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# Ornamentation in Mozart's Flute Concerto in D Major K.314

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This article discusses options for appoggiaturas in the Flute Concerto, as well as other issues of performance practice.

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## ***Mozart's Truly MAGIC Flute, The Concerto in D Major, K. 314***

Any person having the most basic exposure to the flute repertoire will probably have heard or played Mozart's Concerto in D Major, K314. Perhaps for this reason, it becomes somewhat shop-worn for many performers. Technically, the piece is well within the reach of most high school students, so most professionals have had layer after layer of experiences with the concerto from an early age. Sometimes these experiences make new ideas and a fresh approach difficult, but all the more necessary, in order to create a truly convincing performance. Returning to this venerable "warhorse" once again, I am delighted and inspired by new discoveries revealing Mozart's incredible creativity. In the following article, I will investigate the structure and ornamentation of this concerto's first movement, in view of both historical and theoretical perspectives.

In 1777, Mozart left for Munich, Mannheim, and Paris with his mother, in search of a position of stable employment. While in Mannheim, he became friends with members of the Mannheim orchestra, including concertmaster Christian Cannabich, Ignaz Holzbauer, and the flutist, 54 year-old Jean-Baptiste Wendling. Wendling introduced Mozart to a Dutch amateur flutist named Ferdinand Dejean, who commissioned Mozart to write some quartets and concertos for the flute. Having tired of completing the commission (and having fallen behind schedule), Mozart arranged his oboe concerto for the flute, in order to provide a second concerto for Wendling's commission. Franz Vester presents a differing opinion of the Concerto's origins:

In spite of all discussion, this concerto remains in my opinion a flute concerto and not an oboe concerto (in C). This is probably the lost flute concerto played by Castel on the occasion of the nameday of Mozart's sister Nannerl on July 26, 1777. (See Mozart. *Die Dokumente sein Lebens, gesammelt un erläutert von*

Otto Erich Deutsch, Kassel 1961, p. 144. (For further information on this concerto see Ingo Goritzki's article Mozarts Oboenkonzert unter neuen Aspekten. *Tibia* 2/79 pp. 302-308).<sup>1</sup>

This movement can be described as being in **Double Exposition Sonata Form**.

In this form, it is customary to present the exposition in the *tutti* (M. 1-32), without successful movement to the dominant until the exposition is repeated with the soloist (M 32-105). A chart of the form is presented below:

<b>Section:</b>	<b>Measure #:</b>	<b>Tonality</b>
<b>Exposition (Tutti)</b>	1-32	
First Theme:	1-11	D Major
Second Theme	12-21	D Major
Solo Exposition	32-105	D Major
First Group	32-77	D Major
Second Group	78-96	A Major
Closing Material	97-105	A major
<b>Development</b>	106-119	A, D Major
Retransition	113-119	A Major
<b>Recapitulation</b>	119-173	D Major
Coda	174-end	D Major

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<sup>1</sup> Vester, Franz. *Flute Music of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Monteux, France: Musica Rara, 1985. P. 320

The concerto opens in D major with an orchestral *tutti*, consisting of strings and oboes and horns in pairs. The **first theme**, beginning at M. 1, is five measures long. It's lyric beauty would suggest that it would be perfect for the flute, however this material is only heard in the strings, even when the exposition is repeated after bar 32. The bass line just seems to sit on repeated eighth note "D's", giving an illusion of harmonic stasis. I call it illusive because actually Mozart moves to the subdominant in second inversion, a very unstable chord. Mozart creates ambiguity by emphasizing the IV chord's 5<sup>th</sup> (D) in the melody. The flutist's entrance is preceded by what I will call the **primary motif** of the entire concerto, at measure 31. It is nothing like the sweeping opening theme, being only a measure in length, and, as the listener and orchestra ready themselves for the soloist's first entrance a bar later, it could pass unnoticed.



### **Primary Motif (m.31)**

The soloist responds to the primary motif with a shake and an ascending scale that mimics the rhythm of the previous measure and inverts its direction. Soon hung up on a high D, the flute provides a pedal to the opening theme, joining the orchestra in the last bars of the phrase. After the primary motif is played by the *tutti*, the flutist's first phrase lasts only seven bars. Was the flutist a little slow at getting started, or "missed" the entrance by a bar? This kind of compositional humor is discussed in David Lewin's essay, "Figaro's Mistakes", where he has elucidated Mozart's use of "misstatement" and

“miscounting”.<sup>2</sup> Following the flutist’s entrance, there is a virtuosic display of leaping sixteenths, closing the soloist’s first section.

