodic contour.⁽¹³⁾

[6] A *Dreyer* (**Example 2b**), the *Præceptor* explains, is similar to the *Zweyer* except that it is a measure longer.

Disc. I understand this very well; because one can see and hear this. But which ones are better in a minuet, *Zweyer* or *Dreyer*?

Præc. *Zweyer*. Because *Dreyer* are not used at all in it. However, I will tell you still today, where and how they can be used successfully.

Disc. Thus one can make a *Dreyer* from a *Zweyer*, or vice versa, by cutting away a measure or adding one to it.

Præc. By all means.⁽¹⁴⁾

We learn that while a *Dreyer* does not have a place in the minuet, it can be easily changed to a *Zweyer*. Indeed, Riepel’s *Zweyer*, *Dreyer*, and *Vierer* are not “organically” conceived units, but combinations of different numbers of measures.⁽¹⁵⁾ Thus, the *Præceptor*’s *Vierer* (**Example 2c**), a four-measure unit, essentially comprises a *Zweyer* with two added measures. This, of course, raises the question of whether there is a difference between a *Vierer* and two *Zweyer*: After the *Præceptor* presents a *Vierer* which he deems fitting for a minuet, the *Discantista* remarks that the first *Vierer* (Example 2c, measures 1–4) does not seem very different from two *Zweyer*. “If [this *Vierer*] is not followed by another *Vierer*, I would accept your opinion if need be,” argues the *Præceptor*. “However, the [two] *Zweyer* would be clearer in the following manner than yours, for example [**Example 2e**]:”⁽¹⁶⁾ He points out that this example (Example 2e) demonstrates a clearer division, “because the other *Zweyer* comes to rest a tone higher. Your *Zweyer* [Example 2d], however, remain both in the tone F.”⁽¹⁷⁾ Indeed, the difference between Examples 2d and 2e lies in their tonal orientation. Stressing the importance of context, the *Præceptor* remarks that if no other *Vierer* follows, the first *Vierer* of Example 2c could be interpreted as two *Zweyer*. Not only can one change a *Zweyer* into a *Dreyer* or *Vierer* by adding measures, but the musical context also can change the interpretation of any of these groupings.

Rhythmic motion within a measure

[7] Following the discussion of *Zweyer*, *Dreyer*, and *Vierer*, which dealt with the grouping of measures, the *Præceptor*’s attention shifts to the rhythmic content of a measure. The figure below (**Figure 1**) schematizes the rhythmic motion and contour within a measure. Riepel distinguishes between “running” (*laufende*), “rising” (*erhebende*), “dotted” (*punctirte*), and “immobile” (*unbewegliche*) notes. Among the running notes, there are those that move by step and those that move by leap. Riepel specifically discusses the difference between running notes that move upward and those that move downward, arguing that the upward moving ones are easier to perform. Among the rising notes (quarter notes), he distinguishes between “perfectly” and “imperfectly” rising notes. The names of a measure’s durational components, except for the “dotted notes,” are not technical (i.e., eighth-note, quarter-note, etc.) but descriptive and grounded in everyday experience. By using perception-based terms, Riepel enables students to immediately understand the issues discussed and also to remember the concepts more easily. In addition, by refraining to use mere technical labels, Riepel emphasizes their function within the measure, not how they are constructed.

[8] The *Præceptor* first introduces the “running notes that move by step” (*stufenweise laufende Noten*) and the “running notes that move by leap” (*sprungweise laufende Noten*), which exemplify the difference between scales and arpeggios respectively.

These “running notes,” the *Præceptor* explains, “[?] are the best notes in an *Allegro assai*, or *Tempo presto* and *prestissimo* of a symphony, a concerto, or solo and so forth, [?].”⁽¹⁸⁾ While these eighth-note runs can be successfully employed in larger compositions, the minuet has different demands. “For a minuet, however,” the *Præceptor* clarifies, “one needs always perfectly rising notes, that is quarter notes, for example.”⁽¹⁹⁾ (see **Figure 3a**). These quarter notes, the *Præceptor* demonstrates, can be varied in the following ways: (see **Figure 3b**). While he encourages his student to create numerous variations, the *Præceptor* also teaches his student to choose the most desirable ones based on general notions of what “works” within a measure and the measure’s function, which is derived from its position within the minuet.⁽²⁰⁾ For example, Riepel’s *Præceptor* prefers eighth-note motion on the second and third beats and dislikes the combination of four eighth notes followed by a quarter note, as in measures 6 and 7 of the student’s sample composition (Example 1).⁽²¹⁾ Although he rejects this rhythmic construction in general, the *Præceptor* does not object if it appears in a single measure. In addition, he considers the eighth-note motion (“running notes that move by step”) in the last four measures of the student’s minuet acceptable, “[b]ecause the minuet aims to reach its cadence and place of rest, almost as if someone hungry [runs] from his work for example to dinner, or ? You should not laugh,” scolds the teacher and defends his use of metaphors, arguing that they are necessary “because a **beginner must imagine** these and a **thousand other comparisons if he does not want to fill his composition with** empty, simple and **lifeless notes** [Riepel’s emphasis].”⁽²²⁾ In all these explanations, the *Præceptor* impresses on his student the importance of context, which changes the function of a rhythmic figure.

