Musicology and Performance Practice: In Search of a Historical Style with Bach Recordings

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The background of this paper was a study of baroque performance practice in the twentieth century. It aimed to propose a critical history of the early music movement and to establish first the components of baroque performance style and, on the basis of these, possible criteria for evaluating performances from a stylistic point of view.[1] In the course of the study approximately one hundred recordings of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Passions*, *Brandenburg Concertos* and *Goldberg Variations* issued between 1945–1975 had been studied together with eighteenth century and modern musicological writings on performance practice. Scholarly suggestions and interpretations of the sources were compared with practical solutions as evidenced in the examined recordings. Here a summary of the conclusions is offered without dealing at length with any of the specific points. Indicating certain important characteristics of the early music movement and milestones in its history, the paper deals, essentially, with the elements of the late baroque style and how or when these manifest themselves in twentieth century practice.

Historical Overview[2]

As is well known, the interest in historical performance practice is at least a century old. One of the first modern publications in the field was Dann-

[1] Dorottya Fabian: *J. S. Bach Recordings 1945–1975: St Matthew and St John Passions, Brandenburg Concertos and Goldberg Variations – A Study of Performance Practice in the Context of the Early Music Movement* PhD diss. The University of New South Wales, 1998.

[2] There are several writings that deal with the history of the Early Music Movement. The present summary only highlights those issues that might be significant from a style-critical point of view. For further details consult H. Haskell: *The Early Music Revival: a History* London: Thames & Hudson, 1988; H. M. Brown: 'Pedantry or liberation? A Sketch of the Historical Performance Movement' in N. Kenyon (ed.): *Authenticity and Early Music* Oxford: OUP, 1988; J. Cohen & H. Snitzer: *Reprise: the Extraordinary Revival of Early Music* Boston: Little, Brown, 1985; J. van der Klis: *Oude muziek in Nederland – Het verhaal van de pioners 1900–1975* Utrecht: Stichting Organisatie Oude Muziek, 1991; L. Hartmann: *Geschichte der historischen Aufführungspraxis in Grundzügen* Teil I: 'Von den Anfangen bis Harnoncourt' Regensburg: Pro Musica Antiqua, 1988, Teil II: 'Von 1970–1990' Regensburg: Pro Musica Antiqua, 1992.

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reuter's book, *Musical Ornamentation* (London, 1893–95) which was followed by Landowska's *La Musique Ancienne* (Paris, 1904) and Dolmetsch's *The Interpretations of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1915). The German organ movement, the initial interest in old instruments (e.g. recorder, lute, harpsichord) and the founding of the Basel Schola Cantorum all occurred during the first half of the twentieth century as well. The aim of this institute, which was opened in 1933, was not just the scholarly exploration of old sources and manuscripts but also to put the findings and results into practice.[3] Its professorial staff included the gambist August Wenzinger and the keyboard player Eduard Müller. Among its first international students we find such later celebrities as Gustav Leonhardt who graduated in 1950. By the 1960s the institute boasted several hundreds of old instruments thanks to Sacher's purchases and the generous gift of the collector Otto Lobeck-Kambli. The syllabus required the students of the Academy to study ornamentation, continuo playing, notation and other specialist courses. Nevertheless, the playing style of its ensembles and soloists did not differ essentially from those of other musicians active at the time. Leonhardt, for instance, played a historically inauthentic Ammer harpsichord until the 1960s in a fairly dry, matter-of-fact performance style, just like his contemporaries, Helmuth Walcha or Ralph Kirkpatrick. Fortunately Frank Hubbard published a pioneering book on the historical harpsichord and its construction in 1965 (*Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making* Cambridge, Mass.: HUP) which enhanced the rediscovery of this instrument's eighteenth century sound qualities and playing techniques. Nevertheless, apart from Leonhardt, most harpsichordists continued to use modernised versions and based their performances on varied registration well until the 1970s.[4] The reconstruction of wind and string instruments was even less advanced. Although Hindemith called for a complete recovery of baroque instruments already in 1950, his plea was ignored by most baroque chamber orchestras, including that of the Schola in Basel.[5] Among scholars, David

[3] H. Oesch: *Die Musikakademie der Stadt Basel* Basel, 1967; W. Arlt: 'Zur Idee und Geschichte eines "Lehr- und Forschungsinstituts" für alte Musik' *Alte Musik I: Praxis und Reflexion* P. Reidemeister and V. Gutmann (eds.) Winterthur: Amadeus, 1983: 29–76.

[4] See more on this in Dorottya Fabian Somorjay: 'Changing style in performing J. S. Bach's music, 1945-1978: The Goldberg Variations' *The Consort* 53 (Summer 1997): 23–49.

[5] 'If we are anxious to present his music as he [Bach] himself imagined it, we must restore the conditions of performance of that time. It is then not enough to use the harpsichord as a continuo instrument. We would have to string our bowed instruments differently; we would have to use wind instruments with the same bore as was usual at the time…' P. Hindemith: *Johann Sebastian Bach – Heritage and Obligation* New Haven: Yale UP, 1952. For the German original see: P. Hindemith: *Johann Sebastian Bach. Ein verpflichtendes Erbe* Mainz: Insel Verlag, 1950.

Boyden undertook the re-examination of the violin and violin playing. After several shorter articles from the 1950s, his comprehensive book on the topic (*The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* London: OUP) was published in 1965, the same year as Hubbard's above-mentioned volume. However, musicians remained similarly slow to put his finer points into practice, just as keyboard players were reluctant to discard their pedal harpsichord.

Apart from Basel, Vienna also became a centre of research and experiments in early music during the 1950s. Joseph Mertin, a professor of the Viennese Hochschule für Musik must have been influential. His pupils included Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Eduard Melkus, two key figures of the movement. Although I did not find any direct reference to Mertin in these artists' statements, his articles (published mostly in *Musik und Kirche* and *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* between 1955–1967) contain several such points and analysis which coincide with the experiments and performance style of the *Concentus Musicus Wien* (established in 1953) of that time. Regarding the source of Harnoncourt's own interest in baroque music the artist himself can be quoted: 'Und schon als Violincello-Student wollte ich wissen weshalb die alte Musik so langweilig klingt. Es war mir unbegreiflich, was es einem Musiker geben kann, wenn die Kilometer von Barockmusik, die nur in Sechzehntel-Noten notiert sind, lediglich herungespult werden.'[6] This is an important pondering because it leads to issues of performance style, of interpretation. It questions the validity of monotonous Bach playing, the dominant style of the *Sachlichkeit* period of the 1950s–1960s. Moreover, it indicates that pragmatic solutions, such as the smaller size of ensembles or the use of recorders and harpsichords do not *per se* bring radical change in the character of the music, they do not make it more interesting.

Before stylistic issues are considered, however, a few further historical facts need to be noted first. Especially the dates of significant publications and the role of key recording companies.

Bach scholarship and editing registered considerable achievements already in the nineteenth century. During the early 1900s Arnold Schering's publications[7] provided initial grounding for the basis of Bach performance

[6] N. Harnoncourt: 'Wir hören die alte Musik ganz falsch' *Westermanns Monatshefte* March 121 (3/1980): 32–33; this citation: 32.

[7] A. Schering: 'Die Besetzung Bachscher Chöre' *Bach Jahrbuch* 17 (1920): 77–89; *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs* Leipzig, 1926–47; *Aufführungspraxis alter Musik* Leipzig, 1931; *Johann Sebastian Bachs Leipziger Kirchenmusik* Leipzig, 1936.

practice. He argued, among others, for smaller ensembles, homogeneous (i.e. male/boys) choir and the exclusive use of organ in Passion recitatives. During the 1930s two Urtext editions of Bach's keyboard works prepared by Ludwig Landshoff and Ralph Kirkpatrick provided further detailed advice on performance practice.[8] Both has its lengthy *Preface* with highly relevant and perceptive information that could be studied with great profit by today's early music interpreters as well. After 1950 the preparation of the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* became the centre of Bach research, at least in terms of editing and authenticating his oeuvre. Nevertheless, the practical vocal score of the *St John Passion* edited by Arthur Mendel (New York: Schirmer, 1951) should also be mentioned because of its *Introduction* which deals with performance practice issues at length. Mendel's interpretation and suggestions reveal such up-to-date views that familiarity with them would be to the benefit of anyone interested in late baroque performance practice. Unfortunately this edition is hard to find nowadays (even in libraries) and Mendel's NBA edition (and Kritische Bericht) of the *St John Passion* does not include this text.

As is well known, publications on baroque performance practice have started to mushroom during the decades following World War II. Thurston Dart's general text (*The Interpretation of Music* London: Hutchinson, 1954) was followed by Robert Donington's comprehensive anthology, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London: Faber) first in 1965 then in revised and extended versions in 1974 and 1989. This book proved similarly seminal to Dolmetsch's 1915 publication. It became the primary reference source for the younger generation of baroque music specialists and it gave impetus to a systematic gathering of data, to the publishing of original or translated early sources.[9] The book's first publication seems to have coincided with the beginning of a new era. An era of growing specialisation, of comprehensive and detailed study. An era when those concerned gradually accepted that Leopold Mozart's or CPE Bach's teachings were not necessarily adaptable to performances of J. S. Bach's compositions, or that the distinction between national styles might not be as clear cut as previously believed.

[8] L. Landshoff (ed.): B*ach: 15 Two-Part Inventions and 15 Three-Part Sinfonias* (Urtext with Preface) Leipzig: Peters, 1933; R. Kirkpatrick: *Bach: Goldberg Variations* (Urtext with notated execution of ornaments in separate staves and Preface) New York: Schirmer, 1938.

[9] Here is a selection of twentieth century publishing dates of English translations or facsimile editions of commonly used sources: Quantz 1966, L. Mozart 1948, 1951, CPE Bach 1949, Agricola 1966, Bacilly 1968, Corrette 1970, Couperin 1933, Geminiani 1952, Heinichen 1966, Hottetere 1968, Kirnberger 1968, Loulié 1965, Marpurg 1969, Mattheson 1969, Tosi 1968.

