

Rethinking ornamentation: a rhetorical approach to *da capo* arias of Georg Friedrich Händel

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Research Question: How can we use rhetorical figures as expressive tools for ornamentation in da capo arias of Georg Friedrich Händel?

Introduction and a personal note

The movement of "Historical Informed Interpretation", expression suggested by Bruce Haynes¹, is centred around interpretational choices based on the informative material of different treatises and historical sources. It appears amidst the increasingly complex effort and debate of Historically Informed Performance as it develops around musicology, interpretation, philosophy and history.²

In that frame, an interpretation of operatic repertoire by G. F. Händel must take into account certain aspects that may help the performer to more accurately depict, at least in certain important elements, a performance of the time. Winton Dean speaks of the immense complexity of these works, describing them as an amalgamation of music, dance, spoken scenes, staging and dramatic effects belonging to the 18th century³. Therefore, a faithful historical representation of such a work is not only extremely difficult in practical terms of venue with appropriate lighting and stage mechanisms, but also involves problems linked to the modern editions of the scores we have access to, with cuts and alteration of voice types⁴. However, even if our goal is not “authenticity” and the inevitable debate it originates, there are certain elements that cannot be overlooked in a historically informed performance.

One element of these operas and surrounding style that is increasingly explored, be it in the context of historical informed interpretations or not, is the use of ornamentation

¹ Haynes, Bruce, *The End of Early Music*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.14

² Palacios Quiroz, Rafael, *La pronuntiatio musicale: une interprétation rhétorique au service de Händel, Montéclair, C. P. E. Bach et Telemann, vol 1 : Étude*, Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012, p. 315

³ Dean, Winton, *The Recovery of Handel's Operas*, in *Music in Eighteenth-Century England, Essays in Memory of Charles Cudworth*, edited by Hoogwood, Christopher & Luckett, Richard, Cambridge University press, 1983

⁴ Dean, Winton, *op. cit.* pp. 105 - 106

in *da capo* arias. From the point of view of the historically informed singer, this is a major element that will undoubtedly receive attention during the preparation of a piece, and can either positively or negatively influence the reception of a given performance.

As laid out by Winton Dean, there are certain problems attached with choosing appropriate ornamentation, such as personal taste, be it from the singer or the listener (depending on expectations, habit, performance culture), little information on how to ornament, as sources with written out ornamentation are rare – and here we must specifically narrow the scope to ornamentation of the time of Händel –, and that only recently singers are beginning to receive proper training in ornamentation.⁵

A few decades past, it could be argued that the last point made by Dean is not that significant anymore. Being part of a conservatory in an Early Music department in an international context, I observe that this training varies greatly from school to school and from instrument to instrument. Information is becoming increasingly available, but it is often noticeable that the biggest source of knowledge and associated performative results lies in the driving interest of the student himself. In an era of recordings and easy access to registers of live performances, there is a big temptation - and I count myself as having fallen in several moments during my studies - of grasping bits and pieces of what other performers have done and incorporate them into our own deliverance of a baroque piece, in a way we perceive to resound as appropriate to a given style. Without falling to a debate of whether this practice is more or less legitimate, and whether it involves the example of performers of significance in the field, or even if they were suggested by teachers, I merely wish to emphasize the importance of verification and actual study of difference sources. This could be a problem in itself considering how busy students can get with the curriculum and developing their instruments (particularly with classical singers, as many of them only had vocal training a couple of years prior to the conservatory), it might seem burdensome to spend hours of reading in order to perform ornamentation in a simple aria for a school concert. In those moments, there will probably be bigger concerns for a young and relatively inexperienced singer, be it

⁵ Dean, Winton, *op. cit.* p. 110

vocal technique, singing in languages they don't speak and struggle many times to pronounce, having an understanding of the character's motivation, etc.

Relying on secondary inspiration instead of literary sources, the performer gets dangerously close of to fall into the trap of thinking that one has developed "a feel" for Early Music by habit, rather than taking the time to ponder on the importance of learning deeply about certain elements that will make a radical difference in a performance. This could easily open a discussion of – *"well then, maybe singers shouldn't attempt historically informed interpretation while they haven't figured out how to use their voices and sing in at least three different languages"*, which, while tempting, is well beyond the scope of this paper.

The episode that contributed largely for my realization that I had fallen in the "feel for Early Music" trap was when I entered my weekly singing lesson and the student before me – let us call him John –, was singing the very well known "*Amarilli mia Bella*" by Caccini. As I had sung that song many times before and heard it often in school context, it was a piece well imprinted in my memory. However, I never heard it sung like John was singing it. Such a simple melody had been amazingly embellished with what I remember thinking as sounding like "waterfalls of notes", beautiful trills and slides that just made me astonished. At that moment the teacher was mainly coaching him about voice quality and emission, but I couldn't get over the fact that I had heard a piece so well known to me as if for the first time, in a refreshing and impressive way. John is a student known for spending hours reading extensively, and in that moment I felt like I was definitely falling behind.

Over time I began to invest more time and creativity in ornamenting *da capo* arias, which without proper knowledge in composition and counterpoint led me often to break harmonic rules, and I have my teachers to thank for guiding me in the right direction.

Soon a question started forming, particularly when ornamenting slow and melancholic pieces, which was how could I use graces and *passaggi* that did not disturb the soft character of the piece? And especially, how can I know my choices come from an informed basis for historical interpretation and not a possibly false sensation of "common sense" based on what I was used to hear being done in this repertoire?

I became increasingly interested in finding ways of using the expression of the text as a guideline for ornamentation, in a way that would not only fit its mood but also emphasize it. Jennifer H. Farrell reminds us of an account about the encores of a soloist at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, 1758: “the singer aims to surpass himself at each repetition by the variety of gradations which he introduces into the trills, modulations and whatever belongs to the expression.”⁶

The execution of ornamentation as a tool for expression is of course part of the realm of the shared goal of a baroque composer and interpreter across nations during the 17th and beginning of 18th century, which was to move the affections of the listener through music,⁷ much as a rhetorical discourse was carefully laid out to impact an audience.

Before outlining the issues attached to my mission, there are a few concepts that must be defined: affects, rhetoric and the musician – orator.

Affects, Rhetoric and the Musician-Orator

The concept of Affects is not new in the baroque era. In *Orationi e Discorsi*, Lorenzo Giacomini (1552-1598) described affection as:

“a spiritual movement or operation of the mind in which it is attracted or repelled by an object it has come to know as a result of an imbalance in the animal spirits and vapours that flow continually throughout the body.”⁸

⁶ Gall, J. “Wer nicht sprechen kann, der kann noch viel weniger singen: Prosodic Structure and Free Ornamentation in Handel's Italian *Da capo* Arias”, *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 26 (2002), p. 93, as cited in Farrell, J. H. “Ornamentation and the Affections in the Opera Arias of George Frideric Handel” The University of British Columbia, 2008 p. 2

⁷ Bartel, Dietrich *Musica Poetica : Musical-Rhetorical Figures In German Baroque Music*. Lincoln, NE ; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997 p. 55

⁸ *The Doctrine of Affections / Music Appreciation*
https://courses.lumenlearning.com/musicappreciation_with_theory/chapter/the-doctrine-of-affections/,
(accessed 02.2020)

Affectus, such as anger, joy, hatred, fear or love, is a Latin translation of the Greek *pathos*, perceived as an “ailment”, which alerted thinkers like Plato and Aristotle to the power that music had to temporarily induce certain states upon someone.⁹ An *affect* – which according to Augustine, could lead to “constructive and destructive passions”¹⁰ (passion being the result of the affect on the mind) and would remain until new incentives produce new effects.¹¹ Baroque composers searched for quantitative and qualitative tools to provoke certain predictable affects in the audience. Church modes, intervals, tempi and harmonic configurations were used as such, but among theorists and composers there was never a firm consensus on what to use to provoke a specific stimulus.¹²

“[There] was the belief that all creation is rooted in (...) the unitas, which is the essence of the Creator himself. Music would reflect this universal order by virtue of its harmonic proportions. When confronted with this truth, the human spirit would instinctively recognize it as such and resonate accordingly. The controlling factor found in the numerical proportions of the musical intervals guaranteed a predictable reaction in the listener to the musically created affection.”¹³