[9] In addition to “running” and “rising” notes (eighth- and quarter-notes), the student’s minuet also contains dotted half-notes. In reference to them, the *Præceptor* warns the *Discantista* that “one never uses an immobile or dead note [dotted half-note] in the middle of such a short and dance-like minuet, but only at the end of the first and second parts. However, one can make such an immobile or dead note come alive in the following manner, for example [**Example 4a**].”⁽²³⁾ Having defined the dotted half note as an “immobile or dead note” (*unbewegliche oder todte Note*), the *Præceptor* consequently labels the combination of half note and quarter note or half-note and two eighth-notes as “imperfectly rising notes” (*unvollkommen erhebende Noten*). He warns the *Discantista* that “two such measures are of no use in a minuet,” and suggests that he should always combine such a measure with a measure of perfectly rising notes (**Example 4b**).⁽²⁴⁾

[10] Finally, after the *Præceptor* has discussed eighth, quarter, and half-notes, the *Discantista* asks if he may also use dotted notes, giving the music shown in **Example 5a** as an instance. The *Præceptor* objects, finding them unsuitable for a minuet. He dislikes the student’s dotted quarter-eighth-quarter combination, claiming that only a “limping dance master” (*hinckenden Tanzmeister*) might like them. However, if the *Discantista* must use dotted notes, then the following combination (**Example 5b**) is much more preferable.

[11] Riepel’s repertoire of rhythmic motion within a measure covers most usable combinations. However, the *Præceptor* does not simply list these rhythmic variants, but gives reasons why some are preferable to others. Some of the reasons are based on general considerations of the specific genre in question (a symphony can accommodate more elaborate rhythmic figures than a short minuet), others are functional (the beginning, middle, and end of a composition require different notes), or are based on aesthetic judgment and personal preference (the *Præceptor* sometimes freely admits to liking a particular combination). Thus these reasons allow us insight into the cultural norms (the mid-eighteenth-century expectation of what constitutes a minuet) and into Riepel’s personal choices and judgments. Often, of course, a particular choice is guided by several criteria. In this way, Riepel does not merely identify and discuss an inventory of rhythmic content and contour for a measure, but teaches criteria for choosing one above the other.

Coherence, Contour, and Contrast

[12] After discussing the parts (the construction of *Zweyer*, *Dreyer*, and *Vierer*) and providing a detailed investigation of the rhythmic motion within a measure, the *Præceptor* shifts his attention to the whole, namely the overall shape of the minuet. For this, the teacher focuses on his last three objections to the student’s sample minuet: (5) motivic/thematic relationship between the different parts of a minuet, (6) melodic contour, and (7) clear separation of measures 4 and 5. In this section of the lesson, teacher and student deal with complex musical relationships. Similar to other beginning students, the *Discantista* often makes mistakes in another area while addressing issues of larger structures.

[13] As his fifth objection, the *Præceptor* argues that a minuet’s second part should be related to the first. The two terms that he uses to describe the relationship between the two parts of a minuet are: “similarity” (*Aehnlichkeit*) and “coherence” (*Zusammenhang*). In the revision of his sample minuet (**Example 6**), the *Discantista* marks the related parts “ go down, in the second, up. Thus, I believe that one can hear enough similarity and coherence.”⁽²⁵⁾ The *Præceptor*, however, is not satisfied with this and tells his student that many consider inverted notes

ornamental. He argues that such inversions are often used in other compositions, but they are hardly recognizable in this context. Immediately, the student writes a number of variants that contain more direct relationships between the different parts of the minuet.