Meanwhile, Sol Babitz, a less known yet very important American protagonist of baroque performance style and eighteenth century instrumental technique published several essential and enlightened articles on rhythm, articulation, fingering and bowing.[10] He also created an 'Early Music Laboratory' in his home in Los Angeles and published a yearly *Bulletin* (from about the mid-1960s to late 1970s) where he further explored the lessons of his experiments with historical instruments. It is interesting to note some of the subscribers to this *Bulletin* (for instance Leonhardt, the Kuijken brothers and David Lasocki) because their playing showed an earlier use of many such stylistic features that people have later learnt to associate with baroque performance characteristics. Other scholars embarked on endless debate about the correct execution of trills and appoggiaturas, or the ratio of dotting and the appropriateness of *notes inégales* in Bach's music. The musicologist who contributed most to this literature is Frederick Neumann whose writings have been collected into thick volumes towards the end of his career.[11] This is not the place to enter into the discussion or analysis of these debates. But it seems important to indicate that the detailed examination of the arguments put forward by the various scholars revealed a less radically different interpretation or point of view than suggested by the heated tone of some of the writings.[12]

Summarising the lessons of the broader literature review it can be noted that the most common activity during the 1950–1980 period was the collecting and presenting of data. The rediscovery of repertoire rather than performance practice. Explanation and interpretation were far and few between, whereas being lost in the myriad of rules and specific details was quite typical. Vocal issues hardly ever emerged and then were treated as too difficult and unrecoverable. Articulation, instrumental technique and the exploration

[10] S. Babitz: 'A problem of rhythm in Baroque music' *The Musical Quarterly* 38 (1952): 533–565; 'Differences between 18th century and modern violin bowing' *The Score* 19 (1957): 34–55; 'On using J. S. Bach's keyboard fingering' *Music and Letters* 43 (1962): 123–128; 'Concerning the length of time that every note must be held' *Music Review* 28 (1967): 21–37

[11] F. Neumann: *Ornamentation in baroque and post-baroque composition* Princeton: PUP, 1978; *Essays in Performance Practice* Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1982; *New Essays in Performance Practice* Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1989; *Performance Practices of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Music* New York: Schirmer, 1993

[12] On the issues of ornamentation (especially trills and appoggiaturas) the most important modern literature apart from Dolmetsch and Donington includes: P. Aldrich: *Ornamentation in J.S. Bach's Organ Works* New York: Colemann-Ross, 1950 and 'On the Interpretation of Bach's Trills' *The Musical Quarterly* 49 (1963): 289–310; E. Bodky: *The Interpretation of Bach's Keyboard Works* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1960; W. Emery: *Bach's Ornaments* London: Novello, 1953. Regarding rhythm one should start by consulting D. Fuller: 'Dotting, the "French Style" and Frederick Neumann's counter-reformation' *Early Music* 5 (1977): 517–543; J. O'Donnell: 'The French style and the ouvertures of Bach 2' *Early Music* 7 (1979): 336–345.

of means of expression were hardly ever discussed. Apart from Babitz only Rosalyn Tureck emphasised the importance of perfecting eighteenth century instrumental techniques as these provided essential, and otherwise inaccessible information about performance practice.[13] The general attitude of the time, however, seems to have been the belief that if a musician plays an original instrument (or a copy thereof) s/he automatically recreates the historical style. If a 'modern' instrument is used, the performer should at least take care to start the trills from above, to sharpen dotted patterns and to play in a non-legato or detached manner.[14]

This brief overview should conclude with a few words on the record companies that played a key role in the development of the early music movement and the history of Bach interpretation. The most significant labels are Deutsche Gramophone's *Archiv*, Telefunken's (later Teldec's) *Das Alte Werk* and the specialist L'Oiseau-Lyre. To clarify the role of *Archiv* is crucial because this label was the first on the market that promised musicological-historical accuracy, and many of us accepted its recordings as touchstones in terms of early music playing. This however, as Georg von Dadelsen noted already in the late 1970s,[15] was not a well-founded opinion. Rather, it took purely promotional material at face value. Although *Archiv* was the first to issue a complete Brandenburg set recorded with 'original' instruments (SCB directed by Wenzinger), after this it did not return to a historical approach until the later 1970s. Instead, it became the centre of traditional Bach-playing. With Karl Richter and his Munich Bach Ensemble as its main performers, Archiv's aim was a kind of conservative perfectionism that is testified to by the names of the solo singers as well. According to Dadelsen, the

[13] R. Tureck: *An Introduction to the Performance of Bach* (3 Vols) London: OUP, 1960; 'Bach in the 20th century' *Musical Times* 103 (1962): 92–95.

[14] The question of authenticity had been explored earlier by German speaking musicians and musicologists than in the English speaking world. Here there is no space to give even a brief summary of my findings related to that topic. However, a separate article is forthcoming. The most important references that I would recommend here are: W. Wiora (ed.): *Alte Musik in unserer Zeit – Referate und Diskussionen der Kasseler Tagung 1967* Musikalische Zeitfragen Vol. 13 Kassel–Basel: Bärenreiter, 1968; L. Rosenstiel (ed.): 'The Spheres of Music: Harmony and Discord, Part 1' *Current Musicology* 14 (1972): 81–172, 'Part 2' *Current Musicology* 15 (1973): 81–100; R. Brinkmann (ed.): *Bachforschung und Bachinterpretation Heute: Wissenschaftler und Praktiker im Dialog (Bericht über das Bachfest-Symposium 1978 der Philipps-Universität Marpurg)* Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981; L. Dreyfus: 'Early Music defended against its devotees: A Theory of historical performance in the 20th century' *The Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983): 297–322; Early Music: 'The Limits of Authenticity: A Discussion' *Early Music* 11 (1984): 3–25; N. Kenyon (ed.): *Authenticity and Early Music* Oxford: OUP, 1988; R. Taruskin: 'On letting the music speak for itself: some reflections on musicology and performance' *Journal of Musicology* 1 (1982): 338–349; *Text and Act – Essays on Music and Performance* Oxford: OUP, 1995.

[15] G. Dadelsen: 'Aufführungspraxis und originales Klangbild – Die Bach-Ausgabe der Archiv-Produktion der DGG' *Universitas* 31 (1976): 1289–1295 [Reprinted in Dadelsen: *Über Bach und Anderes* Wiesbaden: Laber, 1983: 125–129].

only exception from this artistic decision is the recording of Bach's *Violin Concertos* by Melkus and his Capella Academica Wien (1970 or earlier, Archiv 2533075).

The establishment of *Das Alte Werk* series, on the other hand, proved to be one of the most influential initiatives of the late 1950s. Wolf Erichson, the executive producer in charge of artistic decisions adopted a radical road when he signed up the little known Concentus Musicus Wien for the recording of the baroque repertoire in 1960–61.[16] Perhaps he was inspired by the head of the German Radio in Colone, Alfred Krings who provided forum for practical workshops in early music interpretation and promoted the work of period instrument ensembles such as the Capella Coloniensis or the Collegium Aureum through broadcast programs. Later his role was also crucial in the launching of the career of many Belgian and Dutch artists.

L'Oiseau-Lyre was established by Louise Hanson-Dyer in order to promote old music.[17] In 1958–59 it released a key recording of the *Brandenburg Concertos* performed by one instrument per part, Dart directing the Philomusica of London (OL 50159, OL 50167). Dart and his ensemble also provided the backbone of a *St John Passion* recording from 1960 which used similarly historical forces: 24 instrumentalists and Willcocks' 29 member strong Choir of King's College, Cambridge (Argo ZRG 5270–2). Both recordings display a very perceptive understanding of style despite the fact that the players use modern instruments. From the point of view of articulation, tempo, tone quality, rhythm and ornamentation this Brandenburg set is one of the most stylish ones from the entire examined period. Its re-issue on CD is highly desirable and would be most welcome.

The Style

The most important lessons of the study can be summarised in five points focusing on the use of instruments, the problem of vocal issues, tempo, ornamentation and the role of metre in rhythm and articulation.

Although the use of period instruments eventually offered a crucial contribution to the reclaiming of baroque performance style, these had little effect at the beginning of the examined period because they were not played in the old manner but with modern technique. Period instruments only became

[16] J. Keller: 'The Historical Performance Interview: W. Erichson' *Historical Performance* 6 (1993): 32–33.

[17] J. Davidson: *Innovation – Lyrebird Rising. Louise Hanson-Dyer of L'Oiseau-Lyre 1884–1962* Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1994. See also Ray Minshull's review of the book in *The Gramophone* November 1994: 24–25.

critical in establishing the style of performance when musicians mastered specific period playing techniques, such as fingering, tonguing, bowing, and learnt to delight in and to use to full advantage the 'imperfections' of the instruments instead of trying to overcome them. This, however, did not happen until the end of the 1960s and remained rare throughout the 1970s. The process can be best observed in the harpsichord recordings, but is also testified by those *Brandenburg Concerto* performances where the ensemble uses period instruments. Among the thirty examined *Goldberg Variations* only Leonhardt's 1965 and Kipnis's 1973 recordings manifest the attributes of a historical style.[18] Out of over forty versions, a full display of eighteenth century instrumental playing techniques is observed only in the *Brandenburg Concerto* set directed by Leonhardt and Kuijken in 1976–77 (Seon RL 30400 EK). These are not really present in the recordings of the Concentus Musicus Wien from the 1960s (*Brandenburg Concertos* 1964, *St John Passion* 1967). Nevertheless it is a fact that Harnoncourt's *B minor Mass* (1968) recording was the first to deliver a more locally nuanced articulation and flexible rhythmic groups, two essential components of a historical baroque style.[19] This performance was soon followed by further radically different and history making productions in the early 1970s: the *St Matthew Passion* (1971), and especially the Cantatas (from 1972 onwards).

Vocal issues have been grossly neglected during the period. There were a few articles that briefly discussed voice types, vocal roles or choir practice, but there were hardly any comments on vocal technique.[20] The recurring theme of all these writings was that the problems were controversial and insurmountable. Wilhelm Ehmann wrote a significant article in 1960 on the role of soloists and choristers[21] and put many of his ideas into practice when conducting his Westfahler Kantorei. However, no Passion recordings were

[18] Three more have been identified: Alan Curtis, 1977 (CD re-issue 1988 EMI CDM 7 63062 2), Rosalyn Tureck, 1978 (CBS 79220) and Gustav Leonhardt, 1978 (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi GD 77149). However these fall outside the main timeframe investigated in the study.

[19] J. Butt: *Bach: Mass in B Minor* Cambridge: CUP, 1991.

