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Ornamentation: A Question & Answer Manual



Synopsis

This guide to understanding ornamentation in each era of music includes information on how to understand and remain faithful to the composer's intention, how many and which notes to use in each ornament, how to integrate ornaments smoothly into a performance, and simple strategies and systems for realizing and practicing ornaments. A synthesis of years of scholarly research resulting in a logical, easy to follow, and accurate volume.

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Customer Reviews

Do not buy this book, as I did, if you are looking for a thoughtful scholarly discussion of baroque ornamentation. That, it is not. It also has little, if anything, to say about ornamentation for non-keyboard instruments. For what it is, however, it's not a bad book. If you are an intermediate keyboard player (or a keyboard teacher shopping for an intermediate keyboard player), I can recommend this with slight reservation. While it doesn't offer an interested student much insight into the Baroque psychology that generated this style of ornamentation, it does provide a reliable (if very basic and somewhat superficial) introduction to specific ornamentation in baroque and classical keyboard music, so it would be good for a piano or harpsichord student who is just being introduced to the Bach two-part inventions or simple preludes.

As noted by Stanley Richie, a major problem with music written from the mid-19th century forward is that most composers predetermine what the ornamentation is supposed to be. The result is that we as performers do not always understand the implications of what we are playing. Great violinists

often have an intuitive sense of what is ornament and what is melody, but the rest of us must discover this for ourselves. A very good introduction to how ornamentation works. After you read it, camp out on YouTube and watch period performers - you will get a better grasp of what they are doing. Then start doing it yourself; it is very liberating. Oh, BTW, get Stanley Richie's book as well.

I have never before seen such precise information on ornamentation from the various periods of music displayed so clearly and accurately. The examples are clearly printed in music notation, and a very complete explanation of the differing uses of the same symbol in different periods, and by different composers in the same periods. I highly recommend this treatise to anyone who has ever wondered whether to start a trill on the upper or lower note, not to mention the more complex symbols.

A clear and accurate description of ornamentation from early Baroque through to modern musical manuscripts. The book would have been much more helpful if it included a CD that played the ornaments at different tempos and on different keyboards. What works on a harpsichord is different for a pipe organ and further on piano. Each has unique qualities of timbre and reverberation that allow some ornamentations to work well, others, not so much. The authors didn't point this out. Otherwise, a valuable resource for keyboardists devoted to Baroque and classical keyboard music. A must have for teachers.

A very good summary of ornamentation through Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Contemporary periods. Much clearer than trying to wade through the historical sources. Practical and also good on historical background.

This is an excellent book for students and teachers alike. It's an easy read and pleasing to the eye. The ornaments of all eras are discussed.

I've been blessed to experience enrapturing performances by these enthusiastic energetic musicians. In addition to their talent, Valery & Carole's success also derives from their understanding of the composer's intent. In *Ornamentation*, the authors share their knowledge of the meanings of the grace note, mordent, turn, and trill. The explanations offered both with words and as singable examples written on the staff detail the timing and pitches to perform---contingent upon composer and period. A history of embellishing notations accompany a perspective with other arts to complete

the book. Study this book to enhance your musical performance!

Good for basic concepts of ornamentation, but current research in baroque performance practice is not part of the picture.

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