[14] The sixth objection on the *Præceptor's* list was that a minuet should rise at the beginning and fall at the end. The student immediately tries out this concept in his sixth revision of his sample-minuet (**Example 7a**). His teacher, however, slows him down saying: “Wait a moment! You went much too high. I have to tell you that the minuet is much too youthful in this way, the melody loses its **seriousness and maturity** [Riepel’s emphasis].”⁽²⁶⁾ To lower the high register, the student writes another minuet (**Example 7b**) which he begins lower than the previous one. “This is very good,” replies the *Præceptor*, “but, one does not need to rise and fall in every *Zweyer*. The cadences are almost always bound to the following rule: the cadence in the second part can fall just by itself, just as a single note  can express the ascent in the first part, as for example [**Example 8**].”⁽²⁷⁾

[15] The last objection of the teacher focuses on separating measures four and five to make the *Vierer* clearly recognizable. Using the distinction between perfectly and imperfectly rising notes, the *Præceptor* exemplifies the two possible versions. In **Example 9a**, measure 4 consists of perfectly rising notes, while measure 5 consists of imperfectly rising ones, for example. Both examples **Example 9a** and **9b** give only the first part of the minuet. This causes the *Discantista* to ask what one does in the second part. “It [the second part] could do similar things if it wished, argues the *Præceptor*, but [the second part] is often so extravagant that it does not want to follow any rule. In addition, a listener might be so taken by the first part that he does not take much trouble with the second part, because it is only considered the resolution of the first part anyway.”⁽²⁸⁾

[16] This ends the seven corrections of the student’s sample minuet with which the first chapter of the *Anfangsgründe* begins. Although the *Præceptor* points out numerous problems in the student’s composition, there are substantial similarities between the student’s minuet and its “corrected” versions that result from the teacher’s interventions. A comparison between the student’s sample minuet (Example 1) and a version of the “corrected” minuet (Example 6), which most closely resembles the original in its musical material, demonstrates that the two minuets have a number of similarities. **Figure 2** presents an outline of the two minuets, using modern terminology to indicate their metric and harmonic structure. It shows the unfolding of the two minuets, with the corresponding sections written one below the other. Both minuets display the same basic structure: Each consists of four sections, which the double bar divides into two times eight measures (thirteen measures in Example 1). Both versions share the same general harmonic orientation: The first group closes on the tonic, the second ends with a half cadence, the third closes on the dominant, and the fourth, the last, cadences in the tonic key. Guided by the *Præceptor's* discussion of *Tactordnung*, the student’s revised version has a clear, symmetrical structure: The first part contains two *Vierer*, of which the first is built out of two *Zweyer* (2+2). However, except for the three quarter-note repetition on C4, which helps to avoid the closure created by the C4 dotted half-note in the student’s first minuet (Example 1, measure 5), measures 5–8 of the revised version correspond exactly to the same measures in the student’s original minuet. Similarly in the second part, the metrically even first *Vierer* (Example 6, measures 9–12) has replaced the five-measure group (Example 1, part two, measures 1–5) in the student’s minuet. However, after the double bar, the *Discantista's* sample minuet already uses the same harmonic structure as the *Vierer*: a sequential continuation pattern, called a *Monte*, which the *Præceptor* discusses in the second chapter of the *Anfangsgründe*.⁽²⁹⁾ Finally, the last *Vierer* of the second part in the revised version resembles the last four measures of the original; except for the stepwise ascending eighth-notes g–a–b–c–d–e (Example 1, measure 10) which are reduced to their underlying g–b–d triad (Example 6, measure 13). The *Discantista* has also cut out measures 6–9 of the original, the unresolved drive to the cadence, which is repeated and resolved in the last *Vierer*. All significant changes in the student’s sample minuet have resulted in a metrically even structure; the revised minuet has a rhythmic “rhyme.” However, *Præceptor* did not need to address the minuet structure, because he could rightly expect his student to understand the functional aspects of a minuet.⁽³⁰⁾

Part II: Teaching the Minuet In Today’s Theory Classroom

[17] The minuet seems an ideal composition for the theory classroom, because it is short and easy to comprehend and it requires only a limited harmonic knowledge. I have used Riepel’s compositional instructions many times at the end of a first-year music theory course to provide students with a hands-on experience of basic compositional strategies.⁽³¹⁾ Since students are usually unprepared for dealing with composition in a specific style, their eighteenth-century “Capellmeister” training requires several stages: First students get to know the basic minuet structure by analyzing a number of minuets thereby recognizing their common features; second, the analyzed minuets provide a starting point for limited compositional assignments (i.e., composing a new melody above a given bass, harmonizing the melody of an existing minuet, composing a

minuet based on a model, etc.); and third, after students have gained some compositional experience within a clearly defined frame, they write their own minuets.

