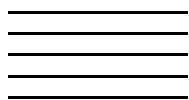


EDUCATION



Ornamentation: An Introduction to the Trill and Appoggiatura

By Michael Lynn,
Michael.lynn@oberlin.edu

For those of us who enjoy playing Baroque music and who want to work toward an historical approach, there are many subjects about which we need to learn. One of the most important, and one of the most fun aspects of Baroque music, is **ornamentation**.

In any music from before the 19th century that we play on recorder, ornamentation plays a part. Whether it is making a trill at a cadence in a Handel sonata or adding beautiful ornamentation to a slow movement, there are guidelines to help us do this convincingly, and with appropriate style.

This is the first of a series of short articles about Baroque ornamentation and its use on the recorder. There is no difference in how one would ornament when playing a Baroque flute, Baroque oboe or other wind instrument. I will also make a short video to demonstrate each topic and the music included. I urge you to watch the video to help get the sound of the ornaments in your ear—visit www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag.

One of the reasons that ornamentation is such a large subject is the variation inherent in Baroque music and the styles of playing ornaments—early Baroque, mid-Baroque, late Baroque—and to make things more complicated, there is variation from country to country. Luckily, there are a lot of things that remain similar through these different styles.

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Types of ornaments

Ornamentation is often broken down into two groups. The first are **ornaments that are indicated by a sign in the notation of the music**. This includes **trills**, **appoggiaturas**, **mordents**, and many lesser-known ornaments like *tour de chant* or *schleifer*. Many of these ornaments have different names in different languages, and even different signs to depict the same ornament.

The other type of ornamentation is often called **Italian Ornamentation or Extempore Ornamentation: adding extra notes in an harmonic or melodic fashion**. This is what you would use to ornament a Handel or Corelli slow movement. For this series of articles, we are going to discuss only the first type—an ornament represented by a sign in the music.

Ornaments are not really so difficult to add, but there are many ways to make ornaments more beautiful and expressive—and of course we want to use them appropriately. The two most common ornaments are the **trill** and the **appoggiatura**. In fact, as we will see, these two ornaments are related to one another.

Rules to help when playing an appoggiatura

An **appoggiatura** is written as below. It is very clear what notes to play, but just how to play them is not really indicated by the notation. The most common notation is a small note tied to a regular note—but there are also cases where a sign is used.



The upper note of the appoggiatura ornament is usually a dissonant note, and something that we want to bring out in the harmony. If you are playing recorder with someone who is playing the bass line, just have the bass player hold the note while you hold the upper note of your appoggiatura. You will hear that it often creates a sense of tension in the harmony.

Why didn't the composer just write this ornament as regular notes? If the two notes of an appoggiatura were written out, you might think they were just passing notes. Instead, one fits into the composer's harmony (the big note) and the smaller note creates a **dissonance**. Performers knew that it is good Baroque practice to stress that upper note and then relax to the lower note, like a sigh.

In Baroque music the **appoggiatura** is **executed on the beat except in special circumstances**. Try not to play it early, as that tends to de-stress it instead of showing the special quality of the dissonant note.

What should the rhythm be? In most cases the upper note will be notated as an eighth or 16th note, and it will be slurred to the second (regular) note. The appearance as an eighth note, however, doesn't really tell us how long it should be. J.J. Quantz, who provides us with lots of useful specifics in his flute treatise, *On Playing the Flute* (which also appears in the article in this AR on articulation),

tells us that the **upper note should take up half of the time of the larger note**. Thus, if we have an eighth-note appoggiatura with a quarter note, the upper note and the regular note should each be roughly an eighth note. If the larger bottom note is a half note, each note would be a quarter note.

If instead the note is dotted, Quantz tells us that the upper note should receive two-thirds of the value. Thus, a dotted quarter with eighth appoggiatura would be played as a quarter resolving to an eighth.

The French used the terms *Coulement* and *Port de voix* for a downward and upward appoggiatura respectively. The *Coulement*, filling in the third, would be short and the *Port de voix* would be long. Note the two different signs.



One of the concepts of Baroque music, with which it is often difficult for us to become comfortable, is that rhythmic groups don't have to be played in a metronomic way. This means the upper note can be almost an eighth note or almost a quarter note. **The overall beat needs to stay in time, but the smaller values can be played with more freedom.** Experiment with the length—I often find that making an ornament just slightly shorter than the “rule” is more musically interesting, but it depends on the context. Often in Baroque music, a rhythm that would be difficult to write down easily, is a good thing—especially within an ornament.

There is one special type of appoggiatura that needs to be mentioned. The French called this the *Tierce de coul * and it usually consists of one or more descending thirds filled in with a “little note” slurred to the second “big note.” In this special case the “little note” is played quickly and before the beat. It gives a very light feeling as opposed to a long appoggiatura, which is meant to be more serious.

Below are some examples of music using short appoggiaturas in the French style. Very often in Baroque music, especially in French music, this figure of a descending third with the quick note between indicates the end of a phrase or figure. The last note should always be very light and somewhat short, with a short silence before what comes next.

Trills of varying lengths

There are many types of trills, but we will start with the most common ones: **long trills** and **short trills**. Some composers actually use a different sign for these two types of trill.