With the publication in 1649 of René Descartes’ “*Les Passions de l’âme*” and Athanasius Kircher’s “*Misurgia Universalis*” in 1650, we understand the clear effort of connecting mathematics, rhetoric and human behaviour.¹⁴ This was based on the belief – dating from Antiquity – that affects were caused by “imbalances” of bodily humours (blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm), which travel from their corresponding organ to the blood stream in form of gas, and then to the nerves, the brain and the soul.¹⁵ The fact that a certain stimulus could affect different individuals with

⁹ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 31

¹⁰ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 31

¹¹ Lasocki, D. 1978. “*Quantz And The Passions: Theory And Practice*”. *Early Music* 6 (4): 556-568. doi:10.1093/em/6.4.556., p. 557

¹² Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 30

¹³ *Ibidem* p. 33

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 36

¹⁵ *Idibem*, p. 38

different impact, or even in a different way, was justified by people possessing different bodily proportions of temperaments (choleric, melancholic, sanguine and phlegmatic), associated with the organs releasing the humours.¹⁶

“The numerical proportions embodied in the music, the "outer air," sets the *spiritus animalis*, the "inner air," into motion, which in turn motivates the humors.”¹⁷

Affects were listed and organized differently by different theorists, but major affects seem to be illustrated as following: sorrow may have violent intervals, syncopations, dissonances in a slow tempo. A faster tempo with the same devices portrays rage. By contrast, joy should use perfect intervals and consonant sounds, faster tempi and no syncopations. Love has a combination of happiness and desire, so it can combine devices used for joy and sorrow. Pity and weeping uses slow tempi with small intervals, whilst fear and pain are expressed through more dissonant harmonies and slightly faster tempo. Astonishment and admiration depend on the text and can use a combination of different rhetorical devices.¹⁸

Baroque music is thought and organized in “cold blood”¹⁹, using tools from rhetoric to create the desired impact over the audience. Affects, music and rhetoric have a connection since Antiquity²⁰ although it received more attention during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, in which music adapted rhetorical devices and vocabulary, not only imitating but reinventing and creating tools that could only fit the musical language²¹.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 37 - 39

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 38

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 48 - 50

¹⁹ Mattheson, Johann, trans. by Ernest Charles Harris. 1981. *Johann Mattheson's Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*. Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press p. 480

²⁰ Quintilien, *Institutio Oratoria*, I, X, 10, “So too Timagenes asserts that music is the oldest of the arts related to literature, a statement which is confirmed by the testimony of the greatest of poets in whose songs we read that the praise of heroes and of gods were sung to the music of the lyre at the feasts of kings.”, cited by Butler, Harold E., Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book 1, [perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu) <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:phi,1002,0011:10> (accessed November 05, 2019)

²¹ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 139

In his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen*, (Berlin, 1752) Quantz compares the musician to an orator:

“Musical execution may be compared with the delivery of an orator. The orator and the musician have, at the bottom the same aim in regard to both the preparation and the final execution of their productions, namely to make themselves masters of the hearts of their listeners, to arouse or still their passions, and to transport them now to this sentiment, now to that. Thus it is advantageous to both, if each has some knowledge of the duties of the other”²²

During the Renaissance and Baroque Periods there were efforts to explore and deepen the connection between text and music, and rhetoric and music.²³ In Germany, a “discipline” called *Musica Poetica* sought to cultivate a “musical rhetoric” that borrowed and recycled elements of literary rhetoric and developed new terms for musical tools.²⁴

“Musica Poetica is that discipline of music which teaches how to compose a musical composition... in order to sway the hearts and spirits of individuals into various dispositions.”²⁵

If Italian baroque music looked at the orator, German baroque music looked at the discipline of rhetoric and its components as compositional devices.²⁶

A Rhetorical discourse is created in several stages: 1) *inventio*, where the theme is defined and information on the subject is collected, which is then logically organized

²² Dikmans, Greg, *Johann Joachim Quantz on Historically Informed Performance*, [earlymusic.dikmans.net](http://earlymusic.dikmans.net/quantz-historically-informed-performance.html#chxi), <http://earlymusic.dikmans.net/quantz-historically-informed-performance.html#chxi>, (accessed November 11, 2019)

²³ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 61

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 57-58

²⁵ Burmeister, Joachim, *Musica Poetica* 1606, cited in Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 10

²⁶ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 59

in the 2) *dispositio*. The 3) *elocutio* deals with how these different parts articulate into proper sentences, with the help of adequate tools (*ornatus*, or figurative language) that help emphasize certain ideas above others. Lastly, there is *memoria*, (memorization) and *pronunciatio*, which is the way the discourse is delivered.²⁷ The orator and the musician deal directly with this last part – *pronuntiatio*, also known as *actio*. It is the moment of delivery and interpretation. In the *pronunciatio*, the orator will use rehearsed gestures and emphatic voice to make their ideas heard with clarity. In the same way, a “singer-actor”, expression used by Michel Verschaeve, will use tools from rhetoric and theatre to better express the feelings of the character²⁸, transforming a libretto in a fleeting *mise en scène*.²⁹

Rafael Palacios Quiroz suggests that in order to understand the environment of a composer and interpreter of the baroque period – the turn of the 16th century and the first half of the 18th century – one must take into account the processes of rhetoric and especially of the *pronuntiatio* where interpretation is concerned. Furthermore, musicians of the time had a very strong rhetorical education, learning Latin and rhetoric since early age³⁰. Quiroz goes as far as saying that this was an age embedded in a “rhetorical background”, thus, an interpretation of their music should have in mind the expression of their cultural surroundings: a rhetorically informed interpretation.³¹

Problems and Proposal

Certainly, it is worth mentioning that 21st century audiences are not expected to receive an 18th century performance as an 18th century audience, starting with the fact that Händel could expect his audience to have some knowledge of rhetoric and would be able to recognize its expression, whilst that would not happen nowadays.³² However,

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 41

²⁸ Verschaeve, Michel, *Traité de chant et mise en scène baroques*, Bourg-la-Reine, Zurfluh, 1997, p. 20, as cited in Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 36

²⁹ Palacios Quiroz, *op. cit.*, p. 78 «Les arts pratiques sont représentatifs, ils se chargent de transformer une œuvre artistique intemporelle en une interprétation momentanée. Un acteur, ainsi, à travers son jeu, transforme un livret en une mise en scène momentanée (performance) »

³⁰ Quiroz, *op. cit.* pp. 42, 43

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 63

³² Farrell, Jennifer Heather. 2008. "Ornamentation And The Affections In The Opera Arias Of George Frideric Handel". Ph.D, University of British Columbia. p. 102

the value in exploring Händel's operatic repertoire in its rhetorical and affective context, and use it as basis for decision making where embellishments are concerned (even if the results will carry a certain degree of subjectivity), resides in the fact that baroque music in general does not "speak for itself" as we have access to it on paper:

"All composers were performers and all performers were composers, at least to the extent that they were called upon to collaborate with the actual composer in the re-creation of any given composition. Many details of execution were not indicated on paper at all, but supplied extemporaneously by the performer."³³

An attempt at a historically informed performance of Händel's operatic repertoire will then require knowledge, musicianship and creativity.³⁴ The biggest problem attached to this brings us back to Winton Dean's point concerning the recent training of singers in ornamentation. A few decades past, although more information is available, the curricula fails in one important point: singers are no longer trained or expected to spend time training composition or improvisation, making the job of improvising embellishments, be it on the spot or prepared in advance very difficult and slow.

This work means to approach ornamentation through rhetoric, by taking selected musical rhetorical figures and using them as ornaments in suitable instances, making the mission of illuminating the affections easier. The idea was suggested already by Mattheson, in the chapter On the Disposition, Elaboration and Ornamentation of a Melody of his *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*:

"If we finally say yet a word on embellishment, then it will be most important to mention that such depends more on the skilfulness and sound judgment of a singer or player than on the actual prescription of the composer of melody. One must add some ornamentation to one's melodies,

³³ Farrell, *op. cit.* p. 96

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 101

and the abundant figures or tropes from rhetoric can really do good service here, if they are well arranged.”³⁵

The figures selected 1) can be applied only to the melody without disturbing the structure of the piece; 2) have an affective character. Some of Händel’s surviving ornamentation will be analyzed, together with ornamented autographs of Farinelli. In the end, I will ornament an aria making use of rhetorical figures, and justifying my choices.

