Ornamental potential of the Pan Flute illustrated in Baroque Transcriptions

Liviu Ioan IOSIF[1]

Abstract: *Each composer of the Baroque era, representative of a certain culture (be it Italian, German, French or English), used the technical potential, as well as the expressiveness of the solo instrument of his choice both in compositions for concerts and in compositions for chamber music. This paper discusses the Baroque musical ornaments, especially those of the pan flute.*

Keywords: *pan flute, ornaments, Baroque*

1. Introduction

Cave paintings dating from the 6th century BC, ancient figurines, even well preserved instruments, bear witness to the fact that the pan flute, popular around the world, is one of the oldest musical instruments (Cernatescu 2006, 13).

Although pan flutes are generally made in the same way – short vertical pipes bound or glued together which produce a wide range of sounds – there are multiple varieties: length, diameter, number of pipes, material, manner of playing – all make the difference.

Unlike other folk music instruments, whose evolution underwent periods of stagnation or, even, disappeared, the pan flute, in all its shapes, continued to prove its versatility. In the last decades of the 20th century it moved from the small folk music ensembles to professional music, pop music and jazz. It also found its place in symphonic, especially chamber music.

---

[1]PhD Candidate, Transilvania University of Braşov, liviu.iosif@unitbv.ro

2. Main musical ornaments in Baroque music

Rubato goes very well with the expressiveness of the pan flute and gives the musician the opportunity to display his manner of interpretation. On the one hand, numerous wind instruments, such as the flute, the oboe, the trumpet, the bassoon, as well as the pan flute had a two octave ambitus. The ornaments indicated by the composer were not considered compulsory in the interpretation; the decision belonged entirely to the interpreter (as mentioned in the notes of J.S. Bach, G. Fr. Händel, A. Vivaldi, G. Tartini and others). The interpreter could opt for a free, personal embelishment without affecting the emotion of the composition. This is why Baroque music can easily be transcribed for the pan flute.

On the other hand the treasure of compositions, both for concerts and for chamber music, is rich, various, full of vitality and melodious. To music lovers nowadays it is expressive and, the virtuosity of the musicians who interpret it, it is impressive. The reactualisation of this body of music is beneficial and it is supported worldwide: Baroque orchestras, faithful replicas of Baroque instruments, creations of Baroque composers on the stages of the world, Baroque studied in schools and universities; regardless of the level reached by the student it is thoroughly studied.

Most of the existing ornaments, mentioned in the old treaties and music sheets as well as in the teaching techniques, apply to the technical possibilities and to the expressiveness of the pan flute. Their names have different significane from one country to another, from one musical school to another, from a composer to another. Moreover, questions arise regarding the ornamentation of the 18th century and its execution. For instance, is the ornament diatonic or chromatic, can it come ahead of the main sound, or simultaneously, and must it be fast or slow? If it is slow, then which is the right relationship between the main sound and the values of time of the figuration? Must the accent fall on the main sound or on the beginning of the ornament? The decision is complicated because the treaties give contradicting answers: the explanations of the composer do not refer to the relationship with the whole – only the figure is noted and not its connection with the accompaniment; the manner of execution was borrowed from tradition. A certain order was introduced by the classics, in the time of Ludwig van Beethoven, when the composer placed ornaments which the interpreters had to execute.

An ornament which a pan flute can play is called an accent where a short sound ends along sound, a higher semitone or a lower one, creating the sensation of pain; the accent-figure is especially employed in sad, affectionate piece, but never in merry ones, or in those which expressed anger; the figure could be placed

on a quarte followed by an octave, or on uneven octaves. Here are a few examples (Montéclair 1736, 80):
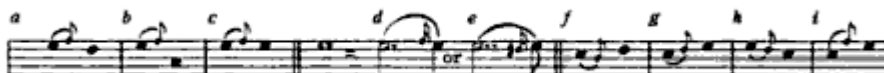
Fig. 1. *Accent*

The *chûte* ornament, *slide* in English, instructs the performer to slide in a descending form from a note; the downfall can be on another interval, too. The effect was pathetic: the high pitch diminishes and dies out. It can be played on pan flute (Montéclair 1736, 79-80):

Fig. 2. *Chûte*

The *porte de voix* and *coulé* ornaments were very versatile. The musical notes are played or sung smoothly and connected. That is, the player makes a transition from note to note with no intervening silence. It is frequently used in playing the pan flute. It adds sweetness to the cantilena an therefore it was never used to express anger. In the beginning it was noted like this:

Fig. 3. *Porte de voix*

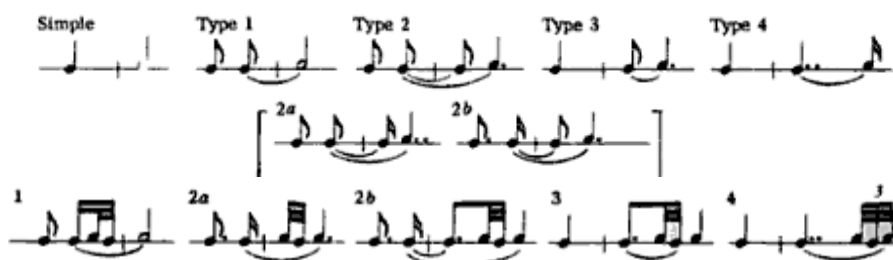Later, the execution became more complicated, easily confused with the mordent:

