



Damn the da capo!

Stylistic considerations for performing and ornamenting Baroque song

prepared for the Madison Early Music Festival, 2020

Dr. William Hudson, Associate Professor of Music

Illinois Wesleyan University

References and additional resources from recorded lecture

Pitch and temperament

Brown and Sadie, Chapter 7

Cyr, Chapter 4

Elliott, pp. 142–4

Tempo and affect

Cyr, Chapter 2

Elliott, pp. 96–99

Phrasing

Fuller, “The Performer as Composer,” in Brown and Sadie

Ranum. Extremely detailed resource specifically about French Baroque music

Toft. Offers in-depth analysis of language and rhetoric as it pertains to performance practice.

Ornamentation

Agricola

Bacilly, Chapter 12

Brown, “Embellishing Eighteenth-Century Arias: On Cadenzas”

Cyr, Chapter 8

Dickey, “Ornamentation in Early-17th-Century Italian Music”

Elliott, pp. 106–32

Hiller, Chapters 4–5

Zimmermann. This is available via download and comes with sound files. It is one of the most user-friendly guides to ornamentation that I know of.

Diminution Manuals in modern edition

Bassano

Brunelli

Conforti, *Breve et Facile*

Foreman. Includes Maffei, Zacconi, Bovicelli, and Conforto

Rognoni

Historical Examples of ornamentation

Dean

Erig

Wolff

Thoughts on ornamenting Arias

Basic thoughts about ornaments

- Ornaments should not destroy pulse of music
- Ornaments should not be mechanically applied
- Ornaments should reflect the sense of the words
- Ornaments should reflect the nature of the aria

Priorities for ornamenting arias

- Embellish but not obliterate the original line
- Leave crucial pitches untouched
- invariably the first and last notes of phrases and also other significant points in the melodic contour
- Demonstrate singer's virtuosity but also to intensify the expression.
- The range of the original is exceeded only once, and only by a tone at the top
upward transposition by an octave is unknown.

Rules regarding cadenzas, according to Agricola, Quantz in 1750s, Mancini in 1770s, and Hiller in 1780s¹

- Cadenzas should neither be frequent nor long. By and large, they should be no longer than a singer can comfortably manage with one breath (leaving enough left over for a good trill and resolution).
- Should be metrically free
- Ought to be appropriate to the main affect of the aria: florid for fast arias, more languid for slow arias
- Can take place either on the I_4^6 chord or on the V chord preceding the tonic
 - The bulk of our examples begin on the I_4^6 chord
- Final phrase of the text may have to be rearranged so that the main part of the cadenza falls on a long or accented syllable.
- Cadenzas can involve no more than figuration patterns arranged to extend and vary an arpeggio or a scale, or else they can make reference to some earlier passage in the aria graced.
- The same figures ought not to be repeated too often. Instead, new figures ought to be introduced. Ideally, cadenzas should present something unexpected, a final surprise of the listeners.
- If a singer makes a modulation within a cadenza, it should not be very distant from the main key, and the singer must take care to make a smooth return to the tonic.
- Cadenzas ought to be improvised, and they ought to change from performance to performance. Eighteenth-century musicians put a premium on the invention of the singer—after all, invention was one of the main justifications for the cadenza -- and they had contempt for musicians who were not imaginative enough to invent their own cadenzas on the spot.

Thurston Dart: "Ornaments are delicate, instinctive things; if they are not ornamental they are worse than useless, and anxiety about the right way to play [or sing] them must never be allowed to cloud a performer's sense of the underlying structure of the music they adorn."²

¹ Howard Mayer Brown, "Embellishing Eighteenth-Century Arias: On Cadenzas," in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed. Michael Collins and Elise K. Kirk (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1984), 265.

² Thurston Dart, *The Interpretation of Music* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 102.

1. **Trill³ / shake / tremblement (by 1640, nearly every author begins trill from above)**

Printed

Performed

je se - ray trop heu - reux

je se - ray trop heu - reux

6 3 3

Beginning and ending a trill⁴

Short note

Long note

with held penultimate

with gap

2. **Passaggio/Diminution/Coloratura passagework.**

3. **Messa di voce (putting forth the voice)**

4. **Esclamazione (exclamation)**

Esclamazione languida

Esclamazione più viva

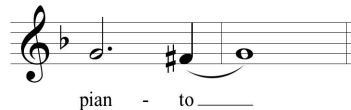
Cor mio deh non lan - gui - re

5. **Accent, or escape tone**

³ Giuseppe Tartini, *Traité des agréments de la musique*, trans. Jacobi (New York: Moeck)

⁴ Manfredo Zimmermann, *The Ornamentation of Baroque Music: A Guide to Learning How to Embellish*. (Ettlingen: M. Zimmermann, 2019), 16–17.

6. Anticipation



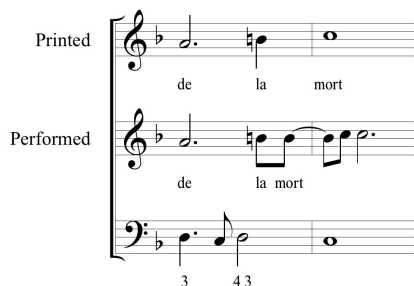
8. Cascata (Fall)



9. Portamento



10. *Port de voix* (from below)



This consists of a dissonant note that is accented or stressed, held, and resolved by step to a consonance.

