

Go big or go home: Eighteenth-century real-time composition

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Poster Abstract

When Michel Blavet (1700-1768), arguably the best flute virtuoso in the first half of the eighteenth century, made his premier appearance at the prestigious *Concert spirituel* in Paris in 1726, he brought more than his flute and music to the stage. Blavet carried with him to the concert hall the requisite and comprehensive *materiel musical* of the period: this included training in theory, counterpoint, improvisation, bassoon, and basso continuo. My goal in this presentation is to demonstrate how much *extempore* ornamentation was expected of Baroque-era performers within a range of technical abilities, and to provide a means to help the modern scholar-performer of historical performance practice meet these expectations.

By looking primarily at eighteenth-century printed music for flute, violin, and harpsichord by composers from Germany (Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Philipp Telemann), France (Michel Blavet), and Italy (Arcangelo Corelli), composed between the years 1700-36, and by examining ornamentation guidelines found in instruction books from the eighteenth century, I will show the high level of harmonic knowledge and required skill in creating melodic complexity expected of the performer. The discussion will also include what ornamentation was implied, inferred, or required in specific pieces that have been transcribed or arranged from one instrument for another. <http://kimpineda.com>