An example that recorder players often come across is in music by J. B. de Boismortier (1689-1755); an excerpt by him is included on page 41. Seeing how he tells us which ornament to use will help you learn to identify the right sort of trill in other music—where this may be just one symbol used for trill. The most common symbols are shown below:



Dieupart - Gavotte

Mancini - Largo (long appoggiaturas)

Charles Dieupart (c.1667-1740), Gavotte from Suite No. 3, available at <http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/o/o4/IMSLP336264-PMLP11438-Dieupart-3.pdf>;
Francesco Mancini (1672-1737), Largo from Sonata IX (XII Solos for Flute); view the 1724 score by John Walsh at [https://imslp.org/wiki/12_Recorder_Sonatas_\(Mancini%2C_Francesco\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/12_Recorder_Sonatas_(Mancini%2C_Francesco))

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long trill



Long trill

If we look at our Boismortier example on the next page (which I transposed up a minor third to play on alto recorder), we can see that **the + sign is generally used on longer notes.** This allows the trill to have a longer appoggiatura note—leaning on that upper note, lengthening it, and gradually starting to trill. The notes of a long trill should never all be played as fast as possible. Instead the idea is that they **start slowly and gradually increase in speed.**

Various wind sources—including Quantz plus the J. M. Hotteterre treatise of 1707 (*which also appears in this issue's articulation article*)—also make it clear that the overall speed of a trill should be in context with the character and speed of the movement. This means **we play an overall slower speed for a trill in a slow movement, and a faster, more lively speed in a fast movement.** You will find that trying to do this greatly enhances the character of the music—and makes music with a lot of trills interesting rather than repetitive.

For the time period we are examining here, there is no tonguing in the trill. The upper note is slurred into the trill, and the next note we tongue is the note following the trill. People often acquire the bad habit of also slurring into the note after the trill. This is not good, as the placement of that note must be very clear unless the composer indicates otherwise.

Many composers, especially towards the beginning of the 18th century, didn't bother to notate a trill: they assumed that players of the era would add one in the proper situation. The main spot where we should always add a trill is at a **cadence.** In the example below, G.F. Handel has no trill markings, but we should add them at the two parenthetical spots. Many modern editions add them for the performer. There are also more complicated signs that tell us to put a "turn" at the end or beginning of the trill. These are seldom notated in wind music, but are much more common in keyboard music.


The first and most important rule in Baroque music is that **the trill starts from the upper note.** If your music shows an A with a trill sign above (as in the Handel example below), it means you start the trill by playing a B. This is very important—there are exceptions to this rule of thumb, but they occur mostly in music before 1680 or after 1760 and are thus not part of the ornamentation "language" we are most concerned with here. Why the upper note? It is because **a trill is really an ornament that starts with an appoggiatura.** That upper note at the beginning of the trill is just like the upper note of the appoggiatura, and we generally want to stress it in the same way.

Handel - showing trills that should be added


G. F. Handel (1685-1759), Sonata in G minor, Op. 1, No. 2 (*end of movement 1*), [http://imslp.org/wiki/Sonatas_for_an_Accompanied_Solo_Instrument%2C_Op.1_\(Handel%2C_George_Frideric\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Sonatas_for_an_Accompanied_Solo_Instrument%2C_Op.1_(Handel%2C_George_Frideric))

The first and most important rule ... is that the trill starts from the upper note.

Short trill

Looking again at our Boismortier example, we see that the short trill is shown with a  sign (sometimes incorrectly called an upper mordent sign). The amount of time available in the music to play this trill is often very short, so even though we still always start from the upper note, we don't lengthen it as we would when playing a normal appoggiatura.



We also usually can only play a couple of iterations of the trill—unlike a long trill notated with a , which can continue for a beat or two. A short trill creates more of a rhythmical device—rather than an expressive device, as with the long trill. Because of its rhythmical nature, it is important that the short trill starts exactly on the beat, never early. The short trills in this example are unusual in that the first note of each trill isn't tongued, since it is under a slur.

Most composers leave it up to the performer to figure out exactly how a trill should be played, rather than using special notation to make it clearer. Adding ornaments was an essential part of the musical language in the Baroque, when everyone was expected to understand how to play a trill—and we can learn to do likewise. Ideas in the Boismortier example will help you identify how trills should be played in other music.

In my next article on ornaments, I'll introduce the mordent/battement/pincé.

Michael Lynn performed at the Inaugural Luncheon for President Obama's first term and has played throughout the U.S., Canada, Taiwan and Japan with Apollo's Fire, Mercury Baroque, ARTEK, Oberlin Baroque Ensemble, Smithsonian Chamber Players, Tafelmusik, American Baroque Ensemble, Handel & Haydn Orchestra, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Cleveland Opera, Santa Fe Pro Musica, and many other ensembles. Lynn serves on the faculty of Oberlin Conservatory as Professor of Recorder and Baroque Flute, and teaches each year at the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute. He writes regularly for flute magazines around the world and is noted for his presentations and videos on History and Development of the Flute. A noted collector of flutes, he has a web site where you can view them at:



www.originalflutes.com. His music and videos: www.soundcloud.com/mloberlin; www.youtube.com/MichaelLynnFlute.



J. B. de Boismortier (1689-1755), Allemande, Gravement from Sonates a Deux Flûtes Traversieres sans Basse, Op. 2, [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Sonatas_for_2_Flutes%2C_Op.2_\(Boismortier%2C_Joseph_Bodin_de\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Sonatas_for_2_Flutes%2C_Op.2_(Boismortier%2C_Joseph_Bodin_de))