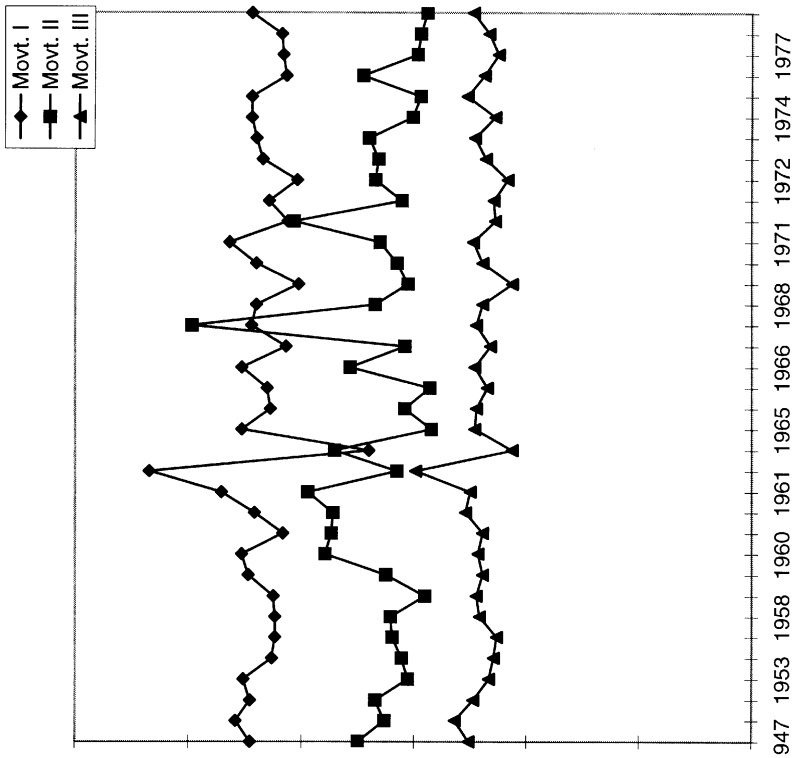
[20] J. Mertin: 'Zur Verwendung der Singstimme in alter Musik' *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 22 (1967): 178–189; R. Stephan: 'Die Vox alta bei Bach' *Musik und Kirche* 23 (1953): 58–65; 'Diskussionsbeiträge zur verschiedenen Problemen' in W. Wiora (ed.): *Alte Musik in unserer Zeit* Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1967: 81–96; A. Ransom: 'Towards an authentic vocal style and technique in late baroque performance' *Early Music* 6 (1978): 417–419; 'Podiumdiskussion zur Situation der Aufführungspraxis bachscher Werke' in R. Brinkmann (ed.): *Bachforschung und Bachinterpretation heute*, 1981: 185–204. Some vocal issues are also discussed, in a rather cursory manner, in more generalist publications (eg. by Mendel, Dart, Donington) and on the pages of *The Musical Quarterly* by Paul Henry Lang in 1972 and Robert Marschall in 1973.

[21] W. Ehmann: '"Concertisten" und "Ripienisten" in der h moll Messe J. S. Bach's' *Musik und Kirche* 30 (1960): 95–104, 138–147, 227–236, 255–273, 298–309. Reprinted, together with several other important artciles in Ehmann: *Voce et Tuba* Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1976.

made and his performances are not easily available today. It seems that systematic work on vocal-choral issues started only around the mid-1980s and did not become the centre of attention until the 1990s.[22] The results are still much in doubt. What is typical for the practice of the 1950 to 1975 period is that the falsettist is rare, the boy soloist is even more so. Operatically trained soloists and fairly large mixed choirs are the most common in Passion recordings. Only Dart's and Harnoncourt's recordings make an exception, Dart's only with regard to the choir.

The examination of tempo had surprising results. Many people claim that the early music movement fosters ever faster tempos. This notion cannot be supported by the evidence. On the contrary! It is possible that this view is based on the experience of the 1980s and beyond, yet it is a fact that mainstream or middle-of-the road performers often chose much faster tempos than those dedicated to a more uncompromisingly historical approach. It can also be shown that during the 1950s tempo was at least as fast if not faster than in the 1970s. Artists, who recorded the same works at various times of their career often played slower on the later occasions. All this can be well illustrated graphically. *Figure 1* shows the various recordings of *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*; *Figure 2* a selection of movements from the *Goldberg Variations*. Here the tempo of the slower variations shows greater diversity, while the values of the fast sections seem to collapse into one. Observing *Figure 3* (a table which lists the Brandenburg recordings in order of duration), another kind of difference between slow and fast movements can be noted. There are artists who speed up the Allegros but take the Andante very slow, while some others choose a moderate tempo for the outer movements and perform the middle section rather fast. When one turns to eighteenth century sources for guidance in matters of tempo it becomes clear that these promote not just a lively tempo. Their advice includes also a warning to avoid extremities, and to keep within an even spectrum of tempo. In other words, perhaps those artists come closer to historical accuracy in whose performances a kind of *integer valor* provides the basis of tempo across the various sections of a composition.

[22] J. Rifkin: 'Bach's "Choruses" – Less than they seem?' *High Fidelity/Musical America* 32 (September 1982): 42–44 and 'Bach's Chorus: a preliminary report' *Musical Times* 123 (1982): 747–754 are the first writings in the field. See also P. Reidemeister's articles, especially 'Bachs Chorbesetzung – Zur Aufführungspraxis der geistlichen Werke' in Societas Bach Internationalis (ed.): *Wege zu Bach* Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1992: 34–39 and J. Butt: 'Bach's vocal scoring: what can it mean?' *Early Music* 26 (1998): 99–107, among other, more recent publications.



Performer	Date	Movt. I	Movt. II	Movt. III
Neel	1947	5:21	4:12	3:01
E. Fischer	1952	5:30	3:55	3:10
Haas	1953	5:21	4:01	2:58
Wenzinger	1953	5:25	3:40	2:48
Munchinger	1956	5:07	3:44	2:45
Prohaska	1956	5:05	3:50	2:43
Dart	1958	5:05	3:51	2:54
Munch	1958	5:06	3:29	2:56
Baumgartner	1960	5:22	3:54	2:52
Goldberg	1960	5:26	4:33	2:55
Menuhin	1960	5:00	4:29	2:52
I Musici	1961	5:18	4:28	3:03
Klemperer	1961	5:39	4:44	3:00
Harnoncourt	1964	6:25	3:47	3:35
Casals	1965	4:05	4:27	2:33
Coll.Aureum	1965	5:26	3:25	2:57
Faerber	1966	5:08	3:42	2:56
Maazel	1966	5:10	3:26	2:49
Schuricht	1966	5:26	4:17	2:57
Somary	1967	4:58	3:42	2:47
Goberman	1968	5:20	5:58	2:56
Littaur, Leppard	1968	5:17	4:01	2:52
Richter	1968	4:50	3:40	2:33
Britten	1969	5:17	3:47	2:52
Munclinger	1971	5:34	3:58	2:58
Davison	1972	4:57	4:53	2:44
Marriner	1972	5:09	3:44	2:45
Newman	1972	4:51	4:01	2:36
Munchinger	1973	5:13	3:59	2:50
Boult	1974	5:17	4:05	2:57
Pallaird	1974	5:20	3:37	2:44
Kuijken	1976	5:20	3:32	3:02
Leppard	1976	4:58	4:09	2:51
Fuller	1977	5:00	3:34	2:42
Marriner	1979	5:01	3:32	2:48
Harnoncourt	1980	5:20	3:28	2:58

Figure 1: Duration of *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*

Artists	Date	Aria	Var. 1	Var. 7	Var.10	Var. 13	Var. 15	Var. 16	Var. 21	Var. 24	Var. 25	Var. 30	Da capo
Walcha	1953	3:04	2:08	1:38	1:43	3:40	3:15	3:18	2:14	2:50	5:15	1:50	1:44
Demus	1955	3:20	2:04	2:08	2:03	5:32	2:15	3:38	3:30	4:05	7:09	1:00	4:20
Tureck	1958	5:51	2:28	2:06	2:01	3:29	5:15	3:00	3:18	4:00	8:44	2:12	3:01
Malcolm	1962	3:48	1:49	1:49	1:41	4:03	4:38	2:54	3:34	3:51	6:41	2:08	1:59
Rosen	1969	3:53	1:50	2:11	1:32	3:17	4:05	4:34	2:30	3:29	9:10	1:48	2:15
Richter	1972	4:06	2:24	3:09	1:35	3:08	4:36	3:05	3:32	3:04	6:58	1:43	2:02
Kipnis	1973	4:24	2:07	1:56	1:35	6:04	3:58	2:55	3:17	2:33	7:50	1:46	2:30
Tureck	1978	5:00	2:20	2:08	2:02	3:43	5:00	3:05	3:18	2:51	8:06	2:41	2:41

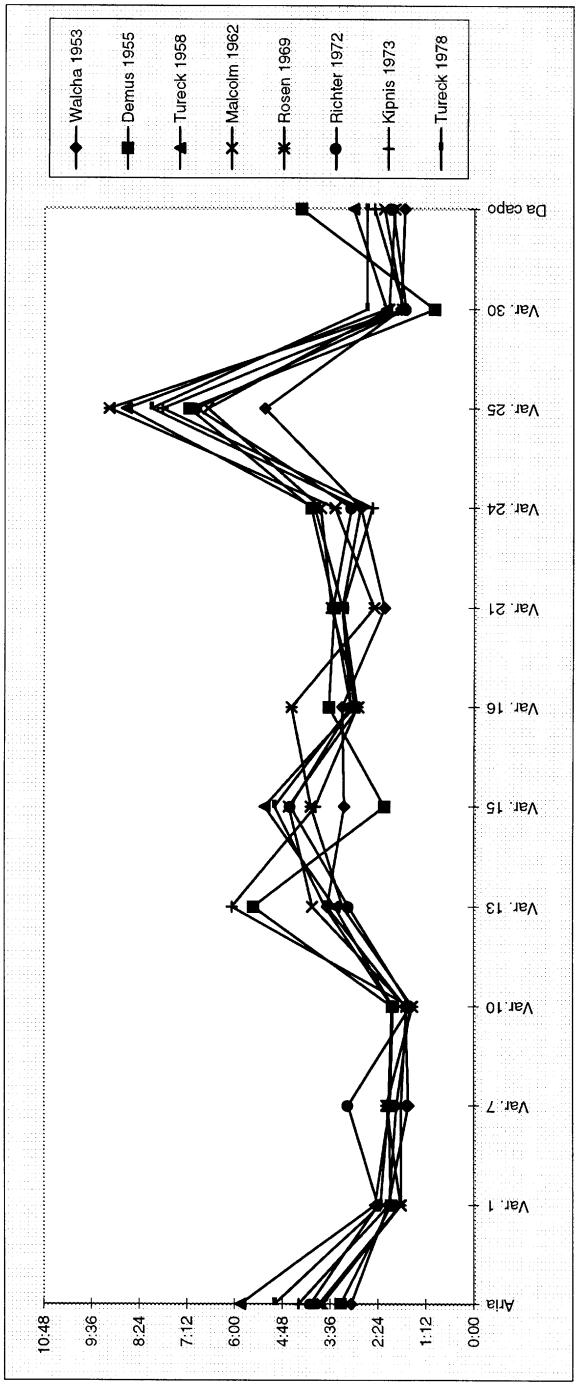


Figure 2: Duration in selected extracts of *Goldberg Variations*

Date	Performer	Movt. 1
1965	Casals	4:05
1968	Richter	4:50
1972	Newman	4:51
1972	Davison	4:57
1967	Somary	4:58
1976	Leppard	4:58
1960	Menuhin	5:00
1977	Fuller	5:00
1979	Marriner	5:01
1956	Prohaska	5:05
1958	Dart	5:05
1958	Munch	5:06
1956	Munchinger	5:07
1966	Faerber	5:08
1972	Marriner	5:09
1966	Maazel	5:10
1973	Munchinger	5:13
1968	Littaur, Leppard	5:17
1969	Britten	5:17
1974	Boult	5:17
1961	I Musici	5:18
1968	Goberman	5:20
1974	Pallaird	5:20
1976	Kuijken	5:20
1980	Harnoncourt	5:20
1947	Neel	5:21
1953	Haas	5:21
1960	Baumgartner	5:22
1953	Wenzinger	5:25
1960	Goldberg	5:26
1965	Coll.Aureum	5:26
1966	Schuricht	5:26
1952	E. Fischer	5:30
1971	Munclinger	5:34
1961	Klemperer	5:39
1964	Harnoncourt	6:25

