

Le Coulé and Coulade

The *coulé*, which has a connotation of ‘to flow’ like water, is an ornament that softens the melody by filling up space between two distant notes, especially useful linking descending thirds. It only appeared in Montéclair’s 1736 treatise⁴⁴ as shown in Figure 19. *Le coulé* is executed by adding a soft note in between thirds, for example, adding a *sol* between *la* and *fa*, adding a *mi* in between *fa* and *re* in the first measure.

Le Coulé.

Le Coulé est un agrément qui adoucit le chant et qui le rend onctueux par la liaison des sons. Il se pratique en différentes occasions, particulièrement lorsque le chant descend de tierce; Il n'y a point ordinairement de signe qui le caractérise, c'est le goût qui décide des endroits où il faut le faire:

Il y a cependant des Maîtres qui le designent par une petite note, A, qui se lie avec la note forte sur laquelle il faut couler, B, dont elle prend le nom, ou par une simple Liaison, C.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Tierces endécendant.' and shows a descending third from G4 to E4. The bottom staff shows the same melody with 'coulé' ornaments marked above the notes. The lyrics are: 'La fa a re e mi i u ut re, fa mi i sol mi i la mi i si mi i si u ut re la a ut re.'

Figure 20: Montéclair's description of *Le Coulé* (Montéclair 1736, p. 78)

Again, this ornament was not usually marked, but Montéclair mentioned that there were several masters who would mark it with a small note A (see Figure 19).

This ornament was specially warned by Montéclair not to be used when the words were expressing anger or when the song was in a fast tempo, because the *coulé* softened the angry expression of the song.

This *coulé* from Montéclair is not to be mixed with Bacilly's *port de voix coulé* because the latter one is a variation of *demi-port de voix* which slides from a lower note to an upper note, while this *coulé* links two descending notes, from an upper to a lower one.

⁴⁴ Montéclair 1736, p. 78.

Another ornament which also has a similar connotation of ‘to flow’ is the *coulade*, as it comes from the French word *couler* as well. Like the *coulé*, the *coulade* also serves a melodic purpose on the linkage of two distant notes, and it was also only mentioned in Montéclair’s treatise. The *coulade* allows the performer to add two or more ornamented notes proceeding in a continuous ascending or descending stepwise motion. It is executed by singing continuous notes in between melody in one single breath (See Figure 20), with the purpose of making the melody more *legato*.⁴⁵

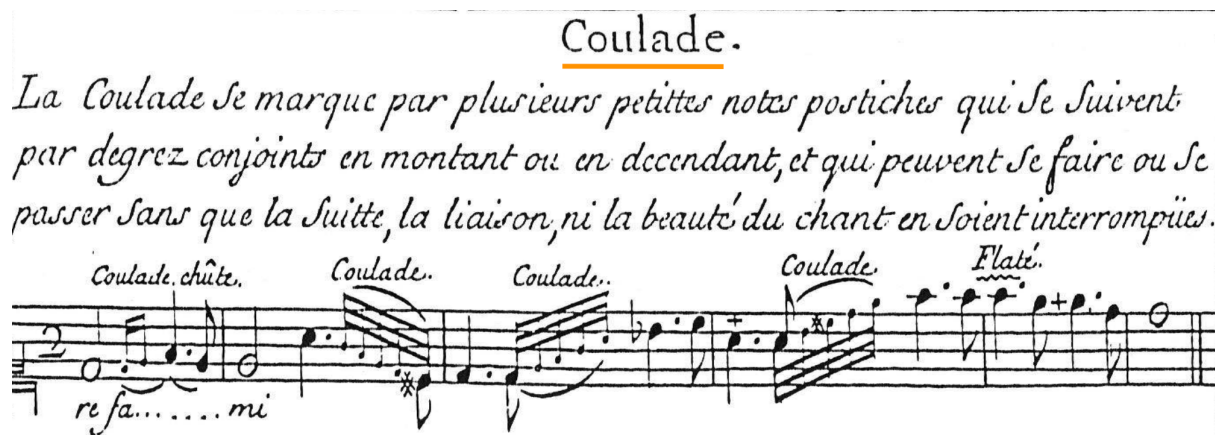


Figure 21: Montéclair’s description of *Coulade* (Montéclair 1736, p. 87)

⁴⁵ Montéclair 1736, p. 87.