[18] In the first chapter of the *Anfangsgründe*, “*De Rhythmopoeia*, or On Metric Order” (*Tactordnung*), which focuses on the rhythmic and metric structure of compositions, Riepel’s *Praeceptor* teaches his student the fundamentals of composition, that is, how to use note values in a measure, how to group measures into larger units, and how to combine them into a minuet. In the second chapter, “Basic Rules Concerning the Order of Pitches” (*Tonordnung*), which considers minuets, concertos, and symphonies from the standpoint of their tonal organization, Riepel discusses specific ways for continuing the second part of a minuet and how to extend a sixteen-measure long minuet to 32 measures and more by way of repetition, insertion of new or contrasting material, expansion (i.e., lengthening a section), and the doubling of a cadence, that is, the repeat of a cadential gesture.⁽³²⁾ **Figure 3** schematizes the basic minuet structure, which can be found throughout the first two chapters of Riepel’s *Anfangsgründe*. Most minuets close their first section in the tonic, followed by turn to the dominant. The second section, and with it the first part, usually ends either with a half cadence on the dominant, like Examples 1 or 6 or, after a modulation to the dominant key, with an authentic cadence in the dominant, like Examples 7a, 7b, and 8. The second part opens either with *Monte*, *Fonte*, or *Ponte* and ends with a cadence in the tonic key. *Monte*, *Fonte*, or *Ponte* are melodic/harmonic continuation patterns, which Riepel discusses, in the second chapter of the *Anfangsgründe*. *Monte*, which means going up the mountain, consists of an ascending sequence (C–F followed by D–G in C major), harmonically V of IV going to IV followed by a V of V going to V movement. *Fonte* (going down a well), consists of a descending sequence (A–d followed by G–C, again in C major), harmonically V of ii going to ii followed by a V to I movement. *Ponte* (crossing a bridge) consists of a prolongation of the dominant that closes on the tonic. These continuation patterns usually appear after the double bar line in a minuet thus opening the second part.⁽³³⁾ The beginning of the second part of Examples 1, 6, and 8, and Examples 2a through 2e contain a *Monte*, while Examples 7a, 7b begin their second part with a *Fonte*.

[19] Because W. A. Mozart’s Minuets K. 1–7 stylistically match the minuets in Riepel’s *Anfangsgründe*, I have found them to be the best possible example for the class room.⁽³⁴⁾ **Figure 4** provides an overview of some of their features. Except for K.2, which ends its first part with a half cadence (HC), all of Mozart’s Minuets K. 1–7 modulate to the key of the dominant and end their first part with a cadence in the dominant key (*V-Cad.*). In addition, all of them employ a continuation pattern at the beginning of the second part; two minuets begin with *Monte* (K. 4 and 5), four with *Fonte* (K. 1e, 1f, 2, and 3), and one with *Ponte* (K. 7), and end with a final cadence in the tonic key (*I-Cad.*). While both parts of K. 1e and 1f c are exactly eight measures long, the remaining minuets contain sections with 10, 12, 14, or 16 measures. **Figure 5** summarizes my interpretation of the metric and harmonic structure of Mozart’s Minuets K. 1–7.

[20] As **Figure 5** demonstrates, all minuets are constructed out of even numbered metric groupings. Four measure structures, *Vierer*, are usually the result of the combination of two two-measure units, two *Zweyer*. The two *Zweyer* can either be joined (+), repeated (R), or transposed (I) in order to create the *Vierer*, the four-measure groupings. I find such a distinction helpful because it emphasizes the structural difference between the functional sections of a minuet. For example, a beginning *Vierer* will usually not be the result of a transposed *Zweyer*, because the function of the opening *Vierer* is to acknowledge and strengthen the tonic. On the other hand the second part usually opens with a transposed *Zweyer*, because the transposition is part of the contrast provided by the continuation patterns. **Figure 5** also lists instances of inserted measure (I) and doubling of the cadence (Dblg.). The former is easily distinguished in that the inserted material usually stands out and is not related to the surrounding music, while the later presents a special case of repetition, which simply restates the cadential measures. This often happens in combination with a deceptive or weak cadence and requires a restatement of the cadence. In addition to the metric structure **Figure 5** provides also a basic harmonic overview of the different minuets. The *Vierer* in a minuet usually end either on the tonic (I) or Dominant (V); yet I also show the *Zweyer* of *Monte* and *Fonte*, which end on IV and ii respectively. If the ending is not a formal cadence with a stepwise approach of the final note in the melody and leap from the fifth to the first scale degree in the bass, it is simply identified with the scale degree (I or V).⁽³⁵⁾ Discounting the extensions by way of repeats, sequences, transpositions, and insertion, Mozart’s minuets clearly adhere to the minuet structure taught by Riepel.

