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Fast notes!

An argument against Convenience-Slurring

How does one articulate fast passages on the dulcian in music from the period 1550-1700, the pre-bassoon-method era, when there are no indications suggested by the composer.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate the different ways of articulating fast passagework on the dulcian in repertoire spanning the period ca.1550 until ca.1700. Prior to 1787, when Etienne Ozi published his first edition of the *Nouvelle Methode de Basson*,¹ there are no sources known that specifically discuss articulation or (double) tonguing on bass double reed instruments. When we perform music from this era, we are in the dark as how to articulate highly virtuosic passages. What is preferable: Two-by-two slurring? Slurs over more notes, or maybe the use of some kind of double tongue-stroke?

During this research I will focus on primary sources that deal with articulation on various non-reed wind instruments of the period in question, such as the recorder, the cornetto and the trumpet. By studying the indications and recommendations given by masters of the past we can deduce their musical intentions. When we accept these authors as our guides, they may be able to help us imagining what articulation on a double-reed instrument could sound like. The moment we envision this concept, we can start to translate their instructions into articulation on reed instruments.

The output is threefold:

1. A paper describing the different ways on how to articulate fast passagework on the dulcian in a way that matches the *souplesse* and speed of non-reed instruments.
2. Two compositions written for the dulcian, with added articulation-markings by the author.
3. Video examples clarifying the musical examples.

With this project I hope to shed light on practical issues of the performance of highly virtuosic repertoire for dulcian and bassoon from the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

¹ Ozi, Etienne. *Méthode nouveau de basson* (1787)

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Introduction

I clearly remember the moment when I first got my hands on the score of the sonatas *per fagotto solo* (1645) by Giovanni Antonio Bertoli.² I was studying the baroque bassoon at the conservatoire and had just picked up the dulcian. There was no dulcian teacher, so I was on my own. I remember thinking after having studied the score: “This is impossible to play!”

After having studied the recorder for years, I had imprinted in my head: “*One should tongue fast notes in music from the early baroque. Ganassi and Dalla Casa say so.*” I brought the score to my recorder teacher, and she agreed with me that the early sources urge us not to slur fast notes. When I confronted my bassoon teacher with my problem, she recommended to stop thinking about it and to just add slurs.

I settled on trying my utmost to learn to attack all notes, thinking that I was lacking technique. Although even after a great deal of practicing and a bleeding tongue, I could still not attack the fastest passages. It was a mystery to me.

Since I was very eager to play these pieces, I finally decided to add some slurs, using my musical instinct as to the length of them. Slurring two-by-two, over four notes or over larger amounts of notes. But it never felt quite comfortable thinking that I was using techniques that were not *right*.

After having played and performed this repertoire for years now, and having spent a lot of time on helping students with articulation issues, I came to the conclusion that, years ago, I made a mistake in my reasoning. The truth is that Ganassi and Dalla Casa did not have the music of Bertoli in mind when they wrote their recommendations on articulation. They were talking about sixteenth century diminution repertoire for recorder or cornetto, and not seventeenth century repertoire for *fagotto solo* such as the works by De Selma³ or Bertoli.⁴ But having come to this conclusion, I realized that I had opened a big can of worms.

What information, from which sources, from what era, can, or should, one apply to what kind of repertoire?

After having pondered over this for a while, I started to ask students simple questions about articulation. Questions like: “When you play this piece with these fast passages without articulation indications, what historical sources could you use to find out what articulation to use.” After having

² *Compositioni Musicali* (Venice, 1645)

³ *Canzoni, Fantasie et Correnti* (Venice, 1638)

⁴ *Ibid*

done this for quite some time, I have come to the conclusion that many baroque bassoon (and baroque oboe) students ask themselves few questions about articulation.

This is why I thought it is time to try to shed some light on the issue of how to play *Fast Notes!* on the bassoon.

Prior to 1787, the year in which the bassoon virtuoso Etienne Ozi published his first edition *Nouvelle Méthode de Basson*, there are no sources that we know of, that specifically discuss articulation on double-reed bass instruments. Dulcian players and bassoonists interpreting music from before this year can follow markings given by the composer if they are there, or will have to make decisions concerning articulation for themselves.

What we do have though, are treatises discussing articulation on other instruments, such as the recorder, the cornetto and the traverso, but also string instruments, keyboard instruments and vocal treatises. In different periods in music history and various countries, we find that the sources handed down to us, indicate different rules and suggestions as on how to approach articulation.

Rather than adding a profusion of long slurs, or playing everything with a hard double-tongue staccato, I would like to invite bassoonists to make conscious choices between paired single-tonguing, double-tonguing and/or slurring in a variety of different manners, based on musical expression. A subtle use of articulation, also in fast passages, can be an important way to express one self. Some choices of articulation can, and should be made by the performer, from a personal, aesthetic point of view; other decisions might have technical reasons. More about these considerations later.

In this paper I will discuss different historical sources that deal with articulation, and the way we can use this information in repertoire for the bassoon. Furthermore, I will compare compositions either for dulcian or bassoon that are handed down to us *without* articulation markings, with treatises or repertoire written for other wind instruments of the relevant era, *with* articulation markings added by the composer.

In the musical examples and in the complete pieces with articulation markings, which are included in the appendix, the syllables used are not meant to be rigid. They have the following meaning:

<i>tu</i>	strong, in front of the mouth
<i>du</i>	weak, farther back on the palate
<i>gu</i>	in the back of the mouth as in <i>gorgonzola</i>

It is impossible to grasp the relative nuances of harshness or weakness of the above-mentioned syllables on paper.

I hope this research will challenge the interested bassoonist to question the way of articulating fast passages in bassoon literature, and encourage them to make choices regarding articulation in a more informed way.

I would like to express my gratitude to Charles Toet and Kathryn Cok for sharing their time and knowledge.

1.0 What is articulation?

“A term denoting the degree to which each of a succession of notes is separated in performance; it may lie at either of the extremes of staccato and legato, or anywhere between the two.”⁵

“The way successive notes are joined to one another in performance. Opposite kinds of articulation are staccato (detached) and legato (smooth).”⁶

“In music as in speech, articulation is the process by which one sound is separated from or connected to that which precedes it.”⁷

The above-mentioned definitions of articulation seem clear-cut, yet the technical implications for players of various kinds of instruments or vocalists are wide-ranging. String players are dealing with bowing, singers with text, keyboard players with fingerings and touch, and players of wind instruments with tonguing.

In various genres and periods, the use of articulations, such as slurs, paired tongue-strokes and double tongue-strokes, can have different functions. In virtuosic instrumental music we might choose to add slurs to reach a certain speed, whilst in vocal music we might use paired tonguing to match the text of a vocal part. In sixteenth century diminutions we might try to avoid slurs because most treatises advise us not to for the sake of imitating the human voice, whilst in classical music we might feel the need to add slurs in fast passages, as without them, it would sound ‘old-fashioned’, as Etienne Ozi points out in his celebrated method for the bassoon.⁸

Within the family of woodwind instruments we can distinguish important technical differences between those instruments with double reeds, such as the bassoon and the oboe, and those without, such as the cornetto, the recorder and the traverso. Starting a note on a non-reed instrument, one starts the note by touching the palate with the tip of the tongue. When released, the tone speaks. On reed instruments we do not touch the palate, but instead we touch the tip of the reed.

Before we proceed, we should define the different kinds of articulation. This research is about fast passages and therefore about paired-tonguing, double-tonguing and slurring. The single tongue-stroke is used for slow and moderate tempi and, as a result of this, will be touched upon only briefly in this paper.