Date	Performer	Movt. 2
1965	Coll.Aureum	3:25
1966	Maazel	3:26
1980	Harnoncourt	3:28
1958	Munch	3:29
1976	Kuijken	3:32
1979	Marriner	3:32
1977	Fuller	3:34
1974	Pallaird	3:37
1953	Wenzinger	3:40
1968	Richter	3:40
1966	Faerber	3:42
1967	Somary	3:42
1956	Munchinger	3:44
1972	Marriner	3:44
1964	Harnoncourt	3:47
1969	Britten	3:47
1956	Prohaska	3:50
1958	Dart	3:51
1960	Baumgartner	3:54
1952	E. Fischer	3:55
1971	Munclinger	3:58
1973	Munchinger	3:59
1953	Haas	4:01
1968	Littaur, Leppard	4:01
1972	Newman	4:01
1974	Boult	4:05
1976	Leppard	4:09
1947	Neel	4:12
1966	Schuricht	4:17
1965	Casals	4:27
1961	I Musici	4:28
1960	Menuhin	4:29
1960	Goldberg	4:33
1961	Klemperer	4:44
1972	Davison	4:53
1968	Goberman	5:58

Date	Performer	Movt. 3
1965	Casals	2:33
1968	Richter	2:33
1972	Newman	2:36
1977	Fuller	2:42
1956	Prohaska	2:43
1972	Davison	2:44
1974	Pallaird	2:44
1956	Munchinger	2:45
1972	Marriner	2:45
1967	Somary	2:47
1953	Wenzinger	2:48
1979	Marriner	2:48
1966	Maazel	2:49
1973	Munchinger	2:50
1976	Leppard	2:51
1960	Baumgartner	2:52
1960	Menuhin	2:52
1968	Littaur, Leppard	2:52
1969	Britten	2:52
1958	Dart	2:54
1960	Goldberg	2:55
1958	Munch	2:56
1966	Faerber	2:56
1968	Goberman	2:56
1965	Coll.Aureum	2:57
1966	Schuricht	2:57
1974	Boult	2:57
1953	Haas	2:58
1971	Munclinger	2:58
1980	Harnoncourt	2:58
1961	Klemperer	3:00
1947	Neel	3:01
1976	Kuijken	3:02
1961	I Musici	3:03
1952	E. Fischer	3:10
1964	Harnoncourt	3:35

Figure 3: Duration order tables of *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2* recordings

Ornamentation is probably the most discussed topic in baroque performance practice. However, the most important aspects of it are usually neglected and never featured prominently during the examined period. The majority of the writings displayed overconcern with how to execute specific graces. This fostered pedantic debate and rigid performance. At the same time the most important issue of embellishment has not been explored satisfactorily: namely that ornamentation has to be improvisatory in character. Although some scholars and musicians recognised that spontaneous decoration must be flexible and independent of prescribed musical material, they did not provide an applicable *modus operandi* for such playing. The problem, of course, was to find a context within which the desired flexibility could be achieved without the threat of being accused of taking 'romantic liberties'. During the 1950s and 1960s such a criticism was probably avoidable at all costs and the performances remained fairly strict, matter-of-fact and 'sewing-machine-like' in style.[23] Further to that it has to be noted that the execution of arbitrary *agréments* plays actually a relatively minor role in Bach's music. In his compositions, apart from choosing musically workable appoggiaturas, the playing of specified or improvised trills, mordents and so on does not affect the overall style of the interpretation much. Why? Because Bach's scores are much more detailed both melodically and harmonically. Some seem almost impossibly dense and complex in their rhythmic patterns. But only if one forgets that these scores represent fully written-out performance copies, documents of Bach's own improvisation. As we know, the contemporary Scheibe censured Bach for this practice saying that by writing out 'every ornament … that belongs to the method of playing' he obscured the basic outline.[24] Mendel suggested already in 1951 that Scheibe's objection was perhaps due to the difficult rhythmic patterns that arise from written out trills and ornaments: 'Because of the essentially improvisatory character of … ornaments, the attempt to write out just what metric value each tone is to have can never be successful. I think this may be partly what Scheibe meant in criticising Bach for writing out so much … The attempt to pin down the rhythm of living music at all in the crudely simple arithmetical ratios of notated meter is [hardly] … possible.'[25] If one keeps that in mind, it becomes clear that the complex looking rhythmic figures represent ornamental fig-

[23] L. Dreyfus: 'Early Music Defended against its Devotees: A Theory of Historical Performance in the 20th century' *The Musical Quarterly* 69 (1983): 297–322.

[24] H. David & A. Mendel (eds.): *The Bach Reader* New York: Norton, R1972: 238.

[25] A. Mendel (ed.): *Bach: St John Passion* Vocal Score Schirmer, 1951: xxii.

ures which *must not* be played correctly but with a certain freedom which allows for the basic pitches and essential contour of the melody to be highlighted. Another question also emerges in relation to these scores: whether it is appropriate to further embellish them. A case in point is the 25th variation from the *Goldberg*. Both Tureck (1978) and Kipnis (1973) add many more ornaments when they repeat each section. [*Figures 4* and *5*]. What musicians may find problematic with these versions is that they go into excess. They do not create a new ornamentation over the 'principal melody' but add on top of the already decorated one. If it is assumed (in agreement with Birnbaum's defense[26]) that Bach knew how much clarity was needed to secure the es-

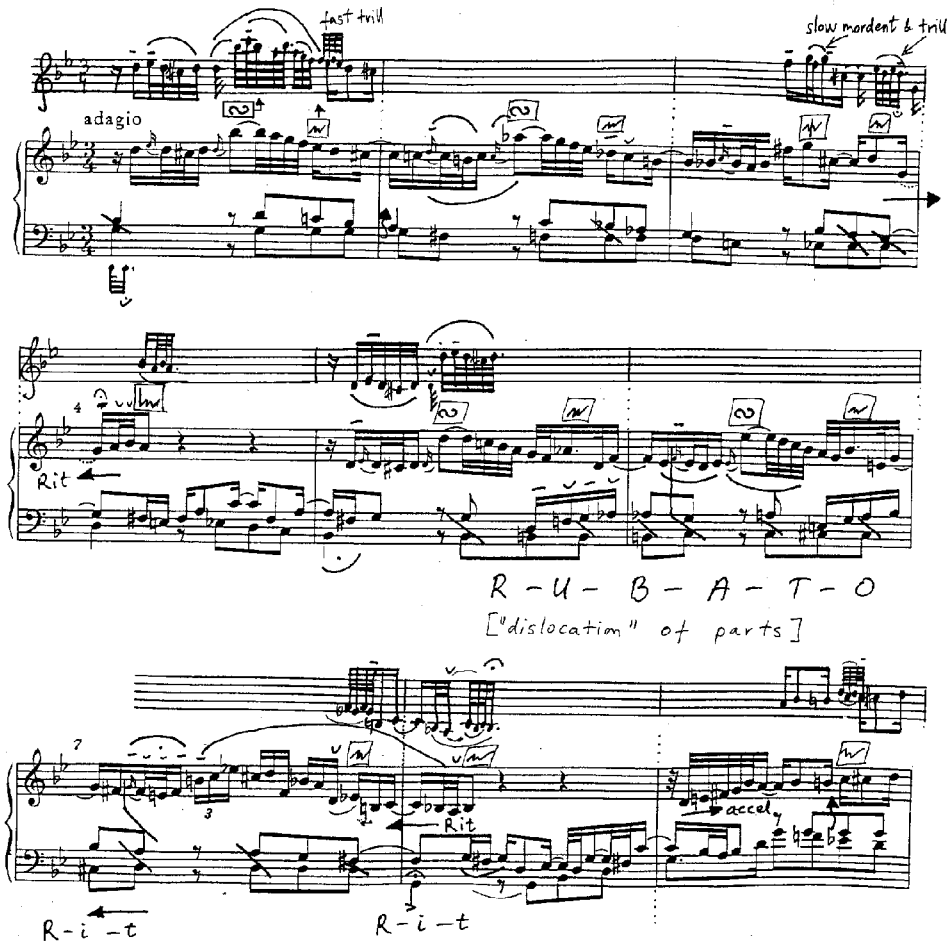


Figure 4: Transcription of Tureck's performance – *Goldberg Variations:* Var. 25 b.1–16

[26] In response to Scheibe's criticism. See H. David & A. Mendel (eds.): *The Bach Reader*: 239–247.

sence of the melody and kept the *decoratio* within these boundaries, it becomes quite obvious that he left the essential notes 'clean' and long(er) within the complex embroidery of *fioriture* to provide structural points; to 'serve the principal melody'. If these notes are further decorated with turns, trill and mordents, as Tureck does in bars 1–4, 11–12, 14, etc., no content remains to be heard ('the principal melody is spoiled'), only surface decoration.[27] The rendering of Kipnis is perhaps more naturally flowing, notwith-