³⁵ Mattheson & Harris, *op. cit.* p. 480

Ornamenting *da capo* Arias

The aria, as defined by Johann Mattheson, is a song generally divided in two parts, often displaying one main affection, from which the first will often be repeated in the *da capo*³⁶. The B section can show a development of the first affection, or even a contrasting perspective. It is in the *da capo* section that most ornamentation will take place.

Ornaments can be of two types: essential graces, “*agréments*”, and melodic figures added to the original melody³⁷, also called “arbitrary variation” by Quantz³⁸, a less recommended practice. The question of how to ornament without disturbing the character of the piece can be partially answered by reading a few important works - particularly Tosi’s *Opinioni dei cantori antichi e moderni* (Bologna, 1723) comes to mind, of particular importance as it is the only known treatise of vocal pedagogy contemporary to Handel. Tosi mentions that the *appoggiatura* is more connected to melancholic characters, and several kinds of trills that are analyzed should be employed in more vivid characters, respectively. As for *passaggi*, Tosi comments that although they are of great importance to display the virtuoso qualities of a singer, they do not “possess the power to produce that sweetness which penetrates [the soul].”³⁹ However, adding *passaggi* or other melodic material to the main melody would many times have a bad effect:

*“I passaggi corrono la medesima sorte che I Trilli. Ambi egualmente diletmano nel loro nicchio; ma se non sono riservati alle occasioni opportune, la troppo quantità genera noja, e la noja disprezzo, & oddio al fine”.*⁴⁰

³⁶ Farrell, *op. cit.* p. 19

³⁷ David Lasocki, “*Late Baroque Ornamentation: Philosophy and Guidelines*”, *American Recorder* 29 (1988), pp. 7-10 cited in Farrell, *op. cit.* p. 20

³⁸ “*Das VIII Hauptstück: Von den Vorschlägen, and den dazu gehOrigen kleinen wesentlichen Manieren; Das XIII Hauptstück: Von den willkihrlichen Verdnderungen fiber die simpeln Intervalle,*” Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voss, 1752), 77 and 118; see Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 91, cited in Farrell, *op. cit.* p. 20

³⁹ Tosi, Pier Francesco. 1723. *Opinioni De' Cantori Antichi, E Moderni, O Sieno Osservazioni Sopra Il Canto Figurato Di Pierfrancesco Tosi ... Dedicate A Sua Eccellenza Mylord Peterborough ...* [Bologna]: [L. dalla Volpe].

⁴⁰ Tosi, *op. cit.* p. 35

The *passaggi* suffer the same fate as *trills*. Both equally delight when used in their right place; but if they are not confined to the right occasions, too many will be tiresome and eventually cause despise and hatred.⁴¹

Mancini also refers to the use of the *appoggiatura*. It should be avoided in pieces with harsh words such as cruelty and tyranny, but rather in softer “cantilena” pieces.⁴²

Other recent works, like Farrell’s dissertation, connect these basic ornaments to the affections present in Händel’s works.⁴³

The ways in which this ornamentation was executed and especially how it was notated, varied considerably from country to country:

“In the course of the seventeenth century the three leading national styles developed three different methods of ornamentation: the Italian notated hardly any embellishments at all, leaving them to the performer; the French devised a system of symbols as a sort of shorthand for the *agréments*; the Germans, finally, tended to write out the ornaments in full and availed themselves also of some of the French symbols. The French and German methods both curtailed the improvisatory additions of the performer, typical of Italian practice.”⁴⁴

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach states that ornaments “are, in fact, indispensable. (...) They connect and enliven tones and impart stress and accent; they make music pleasing and awaken our close attention. Expression is heightened by them; let a piece be sad, joyful, or otherwise, and they will lend a fitting assistance.”⁴⁵ However, Bach also

⁴¹ My own translation

⁴² Brandon, Beverly Ann, *Ornamentation of Italian Vocal Music of the Eighteenth Century According to Pietro Francesco Tosi and Giovanni Battista Mancini*, Ph.D. University of North Dakota UND Scholarly Commons, 1970, p. 20

⁴³ See Farrell, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Manfred F. Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era, from Monteverdi to Bach*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1947, p. 375, cited in Farrell, *op. cit.* p. 20

⁴⁵ “Es hat wohl niemand an der Nothwendigkeit der Manieren gezweifelt. Man kan es daher mercken, weil man sie überall in reichlicher Menge antrifft. Indessen sind sie allerdings unentbehrlich, wenn man ihren Nutzen betrachtet. Sie hängen die Noten zusammen; sie beleben sie; sie geben ihnen, wenn es nöthig ist, einen besondern Nachdruck und Gewicht; sie Machen sie gefällig und erwecken folglich eine besondere Aufmercksamkeit; sie helfen Inhalt erklären; es mag dieser traurig oder fröhlich oder sonst beschaffen seyn wie er will, so tragen sie allezeit das ihrige darzu bey.” Bach, *Versuch über die*

remarks that “it is difficult to prescribe the correct context for every embellishment, for all composers are free to introduce their favourites where they will, so long as good taste is not thereby assailed.” Mattheson on the other hand suggests that the use of ornaments depends a great deal on the skills and reason of the singer rather than the composer,⁴⁶ and that one should condemn singers who excessively make use of ornaments in inappropriate places, with no taste.⁴⁷ It is clear from the literature that experience and “good taste” are the leading directions for good use of ornamentation, more than pre-determined rules⁴⁸.

What was considered to be “good taste”, as the ornaments themselves, varied as well from country to country, but when we speak of the case of Händel, a composers that undoubtedly incorporates different national styles in his compositions, one must not overlook his German roots and the movement of *Musica Poetica*.

Händel’s rhetorical background

It is thought that Händel attended the Lutheran Gymnasium of Halle, although there is not concrete evidence of this, as its archives are unfortunately incomplete⁴⁹. However, Mattheson, supported by Johann Christoph von Dreyhaupt, in his *Chronique*, in 1750⁵⁰, mentions that Händel attended the “Hohe Schule”. Furthermore, John Butt reminds us that Händel’s father attended the Gymnasium of Halle, and was in regular contact with the rector, Johan Praetorius. “From early age, the children were initiated in lutheran catechism and learned how to read and write in German and Latin. A little later, they were taught grammar, syntax, Latin composition, geography and the writing of letters. Towards the middle of the course, they were introduced to Greek, the study of Tacit and Ovid, the New Testament in Greek and the poetic composition in German and Latin. In the higher years, they studied Cicero, Horace and Plutarco, Hebrew writing, the «elegant style», logic, ethics, physics, the oratory art and the argumentative art.

wahre Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel, trans. William J Mitchell, in *Essay On The True Art Of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, p. 79

⁴⁶ Mattheson, trans. Harriss, Ernest C. *op. cit.* p. 480

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 481

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 267

⁴⁹ Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 184

⁵⁰ Mattheson, *Grundlage*, p. 93, cited by Butt, John, « Germany - education and apprenticeship », *The Cambridge Companion to Händel*, ed. Donald Burrows, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 11-2

Apparently music (...) was not included in the main study program”.⁵¹ Later, he studied law at the University of Halle. Although much has been written about Händel’s father despise for music, according to John Butt, he was acquainted and in contact with several important musicians, and sent the young Händel to study with Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow.⁵²

Furthermore, he was a close friend of Mattheson’s⁵³, who is considered one of the leading authorities in *Musica Poetica*. Furthermore, he was a member of the Mizler’s Conrrespondierende Societät der musicalischen Wissenschaften in Leipzig, together with J. S. Bach, Telemann, Graun and Meinrad Spiess, another important theorist. ⁵⁴

Looking at his compositions one can easily identify the use of rhetorical devices in his compositions. It then not so farfetched to use rhetorical figures in the ornamentation of his arias.

