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Interpreting and adorning the bass lines of Handel's Italian continuo cantata arias: a catalog of possibilities

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**INTERPRETING AND ADORNING THE BASS LINES OF
HANDEL'S ITALIAN CONTINUO CANTATA ARIAS:
A CATALOG OF POSSIBILITIES**

by

CHING YI DENISE FAN

B.A. (Hons), Hong Kong Baptist University, 2011
M.M., Boston University, 2013

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

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Approved by

First Reader

Victor A. Coelho, Ph.D.
Professor of Music

Second Reader

Peter Sykes, M.M.
Associate Professor of Music
Chair of the Historical Performance Department

Third Reader

Scott Allen Jarrett, D.M.A.
Director of Music at Marsh Chapel

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Major Professor: Victor A. Coelho, Ph.D., Professor of Music

ABSTRACT

This study explores the possibilities for violoncellists to embellish the Italian baroque aria bass. The invention of the wire-wound bottom string on the violoncello in Italy around the 1660s forged two diverging paths on the use of this novel instrument in aria accompaniment: 1) it is observed in the works by composers such as Stradella, Scarlatti, Giovanni Bononcini, Gasparini, Handel and Caldara that the bass line of the continuo aria assumed an obbligato character, and was creatively developed and refined into an interesting part that engages meaningfully with the voice to render the poetic texts between the 1670s and 1710s; 2) the advancing invention techniques demonstrated in the early solo cello works by Gabrielli, Galli and Vitali enabled cellists to devise variations and embellishments spontaneously, and critical accounts suggest such creative display flourished in aria accompaniment. Shall performers consider the written bass a complete form of embellishment and reproduce it faithfully? Or could they attempt to rediscover improvisation-based period practice and revive an elaborate style of accompaniment? In an attempt to open up avenues for present-day cellists to actively engage in the creative process of breathing life into a poetically inspired bass, I have conducted an exploratory

study into Handel's continuo cantatas, composed in Italy between 1706 and 1709—a pivotal time when the maturing lyricism of cantata-aria and cello technique dynamically influenced each other. Their meticulously crafted bass lines show various types of ornaments, in the form of ornamental figures, namely the passing note, the mordent figure, the appoggiatura, the passing appoggiatura, the trill, the slide and the figurate arpeggio, being integrated as motivic elements to echo the sentiments expressed in the texts. In addition, their extended applications within the surveyed collection of arias are further explored and discussed for use in enlivening the bass-only ritornellos in the da capo section.

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of making diminutions out of the bass in accompanying arias emerged in Italy during the baroque period, and was carried out in two forms: composition and performance. It has been observed by Borgir that the bass lines of the Italian continuo arias assumed an obbligato character from around the 1670s,¹ when the novel violoncello with wire-wound bottom string came into fashion. Especially in Rome, where we have the earliest examples of arias with solo obbligato cello—found in Stradella's oratorio, *S. Giovanni Battista* (1675),² the continuo-aria bass was creatively developed and refined into an interesting part that engages meaningfully with the voice to render the poetic texts by composers such as Stradella, Scarlatti, Giovanni Bononcini, Gasparini, Handel and Caldara between the 1670s and 1710s, particularly through the cantata genre. Among the aforementioned composers, the celebrated cellist-composer Giovanni Bononcini was expressly praised for his inventive bass diminutions by Gasparini in his keyboard treatise:

Many such motifs, of various kinds, may be observed in the cantatas of many excellent composers—but especially in those cantatas by Giovanni Bononcini, most worthy Virtuoso of His Imperial Majesty. In these cantatas you will discern no little *bizzaria*, beauty, harmony, artful study, and fanciful invention, because of which they justly receive the applause of the whole world in admiration of his most delightful talent.³

¹ Tharald Borgir, *The Performance of the Basso Continuo in Italian Baroque Music* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 38-39.

² Stefano La Via, "Il violoncello a Roma al tempo del Cardinale Ottoboni: ricerche e documenti" (Tesi di Laurea, Università degli Studi di Roma, 1984), 156.

³ Francesco Gasparini, *The Practical Harmonist at the Harpsichord*, trans. David L. Burrows (New Haven: Yale School of Music, 1963), 94.

The following excerpt, which shows the continuo introduction in the aria, "Infante volante" from Bononcini's cantata, *Cieco Nume, tiranno spietato*,⁴ presumably demonstrates the type of brilliant bass that Gasparini had in mind:



Ex. 1: "Infante volante" from Bononcini's *Cieco Nume, tiranno spietato*

Along with these visually dynamic bass lines, the Italians were famous for their extempore, rich and fanciful style of accompaniment. An oft-quoted source from the first quarter of the eighteenth century, if biased towards the "noble and modest"⁵ style of French playing, provides us with some clues to the Italian approach:

All that is generally heard in the Italian music is a thorough-bass accompaniment unceasingly varied (*doublée*), this variation being often a kind of breaking of chords, and an arpeggiation, which throws dust in the eyes of those who know no better. (Le Cerf de La Viéville, 1725)⁶

The Italian habit of arpeggiating chords in accompaniment was also attested by C.

⁴ "Cieco nume tiranno spietato. Infante volante," Scheda numero 9506, ed. Teresa M. Gialdroni, Clori. Archivio della Cantata italiana, accessed April 22, 2021, http://cantataitaliana.it/query_bid.php?id=9506.

⁵ Mark Kroll, "France," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Harpsichord*, ed. Mark Kroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 113, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316659359.008>.

⁶ Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, New rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 369.

