



# BAROQUE PRACTICE

## HIP Orchestras: Incorporating Baroque Performance Practice in Young Orchestras

by Mary Sorlie

Go to an early music concert these days, and it might be referred to as a HIP performance. HIP stands for historically informed performances. In recent years, HIP concerts have become more mainstream. HIP seeks to place music performance in its original context, allowing audiences to experience it as the composer originally intended. This is done by using instruments of the Baroque period (originals or copies), as well as specialized techniques, research, artwork, scores and treatises.

One of the first HIP orchestras was *Concentus Musicus*, founded in 1953 by Nicholas Harnoncourt. Conductors Christopher Hogwood and Nicholas McGegan also greatly helped in allowing this movement to flourish. In 2009, Juilliard added a Historical Performance Division. In most large cities today, you will find choral and instrumental ensembles devoted to HIP.

So why even bother introducing this in the classroom or studio? Isn't there enough to teach or enough material to cover in each rehearsal or lesson? It is not just knowing about the composer and/or historical context of a work, but rather what the instruments were, and how the composer was writing for them. The instruments of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries have very different designs, sounds and limitations than those of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. When you approach a composition from the original context, it allows both the performer and audience to experience and hear it as the composer intended. And ultimately, that is the job of the performer.

When working with a younger orchestra, I would like to suggest four areas to begin with in introducing Baroque performance practice. These areas are: 1) Standing while playing, 2) repertoire, 3) ornamentation, and 4) resources in the Twin Cities.

### Standing while playing

Baroque paintings of musicians depict angelic figures surrounding musicians. The musicians are almost always standing. Early

paintings of the orchestra at Esterhazy show the musicians standing. Pictures of the Leipzig orchestra of the 1850s show Concertmaster Ferdinand David and all of the strings except the cellos standing. Until almost 1900, players stood. Today, there seems to be a trend for the upper players to stand in a string quartet. The Emerson Quartet is perhaps the most famous quartet to be doing this.

Try working with the upper strings standing. Stands should not be too high, and players should be given lots of room to move. Students will hear and feel things much differently. If the ensemble is not too large, try without a conductor. It is amazing what can happen when there is very little dialogue in a rehearsal. Students will usually feel better when they play standing. If your violin sections are not across from each other, try placing them opposite each other instead of next to each other. Have the students suggest different instrument configurations.

### Repertoire

Repertoire can be a great place to start for Baroque performance practice ideas. From the most beginning to most advanced orchestras, there seems to be an endless supply of music beyond the *Brandenburg Concerti* and *Water Music*. IMSLP is a great starting point. Listed below are just a few ideas to get started.

#### *Beginning String Orchestra*

*Autumn from the Four Seasons* by A.

Vivaldi, arr. Douglas Wagner

*Bourree* by G.F. Handel, arr. Christina Hans

*Gavotte* by A. Corelli, arr. Bob Phillips

*Gavotte* by F.J. Gossec, arr. Albert Want

*King Williams March* by Jeremiah Clarke, arr. Bob Phillips

*Ocean Storm* by A. Vivaldi, arr. Tom Fritz

*Prelude and Gavotte* by A. Corelli, arr.

Doris Gazda

*Winter from the Four Seasons* by A.

Vivaldi, arr. Tim McCarrick

#### *Intermediate String Orchestra*

*Allegro* by J.B. Senaillé, arr. Robert S.

Frost

*Battalia* by H. Biber

*Brandenburg Concerti 2, 3 and 5* by J.S.

Bach, arr. Merle Isaac

*Don Quixote Suite* by G.B. Telemann, arr.

Richard Meyer

*The Golden Sonata* by H. Purcell

*The Virtuous Wife* by H. Purcell

*The Water Music* by G.F. Handel, arr.

Douglas Stroud (IMSLP)

#### *Advanced String Orchestra*

*Brandenburg Concerti 3 and 6* by J.S.

Bach

*Capriccio Stravagante* by C. Farina

*Concerti Grossi* by G.F. Handel, A.

Corelli and F. Geminiani

### Resources in the Twin Cities

There are several groups in the Twin Cities that perform on period instruments. In addition to concerts and workshops, several of these groups have educational components to them. Flying Forms has a supply of student Baroque bows. When they do a school presentation, the students can experience playing with a Baroque bow firsthand.

The Rose Ensemble, [www.roseensemble.org](http://www.roseensemble.org), Jordan Sramek, Artistic Director

Bach Society of Minnesota, [www.bachsocietymn.org](http://www.bachsocietymn.org), Yunyue Liu, Executive Director

Lyra Baroque, [Lyrabaroque.org](http://Lyrabaroque.org), Johanna Lorbach, Executive Director

Flying Forms, [www.flyingforms.org](http://www.flyingforms.org). Contact: Tami Morse

Twin Cities Early Music Collective. Contact: Julie Elhard [julie.elhard@gmail.com](mailto:julie.elhard@gmail.com)

### Beginning Ornamentation

In some ways, jazz improvisation parallels Baroque ornamentation. Both are based on the improvisation skills of the player. While many ornaments are notated in the score,

there is still plenty of room for the player to experiment with where and how to place ornaments. These ornaments can vary from simple trills to full cadenzas. Here are just a few to start with:

*Trills:* They should start from the upper note. Encourage students to add these at cadences. Experiment with the speed of the trill.

*Appoggiaturas:* As this is the dissonance that resolves, don't make this note too short. Appoggiaturas are usually added for expression. Experiment with how loud and long it can be.

*Mordents:* You will sometimes see these quick trills in dotted rhythms and longer 16<sup>th</sup> note passages. Mordents add a rhythmic function to notes/passages. They should be played very quickly.

*Turns:* Besides looking cool and confusing to most students, the turn is a melodic ornament between two notes. The speed of the turn can vary, depending on the melodic content.

*Vibrato:* This was often notated on specific notes, and not played throughout entire passages. Try phrases with vibrato on only specific notes. It really does change the sound of the ensemble.

Experiment, get outside the box and have fun with your students. Your students will begin to think and hear things differently. They may also become more creative and improvisatory on their instruments. And that is a wonderful thing!

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