

Go Big or Go Home: 18th-century Real-Time Composition

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Why should we go from here to *HERE* ?

My goal is to demonstrate how much *extempore* ornamentation was expected of Baroque-era performers with different levels of training, and to provide a means to help the modern scholar-performer of historical performance practice meet these expectations, using 18th-century examples.

The WWW of Ornamentation:

When the character/affect calls for it; to support your rhetoric

Where Typically slow movements, but also in fast movements

Why Written notes are mnemonic devices, essentially only 50% of the music; rhetoric guides the performer's ornamentation

Teaching: Mnemonic Version below the Expectation

Arcangelo Corelli, (1653-1713), Sonata Op. 5, no. 3 (1700)



Teaching: Mnemonic Version above the Expectation

G Ph Telemann (1681-1767), *Sonates méthodiques* 1728/32



Allemande

Jacques-Martin Hotteterre (1674-1763)
Deuxième Livre de Pieces pour la flûte-traversiere, Œuvre 5, 1715



Sarabande

Jacques-Martin Hotteterre (1674-1763)
Deuxième Livre de Pieces pour la flûte-traversiere, Œuvre 5, 1715



Music for the Skilled but Unpaid Player

Michel Blavet (1700-1768), Sonata IV, Op 3



Performance Expectation in a Teaching Piece

J. S. Bach, Partita IV, Clavier-Übung I (1726-30)



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The Expectation Written for the Performer

Blavet, Sonata IV, Op 3, continued



Come to think of it, I'll have a Heinichen . . .

Johann David Heinichen (1683-1729) Sonata in D



Why Heinichen?

- Dresden was one of the best musical establishments in Europe
- Heinichen's employees were often composer-performers
- Little need to provide detailed ornamentation (cf. Blavet)

Ornamentation Guidelines

- The less you see, the more you add (Heinichen)
 - you are expected to complete the composition
- The more you see, the less you add (Blavet)
 - because the composer thinks you can't improvise

Final Thoughts on Real-Time Composition

- Tradition extends back to the 15th century
- 15th century composers learned first to write counterpoint then learned to improvise it
- The expectation: to be able to improvise counterpoint in 3-5 voices as well as it was written
- Living tradition: Preservation Hall, New Orleans:
 - Improvised counterpoint as well or better than written
- Think of time spent studying extended techniques, music theory; learning to extemporize is just another technique to help meet the composer's expectations
- 18th-century written music provides the landscape;
 - you are expected to explore it

Contact information

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