P. E. Bach: "It is known that they can play scarcely any chord without rolling it."⁷ For this reason, he teases the Italian's lack of sensitivity in supporting singers:

Hence in Italian works, delicate passages usually carry the direction *senza cembalo* over the bass as a kind of warning. Whole arias sometimes have this indication, which is laughable to the singers of that country when they are shown the words in their own scores.⁸

Towards the late baroque period, however, this elaborate style of accompaniment was no longer an exclusively Italian specialty. Instead, it seemed to be exercised across the board as we find multiple remarks criticizing bass embellishments:

For the Accompaniment is only made to support [*seconder*] the voice, & not to stifle or disfigure it by [making] a noisy clamor [*un mauvais carillon*]. There are those Accompanists who have such a good opinion of themselves that (believing themselves to be worth more than the rest of the Ensemble [*Concert*]) they strive to outshine all of the Players [*Concertans*]. They burden the Thoroughbass with divisions [*passages*]; they embellish the Accompaniments, & do a hundred other things that perhaps are very lovely in themselves--but which are at the time extremely detrimental to the Ensemble, & just serve to show the vain conceit of the Musician who produces them. (Saint-Lambert, 1707)⁹

I do not approve of the diminution of the bass itself, because it is very easy to miss or depart from the intention of the composer and from the proper spirit of the composition—and to offend the singer. But we say “to accompany” advisedly: he who accompanies must take pride in the title of a good, solid accompanist, not of a spirited and agile performer. He may suit his fancy and unleash his brilliance when he plays alone, not when he accompanies; I, at least, intend to suggest how to play with grace and not with confusion.

⁷ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. William J. Mitchell, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), 316.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Michel de Saint-Lambert, *A New Treatise on Accompaniment: With the Harpsichord, the Organ, and with Other Instruments*, trans. and ed. John S. Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 102-3.

Actually (to speak more directly), if I had not known the world to be full of people of various inclinations and different dispositions, I would neither have expounded nor approved of diminution. (Gasparini, 1708)¹⁰

Not all composers are content with these bass variations. . . . One must not irritate the singer with these things and [must] not make a prelude out of the accompaniment. (Heinichen, 1728)¹¹

Gratuitous passage work and bustling noise do not constitute the beauties of accompaniment. In fact, they can easily do harm to the principal part by robbing it of its freedom to introduce variations into repetitions and elsewhere. (C. P. E. Bach, 1762)¹²

It is not surprising that keyboard players were particularly tempted to deviate from their supportive role and show off their creative skills when accompanying owing to the impromptu nature of their practice. Yet, violoncellists, being the newer addition to the continuo team in chamber setting, appeared to also have fun playing around with the bass in accompanying arias, as suggested by Marcello's satirical account in his treatise, *Il teatro alla moda* (1720):

The virtuoso on the cello . . . should perform all kinds of embellishments in his aria accompaniments and vary these every night, though such variations may not at all harmonize with the vocal or violin part.¹³

We may also surmise from Le Cerf de La Viéville's complaints—although they were directed to viol players, given the perplexities of the organology and terminology of

¹⁰ Gasparini, *Practical Harmonist*, 90, 93.

¹¹ George John Buelow, "Johann David Heinichen's *Der General-Bass in der Composition: A Critical Study with Annotated Translation of Selected Chapters*" (PhD diss., New York University, 1961), 353.

¹² Bach, *Essay*, 367.

¹³ Benedetto Marcello, "Il Teatro Alla Moda--Part II," *The Musical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1949): 89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/739581>.

the bass string family, it is unclear whether the term "viol" refers strictly to our currently conceived viola da gamba¹⁴—that the Italian cellists habitually devised variations in accompaniment (in continuation of the quotation referenced earlier):

These thorough-basses are good only for showing off the quickness of hand of those who accompany on the harpsichord or the [bass] viol [gamba] or again, to go one better (*rencherir*) on these basses, already varied in themselves, they vary them further, and it goes to him who will vary them the most. . . . These thorough-bass accompaniments pass rather for solos for the viol, than for an accompaniment, which ought to be subordinate to the melody, and not overpower it. The voice ought to stand out and attract the main attention; just the opposite happens here: you only hear the thorough-bass accompaniment, which rattles so loudly, that the voice is smothered.¹⁵

Such lavishly rich, spontaneous style of accompaniment on the cello likely stems from the maturing technique of inventing patterned figures taught through the early solo cello works, for example, Domenico Gabrielli's seven *Ricercari* (1689-90), Domenico Galli's *Trattenimento musicale sopra il violoncello a' solo* (1691) and Giovanni Battista Vitali's *Partite sopra diverse Sonate per Violoncello* (no later than 1692), a book which focuses on variations upon ground basses. These works demonstrate the use of various sequential patterns for embellishing scales (Ex. 2), intervals such as the octaves (Ex. 3) and thirds (Ex. 4), the circle of fifths (Ex. 5), chords (Ex. 6) and cadences (Ex. 7). In fact, shortly after the appearance of these works, in Rome, there came two curious collections of cantatas by Gasparini (*Cantate da camera a voce sola*, Op. 1, 1695) and Gaffi

¹⁴ According to Vanscheeuwijck: "Even the strict separation between viole da gamba and viole da braccio is artificial and anachronistic, particularly when it comes to large instruments." Marc Vanscheeuwijck, "Violoncello and Violone," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter, rev. Jeffery Kite-Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 239, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16gzcwn.20>.

¹⁵ Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 369-70.