⁵¹ Quiroz, *op. cit.* p 183

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 186, citing Butt, John, « Germany - education and apprenticeship », *The Cambridge Companion to Händel*, ed. Donald Burrows, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 15

⁵³ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 136

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 144

Musical Rhetorical Figures

“For the figures are themselves a language of the affections.”⁵⁵

In his *Musica Poetica*, Dietrich Bartel compiled a list of musical-rhetorical figures, enumerating several references from treatises and sources of Joachim Burmeister (1564 – 1629), Johannes Nucius (1556 – 1620), Joachim Thuringus (dates unknown), Athanasius Kircher (1601 – 1680), Elias Walther, Christoph Bernhard (1628 – 1692), Wolfgang Gaspar Prinz (1641 – 1717), Johan Gregor Ahle (1651 – 1706), Tomás Baltazar Janovka (1669 – 1741), Marituis Johann Vogt (1669 – 1730), Johann Gottfried Walther (1684 – 1748), Johann Mattheson (1684 – 1764), Meinrad Spiess (1683 – 1761), Johann Adolf Scheibe (1708 – 1776) and Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749 – 1818).

These figures are divided in different categories, most of them applied to the composition of a piece, the *elocutio* and *ornatus*, but also of the *pronuntiatio*:

- 1) Figures of melodic repetition
- 2) Figures of harmonic repetition; fugal figures,
- 3) Figures of representation and depiction
- 4) Figures of dissonance and displacement
- 5) Figures of interruption and silence
- 6) Figures of melodic and harmonic ornamentation
- 7) Miscellaneous figures

Some authors distinguish between musical-rhetorical figures and *manieren*, which are directly connected to the *pronuntiatio*. These include “*accentus, tremolo, trillo, trilletto, tenuta, groppo, circolo mezzo, tirata, ribattuta, transitus, mordant* and *acciaccatura*.”⁵⁶ However, for this research we will include the *accentus* and the *tirata* in our analysis, as authors agree that they have an affective power⁵⁷. As this investigation is only centred around the *pronuntiatio*, the figures selected will only be those that do not interfere with the composition, meaning they are only used as

⁵⁵ Scheibe, Johann, *Der critische Musikus* 1745, cited in Bartel, op. cit. p. 57

⁵⁶ Bartel, op. cit. p. 143

⁵⁷ Mattheson, op. cit. p. 270, and Bartel, op. cit. p. 409

variations added to the structure. The choice falls on the figures that, in the context of the plot, deepen the major affects present in an aria.

Accentus

(Figures of melodic and harmonic ornamentation)

The *accentus*, also called *superjectio*, is connected directly with the *pronuntiatio*,⁵⁸ which means it is often an addition by the performer. It is a *figura simplex*, and normally not considered a musical-rhetorical figure (Mattheson clearly makes the distinction between *figuren* and *manieren*) however, it as an actual affective power⁵⁹, and for that it is included in this list.

It is defined as a higher or lower neighbouring note, before or after the main note, and should only be applied in association with strong syllables⁶⁰. It can also be a leap of a bigger interval.⁶¹ Accents can be simple or double and should “glide” from a dissonance to a consonance, or the other way around.⁶² As this figure connects main notes to shape legato singing, Bernhard suggests that it is associated with affliction and sweetness. Walther will later emphasize the dissonant character of the figure, relating it to darkness, winter and the night.⁶³

Anabasis and Catabasis

(Figures of Figures of representation and depiction)

Anabasis and *catabasis* are opposing figures, one ascending and the other descending. *Anabasis*, or *ascensio*, is an ascending passage expressing a positive progression or an exaltation of affects.⁶⁴ Its opposite, the *catabasis*, or *descensus*, is a descending music passage illustrating negative affects and situations.⁶⁵ Joy and sorrow have different expressions in a composition, thus accentuated and sublime ideas will

⁵⁸ Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 146

⁵⁹ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 170

⁶⁰ Walther, *Praecepta*, p. 153, cited by Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 173

⁶¹ Mattheson, *op. cit.* pp. 269 - 270

⁶² Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 106

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 107

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 131

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p.132

have a higher place in the score, and the opposite for lowly ones⁶⁶. The *anabasis* and *catabasis* respectively will be appropriate in these instances⁶⁷. In *Musurgia Universalis*, Kircher describes them as being more than “word painting”: they illustrate and recreate the affect.⁶⁸ Vogt, in his *Conclave*, says that the *catabasis* or *descensus* occurs when the voice descends, as in the text: «He descended into hell».”⁶⁹

Emphasis

(Figure of Figures of representation and depiction)

According to Mattheson, the difference between *emphasis* and *accentus* is that the first deals with a whole word, and the later on syllables. Emphasis means to light up the meaning of a given word, underlining a particular affect.⁷⁰ Spiess describes it as “an exceptional expression of a word through the music”, meant for words that have already a special affective strength,⁷¹ and it can be performed by the singer even if it is not written in the piece.⁷²

Tirata

(Figure of harmonic and melodic ornamentation)

“A rapid scalar passage, spanning a fourth to an octave or more.”⁷³ Both Spiess⁷⁴ and Walther⁷⁵ agree that it should consist of a number of ascending or descending notes by step that have the same duration. Mattheson considers the *tirata* to be a simple *manier* to be used at the discretion of the performer, however with a similar “text-expressive and affective role” as the *accentus*.⁷⁶

⁶⁶ Bartel, op. cit. p. 116

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 116

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 179 & 214

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 215 “*Catabasis descensus cum vox descendit, ut cum textu descendit ad infernos.*”

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 254 citing Mattheson, Cappelmeister, p. 174

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 255, citing Spiess, *Tractatus*, 1745 p. 155.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 253, citing Vogt, *Conclave thesauri magnae artis musicae*, 1719 p. 151

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 409

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 411, citing Spiess, *Tractatus*, p. 156

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 419, citing Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon* 1732

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 409

Climax, gradatio

(Figure of repetition)

In literary rhetoric, *gradatio* or *climax* is a figure that enumerates words in matter of importance, either ascending or descending⁷⁷. As in Thomas Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent*, 1690: "*We are, comedians tragedians, / Tragi-comedians, comi-tragedians, pastorists, / Humorists, clowninsts, satirists; we have them sir, / From the hug to the smile, from the smile to the laugh, / From the laugh to the handkerchief.*"⁷⁸

As a musical rhetorical figure, *gradatio* is a sequence that is repeated, progressively higher or lower, at least three times⁷⁹, defined by Kircher as an "affection-and-text expressive device"⁸⁰. For example, in Dowland's "*Come Again*", the same interval of a fourth is repeated five times ascending, accompanying the words "To see, to hear, to touch, to kiss, to die" and later "I sit, I sigh, I weep, I faint, I die".

⁷⁷ Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 319

⁷⁸ In ullyot.ucalgaryblogs.ca/2015/04/04/shakespeares-gradatio-in-context/, last accessed 15.02.2020

⁷⁹ Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 134

⁸⁰ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 221

Analysis of 18th century sources

The following section will consist of an analysis of a few ornamented sources from the 18th century. Their appearance is in order of importance. Firstly, Händel's autograph ornamentation in three arias of the opera *Ottone*. Secondly, I decided to include the transcription for harpsichord of the aria “*Cara Sposa*”, of the opera *Radamisto*. Two arias ornamented by Farinelli were also added. Although one cannot say that he is directly connected with the German movement of *Musica Poetica*, there are interesting features in his ornamentation that deserve to be analysed and that help to understand the practical use of some ornaments from the perspective of an Italian singer who was so appreciated in Europe in Händel's time, especially when some of them seem to be carefully laid out to fit the text and the affection in question. The musical examples are organized as follows: the bottom stave is the bass, in the middle the original vocal line and in the top stave is the ornamented version, except in examples 12, 13 and 14, where the original version and the transcription for harpsichord are separated.