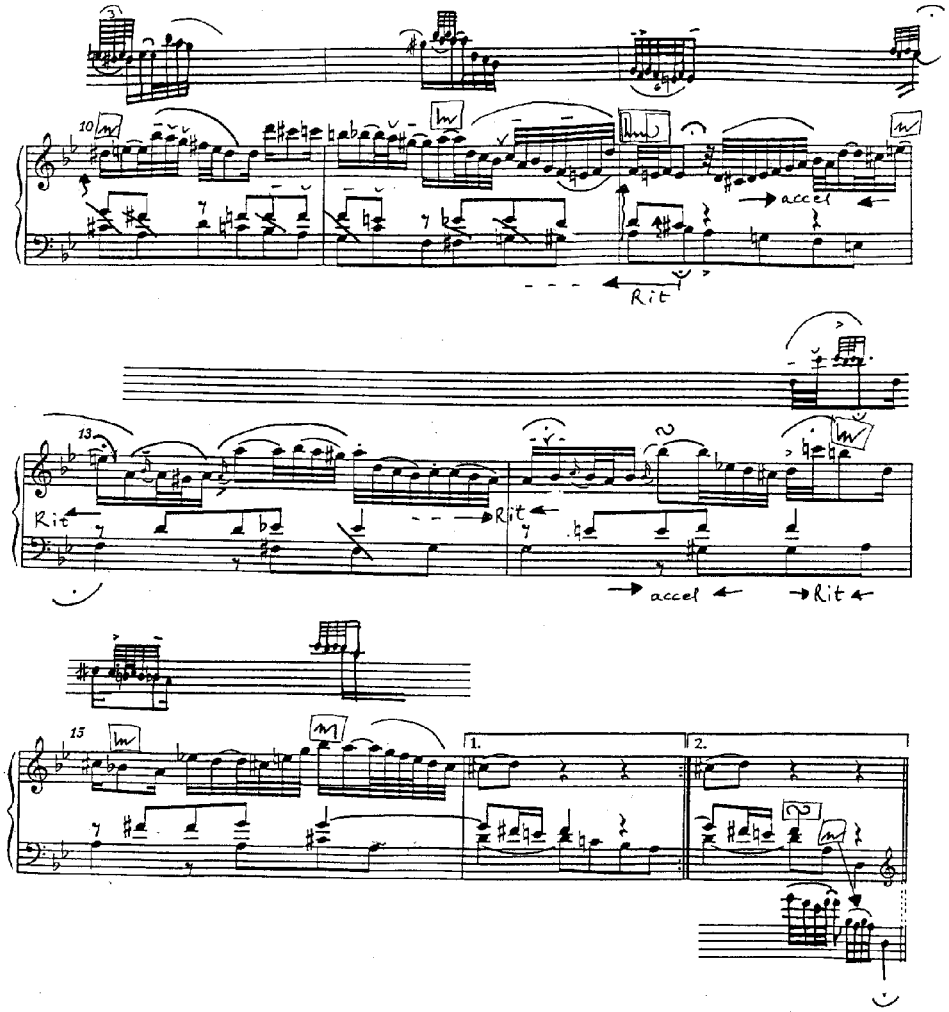


Figure 4 cont.

[27] Not only Birnbaum argues against such treatment of the melody but Quantz and CPE Bach as well.

standing the additional embellishments. However, if a performer wishes to create his or her own improvised ornaments, it might be better first to prepare a reduction of the score to its essential outline and then compose an alternative to Bach's version. Another possibility (which Kipnis explores in the *Aria* of the *Goldberg*) might be to perform a simplified material the first time and play Bach's embellishments for the repeats.

Finally the most important parameters have to be discussed. The examination of the recordings demonstrated that the decisive elements in creating the style of an interpretation are metrically shaped rhythm and articulation

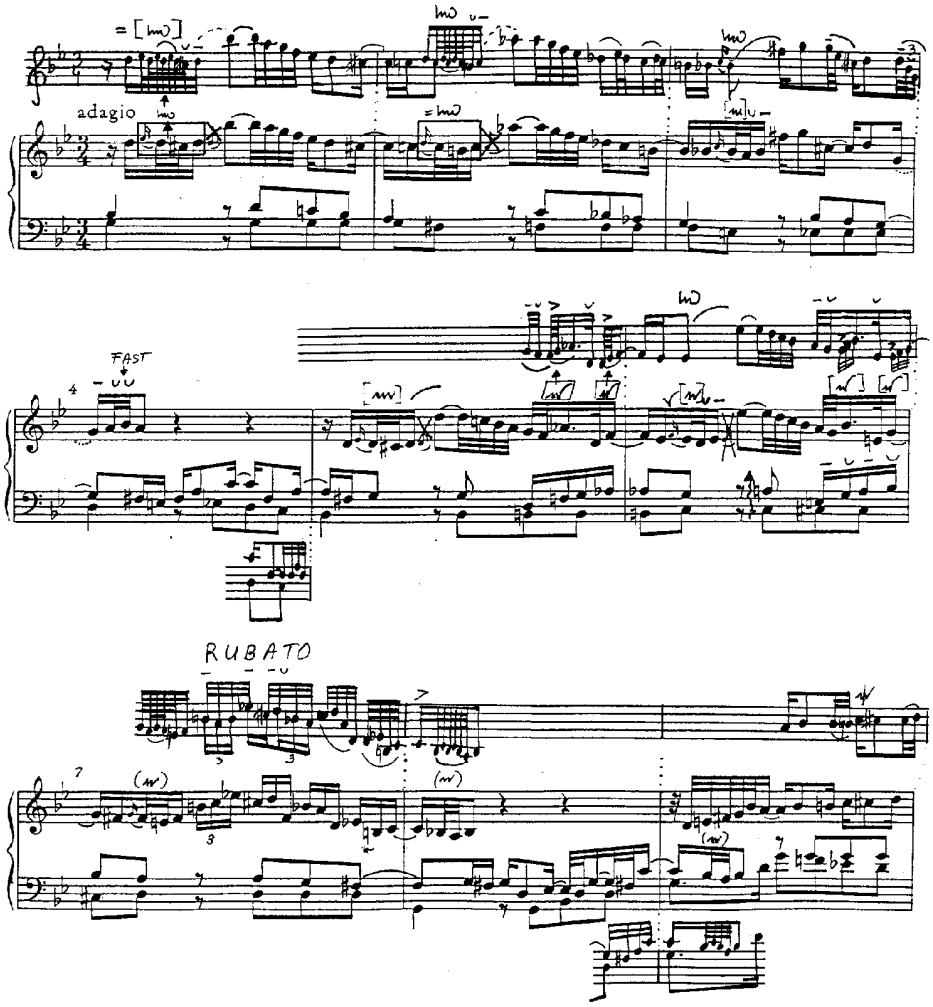


Figure 5: Transcription of Kipnis' performance – *Goldberg Variations:* Var. 25 b. 1–16

based on eighteenth century instrumental techniques and observance of accentual shifts.

During the 1960s and 1970s many publications appeared that concerned itself with rhythmic problems. Most of these, however, dealt with 'local' and 'inessential'[28] issues such as the performance of dotted patterns and the use or ratio of *notes inégales*. This diverted attention from the more significant matters of metre, rhythmic flexibility and articulation. There is no room here to enter into the argument of the appropriateness of using *notes inégales* in Bach's compositions. It seems more important to note a prevailing problem of terminology regarding *notes inégales* vs. *inégalité* that seems

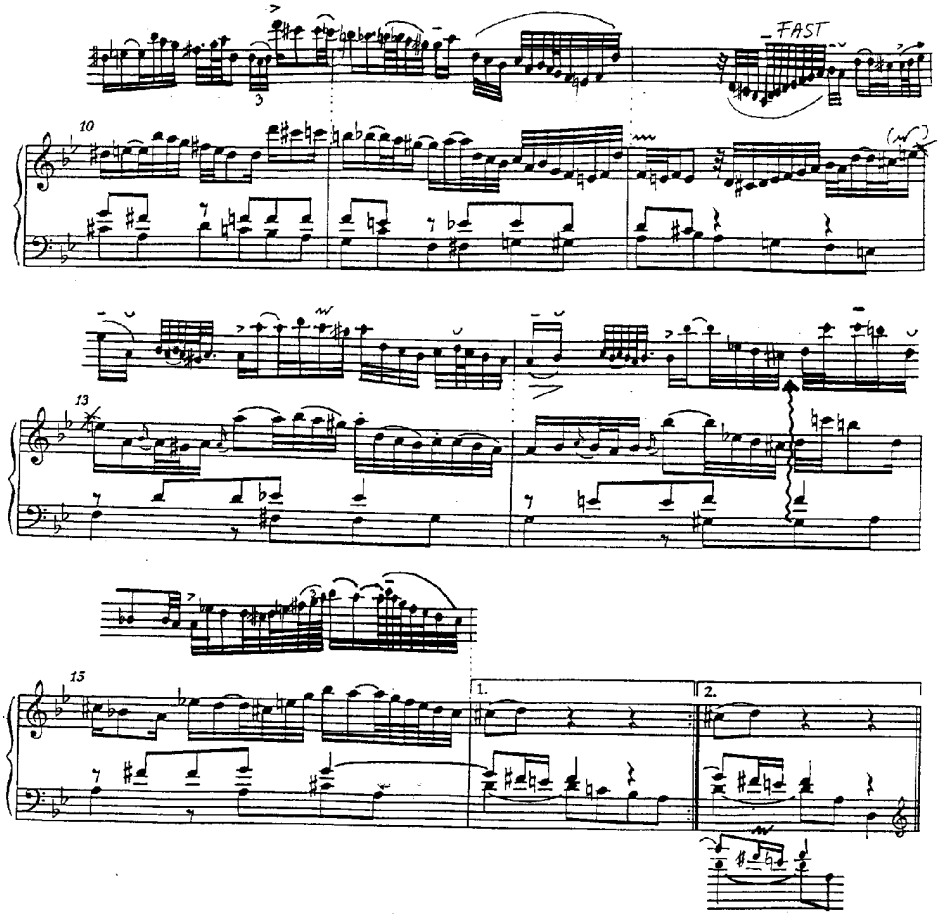


Figure 5 cont.

[28] David Fuller's expression. See D. Fuller: 'The Dotted style' in P. Williams (ed.) *Bach, Handel, Scarlatti – Tercentenary Essays* Cambridge: CUP, 1985: 99–117.

to underlie most disagreements. Since *notes inégales* refers to a specific French practice used in closely prescribed circumstances, it is important to use alternative terms such as *inégalité* only with regard to appropriate repertoire or musical context. At the same time the vernacular expressions 'unequal play' or 'inequality' could be used to denote a more general use of uneven, rhythmically somewhat free interpretation. The performance of dotted patterns can be examined in various situations. Taking the 7th variation of the *Goldberg* (which is a Gigue in 6/8) as our main example, we can note that over-dotting is universal among the recordings. Using the software program *SoundEdit 16* the length of notes can be measured (based on their on-set, off-set times) which enables the calculation of the dotting ratio. Those listed in *Figure 6* indicate a fairly similar value (a difference of 0.05 is negligible) across various versions. What the table cannot show is the nevertheless very different character of these performances. Moreover, the aural perception is such that often the recordings with a lesser dotting ratio sound positively more strongly dotted. In this light it seems quite evident that articulation and a contextual understanding of rhythm are more important. The two are organically interlinked and eighteenth century musicians internalised and mastered them primarily through playing technique.

