

UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS, FACULTY OF MUSIC AND VISUAL ARTS  
DLA PROGRAMME

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**Articulation techniques applied on the one-keyed flute in the 18th century**

*Simple-, double- and triple-tonguing according to contemporary French,  
German and English sources*

Abstract of DLA thesis

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2021

## I. The subject of the research

The subject of my research is articulation techniques – single-, double- and triple-tonguing – applied on the flute, discussed in 18<sup>th</sup>-century French, German and English sources. In the first chapters of my dissertation the background and antecedents of choosing this topic are discussed, then the research method is introduced (*artistic research*). After describing the two possible interpretations of the term articulation, and related concepts, I briefly talk about the history of the flute. The main line of the paper is the analysis of the parts of the selected French, German and English treatises and methods related to articulation. A separate chapter is dedicated to triple-tonguing and the issue of vowels. In the last part of the dissertation, in addition to the summary, I provide articulation suggestions for the second movement of Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685–1750) *Sonata in e minor for flute and basso continuo* (BWV 1034) and the first movement of Johann Joachim Quantz's (1697–1773) *Flute concerto in G major* (QV 5:174) as a demonstration of a possible application of the processed information.

## II. Background, antecedents

From the beginning of my acquaintance with the Baroque flute, I studied Quantz's *Versuch*<sup>1</sup> (1752) with increasing interest. This famous flute method is a detailed and comprehensive document of the practice of previous decades—and of the author's own experiences as a performer and pedagogue. In addition, it is an important source of information on flute technique in the 18th century. It was this book where I first came across the rich palette of articulation techniques that, as a modern flute player, was an unknown field to me and made me extremely curious.

Historically informed performance practice, and the formation and spread of the early music movement inspire greatly the birth of a dissertation such as this one. Turning to early treatises, understanding and putting into practice the instructions described in them, and the essential critical attitude are all rooted in the aspirations and philosophy of the early music movement. In the case of earlier compositions, notation may be incomplete in several parameters and may not always be clear. The authentic performance of these pieces cannot be helped by any of the aids used in the music of our time (personal acquaintance with the composer or with contemporary performers; recordings). With a few exceptions, articulation

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<sup>1</sup> Quantz, J. J. (1752): *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*. Johann Friedrich Voss, Berlin.

was not – or only roughly – marked in the score, therefore studying the relevant sources thoroughly is essential.

Eighteenth-century treatises contain a plethora of information on articulation and tonguing techniques – a valuable knowledge which may awaken the demand for a more colourful, varied articulation among modern flute players, as well. With this research my aim is to contribute to this, and to present and systematize the types of articulation techniques applied on the one-keyed flute, according to French, German and English treatises.

### **III. The research method**

In the course of my research, I followed the disciplines of *artistic research*. In general, any types of research methods describe procedures and techniques that enable the researcher to keep the cognitive process in line with the strict requirements of science. Two basic types of research methods are distinguished: quantitative and qualitative researches. In addition to these two types, artistic research has emerged in the last few decades, a form of research that is still somewhat uncertain in the higher art education. Its main feature is the acceptance of subjectivity as opposed to classical scientific methods, with the aim of gaining knowledge through studying and testing within the framework defined by artistic disciplines.

The present research can be considered as an *artistic research* in the sense that the processed and systematized information will not only be preserved on paper, but it aims to help modern and baroque flute players to make articulation more colourful and varied by using and applying the findings of the research. Although, in my opinion and according to my experience with the modern flute, articulation techniques of the 18th century do not – or only to a very small extent – work on the modern flute, the attitude of 18th-century instrument players to articulation is certainly an example to follow.

### **IV. The results and conclusions of the research**

There are two possible interpretations of the term articulation. According to contemporary descriptions, the goal is the eloquence of the performance, and articulation is nothing more than a musical representation of the text (rhetoric, *Figurenlehre* and *Affektenlehre* are closely related to this concept). One of the concepts that was widespread in the Baroque era refers to phrasing. The essential part of this concept is the transformation of linguistic parameters into musical ones. In today's sense, the term articulation is often used to refer to

different versions of the formation of sounds, the initiation of notes (tongue-strokes), beginning or ending a note, the connection of two or more notes. Although this approach may seem rather technical, in the Baroque era the reference point of this was definitely the text and vocal music.

Articulation is closely related to musical expression, and its changes illustrate the transformation of the musical style of the century. The driving force behind the modifications is therefore not always the need for technical improvement, but often the change of musical taste, the adaptation to the new aesthetic requirements of music.

The articulation of fast passages is one of the most documented subjects in 18th-century treatises. Single-, double- and triple-tonguing are the three types of articulation discussed in the dissertation. In the sources on flute playing, the authors employed a variety of different consonants when they described double-tonguing. The vowels imagined by the player primarily affected the tone and sound. They had a very limited influence on the tongue-stroke, therefore I focused mainly on the consonants in my research.