⁵ White, Bryan. "Articulation." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press.

⁶ Music-Dictionary.org, accessed August 24, 2015

⁷ Tarr, Edward H, and Bruce Dickey. 2007. *Articulation in Early Wind Music*. Amadeus Verlag. Pg. 11

⁸ Ozi, Etienne. *Méthode nouveau de basson* (Paris, 1803), pg.9 “Il ne faut jamais piquer toutes les notes de l'exemple ci-après, dans quelques mouvements qu'il soit; cela tiendroit trop du vieux style musical”.

- Paired-tonguing is a combination of strong and weak 'single' syllables and is mainly used for passages in tempi between moderate and fast. E.g. *tu du, tu du, tu du*
- Double-tonguing is a tongue-stroke used by wind players to articulate fast passages cleanly, clearly and without slurs. It is used when the tempo is too fast to use single tonguing. Later on we will focus on double-tonguing more extensively.
- The term slurring is applied when we play legato without the use of the tongue. The first note should always be attacked by the tongue though, in order to let it speak.

The term single-tongue stroke is used when we use the same syllable consecutively. E.g. *tu, tu,*

1.1 Single and paired tonguing

On wind instruments, different kinds of tongue-strokes are described by the masters of the past by the means of syllables, such as *te, de, le and re*. The consonants used in articulation syllables differ per country. Whereas in Italy the preferred consonant is *e*, in Germany and England *i* is used, and the French like *u*. It is likely that these differences originate from shape of the inside of the mouth while speaking the native tongue.

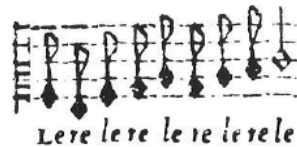


Fig.1 Example from Girolamo Dalla Casa *Il vero modo do diminuir* (1585)

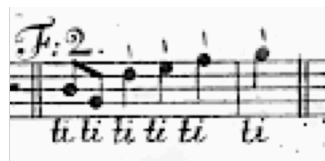


Fig.2 Example from Joachim Quantz *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (1752)



Fig.3 Example from Hotteterre le Romain *Principes de la Flute Traversiere* (1707)

From as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, until the end of the eighteenth century, leading instrumentalists and pedagogues felt the need to teach their students, in treatises such as *Opera Intitulata Fontegara* by Sylvestro Ganassi up to the *Ausführlicher und Gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen* by Johann George Tromlitz,⁹ how to apply different ‘articulation syllables’ in such a way, that the notes would sound *as if* they had text, and how to play a musical instrument in such a fashion, that it would sound as possible to the human voice: music as speech.

⁹ Leipzig, 1791



Fig.4 Sylvestro Ganassi. Title page *La Fontegara* (1535)

From the point of departure of this paper, namely the beginning of the sixteenth century until approximately the second half of the eighteenth century, the use of different tongue-strokes and slurs on the various wind instruments, is generally approached in the same manner.¹⁰

In diatonically moving passages the majority of the treatises advise us to attack the notes in an alternating way: strong-weak, strong-weak. Since we do not have any treatises for bassoon before 1787 discussing articulation as mentioned above, we should use the sources written for other wind instruments, when we interpret music for dulcian or bassoon.

In the following chapters we will take a closer look at the different musical objectives of articulation. What exactly do we want to achieve by using a variety of articulations in different musical style periods?

¹⁰ Michel Corrette is an exception. From 1735 onwards we can distinguish the beginning of a new trend in articulation that will lead eventually to ways of articulation in the classical era. Corrette, as it happens, writes in his *Méthode pour apprendre aisément à jouer de la flüte traversière* that earlier flautists applied *tu ru* in tonguing. He goes on by saying that [his] present-day virtuosi do not use *tu ru* anymore. He calls using this form of paired articulation absurd and that it only serves to bother students. Maybe he wants to make his treatise a little too effortless? In 1735 Corrette seems to stand alone in his aversion of paired tonguing, but later on in the century it slowly disappears in favor of slurring two-by-two.

Before we speak about more complicated multiple tongue-strokes, let us now have a closer look at the basic single ones:

Tu is the strongest tongue-stroke since the tongue is placed in front of the mouth, right behind the teeth as in pronouncing the word ‘ten’. The *du*, *lu* and *ru* are the softer syllables. Hereby, the tongue is placed against the palate in different places, increasingly farther back in the back of the mouth towards the uvula. The difference between the placement of the tongue between a *t* and a *d* becomes obvious we say the word ‘tender’. The tongue starts in front of the mouth for the *t* and moves back when pronouncing the *d*.

A succession of the same syllables such as *tu,tu,tu,tu* or *du,du,du,du* can be used for longer note values, or on shorter note values in slower tempi, as can be seen in fig. 5. This articulation we call single-tonguing, or single tongue-stroke.

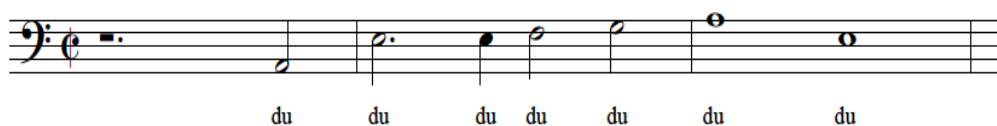


Fig. 5 Excerpt from *Anchor che col Partire* by Cipriano de Rore

Combining the stronger and the weaker syllables, we create a so-called ‘paired tongue-stroke’. When we articulate in this manner, we always start with the stronger articulation in the front of the mouth behind the teeth, followed by a weaker one farther back in the mouth.

This alteration of *strong* and *weak* syllables (also called *good* and *bad*) is in sounding effect comparable to the *up* and *down* stroke on the violin, as discussed by Francesco Rognoni,¹¹ or *good* and *bad* fingers on a keyboard instrument, such as described by Girolamo Diruta (1554-after 1610).¹²

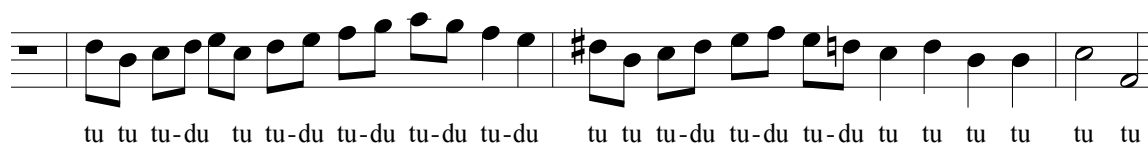


Fig.6 Excerpt from *Anchor che col Partire* by Cipriano de Rore with an uncomplicated diminution by the author.



Fig.7 Dalla Casa, *Il vero modo di diminuir* (1584), pg 1

By applying this paired articulation, we find that it creates a slight rhythmical inequality as in reciting a text.¹³

¹¹ *Selva de varii passaggi*, Milan 1620

¹² *Il Transylvano*, Venice 1591

When playing a reed instrument, because of the fact that we have to touch the reed with the tip of the tongue when we make a tongue-stroke (we will discuss the double tongue-stroke later), we cannot place the tongue on different places on the palate, as is advocated in treatises dealing with articulation and tonguing on non-reed instruments.

If we cannot make the distinction between strong and weak notes by using different positions of the tongue on the palate, how can we then achieve this alternation of *good* and *bad* notes, and the rhythmical irregularity that comes with it? The answer can be found in the angle in which the tongue touches the reed.

