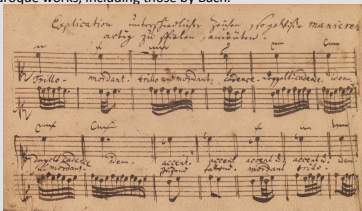


Baroque Basics: Adding Ornamentation and Embellishment to Baroque Keyboard Works

Curtis Pavey

Ornament Tables

Ornament tables from the Baroque served as helpful guides for musicians to decipher the ornament signs seen throughout musical scores. In order to become comfortable adding our own ornaments into compositions from the Baroque, we must first study the types of ornaments available. Below are two of the most popular ornament tables from the 17th and 18th centuries. On the right is the ornament table for Wilhelm Friedmann Bach, a copy seen here from the manuscript. Many pianists become familiar with this table through study of Bach's inventions, sinfonias, and suites. Interestingly, though, Bach's table was largely based on an ornament table that he studied by French composer, Jean-Henri d'Anglebert (left). This table comes from the 1689 publication of d'Anglebert's *Pièces de clavecin*. In this table, we see numerous other types of ornaments including filled in thirds (tierce coulée), arpeggiations of chords (even specifies the direction), appoggiaturas (port de voix), filled in intervals, trills, and mordents (pincé). These ornaments would be appropriate in late Baroque works, including those by Bach.



Bach's Ornamentation

After a thorough examination of the types of ornaments that are available for us to use in Baroque music we need to consider models for ornamentation to see what amount of ornaments would be appropriate. While French music is known for containing a plethora of ornaments throughout, Bach's English Suites contain several works with written out ornamentation (agréments), which can serve as an example for what was expected of performers from his time. Below is an example from the "Sarabande" of Bach's *English Suite in G Minor, BWV 808*. Through a comparison of the original version (left) and the ornamented version (right), we can see that Bach advocated for numerous ornaments to enrich the melodic texture. Bach's embellishments go beyond trills and mordents – he also includes arpeggiated chords, port de voix (appoggiaturas), and additions to the melodic line.



Ornamentation Tips:

1. Add embellishments to the repeats of sections. This allows for the original to be heard first before the added ornamentation.
2. Add ornaments to long, sustained notes. When played on period instruments, ornaments help to sustain the sound of the instrument.
3. Add ornaments to strong beats, not to subdivisions. Ornaments on subdivisions sound awkward because they create an accent in a weak part of the measure.
4. Add embellishment to leaps and thirds – these are excellent places to use examples from d'Anglebert's ornament table to fill in those leaps.
5. Add ornaments to cadences to produce a satisfying close to a phrase or a piece.

Handel: Minuet in F Major, HWV 516c



Ornamented:



Written Out Ornaments:



Bach: "Gavotte" in G Major, from French Suite No. 5 BWV 816