After a *tutti* interlude, the primary motif is presented by the soloist alone at M. 50, and the trill termination of “G#” implies a direction toward the dominant, however this section is still in the tonic. G# ‘s are added intermittently, creating a gradual transition toward the dominant harmony. By having the soloist introduce the primary motif and incorporating a G# in the resolution of the trill (M.50), the primary motif works to create ambiguity by masquerading as the second theme. Only at measure 79 is the key of A major firmly established by a perfect authentic cadence, marking the second repeated half-note theme (M. 78) as the beginning of the **second group**. So far, this primary motif has been used to create a false start for the soloist, and “phantom” second theme.

The **Development** (M.105) utilizes the primary motif from Measures 49-50, with the addition of a more lyric consequent phrase. The first and second statement are set in A and then D major. The third statement lands the antecedent on a vii/ V in D major, setting up the **retransition**. Thus again, the primary motif has been used in the Development, where it is customary to use some part of the first or second theme.

The final “mistake” in this movement is the canonic entrance of the primary motif in the oboes and horns, two bars before the end of the movement. Perhaps they too “got a little behind” the strings.

The Development is of unusually brief proportions by comparison to the rest of the piece. Developments of solo concerti usually offer an opportunity for virtuosic display and for excursion to distant harmonic areas. The flute and oboe of the period were

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<sup>2</sup> Stein, Deborah. *Engaging Music, Essays in Music Analysis*, New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Pages 99-109

able to play in remote keys, however the more remote the key, the more virtuosic display was limited. Like the opening, the recapitulation leaves the first theme to the orchestra and the section remains in the tonic, D major. Beginning in bar 134, Mozart returns to the virtuosic style of the **exposition**. Material from the first group is extended and elaborated until bar 152. It makes perfect sense to have this display in the recapitulation, since it is a section that remains in the tonic harmony, thereby favoring the instrument's strengths. In addition to the "brilliance" of virtuoso playing, works of this period often presented established "topics" and "styles" which were well established in the musical vocabulary.<sup>3</sup> Bars 72 and 147 enrich the harmony by using a German Sixth chord, and these are the only measures in the movement where this harmony is used. Bar 72 is further emphasized by the forte/piano dynamic. The transverse flute's ability to play loud and soft was an important feature, and led to its popular supremacy over the recorder (Blockflöte). Bar 147 is emphasized by an impressive chromatic scale. Indeed, playing a chromatic scale on a one-keyed classical flute was a difficult feat, especially in sixteenths. In these two instances, Mozart used harmony to feature the strengths of this wind instrument.

## Ornamentation

As with most 18<sup>th</sup> century repertoire, we have decisions to make about performing ornaments in the Concerto in D Major, K. 314. Looking at the context of these ornaments, their relative consonance or dissonance, and the notation of the ornaments, all give us clues as to what Mozart might have intended. In Frederick Neumann's book

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<sup>3</sup> Leonard Ratner provides an important explanation of the various "fixed" styles of the late eighteenth century. Using his terminology, I would deduce that M.43-46 would be "brilliant" style. M. 32 presents the Horns in the typical "hunt" motif.

about this specific topic<sup>4</sup>, he draws surprising conclusions about the performance of Mozart's ornaments. Neumann's general thesis is that Mozart was usually writing unaccented grace notes, or very short appoggiaturas. By citing examples where diction, harmony, and instrumental accompaniment would dictate specific performance outcomes, Neumann uses Mozart's vocal compositions to make his argument. By comparing these results to eighteenth century writings on ornamentation, he postulates that Mozart rarely adhered to contemporary practices mentioned in treatises of his day, including that of his own father. Although Neumann's conclusions have had little impact on professional flutist's performances since his book's publication in 1986, he makes a number of suggestions that should be investigated in the context of K. 314.

The first ornaments occur in bar eight. This measure is like measures 12, 78, and 153, however here the ornamented notes are harmonized, whereas the following examples are not. In this case, Neumann's suggested "grace" note performance, in other words, very short and on or slightly before the beat, is an appropriate solution. The chord function of the downbeat of measure 9, a V chord, contrasts with the tonic harmony on the downbeat of bar 13. The "A" feels different depending on whether it is the fifth of D major (M. 14), or the root of A major (M. 9). Later, when left unharmonized, it is up to the listener to imagine what chord might underlie the repeated "A's". Whatever the performer's decision, accented on the beat, or short and before the beat, it is best if the soloist is aware of what the violins chose to do in M. 12, and then choose to reflect or contradict them.