[21] The attached PDF-file “[Instructions on How to Write a Minuet in the Galant Style](#),” provides a sample of my minuet-teaching material. I usually distribute the six minuets (pages 3–8) together with a comparison sheet (“K. 1–7 Minuet Comparison,” page 9) at the beginning of my minuet unit. The comparison sheet helps to focus students’ analyses on the thematic, structural, and harmonic aspects, and, by compiling their findings, it allows them to recognize common features more easily. Throughout these investigations into Mozart’s early minuets, I encourage students to consider these compositions from the standpoint of a courtly composer whose livelihood depends on his ability to quickly produce a

handful of minuets for the evening entertainment of his employer. Composition from such a viewpoint is about craft, not inspiration. As a result, I am highlighting the functional aspects of the different sections and their role within the basic sixteen measure minuet structure, where the first four measures serve to establish the tonic and introduce the main thematic material, measures 5–8, the second section, usually modulate to the dominant, ending with a cadence which usually takes up measures 7–8. The second part opens with a contrasting pattern (*Monte*, *Fonte*, or *Ponte*) and ends with a section that cadences in the tonic. I have found it useful to provide students with a number of handouts that emphasize the functional sections within a minuet: ⁽³⁶⁾

1. The two-page “K. 1–7 Mozart Minuet (Basic 8+8 Structure)” allows for easy comparison of the harmonic and thematic details in the six minuets. All minuets are reduced to the minimum requirement of sixteen (8+8) measures, which allow just for the four required sections of the minuet. The following handout “Minuet Extensions,” which identifies all the extension measures that have been left out, is useful for comparing the reduced versions with the real minuets. Usually, I demonstrate the effect of leaving out a repeated section during the analysis of the individual minuets. Thus the handouts merely summarize something that students have already heard. However, I always emphasize that the reduced minuets do not replace the complete minuets but that they prove a conceptual stance. Thus whenever I leave out repeated measures to demonstrate a structural aspect, I later bring them back again and discuss with students why the repeat works.
2. The “K. 1–7 Cadential Patterns” handout demonstrates the melodic variety within the basis IV–V $\frac{6}{4}$ – $\frac{5}{4}$ –I or ii⁶–V $\frac{6}{4}$ – $\frac{5}{4}$ –I structure. All of them are perfect authentic cadences, except for the half cadence in K. 2 (boxed example). The handout emphasizes not only the melodic variety of the cadential patterns but also a number of other features. First, it makes clear that a cadence requires two measures: the first contains the pre-dominant and the cadential $\frac{6}{4}$, the second measure the final cadential harmony. Second, it demonstrates the importance of the hexachord above the final note as the melody of half of the cadences leaps up to the sixth scale degree before descending stepwise or with skips to the final tonic (for example, K. 1e La–Sol–Fa–Mi–Re–Do and La–Fa–Re–Do–Ti–Do); many of the remaining cadences leap at least to the fourth scale degree (for example, K. 5 Fa–Mi–Re–Ti–Do with thirds and K. 7 Re–Fa–Mi–Re–Do–Ti–Do). In addition, the handout serves a practical purpose as it allows students to “cut and paste” cadences into their own assignments.
3. The “K. 1–7 Continuation Patterns (Monte, Fonte, and Ponte)” provides an overview of the some of the melodic possibilities for the beginning of the minuet’s second part after the double bar line. Again, I encourage students to consider the handout a collection of continuation patterns from which they can draw for their own compositions. Students often only need to transpose, and slightly alter them before they can paste these patterns into their own compositions.