(*Cantate da camera a voce sola*, Op. 1, 1700) containing arias with two separate "bass" parts, one shows an ordinary harmonic progression in bass clef, and the other displays spelled-out figurations in either bass, tenor or treble clef. In the prefaces of these two opuses, the composers explained that the additional staff was intended to present the accompaniment in a tablature-like form, which could either be played on the harpsichord, or, as per Gasparini's suggestion, supplied by the archlute and the cello; as a further alternative, Gaffi recommended an optional use of a violin or violone together with the harpsichord.¹⁶ While these works may attest to the composers' awareness of trends in the performance and their attempt to incorporate the new style of playing, in particular the figuration-based harmonic expression brought forth by the cello, into the keyboard accompaniment, it is also possible that they indicate the composers' urge for a text-driven style of accompaniment, that is, regardless of the instruments used, the chosen pattern of figuration has to support the affect of the aria text. Thus, these arias could signal an escalated friction between the conscientious composer and the quick-witted performer as a consequence of their divergent approaches to elaborating on a vocal accompaniment.



Ex. 2: Excerpted from Galli's Sonata No. 4

¹⁶ For translations of the prefaces, see Tharald Borgir, "The Performance of the Basso Continuo in Seventeenth-Century Italian Music" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1971), 123, 125.



Ex. 3: Excerpted from Vivaldi's *Capritio sopra otto figure*



Ex. 4: Excerpted from Gabrielli's Ricercar No. 7



Ex. 5: Excerpted from Galli's Sonata No. 9



Ex. 6: Excerpted from Gabrielli's Ricercar No. 5



Ex. 7: Excerpted from Gabrielli's Ricercar No. 4

Beside inventing figurations in the course of accompaniment, based on Quantz's remarks: "the violoncellist must take care not to garnish the bass with graces, as some great violoncellists were formerly in the habit of doing,"¹⁷ it is conceivable that cellists also added extempore ornaments to the aria bass. Hence, we are presented with a dilemma: on one hand, considering the increasingly tailored continuo-aria bass, it is

¹⁷ Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly, 2nd ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 242.

sensible to faithfully reproduce the composer's work of art as a prudent performer; on the other hand, given a performance tradition that is characterized by the player's instantaneous act of embellishment, as an investigative performer, it is artistically rewarding to rediscover and revive a creativeness-stimulating period practice. I am conducting an exploratory study into Handel's continuo cantatas, composed in Italy between 1706 and 1709—a pivotal time when the maturing lyricism of cantata-aria and cello technique dynamically influenced each other. In doing so, I attempt to open up avenues for present-day cellists to actively engage in the creative process of breathing life into a poetically inspired bass, with special focuses on understanding how the bass lines were constructed to potentially reflect or articulate the affects of the aria texts as well as determining room for bass adornment. Upon surveying a wide array of bass designs, it is found that ornaments, in the form of ornamental figures, have actually been embedded in Handel's well-crafted bass lines, and one has to concur with Mattheson's comment: "there is seldom opportunity for ornamental and florid playing when the bass itself is purposely written in an ornamental and florid style."¹⁸ Therefore, in order to facilitate an actively collaborative role of the continuo cellist, especially in the da capo section, where appropriate embellishments could encourage and promote ravishing ornamentation from the singer, interpretative analyses of Handel's use of ornamental figures in the bass in relation to the texts are carried out along with experimental applications and the ensuing discussions. Chapter one reviews the most commonplace melodic connector, the passing note, which can be added instinctively by the performer, and calls for a close study into

¹⁸ Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 354.

its proper usage. Chapter two focuses on the melodic figure sometimes called the mordent, an ornament that earned historical license to be freely introduced in the bass, and therefore requires more technical analyses to establish the perimeter of its applicability. Chapter three deals with a group of ornaments found in Handel's examples, namely the appoggiatura, the passing appoggiatura, the trill and the slide, they are less suitable for the accompanimental bass, but may be used to garnish the bass-only ritornello. The last chapter explores the most elaborate yet controversial variation device, the figurate arpeggio. Since it has virtually become obsolete, reviving this efficacious style of embellishment necessitates broader repertoire study, bottom-up skill building and trial-and-error practice. In each chapter, written-out examples found in Handel's works will be presented in a format similar to a thematic catalogue, viz., texts and translations, borrowed from Ellen Harris' book, *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas*, will be given, and accompanied by annotated musical examples with brief descriptions of how the ornaments may be portrayed in performance to support an expressive delivery. The second half of the chapters will discuss the potential applications of the respective ornaments. For clarity, each of the four ornaments examined in Chapter 3 forms an individual subsection, following the same layout.

CHAPTER 1

The Passing Note

The passing note is a non-chord note that fills in an interval of a third, in either ascending or descending motion. It is the most common melodic connector; however, when it is fashioned into a specific rhythmic pattern or melodic structure recurrently, it becomes a distinct ornament that brings a musical gesture to life. In practice, the passing note is an unaccented note, often slurred from the previous note.¹⁹

Filling in an ascending third

"Non esce un guardo mai" from *Udite il mio consiglio*

<i>Non esce un guardo mai</i>	<i>Never does a look depart</i>
<i>Da quegli arcieri rai,</i>	<i>From those shooting rays,</i>
<i>Che non saetti un cor.</i>	<i>That does not wound a heart.</i>
<i>E'l cor che vien colpito,</i>	<i>And the heart that is hit,</i>
<i>Si sente già ferito</i>	<i>Already feels wounded</i>
<i>Che non lo crede ancor.</i>	<i>When it still believes it not.</i>



Ex. 1.1.1: "Non esce un guardo mai" from *Udite il mio consiglio*

¹⁹ Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 268.