Fig. 4. *Mordent*

However, this execution is also correct:

Fig. 5. *Coulé*

The Italian Ricardo Rogniono (Rogniono 1592, 17,18,20,22) gives the following indications, the *coulé* tertians being elements of virtuosity in Italian music:

Fig. 6. *Coulé*

And here we have the opinion of J. Ph. Rameau about ornaments (Rameau 1724). He demonstrated that the perception changes even in the creation of the same composer:
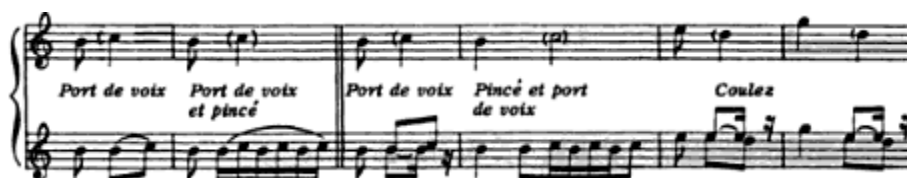

Fig.7. *Porte de voix, coulé*

There were different directions on how to approach the *coulé*, according to its place of origin and to context. J. J. Rousseau gives the following indications in his dictionary (Rousseau 1767, B): in the case of A, B, D, G, the *coulé* is executed between the sounds of a tertian, in C it is played when the sound is repeated, in Eit is placed within an ascending chromatic succession, in F in adescending dissonant leap, in H the sound is repeated in *coulé*, if there is a second long interval, in I we have an accent first (ascending) and then a *coulé*:

etc.

Fig. 8. *Execution of a coulé according to context*

In the same category we have the *coulade* ⤳, again obtained from the passage note or notes bewteen two real sounds in the interval of a tertian, but it could extend to a sixth, ascending or descending, even more in the instrumental style.

The Apogiatura, (*appoggiatura* in Italian, *Vorschlag* in German *grace notes* in English) is an added non-chord note unrelated to the accord which accompanies it and with which it resonates and which is resolved to the regular note of the cord. It precedes the sound of an accord, which will ensure the harmonious resolve. It is advisable to delay the articulation for this will make it more expressive. With regard to its length, the appoggiatura is of two kinds, long and short; the long appoggiatura bears a fixed relation to the length of the principal note, which is worth ½ of the rhythmical value of the time or 2/3 of a dotted value, according to G. Tartini's Treaty on Ornamentation

Fig. 9. *Apogiatura*

The short appoggiatura (*appoggiatura corta*, or *acciaccatura* in Italian, *short appoggiatura* in English) was noted in the same way in Baroque compositions (in the Classical period is usually performed before the beat) and it is written using a quaver (or an eighth note). Unlike the short appoggiatura, the long one expresses yearning. The appoggiatura is an expressive melodic accent easily confused with the first of the ornaments.

Fig.10. S*hort Apogiatura*

If the appoggiatura comes before a trill it must be rapid else it will lackharmony. The appoggiatura noted on a beat followed by a pause borrowed the rhytmic value of the main sound, while the fundamental sound borowed the value of the pause which disappeared leaving only its significance that of closure.

The appoggiatura (*porte de voix* in French, *porta di voce* in Italian) was the reverse of a coulé and it was smaller written sound, ofted tied to the next main sound ormarked by a V:

Fig.11. *Porta di voce*

Although not always noted, it's place could be deduced after a *pincé*, especially at the closing of a phrase or of the general arch of the piece.
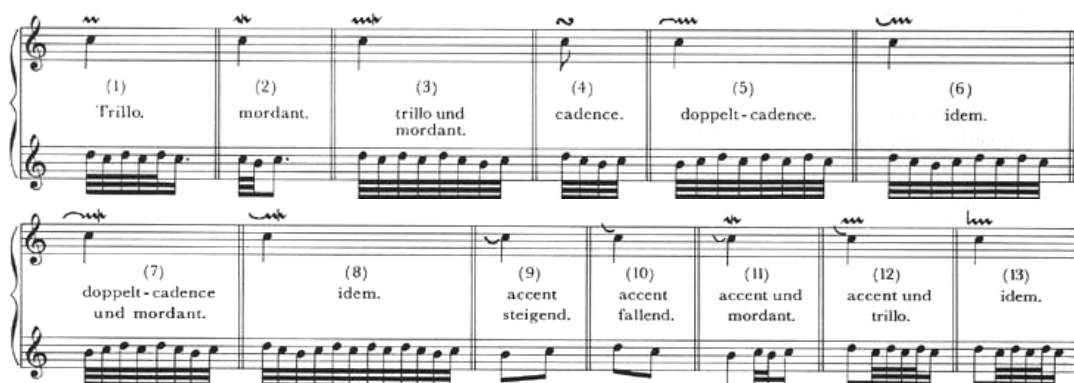
This ornament conveyed grace and an elegant closure. The *Porte de voix* was considered a delaying of the preceding sound and it created an elegant slide between sounds.