On a double-reed instrument, the difference between a harsh tonguing and a softer one is determined by the extent of how much we block the airstream through the reed by the tongue.

A harsh tongue-stroke (E.g. *tu, ta or ti*) is executed by completely blocking the reed with the tip of the tongue, not allowing any air passing through the reed. As an analogy, we could think of opening and closing a faucet; the water either runs or stops.

The weaker articulations (E.g. *du, ru or lu*) are performed by touching the reed more from below without actually closing the tip, and by doing so, allowing air to pass through the reed when touching it with the tongue. In this manner one does not block the tip of the reed completely. As an image one could think of pulling your finger quickly through a flowing stream of water from the faucet. The finger minimally interrupts the water just like the tongue minimally interrupts the airstream.

The alternation of *good* and *bad* notes, as described in treatises for non-reed instruments (*de re, te re, te re*, etc.), is therefore not done by moving the tongue to different positions on the palate, but by varying the extent of closing the tip of the reed and thus the amount of air that passes through the reed. The *tu* equals ‘closing the tip completely’ and the *du* equals ‘letting air pass through the reed while attacking’.

¹³ An in-depth discussion about tonguing and articulation on non-reed wind instruments can be found in the preface of *Italienische Diminutionen* by Richard Erig (Amadeus Verlag, 1979)

1.2 Double tongue-stroke

The double tongue-stroke, also called double-tonguing, is the fastest way of attacking notes on a wind instrument. A double-tongue stroke is composed of two syllables instead of one, as discussed in the previous chapter. In the sixteenth century, we can recognize three varieties. They were called ‘the three principal tongue-strokes’. Dalla Casa describes them as follows:¹⁴

1. Reversed tongueing (*lingua riversa*): *ler-er, der-ler* or *ter-ler*
2. *Te-re te-re te-re te* (good for eight and sixteenth notes)
3. *Te-che te-che te*



Essendo la lingua riuersa, la principal delle tre lingue la metteremo nel primo loco, per hauer lei la simiglianza della gorgia piu che l'altre. Et si dimanda lingua di gorgia. Questa lingua è uelocissima, & è difficile da raffrenar, lo batter suo è al palato, & si proferisse in tre modi. Ler,ler,ler,ler, der ler, Ter,ler,ter,ler. El primo è proferir dolce, il secondo è mediocre, & il terzo è piu crudo de gli altri, per esser piu pontata lingua. Nel principio dell'opera hauete gli essemplj di tutte tre le forte di proferir: nel qual farà scritto le sue sillabe sotto ogni nota, & compagnerete la lingua con la mano. Questa regola la offeruarete sopra tutti gli essemplii.

La seconda lingua è questa. Tere tere, tere, terete. Questa lingua si dimanda lingua dretta, il suo batter è nelli denti, & è lingua per natura leda, & è buona per la Minuta di Croma, & Semicroma, essendo naturalmente raffrenata. Doue hauerete il medesimo essemplio, che dico de sopra.

La terza lingua è questa Teche, teche, teche, techete. Questa lingua si batte nel palato appresso alli denti è lingua cruda per sonatori, che uogliono far terribiltà; non è troppo grata all'orecchio, & è per natura ueloce, & difficile da raffrenar. Hauete l'essemplio simile alle altre.

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Fig.8 Dalla Casa excerpt from *Il vero modo di diminuir* explaining different ways of articulation on the cornetto.

It is important to point out, that the first two kinds of principal tongue-strokes as described above, are produced by placing the tongue on different places on the palate. The third variety *te-che te-che* is executed by placing the tongue behind the teeth for the *te*, however the *che* is formed in the back of the mouth as in *ticking*.

If, because of technical inability of the player, the three principal tongue-strokes are not an option, the alternative is slurring, meaning no use of the tongue at all, except for the first note of the slurred passage. Sylvestro Ganassi¹⁶ clarifies in chapter 8 of his treatise, after he describes the three principal tongue-strokes, “there is a tonguing in which no syllable at all is pronounced. Its movement is from one lip to the other.”¹⁷ Although Ganassi’s explanation on this matter is rather cryptic, the remark “in which no syllable at all is pronounced” is likely to mean ‘slurring’.

¹⁴ For more information about these articulations see *Il vero modo di diminuir* (1584)

¹⁵ Dalla Casa, Girolamo. *Il vero modo di diminuir* (Gardano, 1584), preface

¹⁶ *Opera Intitulata Fontegara*. (Venice, 1535)

¹⁷ Dickey and Tarr discuss the different possibilities this vague description could mean in *Articulation in Early Wind Music* (Amadeus Verlag, 2007), pg.45

The next time slurring¹⁸ is mentioned, is over a century later by Marin Mersenne in *Harmonie Universelle* in 1636¹⁹ and by Bartolomeo Bismantova in his treatise *Compendio Musicale* in 1677.

According to Dalla Casa double-tongue strokes can be executed on the cornetto in three basic different ways. In his *Il vero modo di diminuir* he states:

“*Lingua Riversa* [...] is extremely fast, and difficult to control. Its beating (striking point) is on the palate, and it and it proffers itself in three ways. Ler, ler, ler, derler; Ter, ler, terler. [...]

The second tonguing is this: tere tere, tere tere. [...] [This tonguing is] good for examples of *croma* and *semicroma*, being naturally controlled. [...]

The third tonguing is this: Teche, teche, teche, teche. This tonguing is articulated in the palate close to the teeth, and is a crude [hard] tonguing for players who want give an effect of terror.”²⁰

When we try to use this information on a reed instrument, we find that the *lingua riversa* is hard to perform, because the reed gets in the way of the tongue. The tongue has to move back and forth, from right behind the teeth to a little farther in, and back. It works when the tongue moves back and forth over the palate, but the reed blocks this movement.

The second tongue-stroke, *te-re te-re*, does work on the dulcian and bassoon, but only in moderate speed. On the recorder or the cornetto, the air pushes the tongue back to the front of the mouth. The reed is in the way and makes this air-controlled movement of the tongue to the front of the mouth, impossible.

The third tonguing Dalla Casa mentions, *te-che te-che* (the *che* in Italian is pronounced as *k*), is the most successful and useful one on the dulcian and the bassoon.



Fig.9 Excerpt form Dalla Casa, *Il vero modo di diminuir* (1584)

This technique is similar to what we now call double-tonguing on the modern bassoon, although we might want to use *du-gu* or *dou-gou* rather than *te-ke*. *Dou-gou* syllables give a smoother attack and are very well suited for diminutions, since they still sound slightly paired. When truly mastered, this tongue-stroke can sound as flexible as on the cornetto, when it is executed well.

¹⁸ in wind instrument articulation.

¹⁹ Marin Mersenne. *Harmonie universelle* (1636) pg.274-275

²⁰ Rosenberg, Jesse. “Il vero modo di diminuir” *Historical Brass Society Journal* (1989) pg.109-114

Dalla Casa describes the *te-che te-che* tonguing as ‘harsh and crude’, however, we should not forget that he focuses on the cornetto. An instrument without a reed is much more sensitive for minuscule differences in attack. On a double reed instrument, we have to make a strong attack in the back of the mouth near the uvula (*k or g*) to get the reed to vibrate. An articulation that may sound crude and harsh on one instrument, does not necessarily have to sound the same on another.

It is remarkable that Bismantova points out in his treatise²¹ that articulations on the recorder should be performed softer compared to how you would do it on the cornetto. Tongue-stroke on the recorder will sound more direct than on a cornetto, since there is no embouchure (buzzing of the lips) in the way. Bismantova provides identical musical examples for the two instruments, however using *t* tonguing for the cornetto, whereas he uses the softer *d* tonguing for the recorder.