Ex. 1.1.2: "Non esce un guardo mai" from *Udite il mio consiglio*

The passing note is commonly used within the siciliano context. It provides a melodic component to the bass, and is put into play when the voice holds a long note (Ex. 1.1.2). Paired with the text, in this example it helps to convey the protagonist's fervent admiration towards the "simple girl."²⁰

"Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste" from *Occhi miei*

*Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste:
 Che negli occhi di costei,
 Solo inteso a danni miei,
 S'ascondeva il Dio d'amor.
 Troppo tardi v'accorgeste
 Ch'il mirar que' lusinghieri
 Occhi neri
 Gran periglio era del cor.*

*I said this to you, and you did not believe it:
 That in those eyes of hers,
 Only intended for hurting me,
 The god of love hid himself.
 You realized too late
 That gazing into those enticing
 Black eyes
 Was a great danger for the heart.*

²⁰ For the text and translation of the preceding recitative, see Ellen T. Harris, *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 361.



Ex. 1.2: "Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste" from *Occhi miei*

The bracketed ascending three-note gesture is especially interesting in this case since it opposes the descending contour used in the vocal theme, as if to indicate the subject's—"you" ("my eyes")—blind admiration for Fille.²¹

"Figli di rupe alpestra" from *Poiché giuraro amore*

*Figli di rupe alpestra,
Duri sassi,
Cangerassi
Forse un dì la vostra sorte.
Vi darà mano maestra,
Forza spirito e valore
Ch'al furore
Vi torranno del tempo e della morte.*

*Offspring of the rugged cliff,
Hard stones,
Your fate will change
Perhaps one day.
A divine hand will give you
Strength, spirit and valor
That will release you from
The fury of time and death.*



Ex. 1.3.1: "Figli di rupe alpestra" from *Poiché giuraro amore*

²¹ For the text and translation of the preceding recitative, see *ibid.*, 339.



Ex. 1.3.2: "Figli di rupe alpestra" from *Poiché giuraro amore*

The three-note pick up in the continuo introduction (Ex. 1.3.1) is used throughout the aria to set a hopeful tone, and is presented in a compact form at the end of both the A and B sections (Ex. 1.3.2 shows the closing ritornello).

"Nascermi sento al core" from *Sei pur bella (La bianca rosa)*

*Nascermi sento al core
Dal candor di tua presenza
Bel desio di libertà.
Mi rinfaccia il tuo colore
Che perduto ho l'innocenza,
Che più pace il sen non ha.*

*I feel born in my heart
From the innocence of your being
The beautiful desire of liberty.
[But] your color taunts me
That I have lost my innocence,
That my breast has no more peace.*



Ex. 1.4: "Nascermi sento al core" from *Sei pur bella (La bianca rosa)*

The patent passing note is shaped into a motivic unit that expresses the invigorated spirit of the protagonist.

"All'amor mio" from *Manca pur quanto sai*

<i>All'amor mio,</i>	<i>To my love,</i>
<i>Lo so ben io,</i>	<i>I know it well,</i>
<i>Ritornerei</i>	<i>You will return</i>
<i>Pentito, un dì.</i>	<i>Penitent one day.</i>
<i>E allor vedrai,</i>	<i>And then you will see,</i>
<i>Se mai si diede</i>	<i>If ever existed</i>
<i>Un'altra fede,</i>	<i>Another faith,</i>
<i>Bella così!</i>	<i>As beautiful!</i>



Ex. 1.5: "All'amor mio" from *Manca pur quanto sai*

Sometimes, the passing note, enclosed in a triplet figure, helps project the character's optimistic attitude.

"Non s'afferra d'amor il porto" from *Se pari è la tua fè*

<i>Non s'afferra d'amor il porto</i>	<i>The port of love is never gained</i>
<i>Senza mai patir procelle.</i>	<i>Without ever suffering storms.</i>
<i>Dopo i nemi e le tempeste</i>	<i>After the clouds and tempests</i>
<i>Son più bel lume, le stelle.</i>	<i>The stars are more beautiful lights.</i>



Ex. 1.6: "Non s'afferra d'amor il porto" from *Se pari è la tua fè*

Preceded by large leaps, the highlighted three-note unit can portray a positive frame of mind through the use of ascending intervals.

"Nell'incanto del tuo canto" from *Qualor crudele*

*Nell'incanto del tuo canto,
Mi tormenti, mi contenti,
Cara del Dio d'amor,
Bella sirena.
Sei ritrosa ma vezzosa,
Superbetta ma diletta,
Dai pena ma puoi far
Dolce la pena.*

*In the enchantment of your singing,
You torment me, you delight me,
Darling of the god of love,
Beautiful siren.
You are coy but charming,
Haughty but beloved,
You give pain, but can make
The pain sweet.*



Ex. 1.7: "Nell'incanto del tuo canto" from *Qualor crudele*

In short, the playful insert of the passing note seems to allude to the protagonist being enchanted by the attractive Dori.²²

Filling in a descending third

"Già superbo del mio affanno" from *Lucrezia* ("O numi eterni!")

*Già superbo del mio affanno,
Traditor dell'onor mio,
Parte l'empio, lo sleal.
Tu punisci il fiero inganno
Del fellon, del mostro rio,
Giusto ciel, Parca fatal.*

*Already exulting in my suffering,
The betrayer of my honour,
Wicked and faithless, takes his leave.
Oh, punish the arrogant deceit
Of this traitor, this evil monster,
Just heaven, O deadly Fate!*



Ex. 1.8.1: "Già superbo del mio affanno" from *Lucrezia* ("O numi eterni!")

²² For the related text and translation, see the opening recitative of the cantata in Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*, 342-43.



Ex. 1.8.2: "Già superbo del mio affanno" from *Lucrezia* ("O numi eterni!")