I

Three ornamented arias from the opera *Ottone*

We have access to Händel's autograph ornamentation through a copy in the Bodleian Library (Blodeian MS Don.c.69), edited by Winton Dean.⁸¹ Three arias of the opera *Ottone* were ornamented for the role of Teofane, which were transposed for a mezzo-soprano. Winton Dean believes they were intended for an English singer, inexperienced in ornamentation, as the Italian singer was ill. As the production never saw light, these ornaments were neither finished nor performed.⁸²

1) *Affanni del Pensier*

Teofane is about to be married with the impostor Adelberto, who is impersonating Ottone. Adelberto's mother Gismonda interrupts the ceremony telling her son he has to fight the real Ottone, who has just arrived in Rome. Teofane becomes conscious of this

⁸¹ Dean, Winton, *Three ornamented arias / G. F. Handel*, Oxford University Press, 1976

⁸² Dean, Winton, “*The Recovery of Handel's Operas*”, p. 110

scheming and tells of her suffering. Already in distress having been confronted by a man who looked nothing like the portrait she had received from Ottone, she feels lost, not knowing what to do or where to go, and wonders if her torment will ever end.

<i>Affanni del pensier,</i>	<i>Worries of the mind,</i>
<i>Un sol momento</i>	<i>For one moment at least</i>
<i>Datemi pace almen,</i>	<i>Give me peace,</i>
<i>E poi tornate!</i>	<i>And then return!</i>
<i>Ah, che nel mesto sen</i>	<i>Ah, that in the anxious heart</i>
<i>Io già vi sento,</i>	<i>I already feel you,</i>
<i>Che ostinati</i>	<i>Obstinate,</i>
<i>La pace a me turbate</i>	<i>You disturb my peace.</i>
	(my translation)

Examples of *Accentus*

In the next two bars (see ex. 1) the *accentus* clearly illustrate the affects of sorrow and pain. In bar 13, the highlighted C, although it appears in the original melody as a passing note, becomes an *accentus* because of the leap to come, resembling sobbing. The following Bb appears as an appoggiatura which resolves to the Ab. The following G forms a dissonance with the *continuo* that will be resolved in the next beat, with another “sob” in between (Ab).

In bar 14, to give emphasis to the main request of the character – for the God of Love to bring back Ottone – the most important word is “*tornate*”, meaning that it has to take more importance than “*poi*” in the florid version. The text would be placed as such: “*poi*” would fall on the first note (Eb), and “*tor-*” would start on the following note D, with the second syllable “*-na-*” stretching from the triplet, finishing with the last syllable as in the original line. The four highlighted notes should then be sung as an “ascending glide”⁸³ with the second and fourth notes being softer than the first and third.

⁸³ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 106

Ornam.

Original

Bass

da - te-me pa - ceal-men, E poi tor - na - te.

Ex. 1

Later in the piece, upon the word “*pace*” in bars 40, (see ex. 2) the *accentus* resembles sobbing once more, as it “glides” down from the Ab and later from G. The effect is a quick and light dissonance away from the note and back again to the original note as if taking strength from the line. This accentuates the fact that the character does not have any guarantee at this point whether “*peace*” will be granted.

5

39

la pa - - - - ce.

Ex. 2

Example of *Catabasis*

The *catabasis*, a downward melodic movement, illustrates in this context the affects of sorrow and especially humility. Teofane, although being the main female character of the opera, is once again subject to circumstances and the will of others. The “*larghetto*” of the aria in such a stressful moment, shows the colours of the character. The *catabasis* is a figure very suited for the expression of these affects, especially in a slow tempo. The figure is already present in the original line (see ex. 3) from “*tornate*” (and appears often through the aria), however it is heightened by the ornamentation

chosed by Händel, deliberately choosing higher pitches. This is seen particularly in bar 21, making an effective languid *legato* movement down, by connecting all the pitches.

19

Da - te - mi pa - ceal - men, E poi tor - na -

Ex.3

Example of *Emphasis* / *Tirata*

This is the first time the word “*pace*” appears in the aria (see ex. 4). The original melody is very simple and introductory. In the da capo, this word gains a new strength with this ornament. Through the da capo, the words “*pace*” and “*tornate*” will acquire the most importance in terms the ornamentation. In this case, the whole word is highlighted for the first time, with a generous leap of a 6th from F to D. At the same time, the downward *tirata* illuminates the affects of humility and sorrow, much like the description of *catabasis* in example 3.

10

Da - te - mi pa - ceal - men.

Ex. 4

2) *Alla Famma*

In the second act, after Adelberto is arrested, Teofane and Ottone are finally about to meet, but Matilda intrudes to plea for Adelberto's freedom. Teofane hides and watches the scene: while denying her request, Ottone embraces Matilda in pity. Misreading the situation, Teofane assumes that Ottone is in love with Matilda and has forsaken her. The "*allegro ma non troppo*", the frequent dotted rhythms and wide intervals in the vocal line show a much fierier feature of Teofane. I would describe the main affect of the piece as indignation⁸⁴: "The affection of rage and indignation should use faster, more vehement tempi and rhythms with a liberal use of dissonance. It is the affection closest to the choleric temperament⁸⁵".

<i>Alla fama, dimmi il vero,</i>	<i>Tell me the truth,</i>
<i>Troppa fè diede il pensiero,</i>	<i>Your thoughts put too much faith in rumours,</i>
<i>Quando a te mi finse bella,</i>	<i>When they made me beautiful for you,</i>
<i>Dimmi il vero, dimmi!</i>	<i>Tell me the truth, tell me!</i>
<i>Or mirando mi da presso,</i>	<i>Now, seeing me closely,</i>
<i>vai dicendo da te stesso,</i>	<i>You say to yourself,</i>
<i>non è tal, ch'io deggia in petto,</i>	<i>She is not one to make my heart pound</i>
<i>infedele, a un altro oggetto</i>	<i>With a new flame,</i>
<i>ricettar fiamma novella.</i>	<i>Unfaithful to another object.</i>

(my translation)

The ornamentation respects the character of the piece by maintaining the leaps. Nevertheless, the added *passaggi* are many, and appropriately fit the existing melodic

⁸⁴ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 48, citing Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni* (Rome, 1650)

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 50

line. The figure most found is the *tirata*, which in a fast tempo illuminates the fiery character of the piece.

Example of *Tirata* / *Accentus*

The *tirata* on the word “*vero*” (see ex. 5) has two effects: on the one hand it avoids repetition (bars 36 and 38 have the same melodic line), and on the other it emphasises the word “*vero*”, bringing it to higher pitch and increasing the intensity of the notes. On a deeper layer, the ascent of the pitch on *tirata* specifically in this context could be interpreted as having an *anabasic* colour, bringing the line closer to “heaven”, where a virtue such as truth is closer.

Furthermore, the Eb on bar 39 creates an intense dissonance with the bass, which is resolved in the following beat and will be considered here as an *Accentus*. This clash definitely goes in line with the prescribed use of dissonance used in the expression of distress. The exact same figure and dissonance will be repeated a few bars ahead (45 – 46) on the word “*pensiero*”, only a whole tone below.

35

Al-la fa-ma, dim-miil ve-ro, dim-miil ve-ro.

Ex. 5

3) *Benchè sia crudele*

In the third act, Teofane falls in desperation after being abducted by the pirate Emireno. Believing that her betrothed loves Matilda, she asks her guard to kill her. Nevertheless, Teofane keeps some hope and wishes to remain faithful to Ottone, asking the God of Love to bring back her beloved.

*Benchè mi sia crudele,
 Benchè infedel mi sia,
 Infida l'alma mia,
 Nò, non sarà così.
 Senta le mie querele,
 Il Nume Dio d'amore,
 Poi renda a questo core
 Il ben che lo tradì.*

*Even though he is cruel,
 Even though he is unfaithful,
 Deceitful my soul
 No, it will not be.
 May he listen to my
 complaints,
 The God of love,
 And then grant to this heart
 The love that betrays him.
 (my translation)*

I will suggest that the major affects present in this piece are indignation and pain in the A part, and love in the B part.⁸⁶ Teofane's persistent faithfulness to Ottone, in spite of her misguided belief that he despises her, is shown in the repetition of the negative "no, non sarà così". In the B part, the affect of Love is well illustrated on the word "core", with a long and chromatic *anabasic* legato line.