Ratio	Performer	Date
0.75	Mechanical	
0.81	Walcha	1953
0.82	Marlowe	1962
0.83	Leonhardt	1953
0.84	Rosen	1969
0.84	Leonhardt	1978
0.85	Leonhardt	1965
0.85	Tureck	1978
0.85	Demus	1955
0.89	Kirkpatrick	1959

Figure 6: Ratio of dotted quaver to crochet in various performances of the *Goldberg Variations:* Variation 7

The significant aspects of baroque rhythm that provide a context for articulation as well are metre and pulse: the metric 'furnishing' of the bar. That time signatures in combination with the use of certain note values have a bearing on tempo and pulse is a convention of proportional mensural notation. That this convention was still in practice throughout the seventeenth

and early eighteenth centuries has not always been duly recognised. During the 1945–75 period the meaning of baroque time signatures, that is the information contained in them regarding the number of 'structural beats' (i.e. pulse) within the bar has been mostly overlooked. Instead, there prevailed an overemphasis of the importance of down-beat accents both on paper and in performance which seems to have diverted the attention from a comprehensive examination of metre, accenting, and the articulation of rhythm. Nevertheless one such study was published in 1953.[29] Rothschild argued that in the 'old tradition' the main emphasis was on rhythm that was conveyed by beats indicated by the time signature. Hence a great number of time signatures had to be used in order to allow a great variety of rhythmic patterns. He claimed that during the baroque period rhythm rather than tempo was the mainstay of a good rendering. Emphasis of the rhythmic characteristic permitted the freedom of expression, which was an inherent quality of the music. Although the book contains many similarly important points quite a few of its explanations are unconvincing or even incorrect. More reliable are George Houle's[30] and Anthony Newman's[31] books published during the 1980s. They both discuss at length the inter-relationship between tempo, baroque time signatures and note values used, and confirm that from Frescobaldi to Bach each metric signature had a specific accent pattern as well as an inherent tempo. Both of them use Kirnberger's explanation of metre put forward in 1774[32] and emphasise that all contemporary discussions painfully avoided using the word 'accent'. Instead, most comments were related to the timing, in other words to the length and moment of attack of these notes, rather than to dynamic stresses, that is to accents. According to Kirnberger, time signatures regulated not just articulation but compositional possibilities and the style of the performance as well. He claimed, for instance, that '3/4 with eight-note triplets and 9/8 ... have the same tempo. In 3/4, the triplets are to be performed very lightly without the slightest pressure on the last of the three, but in 9/8 the eighths are heavier with some weight on the last eighth note. This allows a change of harmony on the last eighth note in 9/8, but not on the third triplet in 3/4. ... If these special qualities are not observed, 6/8

[29] F. Rothschild: *The Lost Tradition in Music: Rhythm and Tempo in J. S. Bach's Time* London: A & C Black, 1953.

[30] G. Houle: *Metre in music 1600-1800* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987.

[31] A. Newman: *Bach and the Baroque: A Performing Guide to Baroque Music with Special Emphasis on the Music of J. S. Bach* New York: Pendragon Press, 1985.

[32] J. P. Kirnberger: *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* Berlin, 1774 (Eng. Trans. By D. Beach and J. Thym, New Haven, 1982).

gigues might as well be written in 2/4, and 12/8 in **C**'[33] It is important to add, that **C** is not the same as 4/4, as most people would think. Whereas **C** has only two structural beats the 'great 4/4 has a very emphatic and serious pace' with four equal stresses, and should be used for 'a lively and wakeful expression, which, however, still has something emphatic about it'.[34]

The metric governance of pulse is implied by all those writings as well which deal with the so-called 'good' and 'bad' (or strong–weak) notes. Although this topic was more often considered by twentieth century scholars (for instance by Dolmetsch, Mendel, Babitz, Boyden, Donington, Neumann), the discussion usually remained cursory and failed to recognise the issue as a key to the understanding of the context of baroque rhythm. Houle, on the other hand, used it to conclude that 'the perception of *quantitas instrinseca*, or 'good' and 'bad' notes, gave essential information to performers about standard articulation patterns. Instead of relying on markings for slurs, staccato marks, sforzandos, and accents, seventeenth- and eighteen-century performers interpreted their unmarked scores through habits and formulas learned as part of their elementary instruction. No matter how subtle and polished a performer eventually became, articulation determined by meter of the music was embedded in his or her technique. ... The variety of ... patterns and tongue strokes provided many different shadings of articulation. The early eighteenth-century manuals teach articulation in order to group notes and define measure organisation, rather than to heighten particular melodic ideas or introduce a dramatic effect. ... Reading Muffat and Quantz it seems likely that until the mid eighteenth-century upstrokes and down-strokes were not even, yet this unevenness was not achieved by extra accents but purely with bowing'[35]

Muffat, of course, provided us with an extended discussion of bowing in various time signatures. His instructions were used by other scholars as well, especially Boyden. For many musicians (particularly in the 1960s) Muffat's teachings were reduced to the 'rule of the down-bow'. Harnoncourt's performances were often commented upon for their 'thundering down-strokes' and others soon followed suit. However, there is much more in Muffat's *Florilegium secundum* than just the recommendation to emphasise the down-beat of each bar. Further to the basic principles of dif-

[33] Ibid. (English trans.): 396.
[34] Kirnberger: *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*: 133, cited in Newman: *Bach and the Baroque*: 30–31.
[35] Houle: *Metre in music*: 85, 103.

ferent bowing in various metres, Muffat also shows internal subdivisions arising from the figuration of the beat and the possibility of 'grading' beats of similar function (i.e. differentiating between a more and a less important *buona nota*). However, and this cannot be emphasised enough, neither Muffat, nor the other theorists of the time use the term accent or stress, which seems to be a concept (and practice) of the later eighteenth century, probably introduced by Leopold Mozart. In spite of this, studies from the middle of the twentieth century that tackle the problem of baroque performance always rely on these terms. Thus blurring the real meaning of metrical performance and creating a context where a confusion between dynamic stresses and 'the length of time' or articulation (as in grouping) becomes unavoidable. As mentioned earlier only Babitz recognised the essential difference between an accented and a metric performance of rhythm, and the underlying implications for the general character of baroque playing style. He was also among the firsts to show that in the minds of eighteenth-century musicians, aestheticians and philosophers the rhythm of music was similar to the rhythm of speech: intrinsically varied, fully dependent on context and meaning. However, just as speech was organised according to strict grammatic rules so was the freedom of rhythmic expression governed by the 'rule of metre' indicated by the time signature and note values used. Only through keeping a clear pulse yet being flexible with rhythmic groups can a performer achieve 'musical discourse'. In other words, this is the way to establish a direct connection between *oratio* (or *rhetoric*) and musical expression, the proclaimed goal of contemporary German music theory.

Four examples could be discussed to illustrate that metric articulation has the greatest influence on the character, style, and texture of a performance. The monotony caused by regular and too frequent accents gives way to a kind of speech-like clarity and natural flexibility as soon as the performance becomes dependent on metre and pulse. When articulation reflects the principles of figuration, when it is derived from eighteenth century playing techniques and follows freely the gestures and inflections dictated by the time signature, it becomes the most direct means of creating a *speech in tones*.[36] The musically most effective interpretations among the examined recordings are those which are led by 'rhythmic drive'. This is achieved by subordinating both rhythm and articulation to metre and its intrinsic charac-

[36] Harnoncourt's expression. See N. Harnoncourt: *Baroque Music Today*: *Music as Speech* Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1988: 39 (Eng. Trans. By Mary O'Neill). German orig.: *Musik als Klangrede* Salzburg: Residenz, 1982.

teristics without adhering crudely to regular accents of dynamic stresses based on the 'tyranny' of the bar-line. As Kirnberger said, 'it is movement, beat and rhythm which give to a song its life and its power.'[37] What the examples also show is that Bach meticulously followed the rules of his chosen metre in every respect of the composition: harmony, rhythm, melodic line, ornamentation, register, texture, prosody, and so on.

Variation 8 of the *Goldberg* is, for instance in 3/4, has a two-part texture, and its rhythm is restricted to quavers and semi-quavers. The articulation should, therefore, focus on grouping these apparently even 'pearl strings' of semiquaver patterns. A strong down-beat seems appropriate followed by gradually weaker second and third beats. The three-semiquaver up-beat in the left hand (bars 1–8 etc.), and later in the right hand (bars 13–14 etc.), lends a further emphasis to the down-beat of the following bars. The single bar length of the phrasing is also indicated by the semiquaver rests at the end of each unit (see right hand, bars 1–6 etc.). By the same token, this rest at the end of the rhythmic idea reinforces the call for a gradual lightening of the bar from the strong first accent to a non-accent by the end. This can be somewhat difficult, since the melodic line is rising: it must be helped by a detached and light left hand, which, in its descending quaver pattern, can easily support the correct pulse and character. Bars 19–20 and 27–28 provide variation of this pulse. Here slight changes in the pattern (the omission of both the rest and the 'up-beat' figure, together with the fact that both hands play similar material in contrary motion) allow, or even ask for, a grouping by beat rather than by bar. In other words three groups of semiquavers can be articulated, resulting in a broadening effect, rather in the manner of a hemiola: 1,2,1,2 ↔ 1,2,3,1,2,3 ↔ 1,2,1,2 [*Figure 7: Goldberg Variations* Variation 8 bars 17–32].

Not all performances approach the variation with the above in mind. Most of them give a lively account of it (detached or staccato), but quite a few are completely undifferentiated in tone and articulation. Some (e.g. Richter and Ruzicková) choose a fuller registration overburdening the texture. Others (Walcha, Malcolm, Pelleg) use no accents at all. The lack of pulse makes these performances dull, fragmented, and seemingly slow. Newman's version is fast, virtuoso yet mechanistic. However, a slight 3/4 is perceptible, and the music moves by bars. The piano performances (Demus, Gould, Tureck, Peter Serkin, Rosen) are more effective than those on the

[37] Kirnberger: *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*: 105 cited in Newman: *Bach and the Baroque*: 24.