Ex. 1.8.3: "Già superbo del mio affanno" from *Lucrezia* ("O numi eterni!")

The first occurrence of the decorated descending third (the initial bracket marked in Ex. 1.8.1) is repeated in the solo entrance on the word "affanno" (Ex. 1.8.2), which is the central subject matter of this aria. The subsequent descending three-note gesture is, at times, used as a pickup (Ex. 1.8.1), or as a brief countermelody to the voice (Ex. 1.8.3).

"Rise Eurilla, rise Amore" from *Vedendo Amor*

*Rise Eurilla, rise Amore,
Che di già mio vincitore
Mi teniva in servitù.
Ed io misero non spero,
Or ch'io son lor prigioniero
Di goder pace mai più.*

*Eurilla laughed, Love laughed,
That already my conqueror
Held me in servitude.
And I, miserable, do not hope,
Now that I am their prisoner,
To enjoy peace ever again.*



Ex. 1.9: "Rise Eurilla, rise Amore" from *Vedendo Amor*

Dovetailing the laugh figure represented by three repeated eighths, the falling gesture paints the trapped, miserable protagonist.

"Basterebbe a tor di vita" from *Poiché giuraro amore*

<i>Basterebbe a tor di vita</i>	<i>The sadness that I feel</i>
<i>Mille cori, il duol ch'io sento,</i>	<i>Would suffice to take from life a thousand hearts,</i>
<i>Né sì fiero aspro tormento</i>	<i>[But] such fierce, bitter torment,</i>
<i>Al mio cor morte non dà.</i>	<i>Does not give death to my heart.</i>
<i>Che la morte, in lega unita</i>	<i>For death, in league united</i>
<i>Co' nemici del mio core,</i>	<i>With the enemies of my heart,</i>
<i>Vuol di Clori, vuol d'amore</i>	<i>Wants to emulate</i>
<i>Adular la crudeltà.</i>	<i>The cruelty of Clori and of Love.</i>



Ex. 1.10.1: "Basterebbe a tor di vita" from *Poiché giuraro amore*



Ex. 1.10.2: "Basterebbe a tor di vita" from *Poiché giuraro amore*

The dotted rhythm shown is written only in the beginning ritornello. The other occurrences of the descending scalar motion in the main body of the aria are written in even eighth notes. Rather than classifying the bracketed non-chord note as a passing appoggiatura, the passing note rendition makes a smoother phrase that corresponds to the natural delivery of the line, "Basterebbe a tor di vita" (Ex. 1.10.2).²³

²³ See Chapter 3 for the definition of the passing appoggiatura.

"Sì, piangete, O mie pupille" from *Lungi n'andò Fileno*

*Sì, piangete, O mie pupille,
Ed al suon di vostre stille
Coi sospir risponda il cor.
E risuoni in flebil eco,
In ogn'antro, in ogni speco,
La mia pena, il mio dolor.*

*Yes, weep, O my eyes,
And at the sound of your tears
Let my heart respond with sighs.
And let resound in plaintive echo,
In every cave, in every cavern,
My suffering and my sorrow.*



Ex. 1.11.1: "Sì, piangete, O mie pupille" from *Lungi n'andò Fileno*

A four-system musical score for a vocal line in treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system includes a bracketed section. The second system has a long note with a horizontal line underneath. The third system ends with a double bar line and the word '(Fine.)' below it.

cor, mie pu - pil - le, sì, pian - ge - te, o mie pu - pil - le, ed al suon di vo - stre stil - le coi so - spir ri -
- spon - da il cor, - coi so - spir - ri - spon - da il cor, ed - al - suon - di vo - stre
stil - le coi - so - spir - ri - spon - da il cor.

(Fine.)

Ex. 1.11.2: "Sì, piangete, O mie pupille" from *Lungi n'andò Fileno*

The passing note is integrated into the falling triplets (Ex. 1.11.1). It is worth noting that the figure is presented in its inverted form in the second half of the A section, when the stanza is sung the third time (Ex. 1.11.2), and reverted to its normal form in part B. There are three possible readings for the inverted gesture: 1) Handel made use of it as a rhetorical device to dramatize the affect; 2) the focus is turned to the sigh figure, denoted by a large-interval drop, which is expanded to a minor-seventh leap with the help of the ascending triplets (Ex. 1.11.2, last system), as if Handel musically allegorized the line, "let my heart respond with sighs"; and 3) an additional layer of feelings, perhaps a vain hope for Fileno to return,²⁴ is weaved into the text.

"Se non giunge quel momento" from *Filli adorata e cara*

*Se non giunge quel momento,
Che ritorni a me, mia bella,
Sempre mesto piangerò.
Pur mi dice il mio tormento,
Per voler di cruda stella
Non sì presto io ti vedrò.*

*If that moment does not arrive,
In which you return to me, my love,
Always sad I will weep.
However my torment tells me,
Because of the desire of a cruel star,
I shall not so soon see you.*



Ex. 1.12: "Se non giunge quel momento" from *Filli adorata e cara*

Similar to the previous aria, here, the passing note is a part of the descending figure that recurs, together with the dotted octaves, as a motivic backdrop. The ascending triplets shown in the example are simply decorations of the dominant-seventh chord, hence, the embedded passing notes do not impart affective significance.

²⁴ For the text and translation of the preceding recitative, see Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*, 327.