Bacilly - The best advice that can be given concerning *port de voix* is that it is always used at cadential points, points of half-cadence (when there is room to put it in), and all other principle cadential points.⁵

Tosi - The word *Appoggiatura* is derived from *Appoggiare* to lean on. In this sense, you lean on the first to arrive at the note intended, rising or falling; and you dwell longer on the preparation than the note for which the preparation is made, and according to the value of the note.⁶

Giovanni Camillo Maffei

Discourse on the Voice and the Method of learning to sing Ornamentaion
without a teacher, 1562



⁵ Bénigne de Bacilly. *A Commentary upon the Art of Proper Singing*, trans. Austin Caswell. (New York: Institute of Medieval Music, 1968), 67.

⁶ Pier Francesco Tosi, *Observations on the Florid Song*, trans. Galliard, ed. Pilkington (London: Stainer and Bell, 1987), 10.

Baroque Performance Practice BIBLIOGRAPHY

Entries marked † are excellent introductory resources

- Agricola, Johann Friedrich. *Introduction to the Art of Singing*. Trans. and ed. Baird. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Bacilly, Bénigne de. *Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter* (Paris, 1668). Trans. and ed. Caswell as *A Commentary upon the Art of Proper Singing*. New York: Institute of Medieval Music, 1968.
- Bassano, Giovanni. *Ricerche/Passaggi et Cadentie, 1585*. Ed. Richard Erig. Zürich: Musikverlag zum Pelikan, 1976.
- Brown, Howard Mayer. "Embellishing Eighteenth-Century Arias: On Cadenzas" in *Opera and Vivaldi*, ed. Collins and Kirk. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984.
- †Brown, Howard Mayer and Stanley Sadie. *Performance Practice: Music after 1600*. New York: Macmillan, 1989.
- Brunelli, Antonio. *Varii esercitti, 1614*. Ed. Richard Erig. Zürich: Musikverlag zum Pelikan, 1977.
- Caccini, Giulio. *Le nuove musiche*. In *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era 9*. Ed. H. W. Hitchcock. Madison, WI: AR Editions, 1970.
- Conforti, Giovanni Luca. *Breve et Facile maniera d'Essercitarsi a Far Passaggi*. ed. Bradshaw. American Institute of Musicology, 1999.
- Conforti, Giovanni Luca. *The Joy of Ornamentation* (1593). White Plains, NY: Pro/Am Music Resources, Inc., 1989.
- †Cyr, Mary. *Performing Baroque Music*. Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1998.
- Dean, Winton. "Vocal Embellishment in a Handel Aria." In *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Music: A Tribute to Karl Geiringer*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Dickey, Bruce. "Ornamentation in Early-Seventeenth-Century Italian Music." In *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*. Ed. Stewart Carter. NY: Schirmer, 1997.
- †Elliott, Martha. *So You Want To Sing Early Music: A Guide for Performers*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
- Erig, Richard. *Italian Diminutions: The Pieces with more than one Diminution from 1553 to 1638*. Zürich: Amadeus Verlag, 1979.
- Foreman, Edward. *Late Renaissance Singing*. Minneapolis: Pro Musica Press.
- Herissone, Rebecca, ed. *Synopsis of Vocal Musick*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
- Hiller, Johann Adam. *Treatise on Vocal Performance and Ornamentation*. Trans. Beicken. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Mersenne, Marin. *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7)
- Playford, John. *An Introduction to the Skill of Music in Three Books*, 12th ed. Ed. Henry Purcell. [London]: E. Jones, 1694.
- Ranum, Patricia. *The Harmonic Orator: The Phrasing and Rhetoric of the Melody in French Baroque Airs*. [Hillsdale, NY?]: Pendragon Press, 2001.
- Rognoni, Francesco. *Selva de Varii Passaggi*. Ed. Richard Erig. Zürich: Musik Hug, 1987.
- Quantz, Johann Joachim. *On Playing the Flute*. New York: The Free Press, 1966.
- Tartini, Giuseppe. *Traité des Agréments de la Musique*. Trans. and ed. Jacobi. New York: Hermann Moeck, 1961.
- Toft, Robert. *With Passionate Voice: Re-creative Singing in Sixteenth-Century England and Italy*. Oxford University Press: New York, 2014.
- Tosi, Pier Francesco. *Observations on the Florid Song; or Sentiments on the Ancient and Modern Singers* (London, 1742). Ed. Pilkington, London: Stainer and Bell, 1987.
- Wolff, Hellmuth. *Original Vocal Improvisations from the 16th–18th centuries*. Cologne: A. Volk Verlag, 1972.
- †Zimmermann, Manfredo. *The Ornamentation of Baroque Music: A Guide to Learning How to Embellish*. Trans. Ernst Peppel. Ettlingen: M. Zimmermann, 2019.