Cornetto

Recorder



Cornetto

Recorder

Fig.10 Bismantova examples from *Compendium Musicale* (1677)

It is interesting to see how pragmatic Bismantova is in his approach to articulation. It shows that he considers the sounding result of greater importance than which technical action performed. In my opinion, this is an attitude that double-reed players should embrace when performing music from the pre-bassoon-method era.

²¹ *Compendium Musicale* (1677)

2. Articulation in bass diminutions

Diminutions are (improvised) embellishments that replace long notes with notes of shorter value. Adding diminutions to a vocal line was a practice that was developed in the 16th century, with the purpose of ornamenting a vocal line in a polyphonic piece. This could be done by a singer or by an instrumentalist who was replacing or doubling the singer.

Towards the end of the 16th century this practice developed more and more into a distinct genre. Virtuoso instrumentalists took a previously composed (by another composers), often popular, madrigal, and ornamented one of the vocal lines. The original madrigal would be played on an organ or other instruments as an accompaniment to the diminution. These originally vocal madrigals were now used as a base for a newly ‘composed’ diminution, making the composition a fusion between 2 composers: the one composer who composed the madrigal, and the other one who wrote the diminutions.²²

In the sixteenth century, the musical objective of instrumentalists is clear: namely, to get as close to the human voice as possible. Not only articulation-wise, but also matters such as sound production, phrasing and dynamics should be in favor of a vocal treatment of the music.

Sylvester Ganassi opens chapter one of his treatise *La Fontegara*²³ with the following statement:

“You have to know that compared to the human voice, all musical instruments are subordinate. This is why we concern ourselves to learn from them, and to imitate them.”

Francesco Rognoni Taeggio advocates in his *Selva de varii passaggi*²⁴:

“The cornetto is an instrument which partakes more in the qualities of the human voice than does any other[...] You should play it with discretion and delicacy, seeking to imitate the human voice; and the tongue should be neither too dead, nor too harshly struck, but rather be similar to the gorgia.”

If we have a look at solo bass repertoire from this period, diminutions for basso solo, what are the fastest notes we are dealing with? When we have a look at the diminutions on bass parts by Giovanni Bassano, we see that they all have 16th notes as fastest note value. This is typical for this repertoire from

²² Wouter Verschuren, *Bassus* (2014), p 6

²³ *Opera Intitulata Fontegara*. (Venice, 1535)

²⁴ *Selva de varii passaggi* (Milan, 1620) in *Articulation in Early Wind Music*, Dickey, Bruce and Edward Tarr. Amadeus Verlag ed (2007), p 87

this period. With a maximum speed of approximately minim 60, this means all the notes can be attacked, either using a fast paired, or a double tongue-stroke.

As we have pointed out before, the objective in this repertoire is to stay as close as possible to the human voice. Dalla Casa commences his chapter about the three principal tonguings on the cornetto,²⁵ with a tongue-stroke that resembles the *gorgia* most: the *Lingua Riversa*. *Gorgia* means throat in Italian. The word was used for the vocal technique that described the execution of fast vocal diminutions and ornaments such as the *trillo* executed by the throat. The *lingua riversa* consists of two syllables, strong and weak.

When, because of a lack in technique, using a fast single-tongue instead of a paired or double-stroke, there is a danger that all the notes will sound equal in strength and the alteration between strong and weak be lost. In this case, I would recommend slurring two-and-two.

Not every double-reed player is able to use a double-tongue articulation in a flexible, expressive and virtuosic manner. As mentioned before, I believe that in the end, the audible result is more important than the technique used. Slurring *two by two* can give a satisfactory result. It resembles the *le-re le-re* articulation on the cornetto. Personally, I prefer the *du-ge du-ge* double-tonguing on the dulcian, because of its clarity, and its diversity of nuances.

Appendix I contains a diminution on *Ancor che col partire* by Cipriano de Rore with a suggestion of articulation syllables to be used on a bass dulcian.

²⁵ Dalla Casa, Girolamo. *Il vero modo di diminuir* (Gardano 1584) in *Articulation in Early Wind Music*, Dickey, Bruce and Edward Tarr. Amadeus Verlag ed (2007), pg. 55

3.0 Dulcian repertoire from the 17th century

The seventeenth century is the period in which the emancipation of instrumental music took place. Numerous virtuoso instrumentalists such as Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Dario Castello, Giovanni Picchi and many others, commenced to compose instrumental music against the background of the San Marco chapel in Venice. At first they wrote these compositions for their own use, to be played in the liturgy in the *Basilica di San Marco*, the chapel of the Doge. In time, this new genre spread rapidly throughout Europe. New musical forms such as the Sonata, the Canzona and the Fantasia emerged, and would never disappear again.

In instrumental repertoire from the beginning of the seventeenth century, we can clearly recognize the influence of the vocal diminutions from the sixteenth century: The diatonic diminutions in 8th notes going a third up and back (fig.11 letter *a*), or the filling in of the octave in 16th notes (fig.11 letter *b*).

*a)**b)*

Fig.11 Excerpt from *Susana ung giur* by Dalla Casa, 1584

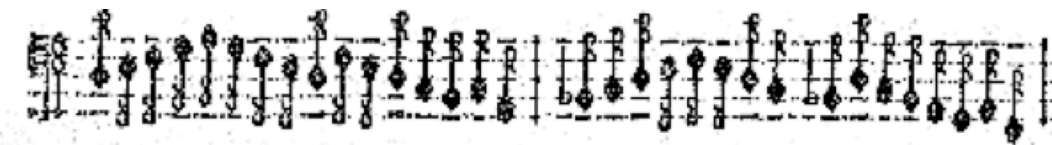


Fig.12 Excerpt from *Susana Pasegiata per basso solo* by De Selma, 1638

These two examples are compositions based on the same madrigal *Susanne un Jour* by Orlande de Lassus (c1532-1594), but composed fifty years apart. In the second example De Selma uses the same kind of diminution patterns as Dalla Casa had used in 1584. Although in other places in the same piece, De Selma uses material that does not resemble vocal diminutions at all.

a)

Fig.13 Excerpt from *Susana Pasegiata per basso solo* by De Selma, 1638

As we can see at letter *a* in fig.13, the composer writes in a reasonably fast passage a jump down stretching over an octave, and right after another one two octaves up. This is technically demanding for a

dulcian player, but rather impossible for a bass singer. It is obvious that we are dealing with instrumental repertoire.

Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) is the first to let go of the idea of *Lingua Versa* as we have discussed above, the fast alteration between stronger and weaker tonguings in fast passages. In his *Harmonie Universelle* (1636) he seems to describe four different tonguings. I deliberately say ‘seems to’, because it is evident that he was not a wind player himself, and was relying on information from other instrumentalists. He might not have been familiar with these techniques himself. His descriptions are often very unclear and puzzling.

Mersennes mentions four kinds of articulation:²⁶

1. Slurring (No example given by Mersenne). He calls it “*flowing or mute*”²⁷ and “*that it is done with the air alone*”.²⁸

2. Ta, ta-ra, ta-ra²⁹



Fig.14

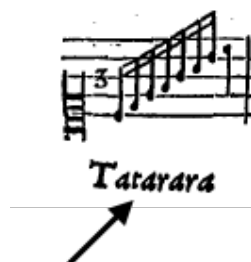


Fig. 15 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (1636)

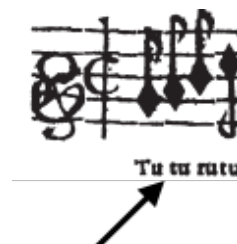


Fig.16 Jacques Hotteterre, *Principes de la flute traversières* (1707)

²⁶ Marin Mersenne. *Harmonie universelle* (1636) pg.274-275

²⁷ *coulante ou muette*.