"Dell'idol mio" from *Clori, ove sei?*

<i>Dell'idol mio,</i>	<i>I can no longer,</i>
<i>Più non poss'io,</i>	<i>Without the beautiful rays</i>
<i>Senza i bei rai,</i>	<i>Of my idol,</i>
<i>Godere il dì.</i>	<i>Enjoy the day.</i>
<i>Come fia mai</i>	<i>How will it be</i>
<i>Ch'io qui respiri</i>	<i>That I breathe here</i>
<i>L'aura gradita,</i>	<i>The welcome breeze,</i>
<i>Se la mia vita</i>	<i>If my life</i>
<i>Non è più qui.</i>	<i>Is no longer here.</i>



Ex. 1.13.1: "Dell'idol mio" from *Clori, ove sei?*



Ex. 1.13.2



Ex. 1.13.3



Ex. 1.13.4

The triplets, which seem to represent the breeze, appear in varied shapes throughout the aria (Exx. 1.13.2, 1.13.3, 1.13.4). The predominant descending form (Ex. 1.13.1) conveys the protagonist's feeling of despair.

"Pastorella, coi bei lumi" from *Nel dolce tempo*

<i>Pastorella, coi bei lumi,</i>	<i>Shepherdess, with your beautiful eyes,</i>
<i>Erbe e fiori anch'innamori,</i>	<i>You inflame even the grasses and flowers,</i>
<i>Pastorella del mio cor.</i>	<i>Shepherdess of my heart.</i>
<i>E quest'aure, e questi fiumi,</i>	<i>And these breezes and streams,</i>
<i>Sussurando, mormorando,</i>	<i>Whispering, murmuring,</i>
<i>Per te sol parlan d'amor.</i>	<i>For you alone they speak of love.</i>

hopeful spirit of the text:

*Chi sa? vi rivedrò,
Il cor così mi dice,
Ed io meno infelice,
Così voglio sperar.
E se non troverò
Fallace la speranza
Vedrete la costanza
Di chi vi seppe amar.*

*Who knows? I will see you again,
So says my heart to me,
And I, less unhappy,
Thus wish to hope.
And if I do not find
That hope is false,
You [the eyes] will see the constancy
Of one who knew how to love you.*



Ex. 1.15.1: "Chi sa? vi rivedrò" from *Lungi da voi*



Ex. 1.15.2: "Chi sa? vi rivedrò" from *Lungi da voi* (embellished)

Example 1.15.2 shows the hypothetical additions in parentheses. It is immediately noticeable that the passing note at m. 3 creates a better effect than the one at m. 5 by virtue of the half step between C# and D. Hence, the directional tendency of the interval size plays a part in the choice of achieving naturalness.

The following excerpt from "Pronti l'ale dispiegate" (see Chapter 4) illustrates a continuo motive that invites a convenient insertion of passing notes. While both versions A and B (Ex. 1.16) amplify the enthusiastic tone of the text, version A has an edge over version B for it preserves the rhythmic integrity of the third and fourth beats, and

therefore, the meaningful deceleration. Moreover, the increased liveliness brought about by the thirty seconds further brings the words, "quickly fly" to life.

Ex. 1.16: "Pronti l'ale dispiegate" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

The next two examples demonstrate fitting occasions where filling in the descending thirds can help intensify the feelings of pain and despair. Examples 1.17.1 and 1.17.2 show the original continuo theme of the aria, "Vedrò teco ogni gioia, ogni bene" from *E partirai, mia vita?* and the recommended rendition, respectively. The added slurs serve to give weight to the pitiful lines:

<i>Vedrò teco ogni gioia, ogni bene,</i>	<i>I shall see all joy, all pleasure,</i>
<i>Da me lungi rivolgere il piè,</i>	<i>Go with you far away from me,</i>
<i>E gli affanni, gli strazi, le pene,</i>	<i>And grief, torture and pain</i>
<i>Tutti insieme restarsi con me.</i>	<i>Remain all together with me.</i>

Ex. 1.17.1: "Vedrò teco ogni gioia, ogni bene" from *E partirai, mia vita?*



Ex. 1.17.2: "Vedrò teco ogni gioia, ogni bene" from *E partirai, mia vita?* (embellished)

Example 1.18 presents the continuo introduction of "Dunque se il tanto piangere" from *Lungi n'andò Fileno* with the suggested ornaments. The C# diminished chord at m. 3 has been kept unembellished as it plays a significant role in expressing the pathos.²⁶ The descending scale formed by the fillers resembles the motivic figure within the recurring, continuo theme of the aria, "Tormentosa crudele partita" from *Parti, l'idolo mio* (Ex. 1.19), which depicts the agony of being separated from the loved one:

<i>Tormentosa crudele partita,</i>	<i>Agonizingly cruel parting,</i>
<i>Tu m'uccidi e ancor non moro.</i>	<i>You kill me, but still I do not die.</i>
<i>Pria dovevi privarmi di vita,</i>	<i>You ought rather to have deprived me of life,</i>
<i>Che privarmi dell'idol ch'adoro.</i>	<i>Than to deprive me of the idol that I adore.</i>



Ex. 1.18: "Dunque se il tanto piangere" from *Lungi n'andò Fileno* (embellished)



Ex. 1.19: "Tormentosa crudele partita" from *Parti, l'idolo mio*

²⁶ For the text and translation, see *ibid.*, 328.