[22] After students are more familiar with the basic minuet structure, I introduce them to Riepel’s *Anfangsgründe* by way of the *Discantista*’s minuet. ⁽³⁷⁾ Their first task is to “mark any problems and mistakes” based on their understanding of Mozart’s early minuets. It has been my experience that students usually pick up on almost all of the *Præceptor*’s objections. Moreover, I have found that the latter objections that deal with the use of note values and thematic coherence in a minuet provide the opportunity for the discussion of more general musical features that are helpful to students. One class period is usually spent on discussing the different corrections to the student’s minuet using pages 2 and 3 of “Minuet Corrections.” The handout reproduces only five of the seven corrections by the teacher, because the teacher significantly changes the melody of the student’s minuet in the final two corrections. The next class period is usually spent with a discussion of the first seven pages, the first lesson of the *Discantista*, in the *Anfangsgründe*, which allows for a consideration of the detail which I discussed in the first part of this present essay. ⁽³⁸⁾

[23] Throughout these analytic approaches, I use worksheets that guide students towards composing their own minuet. By asking students to complete specific sections or aspects of minuets, I emphasize the functional aspects of the different sections; by gradually increasing the length and complexity of their assignments, I am guiding them towards their final project, which consists of an expanded minuet composed and performed in collaboration as a group. **Figure 6** summarizes the different tasks specified in each worksheet. I am using such worksheets as soon as students begin to recognize some of the features of the minuet. This usually happens by the end of the second week. Since each worksheet consists of an incomplete minuet and instructions on how to complete it, the six worksheets yield another six minuets that reinforce the basic minuet structure. Because the cadence and the continuation patterns *Monte*, *Fonte*, and *Ponte* have a predictable structure, the first two worksheets focus on them. While the following worksheets require students to write a new melody above a

given bass (No. 3), to fill in the internal four measures of every part (No. 4), to complete a minuet based on the first four measures (No. 5), and to write a complete minuet (No. 6), the final projects asks students to write minuets above the minimally required sixteen measure structure. It is also helpful to use Leonard Ratner's conception of the overall $\parallel: I ? V : \parallel$; $X ? I : \parallel$ two-reprise form structure of the minuet as a way to demonstrate the connection of the minuet to larger structure.⁽³⁹⁾

[24] In summary, I have found that this step-by-step approach, consisting of analysis and guided composition, provides a meaningful and engaging introduction to working with stylistic copies. The limited composition assignments especially guide student's efforts without overwhelming them with the task of writing a whole composition. While I have experimented with many different approaches over the years, my central concern has remained to provide students with a historically contextualized hands-on experience of compositional procedures that are shared by most common practice compositions.

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———. 1752. *Anfangsgründe zur musikalischen Setzkunst: Nicht zwar nach alt-mathematischer Einbildungsart der Zirkel-Harmonisten, Sondern durchgehends mit sichtbaren Exempeln abgefasst, De Rhythmopoeia, oder von der Tactordnung*, Regensburg.

Footnotes

* This is an expanded version of a paper presented at the 27th annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory in Seattle 2004. I would like to thank Robert Gjerdingen and my anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

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1. Glenn Gould wrote *So You Want to Write a Fugue?* for *The Anatomy of the Fugue*, a CBC-TV *Festival* program, broadcast on March 4, 1963. *Glenn Gould Archive* (Accessed 15 June 2005), <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/glenn Gould/m23-305-e.html>.

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2. Riepel 1752.

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3. While Cook (1996) also works on the basis of historical models and sources, I find his treatment of individual topics too cursory and his overall approach too eclectic for use in the classroom. Yet Cook's text offers a good starting point for exploring ideas about stylistic copies.

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4. Fortunately, the revised Strunk contains a translation of the opening section. See [Allanbrook 1998](#).

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5. “[*Præc.*]eine hinlänglich Erkenntniß? von der ordentlichen Eintheilung des Gesanges. Denn wer Häuser baut, muss die Materialien dazu haben” ([Riepel 1752](#), 1.).

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6. “Disc. Nach meinem Erachten ist auf der Welt nichts leichter zu componiren als ein Menuet; ja ich getraue mir flugs ein ganzes Dutzend nacheinander herzuschreiben” ([Riepel 1752](#), 1.).

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7. “*Præc.* Himmell! du kennest ja noch nicht einmal die Noten voneinander. Von diesem Minuet, wenn ich ihn so nennen darf, [?] mag er gefallen wem er will; ich meines Ortes gebe dir keine gute Pfeife Knaster dafür” ([Riepel 1752](#), 2.).