²⁸ *se fait simplement avec le vent*.

²⁹ In this example it is likely that Mersenne made a mistake. In the other treatises from the time discussing articulation, the strong syllable ta is always alternated with the weaker syllable ra. His suggestion Ta-ta-ra-ra-ra-ra should probably be read as Ta ta-ra ta-ra ta-ra. It is noteworthy though, to observe that Mersenne starts this articulation sequens with two Ta's. In treatises of the high baroque in France, this is the common way to start a diatonic passage like this, but Mersenne is the first to describe it like this, opposed to starting a diatonic passage with one ta as the Italians did. The result is that the strong articulation syllable ta moves from the strong beat to the weak beat in the bar, creating *inegalité* that is so characteristic for French music of the baroque era.

3. Single tonguing (no example given). Mersenne describes it as “done with the tongue alone, and serves for all kinds of notes except eight notes, for which the second manner just mentioned is used.”³⁰

4. Slurring two-by-two



Fig.17 Example in *Harmonie universelle* (1636) describing two by two slurring by using an extra *a* to indicate the absence of the tongue.

Mersenne’s description of slurring “...[the first articulation] is called *flowing* or *mute* [and] is done with the air alone,” resembles the description of slurring given by Ganassi more than hundred years earlier as discussed above. Unfortunately, he does not provide a musical example for slurring, as he does for the other articulations he describes. Mersenne broke with a style of articulation on a wind instrument that was common for over a century. According to his texts, the virtuosic fast movements of the tongue imitating the *gorgia* should be replaced by slurring two by two.

With the emergence of instrumental music, not only new genres sprang to life, but it also allowed composers (who were mostly musicians themselves) to write more idiomatic, using the full range of possibilities of both players and instruments. In this novel, more instrumental approach of composing for wind instruments, we perceive the development of new techniques, such as the use of tremolo,³¹ the use of larger jumps in melodic lines as we have seen in the example of De Selma, and a stretch in range. We can also see of an increase in virtuosic, very fast passages, as can be seen for instance in the works of Bartolomé de Selma y Salaverde and Antonio Giovanni Bertoli, who were both dulcian players themselves.

Before taking a closer look at their compositions, we should give some attention to these important innovators, being the first soloists on the dulcian, the earliest type of bassoon. Who were these men, and what lives did they lead?

Bartolomé de Selma y Salaverde was born in Cuenca, Spain, in ca. 1595. His grandfather, (not his father, as Kenyon de Pascual rightly observes)³² also called Bartolomé, is mentioned the wind-instrument maker of the Spanish Royal Chapel from 1612 until his death in 1616. After his death, an inventory was made by his eldest sons. It is noteworthy to point out that besides a few finished and unfinished two keyed

³⁰ *se fait simplement avec la langue, et sert à toutes sortes de notes, exepté aux demies crochues, pour lesquelles on use de la seconde façon precedente.*

³¹ An articulation executed by pressure of the air.

³² Beryl Kenyon de Pascual. 1986. The wind-instrument maker Bartolomé de Selma (†1616), his family and his workshop.

dulcians, they mention a finished three-keyed instrument. We do not know of any surviving three keyed examples and therefore are not certain what the third key was for. It is likely that this key was the key for the low B-flat as described by Marin Mersenne in his *Harmonie Universelles* (1636). A two-keyed dulcian descends only to C2 as the lowest note.



Fig.18 *Canzoni, Fantasie e Correnti* (Venice,1638)

De Selma junior was an Augustinian friar, and active as a dulcian player and composer. In 1613 he professed at the *San Felipe el Real*, the Madrid house of the Augustinian order. Fifteen years later, he shows up in Innsbruck, where he was engaged from 1628 until 1630 as a virtuoso dulcian player at the court of Archduke Leopold. His one surviving collection, *Canzoni fantasie et correnti da suonar* (Venice, 1638) is the first collection that we know of containing compositions for solo dulcian. De Selma is the first and only composer in this period, using the low B-flat in his fantasia for *Fagotto solo*. It may be recalled that there was a three-keyed dulcian in the inventory of Bartolomé de Selma senior.

In his compositions, De Selma shows himself at times a forward thinker, as can be seen in the use of expressive markings and the use of new musical forms, such as the fantasia and the canzona. But at the same time he clearly stems from the sixteenth century *Prima Prattica* tradition. When we look at his works based on madrigals, such as *Susanne un Jour* and *Vestiva i Colli*, we see him referring to these traditional, well known sixteenth century melodies, treated in a seventeenth century fashion though, by providing a basso continuo part rather than an intabulation of the madrigal.

Taking into account the difficulty of the passagework in his compositions, it is obvious that De Selma must have been a master on his instrument. A sonnet by Claudio Panta praises his control of breathing and tonguing:

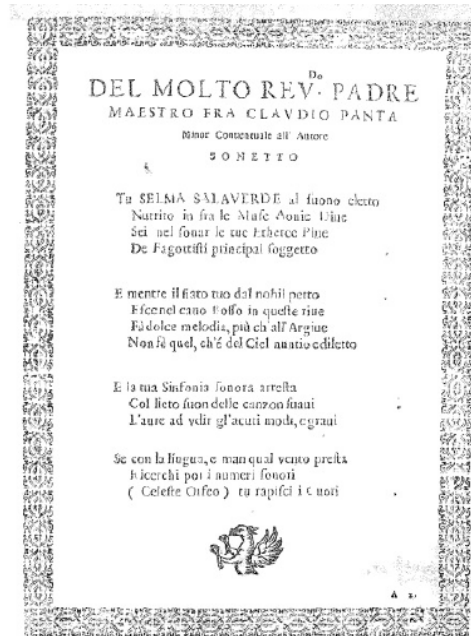


Fig.19 Sonnet by Claudio Panta to De Selma's *Canzoni fantasie et correnti da suonar* (Venice 1638)

*You, Selma Salaverde, born for music
And nourished amidst the divine Muses by Aoidie,
When you play your ethereal piva
You are the best amongst bassoonists.*

*As you make the hollow tube resound,
A sweeter harmony in our lands
Than that produced in Greece
By Heaven's messenger and delight.*

*To the happy sound of your sweet songs
Your sonorous symphony invites the breezes
To halt and listen to your notes both high and low.*

*When, with lips and hand, quick as the wind,
You seek out such sonorous numbers,
Celestial Orpheus, you ravish our hearts.³³*

³³ Translation: Jerome Lejeune

Antonio Giovanni Bertoli was baptized on 27 January 1598 in Lonato, Italy, and died after 1645. He studied under Stefano Bernardi in Verona and was engaged as a cornetto player at the Verona Cathedral in 1614-1615. Bertoli mentions in his dedication to emperor Ferdinand III of his *Salmi intieri* (Venice, 1639), that he had been in the service of Archduke Carl Joseph Habsburg, Bishop of Breslau and Bressanone. Later, in the preface to his *Compositioni musicali* (Venice, 1645) he states that he was persuaded to publish the collection by Francesco Turini, organist of Brescia Cathedral, and by two musicians working at the court of Ferdinand III, Bertali and Giovanni Sansoni³⁴. We may conclude from this that he was active in Italy as well as at the Habsburg court.