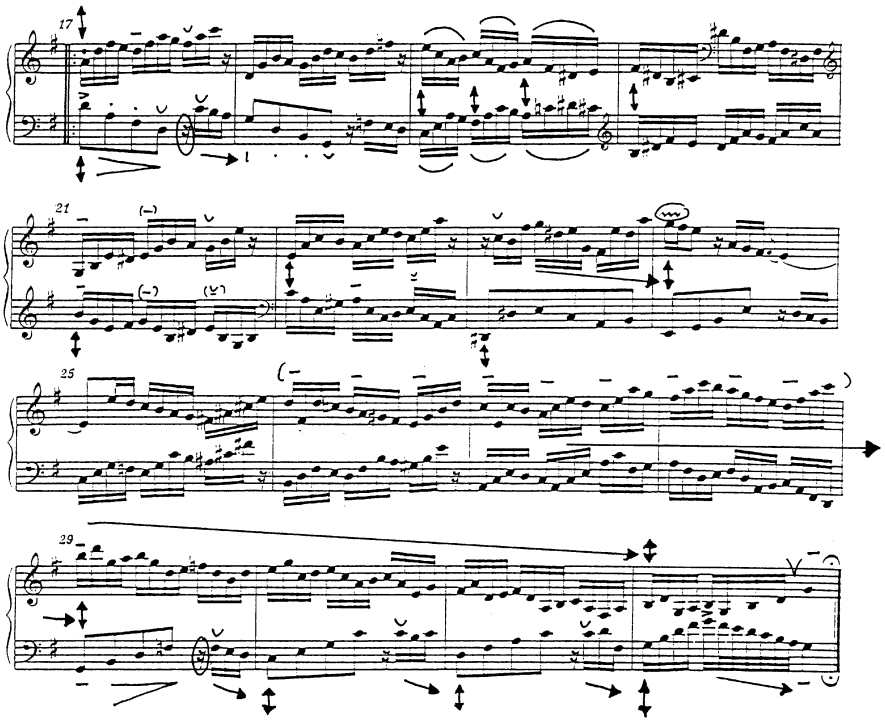


Figure 7: Goldberg Variations: Variation 8 b. 17–32

harpsichord because they play with the metre more daringly. Among the harpsichordists, Sylvia Marlowe could be mentioned as a possible exception. Although her registration is quite full, she gives a very lucid rendition with clear phrases and a natural flow. In his later recordings, Leonhardt seems to give equal importance to all three beats in the bar, but in the 1965 version he plays the semiquavers in a slightly unequal manner. This unevenness might be evidence of his use of eighteenth century fingerings, which cannot be detected in any other performances. Kirkpatrick, who suggests that this variation returns to lyricism,[38] uses the lute stop and plays as legato as possible within these parameters. The evenness of the first half is somewhat varied in the second half where he highlights the melodic line with a few agogic stresses and different slurring of groups (see bars 23–26, especially the slight accent on the last beat in these bars). Galling, Gát, Kipnis and Tureck also give a clear reading although this is achieved more through 'phrasing' than through pulse.

[38] Kirkpatrick (ed.): *Bach: Goldberg variations:* xviii.

In the bass aria *Komm, süßes Kreuz* (*St Matthew Passion*) the metric performance of rhythm is very important. The arpeggiated chords, dotted patterns, and fast ornamental figures in the viola da gamba part need to stem from the correct rendering of 'structural stresses', that is from the observation of the pulse in **C**: two per bar. Looking at the score it is obvious that Bach's organisation of the music fits this pulse. Harmony, rhythm and motivic material follow naturally the principle characteristics of this metre. In the first bar, for instance, the rhythm and harmony of the continuo accent the down-beat and the third beat primarily by way of an up-beat-like quasi secondary dominant resolving to the harmony on the second 'structural stress' of the bar. This pulse is reinforced in the continuo part through its rests on the second and fourth beats. By omitting the accompaniment on these points of the bar Bach secures that **C**, rather than 4/4 is established. Other strong indications of this can be observed in bars four, five, six, and nine. In bar four the flourish of the viola da gamba furnishes the first half of the unit while the second 'structural stress' is emphasised by the appoggiatura (and longer note value), and the dotted figure () in the continuo. The latter not only complements the texture but brings in an element of contrast and vigour, too, as the faster value and dotting are both new in that voice which formerly had only quavers. Bars five and six continue to move by two main beats. Their symmetrically organised motivic and rhythmic content is quite obvious and is further supported by the rhythm of the continuo. It is also worth noting that in both bars the first notes on the 'structural beats' are accented: in bar five their range is low and they are marked with staccato strokes, in bar six they are dotted values followed by an ornamented leap down. The slurs of the seven demisemiquaver groups in bar five perhaps denote a written-out ornament; possibly a mordent with turn, which could, therefore, be played 'free' of metre, faster then the initial low notes that they are supposed to ornament. The accented initial notes, on the other hand, may gain in duration: a typical instance of the flexible (and relative) 'length of time' a note may sound in order to clarify articulation and structural importance. The slurs in bar six are likely to indicate similar ornamental groups that should be performed lightly and spontaneously. In such a manner that they too, emphasise the initial notes that mark the 'structural stresses' of the unit. Almost every bar of the score yields such clear metrical organisation, including the vocal part. See for instance bar nine with its crotchet on the second 'structural beat'. There are very few instances (particularly between

bars 24 and 28) where an over-arching phrasing seems desirable. Even at some of these places (e.g. bars 12, 16, 17, etc.) a solid sense of the underlying pulse would help diction, intonation, and articulation. [*Figure 8:* '*Komm, süßes Kreuz*' bars 1–11]

The recordings are quite varied, most achieving a better interpretation in the obbligato part than in the voice or in the continuo. The tempo also differs considerably, and here it seems that the lively, lightly dotted and 'grouped' versions are also somewhat faster than the more *legato* and evenly performed ones. Lack of pulse in the continuo, and/or a broad vocal line often neutralises the potentially effective interpretation of the gamba solo. In Grossmann's, Richter's, Münchinger's and Gönnenwein's recordings even the dotted patterns are flat or smooth; in Macmillan's, Klemperer's, Rilling's and Karajan's versions the phrasing is broad and *legato*, lacking in pulse; but the dotting is springy and sharp. This kind of playing fragments the aria because it creates an undue contrast. The vocalists are problematic in Scherchen's and Harnoncourt's recordings as well: blunt tone and not enough detail limit the overall effect of the performance, in spite of the presence of clear pulse, airy dotting, light, agile and grouped flourishes in the gamba part, and springy metric continuo bass.

The bass aria: *Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder* in **C** is also a noteworthy example. Quite often the interpretation is successful because of lively, rhythmicised orchestral parts, a springy bass-line, and a clear voice. However, if the solo violin plays its long semiquaver passages mechanically, or if there are four (rather than just two) accents per bar, the effect is ruined. Unforced bouncing of the bow, strong metric stresses, and a well pronounced continuo are crucial. In the ritornello material it is important to shape the melody in the context of pulse. This can be achieved by playing the slurs and staccatos in bar two so as to emphasise the down-beat and the stress on the third beat, which Bach marked with a trill. In other words, by playing a 'baroque slur' where the first note under the slur has a longer intrinsic value than the others. Such an interpretation would also make the staccato notes on the second beat sound lighter. Harnoncourt's performance is the clearest example of such an interpretation. Lively, dancing energy helps project the details of the score. Strong down-beats, grouped smaller values, emphatic shifted accents, and a reasonably clear, agile voice further the affect. Among the other recordings Gönnenwein and Münchinger are similarly mechanistic and undifferentiated as in the earlier example. Richter comes close to

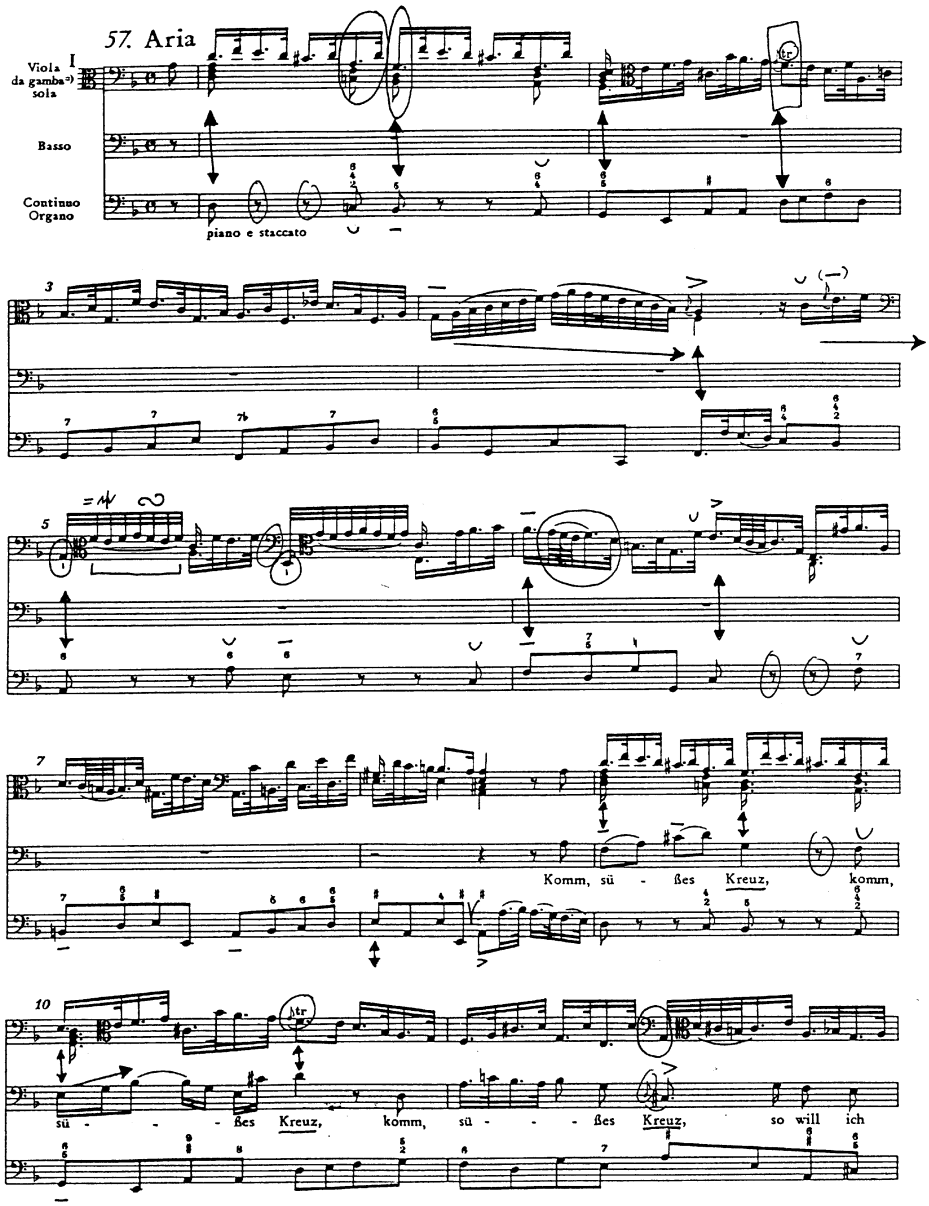


Figure 8: St. Matthew Passion: '*Komm süßes Kreuz*' bars 1–11

Harnoncourt's; Jacques, Karajan, Grossmann and Klemperer offer a fairly *legato* although accented interpretation.