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<sup>4</sup> Neumann, Frederick. *Ornamentation and Improvisation in Mozart*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Bar 10 also favors Neumann's solution of grace notes short and before the beat. Mozart did write triplet sixteenths, so we should assume he would have written that rhythm if he wanted it. Removing the grace notes allows us to see the repeated "D's" and "F#'s". By playing the ornaments short and before the beat, the repeated notes and their rhythms are preserved.

Bar 27 and its analogs are clearly ornaments superimposed on pre-existing appoggiaturas, and would therefore be performed short and before the beat as well, however no recorded performances surveyed were performed in this way.

Ornaments in M. 88, 89 are best "smoothed out" as sixteenths. Their notation is as appoggiaturas, accented dissonances on the beat, in order to accent what would otherwise be weak beats. This solution may also apply to M. 92.

M. 107 and 110 are filling in a succession of thirds. Performed gently and before the beat, they are the definition of *coulés de tierce*, a French ornament common to the eighteenth century. Also suggested by Neumann, this solution creates a beautiful contrast from the previous style, making the phrase more flowing and lyrical.

### **A Note and its Appoggiatura Followed by a Rest**

Measure 64 presents a performer's dilemma. If the ornament is short and before the beat, there is not enough time for its execution, coming off sixteenth notes in the previous measure. The standard solution, playing the appoggiatura as a quarter note, creates parallel fourths with the bass. Perhaps Neumann would propose a short appoggiatura here, in which case we would play it as an eighth, however it creates an



abrupt and active end to the phrase, thus giving away the activity of the following passagework.

This is an instance where I would suggest playing the appoggiatura as a full half note, and then the main note would resolve in place of the rest as a quarter. A breath, necessary at this moment, would be covered by the ascending 6<sup>th</sup> eighth note “G#” in the bass. This solution is both lyrical and historically accurate. The following is a brief explanation of standard performance practice that will support this interpretation. In 1752, Quantz stated: “If a rest follows a note, the appoggiatura receives the time of the note, and the note the time of the rest, unless the need to take breath makes this impossible”.<sup>5</sup>



from: Quantz, *Versuch*. p.96 (n.b. Fig. 23 written notation, Fig. 24 as played)

Although this quote is from Quantz, the same performance suggestion is clearly worded by C.P.E. Bach (1753), and Mozart’s father, Leopold (1756)<sup>6</sup>. As late as 1791, Tromlitz describes the practice in his Flute Treatise:

“The value of the long appoggiatura varies; if it is written in front of an ordinary note, it is worth half of it. But if there is a dot after the note, then the appoggiatura is worth as much as the written note, and the dot is played alone, and slurred onto the long appoggiatura. One proceeds in just the same way if instead of the dot there is a rest after the note.”<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Mozart, Leopold. *A treatise on the fundamental principles of violin playing* (trans. Knocker), London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1951 p. 170

<sup>7</sup> Tromlitz, Johann George, *Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen*, (ed. Franz Vester), Berlin 1791., ed Franz Vester, Amsterdam: Knuf, 1973

Measure 64 presents just such an example, where a long appoggiatura avoids parallel fourths in the bass, and where there is time to breathe after the resolution.

Would it not likely that Mozart would have thought this solution to be a musical one, if it avoided a theoretical problem, and sounded well? Here, as in all performance considerations, the ear must be the guide of good taste.

## **Conclusions and Performance Suggestions**

As a result of harmonic analysis, we create a new picture of the structure of this Concerto. From this picture, we can see Mozart's creative humor and subtlety. By understanding the architectonics of the movement, we can see how different sections and motifs relate to the overall structure of the composition. This understanding can help in everything from memorization to dynamic implications.

Secondly, serious references, such as Frederick Neumann's book on Mozart's ornamentation, give us new and interesting suggestions that would be historically accurate. Reaching beyond his book, the source materials such as Quantz, C.P.E. Bach, Leopold Mozart, and Tromlitz, present surprising performance suggestions, such as the appoggiatura followed by a rest. As for the performance of ornaments in the movement, a combination of harmonic and analysis, combined with a sense of "Good Taste" and a firm historical grounding in eighteenth century, comprise the necessary tools for these decisions.

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