His set of nine sonatas for the dulcian is the first collection of compositions for this instrument, but it is worthy to point out that it is also the first known collection dedicated to solo sonatas as a genre. His writing for the dulcian is extremely demanding and stretches the boundaries of the instrument.

If we compare the compositions of these two virtuosic dulcian players with bass diminutions for the voice as we have discussed in the previous chapter, we can observe similarities and differences. The treatment of division patterns by De Selma and Bertoli in their sonatas and fantasias is similar to those in earlier diminution repertoire, nevertheless we can observe that the dulcian parts are moving faster in the low register than most of the vocal bass parts. Instruments have fewer technical restrictions, compared to the voice in the low register. These virtuosic players fully explore the possibilities of the bass register. A diminution for a bass singer would never go down to low C in a fast passage as can be seen in the following example by De Selma.



Fig.20 Bartolomé de Selma y Salaverde excerpt from *Vestiva i colli pasegiato per Basso solo*

Whereas we have said, in the previous chapter, to avoid slurring in diminution repertoire, in repertoire written for the dulcian in the seventeenth century the situation changes. First of all, we see that the sixteenth note is no longer the smallest note value, thus demanding a different approach to articulation. And secondly, in the rapid passages of sixteenth notes in the lowest range of the dulcian, slurs come in handy since these notes are sometimes hard to attack with a double-tongue.

³⁴ Gabriele Bonomo. "Bertoli, Giovanni Antonio." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press.

The following four categories of fast passages played on the dulcian in seventeenth century repertoire may ask for the use of slurs:

1. Passages moving fast in the lowest range of the dulcian.



Bertoli sonata 8 bar 51-52

Fig.21

2. Fast ornaments above, below or around the main note.



Bertoli sonata 7 bar 38

Fig.22



De Selma Susanna passeggiata bar 68-71

Fig.23

3. *Tirata*. ('Means a shot or an arrow'. *Tirare* = to shoot)



Fig.24 Joachim Herbst *Musica Moderna Practica* (Franckfurt, 1658) pg.13

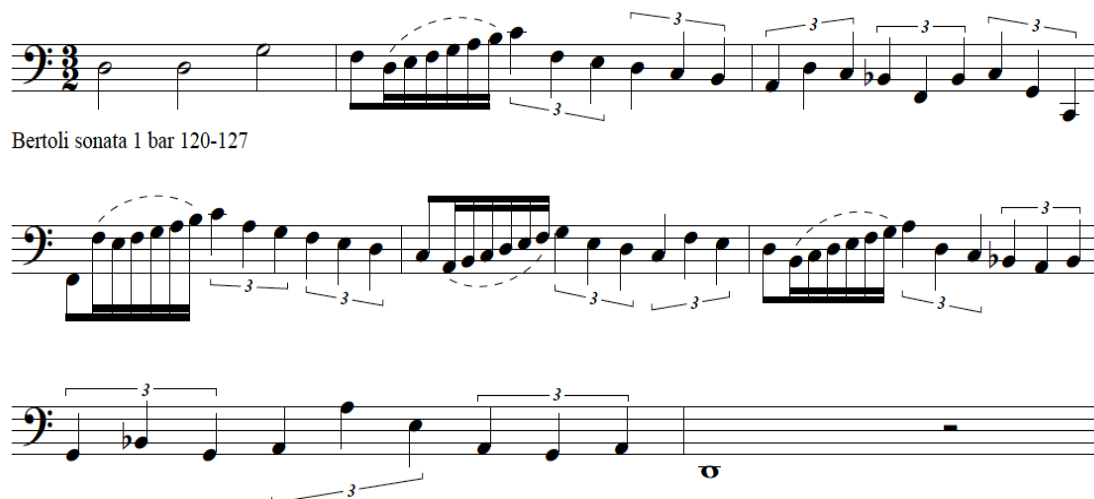


Fig.25

4. Passages consisting of extremely fast notes in which we want the musical freedom to speed up when it is too fast to tongue in any way.³⁵

tu - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du ge du - ge

De Selma Fantasia no.5 bar 100-105

accel.

Fig.26 De Selma, Fantasia per basso solo. Bar 100-104 *Canzoni Fantasie et Correnti*, Venetia, 1638

To point out the difference between the above stated recommendations and some contemporary editions, it might be interesting to make a comparison of some bars of Sonata Prima by Bertoli. Let us compare the original articulation from the 1645 edition, with the edition from Schott Music and with an edition by my hand. The entire piece, with my articulation suggestions, can be found in appendix B.

³⁵ As Mersenne describes as we discussed previously in this chapter.

Fig.27 a,b and c Bar 38-41 from Sonata Prima by G.A.Bertoli:



Fig.27a Excerpt from Edition Schott 1971

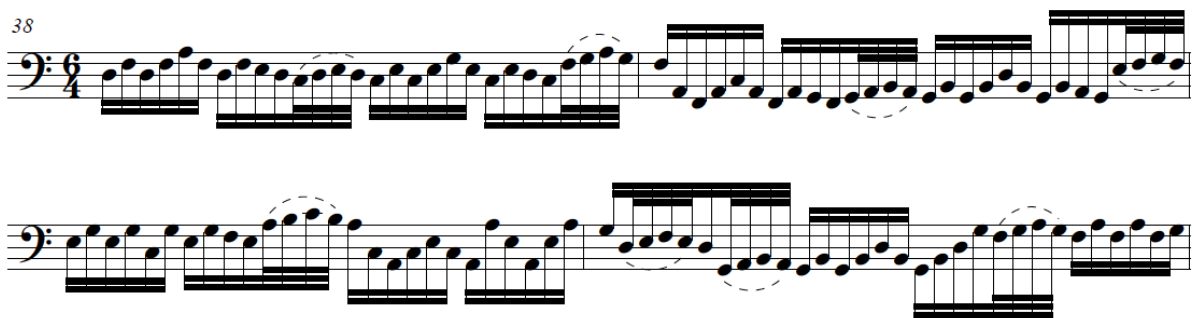


Fig.27b Edition Wouter Verschuren 2015. 32nd notes are slurred following point 2 as explained above.

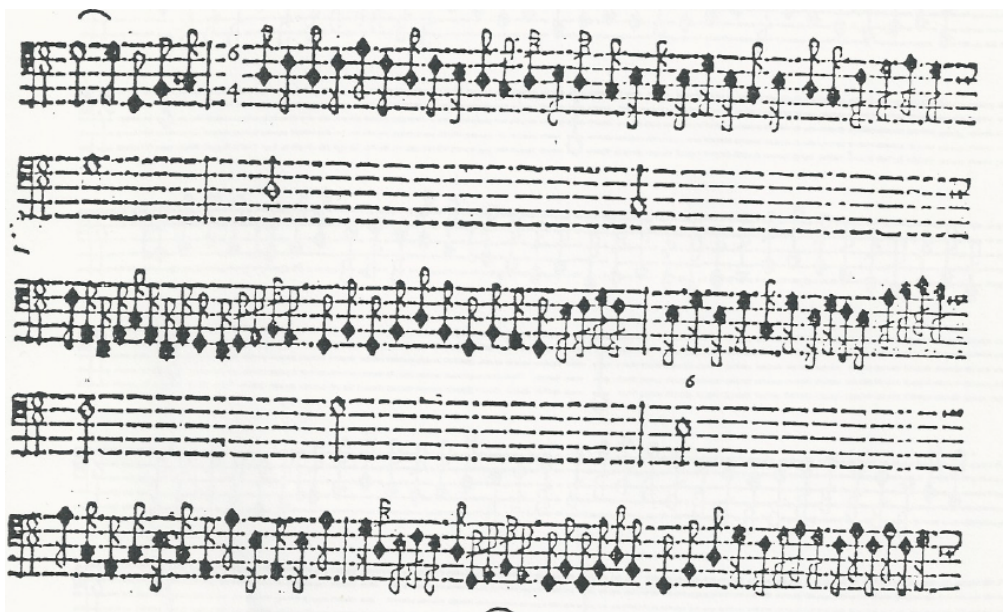


Fig.27c First edition (Venice, 1645)

First, we will take a closer look at the first example, bar 38 to 41. Before we address matters of articulation, it might be good to discuss a few other aspects of the different editions.