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8. See [Riepel 1752](#), 2.

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9. Nola Reed (1983) and Joseph Brumeloe (1991) also emphasize that the first point concerns the overall length of a composition and points two and three are concerned with inner coherence (See [Reed 1983](#), 34–35 and [Brumeloe 1991](#), 78–79.). In addition, Scott Balthazar (1983) points out that Riepel's tendency to begin a topic by presenting it first in its entirety and then dealing with its details, bears resemblance to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's conception of the universe (See [Balthazar 1983](#), 39–72.).

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10. Since Riepel does not use the terms “phrase” or “period” within the *Anfangsgründe*, I will use the more neutral terms “unit” and “section” to refer to groups of measures. The reason for this is that Riepel's conception of musical punctuation differs substantially from nineteenth-century theories of phrase structure. This issue is addressed in [Eckert \(2000\)](#).

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11. Later in the *Anfangsgründe*, Riepel discusses groupings of up to nine measures (*Neuner*).

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12. “[*Præc.*] Eine Zweyer** [Footnote: **Binarius] besteht in 2. Tacten, welche andern darauf folgenden 2. Tacten der Bewegung nach, meistens ähnlich sind, zum Ex.” (Riepel 1752, 2).

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13. See Riepel 1752, 2. Riepel identifies this ascending sequence as a feature of a Monte (going up the mountain) in the second chapter of the *Anfangsgründe*. I will discuss this and other continuation patterns, which open the second part of a minuet, later.

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14. “Disc. Das verstehe ich nun sehr wohl; denn man kann es sehen und h?ren. Allein welche sind besser zu einem Men., die Zweyer oder Dreyer?

Præc. Die Zweyer. Denn die Dreyer sind gar nichts nütze dazu. Ich will dir aber heut noch sagen, wann und wo diese gut angebracht k?nnen werden.

Disc. Also kan man ja aus einem Zweyer einen Dreyer, oder aus diesem jenen machen, wenn man z. Example bald einen Tact abschneidet, und bald einen hinzu thut.

Præc. Auf alle Weise” (Riepel 1752, 3).

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15. In his 1955 dissertation discussing eighteenth-century compositional theory, Arnold Feil argues that although Riepel presents groups of measures, “the first building block is the measure and not the measure group, even if it does not appear individually.” In order to support his argument, Feil reproduces Riepel’s *Zweyer*, *Dreyer*, and *Vierer* with lower-case letters underneath each measure. For example, he marks the four measures of Riepel’s “first *Zweyer*” and “other *Zweyer*” (Example 2a) a, b, c, and d respectively. While Feil’s view is not without merit—individual measures are indeed the basic building blocks—his interpretation ignores Riepel’s own identification of the second *Zweyer* as a repeat of the first. Thus the first *Zweyer* creates a grouping that needs to be considered as a whole. Hence, the measures in the example should not be labeled a, b, c, and d, but a, b, a’, and b.’ See Feil 1955, 38–39.

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16. “[*Præc.*] Wenn nicht noch ein Vierer nachfolgte, so wollte ich deine Meinung zur Noth endlich noch gelten lassen. Jedemoch würden sich die Zweyer auf folgende Art deutlicher ausnehmen, als die Deinigen, z. Ex?” (Riepel 1752, 3).

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17. “[*Præc.*] Daher, weil hier der andere Zweyer um einen Ton h?her zu stehen kommt. Deine Zweyer hingegen halten sich beide in dem Tone F auf” (Riepel 1752, 3).

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18. “[*Præc.*]sie sind gut, und zwar in einem *Allegro assai*, oder *Tempo presto*, und *prestissimo* einer Symphonie, eines Concerts, oder Solo, und so weiter, unter allen die besten Noten?” (Riepel 1752, 4).

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19. “[*Præc.*] Zu einem Menuet aber werden stets vollkommen erhebende, nämlich Viertelnoten erfordert, z. Ex.” (Riepel 1752, 4).

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20. Variation by means of *ars combinatoria* is an integral aspect of Riepel’s compositional approach. See Eckert (2000) for a discussion of the role of *ars combinatoria* in Riepel’s *Anfangsgründe*.

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21. The *Præceptor*’s dislike for such a rhythmic construction is easily understood, since the eighth-notes clearly undermine the down-beat. The single quarter-note at the end gives rise to a rhythmic accent on beat three.