Example of *Emphasis*

The word "crudele" is emphatic by nature, especially in the context of the aria (see ex. 6). Its ornamentation could be taken as simply another rhythmical variation, were it not for the fact that it appears again, emphasised in the same way in bar 46, although illuminating different syllables. In both cases, the pitch raises and the number of notes is intensified. In bar 46 the ornamentation clashes with the violins in the second beat, an appropriate dissonance for the word in question.

The musical score for Example 6 consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/8 time signature. It contains a melisma on the word "crudele" with triplets and a chromatic ascent. The middle staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "Ben-chè mi sia crudele Ben-chè in-fedel mi si-a". The bottom staff is a bass clef. The score is labeled "Ex. 6" on the right.

⁸⁶ ⁸⁶ Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 48, citing Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni* (Rome, 1650)



Ex. 7

Examples of *Accentus* :

The original line (see ex. 8) is an ascending *gradatio*, which illustrates Teofane's strength in spite of her hardships, as the line ascends by step. In the ornamented version Händel keeps the *gradatio*, as the same theme is repeated three times in progressively higher pitches, with the crucial difference of inserting chromatic tones from below. This provides a dimension of weakness as the phrase ascends, as if the rising of the pitch does not come easy to the character. The adding of an extra note also results in a more legato line, ideal to underline the affect pain.

Ex. 8

Example of *Tirata*

The words “*non sarà così*” (see ex. 9) are repeated twice, and after the long melisma in bars 27 – 33 (see ex. 8) form a cadence in bars 38 – 40 that include an ascending *tirata*. It is interesting that after Händel ornaments the previous melisma with *accentus*, resulting in a weaker *gradatio*, he gives extra strength to the cadence by adding the ascending *tirata*.



Ex. 9

In the B part, the speech is directed at the God of Love (see ex. 10). The *accentus* conveys a smoothness to the word “*Nume*”, as the highlighted notes are be sung with a sighing quality, gliding from the first note to the second, from the third to the fourth, and the fifth to the sixth. Similarly, the accents on bars 95 and 96 smooth over the intervals and at the same time the dissonances created render the plea more humble.

Ex. 10

Example of *Catabasis*

This piece contains many figures of *catabasis* in its original version, both in the voice part and in the violins that accentuate the affects of indignation and pain. The following example is the only *catabasis* present in the ornamented part alone. The original line is changed and forms a different figure. This is a rare occurrence, as normally the florid accompaniment figures like *catabasis* or *anabasis* are already present in the original line, however Händel formed a new figure in this instance.

Ex. 11

II

Cara Sposa

The aria “*Cara Sposa*” of the opera *Radamisto* is a transcription for harpsichord attributed to Händel⁸⁷, with the realization of the continuo, written out ornamentation, and the entire text of the aria written by the copyist⁸⁸. It might therefore be argued that it is not particularly to make assumptions about vocal ornamentation, as it is written specifically for harpsichord. Terrence Best, however, suggests that the piece is meant to be sung, for the melodic line fits the text perfectly, and unlike other transcriptions of Händel’s arias, the text is represented in its entirety⁸⁹. However, the goal of this research is not to reproduce Händel’s ornamentation and wrongly attach it to different plots, but to understand the rhetorical reasoning behind them, in direct relation to the text and the major affects present in the aria, in the context of the plot. Thus, even though the ornamentation isn’t vocal, one can investigate what figures are applied where, and how they illuminate the different affects.

In Act 1, Radamisto is consoling his wife Zenobia while there is the possibility of an attack and her being taken as a prisoner by Tiridade. The couple dynamic between Radamisto and Zenobia contrasts fiercely with the one between Tiridade and Polissena. The main affect of the piece is love, especially in the A part, and love and pity in the B part.

⁸⁷ Rogers, Patrick J. “A Neglected Source of Ornamentation and Continuo Realization in a Handel Aria,” *Early Music* 18 (February 1990), pp. 83-89.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 84

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 84

*Cara sposa, amato bene,
Prendi speme,
che non sempre irato il cielo
volgera lo sdegno in me.
Sgombra, oh Dio,
dal nobil core il dolore,
che'l vederti lagrimare
fa tremare lo spirto e il pie.*

*Dear wife, loved one,
Have hope,
Not forever will the irate sky
Turn its anger towards me.
Clear, oh God,
The pain from the noble heart,
For seeing you cry
Makes my spirit and body tremble*
(my translation)

The following examples demonstrate first the original line present in the opera, and below the same examples in the transcription.

Example of *Emphasis + Anabasis*

The original line is very simple: a love declaration without selfishness but with passion, compassion and a smoothing effect, full of hope in spite of the imminent conflict. Händel chooses to emphasise the adjective “*amato*”, (see ex. 12b) in an ascending movement, over “*cara sposa*”. It underlines the expression of “true love” over marriage, and contrasts highly with the relationship between Tiridate and Polissena. The emphasis is consonant with the bass and the sudden intensity and speed of the notes in a *larghetto* expresses the passion that Radamisto feels for his wife.

Ex. 12a

Ex. 12b

Example of *Accentus*

The ascending *accentus* on bar 18 (see ex. 13b) stresses the adjective “*nobil*”, which refers to Zenobia. By raising the pitch up a third, the word gains strength. Because of the dotted note, the figure is sung with a small dynamic articulation, becoming softer after the first syllable, or even with a small separation between D and E. The consequent effect is of sweetness rather than a sorrowful tone. The sorrow comes in the fourth beat of the same bar, on the word “*il*”. The sad descending *accentus* on the article of the phrase anticipates the important word “*dolore*”. Without it, this ornament would have no rhetoric meaning.



Ex. 13a



Ex. 13b

Example of *Emphasis*

The next two examples of emphasis are on two important words of the B section: “*lagrimare*” and “*tremare*” – to weep and shake (see ex.14b). In the original version there is already an ornament written on the first “*lagrimare*”, which then has its shape inverted and intensified with faster notes. The second time the word appears, the ornament has more impact as it is so different from the original line. The legato that suddenly appears, especially in bar 22, fits the weeping more than the interval that was there was there before. However, the big difference comes on the word “*tremare*” that is highly emphasised on bar 21, both raising the pitch in the whole word and dividing it, and in the second “*tremare*”, the vocal line really “shakes” with the fast dotted notes

going down. Even in a very slow tempo, these notes are sung extremely fast, so instead of gaining a beautiful line, the voice will sound scattered.

20



lo - re, cheil ve - der - ti la - gri - ma - re fa tre-mar lo spir - toeil piè cheil ve - der - ti la - gri -

8 23



ma - re fa tre-mar lo spirto eil piè

Ex. 14a

20

22



che 'l ve - der - ti la - gri ma - re fa tre-mar lo spirto eil

99 22



la - gri ma - re fa tre-mar lo spirto eil pie

Ex. 14b

III

Two ornamented arias by Farinelli

1) *Quel Usignolo Innamorato*

Epitide's aria "*Quell usignolo Innamorato*", in the second act of the opera *Merope* (1734) by Geminiano Giacomelli (1692 – 1740), to which the famous castrato Farinelli added his own ornamentation and *cadenze*.⁹⁰

Epitide, disguised as Cleon, returns victorious to city, after defeating the monster the tyrant Polifonte challenged him to kill. Upon kissing his mother's hand – who does not recognize him – he brings her news of her son's probable death. Although a lie, her pain needs to last until Epitide's father is avenged with Polifonte's death. In the moment before this aria, Epitide receives news that he will marry Argea, who he is in love with. His mind is divided between "glory, kingdom, revenge, hatred and love"⁹¹ The tempo is fast, there regular syncopations⁹² in the strings and vocal line, and coloraturas fill most of the piece. The main affects present are love, which includes joy and longing,⁹³ and lamentation, combined with rage especially whenever the world "*crudeltà*" appears.