In bar 38 Bertoli changes the metre to 6/4. He only does this in the fagotto part, as can be seen in the first edition in the fig.27c, whereas the continuo part stays in 2/2. When we look at the continuo line we see that in the section leading up to bar 38 the pulse already is in a slow 2/2 . Fig.28 shows bar 28 to 38.³⁶



Fig.28 bar 28-38 of Sonata Primo by G.A.Bertoli (Venice, 1645)

When we reach bar 38, the meter stays in 2/2 when considering the continuo line. The 6/4 only occurs in the top part. The bar in the dulcian part should be divided in 4 beats rather than in 6, as is the case in the Edition by Schott. It is understandable where the confusion comes from if you take the 6/4 sign literally. We see that in the Schott edition the editor changed the half notes in the continuo line into dotted half notes to fill up to bar. I chose to beam the sixteenth notes into groups of 6 sixteenth notes rather than groups of four as is the case in the Schott edition. Of course the edition from 1645 has no beams at all.

Then there is another puzzling issue. In the Schott edition we find in the whole piece a curious use of commas. The editor points out in the preface that these are breathing caesuras, but they seem to be placed at the most inconvenient places. Also the amount of them, in bar 53-55 three times, seems a little excessive.

³⁶ Counting every semibreve as a bar. Bertoli is not consequent in his placing of barlines as was common in this period.

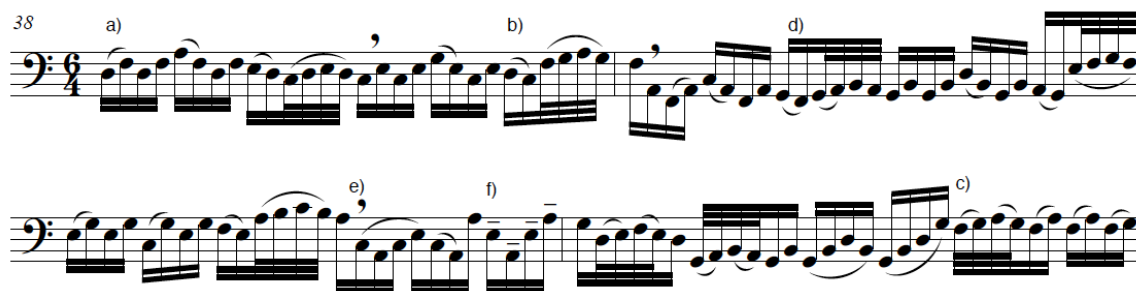


Fig.29 Bertoli sonata 1 bar 38-41 Edition Schott 1971

We finally come to the articulation of the passage. In the Schott edition we are confronted with a wide range of articulation markings:

a)



Slurs over two notes.

b)



Slurs over four notes.

c)



Two-by-two slurring

d)



Two-by-two slurs with the last two separated.

e)



Off beat slurring into a beat

f)



Tenuto markings

To be able to discuss articulation we first need to agree on a tempo. For this sonata would suggest a general metronome tempo of half note is 40. This tempo is, of course, flexible, and the passage at bar 38 might be a touch slower. In this tempo everything is playable using a light double-tongue articulation except for the 32nd notes. I would consider these groups as number 2 'Fast ornaments above, below or around the main note', and slur them as marked with dotted slurs in fig.27b If one does not 'have' a good functioning double-tongue, two-by-two slurring can be a good alternative as discussed in the previous chapter. The articulation markings used in the Schott edition in fig.29 at letters *a*, *d*, *e*, and *f*, I would advise against. This random use of a variety of slurs makes the texture unclear, and this practice cannot be found in any seventeenth century treatise. *Tenuto* markings were not in use in the middle of the seventeenth century.

I deliberately mentioned above "*If one does not 'have' a good functioning double-tongue*" since I hear this phrase being used quite often by students and even by professionals and teachers. This phrase is used as if one is born with a good double-tongue; as a gift from above. I would argue against this. Double-tongue articulation is a technique that can be learned just like training your fingers or working on breathing. Speed, flexibility and refinement in articulation, and especially the double-tongue-stroke, should be addressed as an expressive tool; as a means to be able to perform fast passages without having to resort to complex slurring and is often under-exposed in the education of many bassoon students.

Fig.30 a, b and c Bar 54-55 from Sonata Prima by G.A.Bertoli:



Fig.30a Bar 53-55 Bertoli sonata 1 bar 53-55 Edition Schott 1971

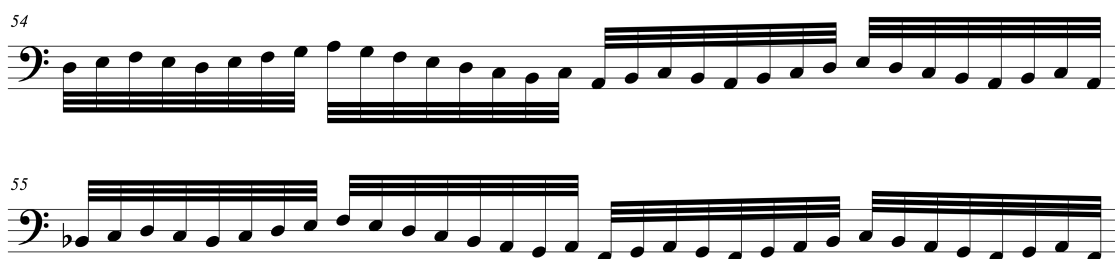


Fig.30b Bertoli sonata 1 bar 54-55 Edition Wouter Verschuren 2015. No slurs, as it is playable with a double-tongue.

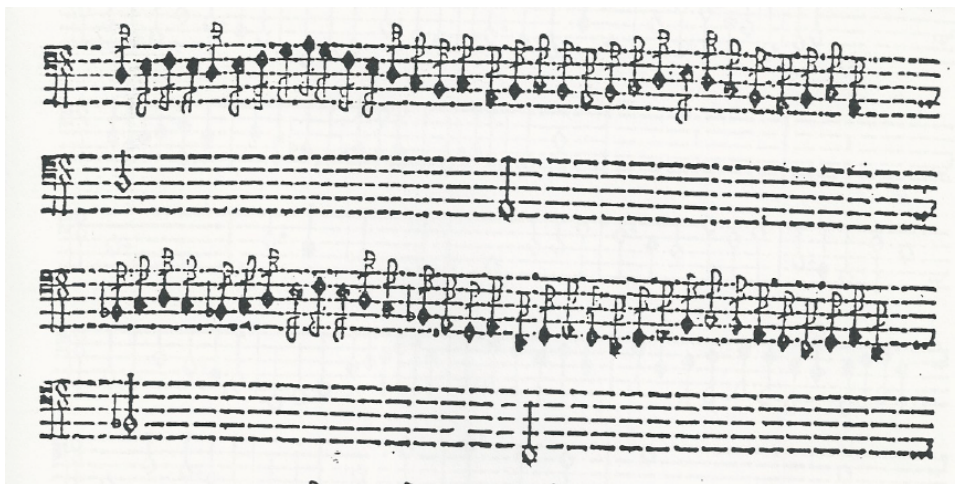


Fig.30c First edition (Venice, 1645)

Let us have a look at another passage. Bar 54-55 is a fast passage in 32nd notes. If we take the tempo as discussed above, that is halfnote-40 (which equals quarter note-80). This means that one can use a double-tongue stroke for all the fast notes which gives a light and clear effect. Of course it should not sound like a machine gun as we can hear in some performances.