By using single-tonguing, the player starts each note with the same consonant, this can be **t** or **d**, occasionally alternated with **r**. The latter was reserved for the good beat, but starting a phrase with **r** was not recommended. If the tempo is very fast and **t/d** is used on the stronger beat, alternating **t/d** with **r** (technically) creates double-tonguing. Some performers applied single-tonguing (or *legato* slurs) for fast passages, depending upon the prevailing style, but single-tonguing was primarily used for moderately fast passages. For very fast passages, the following types of double-tonguing were found in the treatises:

- **d-g/t-k**: the player alternates between a syllable with a dental consonant (**t** or **d**), and a plosive (**g** or **k**) as reaction (backstroke);
- **d-r/t-d**: the player alternates between a harder dental consonant (**t** or **d**) and a softer (**r** or **d**). The **r** is pronounced without rolling, that is through only one movement of the tongue;
- **d-l/t-tl** consists of a syllable starting with **d** or **t** and the reaction (backstroke) **l**, **dl**, or **tl** where the tip of the tongue springs back to the palate and is left firmly there; the airstream is expelled at the sides of the tongue.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bania, Maria (2008): *"Sweetenings" and "Babylonish Gabble", Flute Vibrato and Articulation of Fast Passages in the 18th and 19th Centuries*. Intellecta Docusys, Gothenburg, p. 126

The articulation technique required to perform notes of equal rhythmic value grouped in three (triplets or other fast notes occurring in 6/8 or similar metre) in series at a very fast tempo is called triple-tonguing. For the application of triple-tonguing, theorists have proposed – almost without exception – the use of double-tonguing with minor changes.

In the first half of the century, single-tonguing or the patterns **tu-ru** (Hotteterre, 1707) / **tīrī** (Quantz, 1752) were used to execute moderately fast passages. The use of **tu-ru** / **tīrī** is related to *inégle* (unequal) playing, which was in fashion at the beginning of the century in France. In Hotteterre's *Principes de la Flûte Traversière* (1707), **tu-ru** is the only combination of tongue-strokes, and in Quantz's *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (1752), unlike other sources, it does not appear as a double-tonguing technique, although he does not clearly classify it as a single-tonguing technique either.

In the period of my investigation, Quantz is the first author to mention and give detailed instructions for **did'll** (*Versuch*, 1752) which belongs to the category double-tonguing with **d-l/t-tl**. Although the German, French and English descriptions of tonguing syllables are different, the effect they create is very similar. According to Quantz, recorder players and bassoonists used a similar tonguing technique to **did'll** already in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries (he has probably meant **le-re**). The softest version of the **d-l/t-tl** technique appears in Delusse's *L'Art de la Flute Traversiere* (1761), who suggests the syllable **loul** for execution. However, he did not use this kind of articulation to perform fast passages, but for repeated notes, more like an effect. In Mahaut's *Nouvelle Méthode pour Apprendre en peu de tems a Jouer de la Flute Traversiere / Nieuwe Manier om binnen korte tyd op de Dwarsfluit te leeren speelen* (1759) double-tonguing (using **di-del**) appears for executing fast passages, although it can be deduced from his description that he did not use it himself. Devienne (*Nouvelle Méthode Théorique et Pratique Pour la Flûte*, 1794) and Vanderhagen (*Méthode nouvelle et raisonnée pour la flûte*, c. 1790) both mention double-tonguing with **d-l/t-tl**, but it is not clear whether they themselves used this type of articulation. It is more likely that they did not. In general, double-tonguing with **d-l/t-tl** was not popular among French flautists, perhaps due to the specifics of the French language.

The articulation used by Quantz and Tromlitz (*Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen*, 1791) for fast passages (Quantz recommends **did'll**, Tromlitz **tad'll**) was the most proposed double-tonguing technique in 18th-century Germany, yet far from all flautists mastered it. Of the alternatives, Tromlitz rejects the use of single-tonguing in fast tempi. In moderately fast tempi, he suggests pairs of slurs where the first notes start with **t/d** or

**r** and the second notes are articulated with the chest.<sup>3</sup> This only applies to phrases where articulation was not indicated by the composer.

At the end of the 18th century, single-tonguing and various types of slurring were used in France to execute moderately fast and fast passages. Pairs of slurs, and the ‘two notes slurred, two notes detached’ pattern were generally accepted articulation techniques. In the case of triplets, the first two notes were slurred, the third detached.

No documentation of double-tonguing with **d-g/t-k** – which dates back to the 16th century (**te-ke**) –, is found in 18th-century German sources, therefore it can be assumed that it was not applied. In contrast, according to French treatises, by the end of the century, several French flautists had mastered it; it was certainly a known technique, but was rejected by Devienne (c. 1794) and Peraut (*Méthode pour la Flûte*, c. 1800). They were also those who strongly criticized double-tonguing with **d-r/t-d**. It is also clear from the flute methods of the 18th century that more and more legato was being used towards the end of the century, and that in addition to double-tonguing, single-tonguing was also used to perform *detaché* passages. In Germany, on the other hand, fast passages should ideally have had a clear, round and rolling effect, similar to the coloratura of singers in the Baroque. This approach was best served by using the **d-l/t-tl** articulation pattern.

The most important English treatises of the examined period (*Granom*, 1766; *Heron*, 1771; *Arnold*, 1787; *Wragg*, 1792; *Gunn*, 1793; *Miller*, 1799) do not describe single-tonguing other than mentioning it briefly (Gunn). Double-tonguing with **d-l/t-tl** was wide spread. According to the sources, English authors described the technique by using the syllables **toot-tle**, **tut-tle**, **tit-tle**, **did-dle**, and **toot-tle-too** (triple-tonguing). The reason of the popularity and prevalence of double-tonguing with **d-l/t-tl** might have been that it was relatively easily achieved for English speakers. Gunn writes about another type of double-tonguing technique he has heard on the continent and sees it as an improved version of Quantz’s *tīrī*. The syllables **teddy** or **tiddy** are recommended for its execution.

A common feature of the articulation techniques described in the treatises is that they were always adjusted to the prevailing musical style, the aesthetics of the age. Besides that, the larger concert halls and the changes in the structure of the instrument may have also played a role in the development of articulation techniques.

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<sup>3</sup> Articulating with the chest appears in several contemporary sources, but the diaphragm is the muscle which makes it possible.

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