⁹⁰ *Sammlung von Arien für Gesang mit Instrumentalbegleitung*

http://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_4711034&order=1&view=SINGLE , last accessed 21.02.2020

"*Merope, Polifonte, Argea, Messene, / gloria, regno, vendetta, odio ed amore, / tutti voi siete oggetto / di spavento, e d'invito a' miei pensieri. / Il dibattuto cor qua e là si volge / qual da turbine spinta arena o polve.*" *Librettidopera.it* - <http://www.librettidopera.it/zpdf/merope.pdf> - (last accessed 21.02.2020)

⁹² Syncopations are associated with sorrowfulness, in Bartel, *op. cit.* p. 48

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 50

*Quell' usignolo
 Che innamorato,
 Se canta solo
 Tra fronda, e fronda,
 Spiega del fato
 La crudeltà.
 S'ode pietoso
 Nel bosco ombroso,
 Chi gli risponda,
 Con lieto core
 Di ramo in ramo
 Cantando va.*

*That nightingale
 That, in love,
 Sings alone
 From branch to branch
 Explains the cruelty
 Of fate.
 If one who hears in pity
 In the shady woods,
 Answers him,
 With happy heart
 Sings on,
 From branch to branch.
 (my translation)*

Example of *Accentus*

In bar 33, (see ex. 15) the *accentus* works as an *appoggiatura* and illustrates the sweetness and the sound of the nightingale, provides a pitiful quality, as he sings of the cruelty of his fate. The highlighted notes are sung with more emphasis than their resolution notes, to which the voice will softly glide. There is a very prominent dissonance created in bar 34 with the E against the F of the bass, stressing the word “*solo*”, making it somewhat unpleasant to the ear, but illuminating the sense of the text in that moment.

Ex. 15

In bar 36, (see ex. 16) there is an *anabasic gradatio* that is ornamented with chromatic *accentus*. This is a rare occurrence in which the ornamented line has fewer notes than the original part, but the effect created by the dissonances introduced bring a great deal more affective meaning to the word “*crudeltà*”, mainly Lamentation over Rage, which is present in the original line.

Ex. 16 shows a musical score for a vocal line. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The vocal line begins in bar 35 with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth notes, with a chromatic ornament (a series of sixteenth notes) appearing in bar 36. The ornament is marked with a '6' below it. The lyrics 'fa - to la cru - del - tà' are written below the vocal line, with a long horizontal line under 'tà' indicating a sustained note or a long phrase. The bass line is also present, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal melody.

Ex. 16

In the beginning of the B part, the Moderato opens with accents on the words “*S’ode pietoso*”, referring to the sympathetic listener who is listening to the pitiful singing of the nightingale. In a fast tempo, the performer will most probably sing this passage in staccato, bringing to these *accentus* a more afflictive tone rather than pitiful, especially with the rising of the pitch.

Ex. 17 shows a musical score for a vocal line. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The vocal line begins in bar 75 with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth notes, with accents (marked with red dots) appearing on the words 'S'ode pietoso'. The lyrics 'S'o - de pie - to - so nel bos - coom - bro - so,' are written below the vocal line. The bass line is also present, providing a harmonic foundation for the vocal melody.

Ex. 17

Example of *Tirata*

Similarly to the previous example, there is a change in the affect on the word “*crudeltà*”, (see ex. 18) previously with repeated intervals of a third, to a more lamenting and sad quality with the repeated *catabasic tirata*.



Ex. 18

2) *Son Qual Nave ch'agitata*

This was included in Hasse's *pasticcio* version of opera *Artaserse*, but this setting was a substitution composed by Farinelli's brother, Riccardo Broschi, in London, 1734⁹⁴. It comes in place of Metastasio's “*L'onda mar divisa*”, in the beginning of Act Three⁹⁵. The prince Artaserse visits his friend Arbace in prison, who has been wrongly accused of killing the king, and helps him escape. Arbace sings the aria after learning that he will have freedom in exile.⁹⁶ This aria, as mentioned by Daniel Heartz, “is a metaphor aria so general in its application that it could be sung by almost any character in any situation”⁹⁷. The text used by Farinelli is in fact very similar, and compares the warrior to a ship in the agitated sea, that at the sight of port will rest at last. The composition is not very sophisticated or fluent in musical rhetoric, but rather an opportunity for the singer to show their vocal potential in long phrases, wide range and speed. However, some ornaments chosen by Farinelli actually bring us closer to the affects present in the text, especially the ones of Fear, Sorrow.

⁹⁴ Hasse, Johann Adolf. 1780. *The Favourite Songs In The Opera Call'd Artaxerxes*. Bologna: Forni

⁹⁵ Wood, G. D'Arcy, “*Artaxerxes*” and the Feminization of Virtuosity, *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Summer, 2008), pp. 74-79 Published by: The University of Chicago Press

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 75

⁹⁷ *Ibidem* p. 75, citing Heartz, Daniel, Heartz, Daniel, *From Garrick to Gluck: Essays on Opera in the Age of Enlightenment*. 2004

*Son qual nave ch'agitata
Da più scogli in mezzo all'onde
Si confonde e spaventa
Va solcando in alto mar
Ma in veder l'amato lido
Lascia l'onde e vento in fido
E va in porto riposar*

*I am like a ship, tossed
Upon the breast of the waves
That mistakes her way and
Plows, in fright, the high seas.
But on seeing the beloved shore,
The ship escapes the waves and wind
And makes its way to port,
Faith rewarded, there to rest.*

(trans. by Gillen D'Arcy Wood, 2008))

Example of descending *Gradatio*

To illustrate the plight of the ship tossed in the waves, Broschi uses a descending *gradatio*, although unornamented. Farinelli's ornaments, although simple, maintain the shape of the *gradatio* by repeating the same theme (see ex. 19). A quaver followed by a semi-quaver in the same pitch sung in a fast tempo, automatically demands that the performer sings them *staccato*, bringing a very different effect than if the sentence were sung only as written originally, as it would surely be sung in *legato*, not so much in accordance to the affects of the text. It can be argued that the descending line starting in the middle of bar 60 was left "naked", assuming it would be ornamented in the performance. However, the point being made here is that the figure was maintained and ornamented in a way that expresses the words more effectively.

58

da più sco - gli in mez - zo all' on - de in mez - zo all' on - de spa - ven -

62

ta - ta da più sco - gli si con - fon-de

Ex. 19

Example of descending *Gradatio*, with *Tirata*

Once more, a descending *gradatio* is left “naked” in the original line. The ornaments respect the figure, but by adding a *tirata* of an octave it renders it a great deal more dramatic, reminding us of the affect of Fear. This gains even more strength by the leap of an octave.

The musical score is for a piece in 4/4 time, marked with a box containing the number 107. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a descending scale of eighth notes, starting on G4 and ending on G3. The middle staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat, containing the lyrics "In al - to mar in__ al - to mar__". The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat, containing a descending scale of eighth notes, starting on G3 and ending on G2. The descending scale in the top staff is highlighted with pink dots, indicating the *gradatio* figure. The *tirata* of an octave is indicated by the leap from G4 to G3.

Ex. 20

Conclusions of the Analysis

The use of rhetorical figures as tools for ornamentation is something that we can clearly see in Händel's autograph ornamentation. Händel's ornaments are very sophisticated, and use rhetorical figures in accordance to the affects of the text and the original composition. From the works of Farinelli, with practical perspective of a singer, we understand that he could do more than sub-dividing notes and filling out intervals. Especially in cases where ornamentation distanced itself considerably from the original melody, we see that musical rhetorical figures were present even if this was not always done intentionally by singers. The "good taste" of Baroque period is inevitably connected to the proper use of rhetoric in music, remembering that culture and society was rooted in a "rhetorical background"⁹⁸, especially in the case of German composers. In what concerns *Affektenlehre*, the suggestion that "no thinking performer ever gave such an idea more than a passing smile"⁹⁹, is indeed misleading. It is also important to remember that the bridge between composers, performers and theorists was not as pronounced as it is today. Many authors concerned with musical rhetoric, particularly in the German tradition, were active musicians.¹⁰⁰ There was also a tradition already strong during the Renaissance of training young musicians through improvisation, altering passages there and then with correct counterpoint rules.¹⁰¹

In order to use rhetorical figures as ornaments one must always have in mind the plot and try to identify the affects present in the piece in question. Some words will be more important than others, as they will have more affective weight.