Looking at the *Brandenburg Concertos* the characteristics of the fast movements can be clearly distinguished from issues relating to slow move-

ments. While the outer movements rarely bear markings of slurs or staccato dots, the scores of the middle movements are often more detailed. Because of the contrasting character and tempo of these movements the same artists may adopt different attitudes to fast and slow movements in assembling a 'stylish' performance. The lively character and brisker tempo of the outer movements seem to prompt musicians to play with a lighter tone, stronger accents and in a springier, more detached manner. The slower tempo, different texture and inevitably greater expressiveness of the slower movements, on the other hand, seem to evoke a more 'romantic' vocabulary: broader tone production, intense vibrato, and held notes played with continuous *legato*. The approach creates an undifferentiated effect in the outer movements due to the mechanistic accentuation of each bar and to the uniformity of notes played with equal importance. In the slow movements it fosters a thick texture, dragging thematic content, and a laboured expressiveness which lacks elegance. In all movements it is vital to register the time signature and perform all notes according to their intrinsic value within the given metre. The various melodic and rhythmic ideas need to be distinctly shaped and projected to create a chamber music character and to clarify the design. It is important to realise, for instance, that the opening movements of *Concertos Nos. 2* and *5* are in 𝔠 and not 4/4 or **C**. Observing the implications of this metre means that the semiquavers are grouped not in fours but in eights, immediately creating a much more natural flow and a less 'rattling' effect. However such a reading is rare among the examined recordings. Instead, the majority of performers play them in a mechanistic and undifferentiated manner, usually with four accents per bar.

Singling out the *Allegro* of *Concerto No. 5* for more detailed comments it can be noted that some artists (e.g. Neel, Haas or Somary) provide good accents but little phrasing.[39] Others (e.g. Wöldike, Newstone, Fischer, Maazel or Münchinger) perform in an even, unaccented style; quite slurred and muddied. Karl Richter's version is similarly monotonous. Lacking pulse, treating all eight quavers in the bar with equal importance and using a minimal non-legato, the overall effect becomes quite robust and broad. The solos are not more differentiated either. Instead of paired slurs and short motives punctuated by frequent cadences and the creation of a true dialogue between the flute and violin, the listener is confronted with a continuous and fairly in-

[39] By this I mean that some pulse is perceptible but it does not serve the shaping of melodic and rhythmic groups; it does not *define* gestures or 'germinal phrases' and structural elements.

tensely slurred mixture of flute and violin tones melting and continuing seemingly aimlessly in-between short orchestral 'interruptions' (*ritornelli*). The interpretations of Szymon Goldberg, Littaur/Leppard, Goberman, Milan Munclinger and many others are similar. There are few exceptions: Dart and the *Philomusica* (1958) observe the *alla breve* (𝅜) pulse of the movement. By having only two accents per bar the semiquaver orchestral tutti gains fluency and direction, its structure is clearly defined. The solos fall with similar ease into metrically confined units. Neither Wenzinger (1953), nor Harnoncourt (1964) or the *Collegium Aureum* (1965) achieve such a directly expressive performance. Only the opening tutti (bars 1–9) is well articulated; the rest of the movement is relatively undifferentiated and uninteresting. Harnoncourt's choice of a slowish tempo further undermines the flow of motives and phrases. Casals, conducting the Marlborough Festival Orchestra (and Rudolf Serkin at the piano) in the same year, offers a much more musical interpretation. Although the tempo is also moderate and the tutti sections are somewhat heavy, the structure is clear and the phrases well defined. However, this is achieved not through distinctly articulating figures or metrically grouping notes but 'melodically': by the use of graded dynamics and tempo fluctuations to shape melodic contours and longer periods. Britten's recording (1969) is even more controversial. He not only observes the time signature (𝅜) but some of the paired slurs in the solo instruments as well (e.g. bars 143, 151). Yet everything else is played so literally, and the harpsichordist (Philip Ledger) performs in such a relentlessly 'belted' manner that the accents of the pulse gradually disappear, the semiquavers become laboured and the overall effect monotonous. From the recordings made during the 1970s, four could be highlighted: Marriner's, Davison's and Newman's from 1971–1972, and Leonhardt/Kuijken et al. from 1976. The first is lively and well accented, but under-articulated and matter-of-fact. The next two are quite clearly phrased and articulated yet somewhat too rushed causing muddied sound and loss of audible detail. The last is simply the best performance available from the period: transparent in texture, light and natural in tone, and rich in baroque effects. Here we can observe the elements of a detailed, varied and flexible articulation: instead of accents one perceives 'timing stresses', notes are played according to their intrinsic value. Bowing, tonguing and dynamic shadings derived from baroque tone production serve the grouping of notes into metric units, sharply defining

rhythmic detail and incorporating it into a steady but not mechanistically regular pulse.

The most important general lesson of the examination of recordings is that baroque articulation was rare during the 1945–1975 period. Even when slurs and staccato marks were observed they remained meaningless, mechanistically followed and often subordinated to an over-riding *legato*. True baroque articulation, on the other hand, serves rhythmic gestures, metric groups. It delineates figuration and clarifies structure by highlighting the various contrapuntal layers or shifted accentual patterns. This, however, has not been well understood until the beginning of the 1980s. By then musicians have mastered eighteenth century playing techniques and scholars have started re-examining the sources. Houle's study provided new insight into the role of metre in baroque music, which was followed by John Butt's excellent exposition of matters of articulation in Bach's compositions.[40] A new era dawned when the revival of repertoire started to be enhanced by a more genuine revival of a historical performance style.

Summary List of Recordings Referred to in the Text

St John Passion

Willcocks, David (dir.), Dart, Thurston (continuo), 1959–1960 Argo ZRG 5270–2

St Matthew Passion

Jacques, Reginald, 1947 Decca ACL 109–111 (re-issue: D 42D–3 FMI)
Grossmann, Ferdinand, 1953–1954 VOX mono VBX200
Scherchen, Hermann, 1953–1954 NIXA WLP 6401 or Westminster Festival Records WAL 401 XTV 19938–19945
MacMillan, Ernest, ca. 1955 World Record Club MW-2004 (2XS 1178–81)
Richter, Karl, 1958 DGG Archiv SAPM 198009–12
Klemperer, Otto, 1961 Columbia SAX 2447–50
Münchinger, Karl, 1965 Decca SET 288–91
Gönnenwein, Wolfgang, 1968 HMV SLS 942/1–4
Harnoncourt, Nikolaus, 1971 Telefunken Das Alte Werk SAWT 9572–5
Karajan, Herbert von, 1972, 1987 DGG CD 419790–2
Rilling, Helmut, 1978 CBS Master Works 79403

Brandenburg Concertos

Neel, Boyd, 1947–1948 Decca K 1541–3
Wöldike, Mogens, 1949 HMV C 3947–8
Haas, Karl, 1953 Whitehall WH 200070–1 (or Westminster WG-W-18033)

[40] J. Butt: *Bach interpretation: articulation marks in primary sources* Cambridge: CUP, 1990.

Wenzinger, August, 1950–1953 DGG Archiv APM 1411–12
Fischer, Edwin, 1953 HMV ALP 1084
Newstone, Harry, 1958 Saga XID 5031–2
Dart, Thurston, 1958–1959 L'Oiseau-Lyre OL 50159, OL 50167
Goldberg, Szymon, 1959 Philips GBL 5511–2 (or G 03018)
Münchinger, Karl, 1959 Decca LXT 5512–3
Harnoncourt, Nikolaus, 1964 Telefunken Das Alte Werk SAWT 9459–60
Collegium Aureum, 1965 Victrola VICS 6023 RCA (or BASF BHM 23–20331)
Casals, Pablo, 1965 CDS SBRG 72396–8
Somary, Johannes, ca 1967 Vanguard VSQ 30049–50
Richter, Karl, 1968 DGG Archiv SAPM 104971–2
Littaur, David / Leppard, Raymond, 1968 HMV ConcertMusic SXLP 20110–1
Gobermann, Max, 1968 Odyssey 32260014
Britten, Benjamin, 1969 Decca SET 410–1
Munclinger, Milan, 1971 Supraphon GS 50641–2
Marriner, Neville, 1971 Philips 6700045
Davison, Arthur, 1972 EMI Classics for Pleasure CFP 40010
Newman, Anthony, 1972 Columbia MZ 31398
Leonhardt, Gustav / Kuijken, Sigiswald, 1976–1977 Seon RL 300400EK

Goldberg Variations

Walcha, Helmuth, ca. 1953 WRC 92–6092–1/2
Leonhardt, Gustav, 1953 NIXA PVL 7010
Demus, Jörg, 1955 NIXA WLP 5241
Gould, Glen, 1955 Philips SBL 5211 (or Sony SMK 52685)
Richter, Karl, 1956 Teldec 6.41337 AH
Tureck, Rosalyn, 1958 HMV ALP 1548–9 (Everest 3397)
Kirkpatrick, Ralph, 1958 DGG Archiv SAPM 198020
Marlowe, Sylvia, 1962 Decca DL 710056
Malcolm, George, 1962 L'Oiseau-Lyre SOL 261–2
Gát, J zsef, ca. 1964 Hungaroton HLX 90032
Leonhardt, Gustav, 1965 teldec DAW 6.41198
Serkin, Peter, 1965 RCA Vic-2851
Galling, Martin, 1966 Turnabout TV 340155
Pellef, Frank, 1966 Golden Guinea GSGC 14050
Rosen, Charles, 1967 CBS 773091–3
Richter, Karl, 1970 DGG Archiv 23722 O15
Newman, Anthony, 1971 Columbia M 30438
Ruzicková, Zuzana, 1971 Erato ERA 9034
Kipnis, Igor, 1973 Angel SB 3796