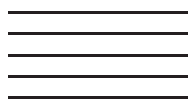


EDUCATION



By Michael Lynn,
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This is the second article I have written that covers ornaments that we might expect to encounter in Baroque music for the recorder. If you haven't read the previous article in this series on ornamentation, it may be helpful to you to read the Fall 2020 AR installment, which covers trills and appoggiaturas.

In this issue, we will discuss the mordent or battement.

One of my favorite ornaments is the **mordent**. It often has a lively musical character but can also be drawn out to make a more expressive ornament.

Players are often confused about the different names for various ornaments, as well as the different signs used to signify them. To add to the complications, the basic term mordent was used to mean something completely different in the 19th century—different from its meaning in the Baroque period.

In this series of articles on learning to interpret ornament signs, I focus on music from the years 1680-1750. If you look much outside of these boundaries, the situation gets more complicated. These dates encompass all of the Baroque recorder literature, with the exception of the early Baroque

Ornamentation: An Introduction to the Mordent/Battement

I'll use the French term battement ... and mordent interchangeably.

17th-century music, which may be played on recorder.

Some of the terms we see being applied to this ornament are:

- **mordent**
- **mordant**
- **battement**
- **pincé.**

I'll use the French term **battement** (meaning to “hit” or “beat”) and **mordent** interchangeably throughout this article—remember that they mean exactly the same thing.

Below is an example showing the **common signs and basic execution of the mordent**.

Jacques-Martin Hotteterre

Modern and many German sources

Pierre Danican Philidor

François Couperin

Don't play it this way—
Trill, not a mordent

In the chart on the previous page, note that **in actual speed, the 16th notes do not need to be played precisely as 16th notes**. Unless one is playing a slow movement, they would be **closer to 32nd notes**. The thing that matters is that the three notes of the mordent take up one quarter note beat—it's less critical that they have a rhythm that is easy to notate.

As the mordent often has a lively character, the ornamental notes should be **quick—and played on the beat**, not before. In a description of playing ornaments written by French flutist and instrument maker Jacques-Martin Hotteterre, he includes the *battement* in the ornaments that one should adjust to fit the character of the piece being played. Thus, in a very slow movement, one should strive to slow down the ornament to fit the sense of the music. I will demonstrate how to do this on my video accompanying this article; visit www.youtube.com/americanrecordermag.

We know from Hotteterre and others that **a *battement* is often included with a lower *appoggiatura* (Port de voix)**. This is usually executed on fairly long notes—often a dotted quarter, half or whole note—and often, only the *appoggiatura* is notated. The performer would add the mordent once the *appoggiatura* is over. The mordent can also be repeated a couple of times (*listen to this in the video example*), and it becomes very much like a trill from below, rather than from above. If done well, this can be quite expressive. In the example marked “optional” below, you can see that there is no sign for the mordent, only the *appoggiatura*. Even though it isn't specifically notated, it would be in good style to add the mordent.



Port de voix with battement

I often try to help out with online discussions about ornaments, and I have been very surprised by how many people think that the inverted mordent (short upward trill) is an option to play instead of the downward mordent. In fact, there is just about zero evidence of the inverted mordent being part of the ornamental language of the Baroque wind player. In music from pre-1680 or after 1750, it does have a use, but not in our regular Baroque recorder repertoire. As best as I have been able to determine, no wind composer or treatise used a sign or description of the inverted mordent during the high Baroque.

Unfortunately, the complications regarding the **mordent** and **inverted mordent** have been made worse by oversimplified examples that can be found online. For example, visit: www.facebook.com/enjoylearnandplaymusic/photos/a.114654366732888/158704902327834. In this case, the sign for the mordent—and the fact that the note goes up, instead of down—is applicable only to 19th-century music, not to Baroque music. This usage came about as a way to play an abbreviated trill in places where there is not room to play a real upper note trill. The use of the ♯ in our period indicates only a regular trill, which starts from the upper note.

The thing that matters is

that the three notes

of the mordent take up

one quarter note beat.

The mordent is

used most often



on the first note

of a figure.

François Couperin

How can we use the mordent properly when it isn't written in the music?

François Couperin is a composer who makes extensive use of the mordent, or as he would have called it, **pincé**. In the Allemande below from the *Concerts Royaux*, we can see that he uses two different ornament signs:

- the trill/tremblement 
- and  for the mordent/battement.


The mordent is used most often on the first note of a figure, as we see in the second line, measure 2, in the example below; or where approached from below, as in the first line, measure 2. Every once in a while, it can be approached from above, as in the second line, measure 3.

This is not recorder music, per-se, but some can be played quite effectively on the recorder.

Allemande - Legerement

François Couperin
from *Concerts Royaux*, 1722
Premier Concert

Soprano Recorder or Voice Flute



François Couperin (1668-1733), excerpt from *Concerts Royaux*, original score at [https://imslp.org/wiki/Concerts_royaux_\(Couperin%2C_François\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Concerts_royaux_(Couperin%2C_François))



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Jacques-Martin Hotteterre

In the musical example below from Hotteterre, notice that his symbol for the **mordent/battement** is the vertical line, “|.” He notates the battement less often than Couperin does, but he often would expect the battement to be added in many places where he shows a **Port de voix** (upwards appoggiatura, or ∨). From a musical perspective he uses the battement to help punctuate a note or give separation between repeated notes.

The Hotteterre example below is part of the opening slow section from his *Première Suite de pièces*, 1712 (in some editions, spelled *Suite* rather than *Suïtte*, a spelling used at that time by French composers including Hotteterre, Philidor and Dieupart). This edition is from Vista Mare Musica, a smaller web site for down-loading free Renaissance and Baroque music.