The *accentus* should be mostly applied to affects like Sorrow, Pain, Longing, Pity, Weeping, or Affliction, they can be used to soften a melody, make it dissonant, create effects of sobbing, scattered breath, etc.

The *tirata*, very much like the *accentus*, can have an affective expression, if used in the right places. After analysing the examples, we understand that the *tirata* can be more

⁹⁸ Palacios Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 63

⁹⁹ Williams, Peter, "Figurae in the Keyboard Works of Scarlatti, Handel and Bach: an Introduction", in *Bach, Handel, Scarlatti Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Peter Williams, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 328

¹⁰⁰ Palacios Quiroz, *op. cit.* p. 75

¹⁰¹ Schubert, Peter & Guido, Massimiliano, "*Back into the Classroom: Learning Music Through Historical Improvisation*", in *Improvisation and Music Education, Beyond the Classroom*, edited by Heble, Ajay, & Laver, Mark, Routledge 2016

than the division of an interval, it can emphasise a certain word with a positive or negative light, but with more strength than the *accentus*.

The *emphasis* can be of great use to highlight the most important whole words of the text and in that way make main affect in a section be very obvious. The way in which it is stressed (how the ornament is built) varies according to the text, using fast notes, dotted rhythms, dissonances, bigger leaps, etc. to provide different effects.

The *gradatio* or *climax*, is not a figure appears generally in the ornamented version of the examples alone. It is however important to be able to recognize it in the melodic line and have the ornaments respect the structure and illuminate it.

Although the ornamentation of an aria by Händel will not be entire made of the use of figures with affective strength, a rhetorically informed ornamentation must first deduce the affects present and what are the main words in the text for the expression of those affects. The use of rhetorical figures will then help to either illustrate or to emphasise the important moments.

Ornamentation of the aria “Se vuoi pace” of the Opera *Agrippina*

The aria “*Se vuoi pace*” is sung by the character of Agrippina in the third and last act of the opera. The plot is a series of scheming and lies, mainly from Agrippina, to place her son Nerone on the throne after hearing of the Emperor’s death. As this proves to be fake, she takes advantage of everyone involved to have her wishes fulfilled. By the time she sings this aria, her scheming has been discovered, but she excuses herself by saying to the Emperor Claudius that her actions were such to protect the throne from a dangerous outcome, after receiving news of Claudius’ death. The outcome: Claudius is convinced.¹⁰² The main affects present in this aria are pity and love. To see the full score, please see appendix 1. The following ornamentation is taken as an exercise, for which the repetitions were dismissed. The following score a transcription is taken from the Bärenheiter vocal edition of the opera.

<i>Se vuoi pace,</i>	<i>If you desire peace,</i>
<i>Oh volto amato,</i>	<i>Oh beloved,</i>
<i>L’odio reo fugga ta te.</i>	<i>Let hatred flee from you.</i>
<i>Guarda in me,</i>	<i>Behold in me,</i>
<i>nume adorato,</i>	<i>Divine beloved,</i>
<i>il mio amore e la mia fè</i>	<i>My love and my loyalty.</i>
	(my translation)

¹⁰² "Handel House - Handel's Operas: *Agrippina*". 2020. Handel and Hendrix. <https://handelhendrix.org/learn/about-handel/opera-synopses/agrippina/>. (last accessed 23.02.2020)

Soprano

Se vuoi pa - ce, o vol - to a - ma - to l'o-dio re - o fug - ga da te;

S.

S.

Se... vuoi pa - ce, o vol - to a - ma - to, l'o-dio re - o fug - ga da te!

Hch.

S.

S.

Hch.

29

S.

S.

Hch.

Guar-dain me____nu - mea-do - ra - to, il mio a -

38

S.

S.

Hch.

mo - re e la mia fè____, il mio a - mo - re e la mi - a____ fè.

In the A part, the important words to be underlined are “*pace*”, “*amato*” and “*odio*”, (peace, beloved and hatred).

In bar two, I chose to emphasise the words “*pace*” and “*amato*” by adding consonant notes, varied rhythm and higher pitches. To the word “*odio*” I added a dissonant *accentus* and a descending syncopation. The syncopation was not something that I found in the sources strictly as an ornament, but it is something that is in accordance the affect that the word “hatred” expresses.

In bar 7 of the original line, the sentence “*fugga da te*”, is composed of smooth intervals by step. In a da capo ornamentation, I chose to use a *tirata* on the word “*fugga*” (to flee). Although the general atmosphere of this piece is calm and loving, one mustn’t forget what is at stake for Agrippina. This aria represents the character’s last card to turn the tide to her favour. An ornament like the *tirata* on the word “*fuga*” will stress the feeling of urgency and distress beneath the smoothing effect of the aria.

From bar 10 to 11 in the original line, the words “*pace*” and “*amato*” are stressed by the raising of the pitch. In the ornamented version I chose to take this a step further and use *emphasis* by adding consonant fast notes and rhythmical various. Furthermore, the word “*amato*” starting in bar 11 is ornamented with dotted *accentus* that, sung softly, will resemble a sob. The same happens on the word “*reo*” in bar 14. Whether Agrippina is being truthful in her words or not (this aria could either be seen as her last resource to save her skin after the scheming she fabricated, or could be interpreted as has a truthful request), the softening of the line by adding tools that bring legato will aid the expression of the text.

Although this research sought to explore ornamentation in the traditional A part of a *da capo* aria, we can see in Händel’s autograph ornamentations that the B part was also ornamented.

In the B part, the words of importance are “*adorato*”, in a variation of the words of the first part, and above all “*amore*” and “*fè*” (love and faith). In bar 34, I added an *accentus* on the word “*nume*”, adjective to “*adorato*”, referring to the Emperor Claudius. Another sobbing effect that brings an apologetic and humble tone to the text.

To further emphasise the word “*adorato*” starting in bar 35, I decided to increase the interval by starting the word on an F, instead of an A, leaping to a D. The following note intensity on the same word forms an emphasis, and the same happens in bar 38, and 42 with the word “*amore*”. Finally, the word “*fè*” in bar 40 has dissonant intervals which are sung with a soft glissando, adding to the affect of pity (over herself), maintaining the descending phrase, in a tone of humility.

Conclusion

The process of ornamenting a da capo aria by Georg Friedrich Händel through a rhetorical informed perspective – even if this research only touches a thin percentage what a rhetorically informed interpretation can eventually include, is an effective way of approaching this repertoire with less risk of destroying the general character of a piece. Once the affects present in the text in the context of the plot and in some composition traits of a piece are understood, we can select a few affective rhetorical figures that help emphasise them.

During the course of this research my practical approach to ornamentation changed a great deal. The course of studying arias by Händel became more inquisitive and thorough. The process of defining the affects of the aria by understanding the plot and some basic compositional mechanisms is in itself a valuable addition to the performance. The ornaments are then chose to highlight important words of the text, according to the affective meaning they have.

The *accentus* can provoke effects of sobbing and dissonances, and they are adequate to lowly affects, such as pity and sorrow. They will soften the line or create unexpected dissonances with the continuo. The *tirata*, as a passage of faster notes from a fourth to an octave, can help emphasise words that require agitation or more stress, and can be applied to a wider range of affects, from joy to rage. The *emphasis* is the figure that allows more freedom in its application and form, and it involves the use of whole words, rather than syllables. It is useful in positive affects and can have a subliming effect over a certain word (for example related to love). The *anabasis* and *catabasis* are important important to recognize in the original structure of a piece, so our ornamentation doesn't destroy it. It is possible, however, to use them in combination with *tirata* and *emphasis*, to accentuate the positive or negative character of a word or phrase. In the same way, it is important to recognize a *climax/gradatio* in the piece as to not disturb it with our chosen ornaments. The *gradatio* is formed by the repetition (at least three times) of a musical phrase either upwards or downwards, and thus our ornamentation should repeat itself as so to keep the original figure. These listed affective figures can be combined with other appropriate *figurae simplex*, or *manieren*, to complete the ornamentation.

The process of ornamenting da capo arias by Händel is now simultaneously more complex but also simpler. I hope other singers may find this research interesting and useful for their own practice of ornamentation.

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