The *messa di voce* (*son enflé* in French) cannot be executed by stringed instruments, but when interpreted by a pan flute it created a good effect. It consists of the controlled increase and subsequent decrease in intensity of tone; J.J. Quantz indicated that, during the execution, the hight must not be altered. The sign resembles a crescendo, but its interior is darkened and, later, it was adopted by the signs destined to show the dynamics of music.

The Mordent is rooted in the sign called *pincé, martellement, battement* in French, *Schneller* in German, related to the *tremblement* (trill) and to the *porte de voix*, but it is short. Bach şi Händel write an M above the real sound; it is either increasing or decreasing. This meaning is employed even today.

Fig.12. *Mordent*

Other interpretations of this sign and a few combinations are presented below:

Fig.13. *Mordent, types and combinations*

The *turn* (*grupetto, circolo mezzo* in Italian, *double cadence*, *tour de gossier* in French with the two apparitions, ascending and descending, preserved its significance over time and it is written identically by all schools of music. The turn, consisting most of the time of five sounds winding around the principal sound on which it is written, coud end in a trill.

Fig.14. *Grupetto*

Below, other means of writing the turn, with the characteristic sign or with appoggiatura which imitates it, as well as the mannet in which it should be executed:

Fig.15. *Means of writing/execution of the grupetto*

The Shake (*tremblement*, *cadence* or *battement in French*, *trillo* in Italian, *shake* in English, *triller* in German) was, between 1600 and 1800, known under various names and written in various ways. It could be short, easily confused with the mordent, or long. It was indicated by a wavy line, a „t", a „tr" ori „+" above the note:

Fig.16. *Trillo*

The execution of a certain ornament was not compulsory; the interpreter could replace it, according to his technical skills, with a mordent or with a turn. The shake unfolded following certain rules; it always began on the note above it and, usually, on a note above (excepting the situations when it was preceded by an appoggiatura); there was a rapid alteration and it the end was anticipated by a pause called *point d'arret.* The end was always quick. It usually began with a note above, but it could also begin with the note below the preceding auxiliary note (*porte de voix*) also had to be signaled. It sometimes ended in a turn. It had to be adapted to the tempo and to the feeling it was supposed to convey (slower in sad, slow pieces and vice-versa in merry ones).

The *vibrato* (*tremolo* in Italian, *tremblement* or *verre cassé* in French) was borrowed from the technique of stringed instruments, but it could be played on other instruments, too, including the pan flute, even organ or clavichord following the movement of the fingers. This modulating of the air flow into the instrument to influence the amplitude of the sound was employed by the Baroque composers

especially on certain notes with a higher rhythmic value and on the final note of a composition – which was long and difficult to hold. Here is the spectrogram illustrating the difference between *tremolo* and *vibrato*.
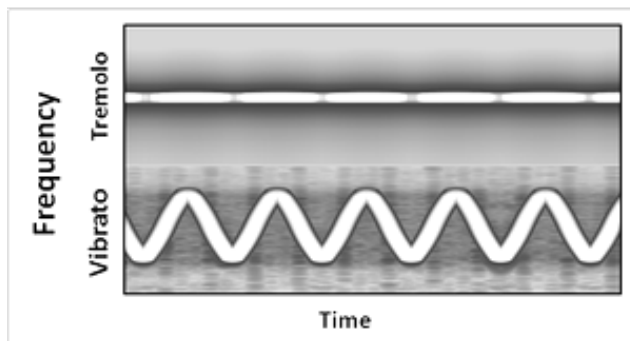

Fig. 17. *Spectrogram*

Combinations between ornaments generatedclear effects. Towards the middle of the 18th century, European schools of music begin to reach a consensus on the subject of musical notatios and on the rules of employing ornamentation and its expressiveness.

3. Conclusions

Regardless of the composer or of the period in which it was composed, Baroque music is vibrant and it conveys a wide range of feelings: dramatic, lyrical, exuberance, melancholy, sadness. Much like a writer or a painter, the composer depicts a world full of life and passion. A world which is perfect for the pan flute.

References

Cernătescu, Dalila. 2006. *Naiul-istorie, prezent şi perspective* [The Pan Flute–history, present and perspectives]. Universitatea Naţională de Muzică. Doctoral thesis.

Montéclair, Michel Pinolet. 2012. *Principes de musique* – 1736. Paris: Edition Foucault.

Rameau, Jean-Philippe. 1706. *Premier livre de pièces de clavecin.* Paris. Edition Roussel, Foucault.

Rameau, Jean-Philippe. 1984. *Pièces de clavecin avec une méthode pour la mécanique des doigts – 1724.* Paris: Editeur: Harmonia Mundi.

Rogniono, Ricardo. 1592. *Il vero modo*. Venice: Editione Petrucci.

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. 2015. *Dictionnaire de musique – 1767*. Paris. Edité par Createspace.