Filling in passing notes may be a considerable choice for the aria, "Forse che un giorno" from Handel's dramatic cantata, *Aminta e Fillide*, which shares the same motive in the bass. In practice, putting emphasis on the adorned third and fourth beats (Ex. 1.20) could effectively render the mocking words:

*Forse che un giorno
il Dio d'amore
potrebbe al core
piaga formarti,
che sia mortal.
Che bel mirarti
allor languire
penar, soffrire,
l'aspre punture,
d'acuto stral.*

*Perhaps one day
the god of love
may give your heart
a wound
which will be fatal;
How lovely then
to gaze upon you
languishing and grieving,
suffering the stinging wounds
of a sharp arrow.²⁷*



Ex. 1.20: "Forse che un giorno" from *Aminta e Fillide* (embellished)

In a similar way, performers may communicate the first person's, often the rational self, thoughts by filling in the thirds in a direction that contradicts the predominant gesture in the music. The bitter tone of self-reproach expressed through the embellished bass in "Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste" (Ex. 1.21; text provided in this chapter)

²⁷ George Frideric Handel, *Aminta e Fillide*, HWV 83, vol. 32, *Handel Edition*, Contrasto Armonico dir. Marco Vitale, Brilliant Classics 95050, 2015, 65 compact discs, liner notes, 45-47.

question, a close reading of the texts is necessary in order to fathom the layers of sentiments, and to decide whether adding passing notes will enrich or negate the overall expressions. Furthermore, given that the large majority of the written-out examples of filling in the descending thirds has slow-tempo indications, ranging from *andante* to *largo*, it is reasonable to reckon the strong correlation between the falling gesture at a slow tempo and the expression of sadness, and subsequently, vice versa.

Allegro

Ex. 1.22: "Voglio darti a mille a mille" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

Adagio.

Ex. 1.23: "Figli di rupe alpestra"

With regard to the issue of repetitiveness, version B in Example 1.22 shows one of the ways to vary the running pattern to achieve a more organic shift between the

decorated figuration and the plain form. Here, the slight positional change of the sixteenth-note group results in a tapering effect that leads to the cadence more organically. A further illustration with "Pupilla lucente" (Ex. 1.24; see also Chapter 2) will serve as an exemplar of turning a humdrum rhythmic recurrence into a meaningfully shaped phrase. The gradually increased number of fillers at mm. 5-7 and the reduced activity at m. 8 produce a hairpin dynamic effect that efficiently renders the arc-shaped melodic contour, and supports the climatic buildup at mm. 11-13.

The image displays a musical score for "Pupilla lucente" (embellished) in bass clef, 3/4 time, and B-flat major. It is divided into three systems. The first system shows measures 1 through 6, with the top staff labeled "Original" and the bottom staff labeled "Embellished". The second system shows measures 7 through 10, with a measure rest at measure 8. The third system shows measures 11 through 13, featuring a dense texture of sixteenth-note patterns. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 1.24: "Pupilla lucente" (embellished)

Sometimes, a mannered result from adding similar decorations spontaneously may be better than a conscious avoidance of repetitiveness. For instance, version A in Example 1.25 is far more natural than version B, in which the imbalanced rhythmic feel

confuses the listener and even produces a comical effect. Although version C might be a better take compared to the other two versions, keeping with the original is recommended for this aria since the broken-chord figuration is intrinsic to the ominous setting (see Chapter 4).

The image displays a musical score for the aria "In un folto bosco ombroso". It consists of four staves, each representing a different version of the piece. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/8. The Original version shows a broken-chord figuration with a skip between notes. Version A adds a passing note. Version B adds a passing note and a grace note. Version C adds a passing note and a grace note, and includes a final flourish.

Ex. 1.25: "In un folto bosco ombroso" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

In general, when a broken-chord figuration is purposefully used as a motive in an aria, one is advised to be extra cautious about adding in passing notes for three main reasons. First and foremost, the figuration likely appears many times in the aria, adorning some of them and leaving others untouched without convincing grounds will raise many eyebrows. It goes without saying that weaving the decorations into the musical structure by repeating the same embellished pattern in all instances is out of the question. Secondly, inserting passing notes could destroy the carefully designed backdrop, such as the breezes in "Ride il fiore in seno al prato" and "Quella che miri" (see Chapter 4). Thirdly, as filling in the thirds takes away the articulated quality from the skipping

intervals, it may weaken the rigor and intensity that are vital to the expression of the texts. For example, the arpeggiations in "Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira" (see Chapter 4) are a representation of extreme anger, adding fillers will substantially diminish the strength of expression.

There are occasions where introducing passing notes is absolutely not encouraged. Echoing the mentioned, allegorical breezes in "Ride il fiore in seno al prato" and "Quella che miri," it is often a bad idea to decorate pictorial figures with passing notes, like the birds' singing in "Senti, di te, ben mio" from *Nel dolce tempo* (Ex. 1.26) and the murmur of the waves in "Mormorando esclaman l'onde" from *Sento là che ristretto* (Ex. 1.27). The embellishments indicated with parentheses at m. 5 in Example 1.26 are discretionary since they are added to the secondary motive but not the primary symbolic representation of the birds' singing, marked by the paired thirds at mm. 1 and 2, and they give sparks to the upper note of the alternating thirds, thus, appropriately convey the ardent feelings of the protagonist:

*Senti, di te, ben mio:
Cantar, dal bosco al rio,
L'augelli ancora.
In questa spiaggia e in quella,
Lodar di te, mia bella,
I lumi, i labbri, il cor,
L'onesto e fido amor,
S'ascolta ognora.*

*Listen, my beloved:
The birds singing of you
From the wood to the stream.
On this bank and that,
Praising, my beautiful one,
Your eyes, your lips, your heart,
And your honest and faithful love,
One hears continually.*

A note of caution: at the quick *allegro* tempo, unless one makes sure the thirty-second notes speak for a desirable result, it is best to stick with what is written. Other situations

being passages with a pedal note (Ex. 1.6) and arias characterized by the dotted gesture (Ex. 1.28), which often communicate intensely sad emotions such as anguish, despair and agony.