Pierre Danican Philidor

As I have mentioned, the mordent is an ornament that has a number of different symbols associated with it, and the composers often do not include a chart that explains their own signs.

A good case in point is Pierre Philidor, one of a family of musicians serving at the French court. He wrote a wonderful set of *6 Suites for two flutes* and *6 Suites for flute and continuo*. These are excellent pieces for recorder, when transposed up a minor third.

There are a number of very special things in Philidor’s publications, as he not only uses signs for trills and appoggiaturas, but he also notates **flattement** (finger vibrato—the subject of the next article in this series). His flattement sign is the long squiggle beginning with a hook. Also, he sometimes puts in phrase marks.

The mordent is an

ornament that has a

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associated with it.

The image shows a musical score for a duo in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of two staves. The first system contains measures 1-5. The second system starts at measure 6 and contains measures 6-11. The third system starts at measure 12 and contains measures 12-17. The score includes various ornaments: mordents (vertical lines), appoggiaturas (∨), and flattements (long squiggles with hooks). There are also some other symbols like a cross (+) and a triangle (^).

Jacques-Martin Hotteterre (1674-1763), *Duo from Première Suite de pièces*, 1712, used with the kind permission of Vista Mare Musica, http://vistamaremusica.com/data/hotteterre/suites_a_2/score.php

Philidor makes things

even more complicated

by occasionally using

Hotteterre's sign for

battement as well.

Showing flattement and phrase markings is extremely unusual in Baroque music.

In the case of the battement, Philidor offers us a bit of confusion, since his mark for battement is the same as Hotteterre's **Coulement** sign, an appoggiatura going down (^). Only by looking at the musical context can we see that Philidor means something else—a battement or Port de voix with battement.

Philidor makes things even more complicated by occasionally using Hotteterre's sign for battement as well. You can see it in the example below, on the first note of measure 17 (the B section). He doesn't explain what this means, but my opinion is that it is played correctly as a battement—without a preceding appoggiatura. In many cases where he uses the other sign, he adds the appoggiatura specifically.

Sarabande - Tres tendrement Pierre Philidor, 1717
from the 5th Suite

Alto Recorder

Pierre Danican Philidor (1681–1731), Sarabande from Suite No. 5, available in the original edition at [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Suites%2C_Op.1_\(Philidor%2C_Pierre_Danican\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Suites%2C_Op.1_(Philidor%2C_Pierre_Danican))

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Charles Dieupart

Composers are often very sparing with the ornaments they write for wind players. An interesting example occurs in the French harpsichordist Charles Dieupart's suites, which he first wrote to be solo keyboard pieces. For these, he has a nice chart of ornaments. He makes extensive use in his music of these ornaments, many of which are specifically for keyboard.

He also made a version of his suites where he writes a recorder part, basically the harpsichord's top line—and interestingly, this version has only a few select trills written in. It contains none of the fancy ornamentation spelled out for the harpsichord.

I have had students create their own editions of Dieupart, adapting the keyboard ornaments to fit the recorder part. This significantly improves the music, and one must assume that recorder players at the time would have created their own ornaments or possibly have borrowed from the harpsichord version. (*A modern version of Dieupart's chart is on page 32—and*



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We're not sure what the coming year will bring, but we hope there will be joyous celebration of playing together in person once again!

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Allemande

Charles Dieupart
Suite 4, 1701

Soprano Recorder

Charles Dieupart (c.1667-1740), Allemande from Suite No. 4, available in the original edition at [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Suites_\(Dieupart%2C_Charles\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Suites_(Dieupart%2C_Charles))

The image displays a musical score for Charles Dieupart's Allemande, Suite No. 4. It is divided into three main sections:

- Top Section:** A chart of ornaments typeset by Hermann Hinsch. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the right hand with ornaments: Tremblement, Pincé, Double cadence, Tremblement pincé, Port de voix, and Cheute. The second system shows the left hand with ornaments: Port de voix et pincé, Coulé, and Harpegement. The third system shows the right hand with Tremblement and Cheute.
- Middle Section:** The harpsichord version of the Allemande. It is in 3/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic melody with many ornaments. The title "ALLEMANDE 2/3" is written above the first staff.
- Bottom Section:** The first phrase of the Allemande, showing two versions of the ornament table. The first version is marked "1^{re} fois" and the second is marked "2^{de} fois".

Charles Dieupart (c.1667-1740), Explication des Marques (top, chart of ornaments typeset by Hermann Hinsch) and first phrase of the harpsichord version of Allemande from Suite No. 4 in manuscript; Dieupart's ornament table plus score and parts for several versions of the entire set of pieces in the original edition are at [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Suittes_\(Dieupart%2C_Charles\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Suittes_(Dieupart%2C_Charles))

part of the harpsichord music, for those who want to try creating your own recorder part.) The Dieupart example on page 31 is a movement showing the recorder part as I might ornament it, using trills, appoggiaturas and battement. I have used Philidor's marking for the battement.

Dieupart's suites are available in many modern editions. Note that the only ornaments marked in the original on IMSLP are the two marked (+). The original indicates that this piece is for fourth-flute, a soprano recorder in B^b.

The battement/mordent is usually quite easy to play and is a great way to add a little spice to your musical experience.

... a great way to add a little spice to your musical experience.

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 are posted at: www.soundcloud.com/mloberlin and www.youtube.com/MichaelLynnFlute.



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