The editor of the Schott edition, as can be seen in fig. 30a, recommends adding a great variety of articulations. This could mean that he or she has a completely different of the tempo since following all these articulation markings is hardly possible in my preferred speed. Slurring *four by four*, as is suggested for the beginning of bar 54 could work if you would continue this pattern. However, proceeding with four separate notes with dots (whatever they may mean) and then followed by a slur over 5 notes, will make it impossible to create an impression of virtuosic sound clusters and will get in the way of speedy tonguing. The second half of bar 54 is almost identical to the first half, nevertheless the editor chooses to use a completely different kind of articulation: namely slurring over the first two 32h notes:



Fig. 31

In the middle of 54 and in the beginning of bar 55 we can spot two commas and their meaning is unclear. It is unlikely that they mean 'breath', since they are placed only half a bar apart. But if they are not breathing marks, what else could they mean?

In bar 55 we find another curious articulation. There are two times four groups of four sixteenth notes. The third group of four has dots. It is totally unclear what the meaning is and how you could ever execute this.



Fig.32

Conclusion

The choice of articulation makes all the difference for a convincing performance of a piece of music, especially in music in which the composer left it up to the performer. The taste in the manner instrumentalists use various articulations, such as slurs and *stronger* versus *weaker* tongue-strokes, changes through the ages. Whereas in the sixteenth century the aesthetic ideal is to slur as little as possible because of clarity, we find in the nineteenth century the urge to slur long phrases together.

When one tries to understand a certain style, and thus to create an image of what a composition should or could sound like, one needs to gain more in-depth knowledge on how the masters of a certain period were handling this issue themselves.

In this paper I provide tools and suggestions for dulcian players, based on readings of the period, on how to approach music of the sixteenth and seventeenth century from a perspective of articulation.

The most important recommendations are:

- In music of the sixteenth century we should hardly use slurs. Most of the repertoire can be played with a single, paired or double tongue-stroke. Fast notes should be articulated two-and-two, creating thus a light rhythmic inequality. Harsh and square articulation should be avoided since imitation of the human voice is the ultimate goal.
- Virtuoso music of the seventeenth century can be approached in the same way as music from the sixteenth century, although we find that often the small note values exceed the speed of the use of the double tongue-stroke. In this case slurs can be used, but in moderation and deliberate consideration. Recommendations on this matter are given in chapter three of this paper.

The use of the tongue on a wind instrument should be seen as a means of expression. Therefore the various manners of tonguing and slurring always have, and should have, a musical and expressive effect. Resorting to slurs because of technical inability will weaken the eloquence of the performance.

Appendix A

Ancor che col Partire

Cipriano de Rore
diminution: W.Verschuren

3

tu tu tu

5

tu - du tu - du tu - du tu-ge du-ge tu - du tu - du tu tu - du tu tu tu

7

tu - ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu tu tu - du tu-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge

8

tu tu-du tu tu tu tu tu tu-ge du-gu tu - du

11

du tu tu - du tu - du tu tu tu-ge tu-ge tu-ge du tu

13

du tu tu du tu du tu - du tu - du tu - du tu

15

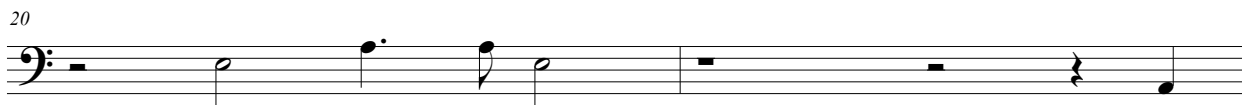
tu - ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du tu tu - du tu tu-ge du-ge du-ge

16

du-gu du-gu du-gu du-gu tu - du tu - du tu tu tu tu



tu du tu du-ge du-ge du-ge tu-du tu-du tu tu du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu-du du du



tu tu - du tu tu



tu-du tu-de du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu - du tu - du tu - ge du-ge du-ge tu tu tu - du tu - du tu



du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu tu tu du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu tu tu-du tu-du tu tu du-ge du-ge du-ge



du tu du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu tu-du tu-du tu-du tu du-ge tu du-ge du



tu tu du tu-du tu-du du tu du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu-du tu-du tu tu-du tu



du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge tu tu-ge tu tu tu tu - du tu



tu tu tu tu-du tu tu-ge du-ge du-ge tu tu tu-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge du-ge

35

du tu du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge tu du tu tu - du

36

tu tu — du tu tu-du tu-du du tu — ge du-ge tu tu-ge du-ge du-ge tu du-ge du-ge du-ge tu-du tu tu tu

38

du tu tu du tu tu du-ge du-ge du-ge tu - du tu - du tu - du tu - du

40

tu - ge du - ge du - ge du - ge tu - du tu - du tu - du du tu tu tu — du tu

41

tu - du tu - du tu - du tu tu du tu tu — ge du-ge tu tu - du tu

Appendix B

Sonata Prima

Giovanni Antonio Bertoli

1

 tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu

6

 tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du tu tu tu tu du tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du tu tu tu

14

 tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du tu tu tu tu

18

 tu du tu du tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du gu tu du gu tu du gu du gu du gu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du gu tu du gu tu du gu du gu du gu

21

 tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du gu tu du gu tu tu gu du gu du gu tu tu gu tu du gu tu tu gu du gu du gu tu tu tu tu tu tu

23

 tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du gu tu du gu tu tu gu du gu du gu tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du gu tu du gu tu tu di tu du tu du

25

 tu gu tu gu tu gu tu du tu

27

 tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du tu tu du tu tu tu tu tu tu tu du tu du


37

 tu tu tu du tu gu du gu du gu tu gu du gu tu tu gu du gu du gu tu gu du gu tu

39

 tu gu du gu du gu tu gu du gutu tu gu du gu du gu tu gu du gu t

40



tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu - du - gu tu tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu

41



tu tu tu tu tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu - du - gu - tu tu - gu - du - gu du - gu

42




tu - gu - du - gu tu tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu - du - gu tu

43



tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu du - gu tu tu - gu - du - gu - du - gu tu - gu - du - gu tu

44



tu-gu-du-gu-du-gu tu tu tu tu tu-du tu tu tu tu tu-du tu-du tu tu tu-du t-du tu-du

54



tu-gu-du-gu-du-gu-du-gu idem.

56



tu tu tu

58



tu tu tu-gu-du-gu-du-gu idem tu tu tu-gu-du-gu-du-gu tu-du tu

61



tu tu du tu tu du tu tu - du tu tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du

74



tu tu tu-du tu tu tu du tu tu - du tu tu tu tu tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu-du tu tu

85



tu tu tu - du tu - du tu - du tu - du tu tu tu - du tu - du tu - du tu - du tu tu tu tu - du tu - du tu tu

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