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22. “[*Præc.*] Darum, weil der Men. gleichsam trachtet zu seiner Cadenz oder Ruhe zu gelangen, gleich wie ein Hungriger von seiner Arbeit etwan zum Abendessen, oder ? Du sollst nicht lachen, denn diese und tausend andere **Gleichnissen muß sich**, sonderlich **ein Anfänger, vorstellen, sofern er seine Composition nicht mit leeren, einfältigen und papirenen Noten anfüllen will** [Riepel’s emphasis]” (Riepel 1752, 5).

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23. “[*Prac.*]?eine unbewegliche Note in der Mitte eines so kurzen oder tanzmäßigen Men. niemals, sondern nur am Ende des ersten und zweyten Theils gebraucht wird. Man kann aber eine solche unbewegliche oder todte Note lebendig machen auf folgende Art, z. Ex.” (Riepel 1752, 5).

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24. “[*Prac.*] Nun zwey solche Tacte sind in einem *Men.* nichts nütze?” (Riepel 1752, 5).

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25. “[*Disc.*] Merke wohl auf! Im ersten Theile gehen die Noten \boxtimes herab, in dem zweyten hinauf, und so glaube ich, daß genug Aehnlichkeit oder Zusammenhang gehret werde” (Riepel 1752, 6).

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26. “[*Prac.*] Warte ein wenig! Du bist gar zu hoch gestiegen, ich will sagen, der *Men.* ist auf solche Art zu jung, hintenmal der Gesang **das Ernsthafte und Mannbare** dadurch verlieret [Riepel’s emphasis]” (Riepel 1752, 7).

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27. “[*Prac.*] Das ist sehr gut. Jedoch braucht man eben nicht mit allen Zweyern zu steigen oder fallen; ja es binden sich die Cadenzen fast gar mehr an diese Regel: indem oft die Cadenz des zweyten Theils für sich ganz allein das fallen: gleich wie im ersten Theile eine einzige Note \boxtimes das Steigen ausdrücken kann, z.Ex.” (Riepel 1752, 8).

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28. “[*Prac.*] Er kñnte dieses eben auch beobachten, wenn er wollte; allein er ist oft so ausschweifend, daß er gar keiner Regel folgen will. Zudem so kann der erste Theil einen zuhrenden Liebhaber auf einmal so sehr einnehmen, daß er sich nicht viel um den zweyten Theil bekümmert, weil dieser ohnehin nur als ein Beschluß des ersten Theils anzusehen ist” (Riepel 1752, 8).

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29. *Monte* (going up the mountain), is a melodic/harmonic pattern which appears usually after the double barline in a minuet. In its basic form it is constituted by an ascending sequence: C–F followed by D–G (in C major), which is usually harmonized with a V/IV going to IV followed by a V/V going to V movement. I will discuss this and other patterns, which Riepel presents, in the next part.

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30. Wolfgang Budday’s (1983) dissertation, which surveys minuets written between 1750 and 1790, clearly demonstrates the close relationship between Riepel’s instructions and contemporaneous musical practice.

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31. While the harmonic competence for dealing with the minuet is usually reached by the end of the first year, I have also used it for a review of diatonic harmony in upper level classes.

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32. For a discussion of Riepel’s means of extension, see Eckert (2000) 172–183.

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33. Robert Gjerdingen’s forthcoming book on galant schematas dedicates a chapter to each of the three continuation patterns and their varied appearance in the repertoire. For a discussion of *Monte*, *Fonte*, and *Ponte* in recent theory textbooks, see Gauldin (1995) and Clendinning and West Marvin (2005).

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34. Wolfgang Budday (1987) argues that Leopold Mozart taught his son composition using the second chapter of Riepel’s *Anfangsgründe* (1755). Indeed it is quite remarkable how closely W. A. Mozart’s early minuets match Riepel’s instructions.

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35. Riepel considers an ending that is not a formal cadence an *Absatz*. While I teach *Monte*, *Fonte*, and *Ponte* to my students, I usually avoid discussing the finer points of mid-eighteenth century musical punctuation to keep the number of new concepts to a minimum.

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36. In order to enable students to compare the different minuets more easily and allow for using sections in their own composition, the following three handouts transpose the minuets into C major.

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37. For a full discussion of the opening section of Riepel's *Anfangsgründe* please see Part I of this essay.

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38. Allanbrook 1998, 749–761.

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39. Ratner 1980, 209–216.

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