Allegro

Ex. 1.26: "Senti, di te, ben mio" from *Nel dolce tempo* (embellished)

Ex. 1.27: "Mormorando esclaman l'onde" from *Sento là che ristretto*

Largo assai.

Ex. 1.28: "Se vedrà l'amena sponda" from *Stelle, perfide stelle! (Partenza)*

CHAPTER 2

The Mordent Figure

A handy device that efficiently enlivens a note, the mordent refers to "an alternation of a main note with an auxiliary note one degree below."²⁸ When a main note alternates with an upper neighboring note, it is called an inverted mordent, which, according to both Donington and Schulenberg, was not a conventional baroque ornament.²⁹ As opposed to French practice, there was no systematized shorthand symbol for the mordent in Italy during the baroque period. Compounded by the problem of how the Italian broadly applied the term *mordente* to what we now call an acciaccatura, a trill and a turn, and given the lack of Italian literature on this topic, it is difficult to learn their art of executing this ornament.³⁰ Not every melodic figure resembling the mordent is ornamental; a certain degree of rhythmic flexibility similar to the French practice of *notes inégales* is necessary in performance in order to portray either a structural or ornamental intent. In the following set of examples, a closer look will be taken at a selected collection of arias in order to investigate the possible meanings of this rhythmic and melodic figure.

²⁸ Donington, *Baroque Music: Style and Performance: A Handbook*, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 139.

²⁹ Kenneth Kreitner et al., "Ornaments," *Grove Music Online*, 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.49928>.

³⁰ Frederick Neumann, *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music: With Special Emphasis on J. S. Bach* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 452.

"Pupilla lucente" from *Chi rapì la pace?*

<i>Pupilla lucente</i>	<i>The shining eye[s]</i>
<i>In stella funesta,</i>	<i>Love changed</i>
<i>Amore cangiò.</i>	<i>Into a fatal star.</i>
<i>Così quel splendore,</i>	<i>Thus that splendor</i>
<i>Con empio rigore</i>	<i>With pitiless severity</i>
<i>La morte additò.</i>	<i>Pointed to death.</i>

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Pupilla lucente" from the opera "Chi rapì la pace?". The score is written for a continuo instrument, likely a lute or harpsichord, and is marked "Andante". It consists of two systems of music. The first system has six measures, and the second system has six measures. The music is in a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score features a vocal line in the upper staff and a continuo line in the lower staff. The continuo line is characterized by mordent figures and bass diminutions. The first system shows a vocal line with a melodic arc and a continuo line with mordent figures. The second system shows a vocal line with a melodic arc and a continuo line with bass diminutions. The score is signed "H. W. 50." at the end.

Ex. 2.1: "Pupilla lucente" from *Chi rapì la pace?*

After introducing the vocal subject in the first three measures, the continuo springs into an autonomous, motivic course that is driven by the use of mordent figures. From gently decorating the melodic arc on the off-beats (mm. 4-9) to propelling the line in the form of bass diminutions (mm. 11-13), the transformed manifestation of the three-note figure resembles the text's, "love changed into a fatal star."

"Quando ritornerò" from *Stelle, perfide stelle! (Partenza)*

<i>Quando ritornerò,</i>	<i>When I return,</i>
<i>Se in voi ritroverò</i>	<i>If I find in you</i>
<i>L'amato mio tesoro,</i>	<i>My loving treasure,</i>
<i>Sarò felice.</i>	<i>I will be happy.</i>
<i>Sperando soffrirò,</i>	<i>I will suffer with hope,</i>
<i>Tacendo l'amerò,</i>	<i>I will love [her/him] in silence,</i>

*Ma di scoprire l'ardor
Mio cor non lice.*

*But to reveal my love
My heart is not allowed.*



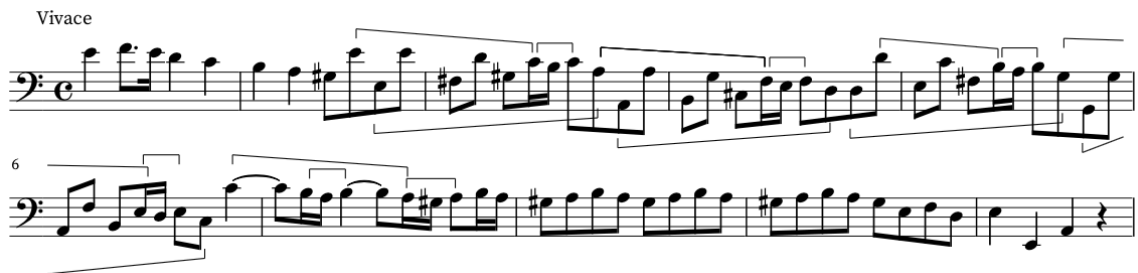
Ex. 2.2: "Quando ritornerò" from *Stelle, perfide stelle! (Partenza)*

In Example 2.2 the function of the mordent figures is to decorate the jumping intervals, for example, G and D at m. 1, E and C at m. 2, and so forth. Exclusive to the bass part, this recurring pattern reflects the mixed emotions of affliction and hopefulness within the protagonist, who, with a heavy heart, sets to depart the city of Rome ("Banks of the Tiber").³¹

"Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero" from *E partirai, mia vita?*

*Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero,
Togli a me la vita, O Amor.
Onde men l'anima afflitta,
Né dal duol tanto traffitta,
Nel da lui preso sentiero
Possa gir dietro al suo cor.*

*Before such a dreadful day dawns,
Take my life, O God of Love;
So that my soul, less afflicted,
And not so pierced with grief,
May go after my heart
Along the path it has taken.*



Ex. 2.3: "Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero" from *E partirai, mia vita?*

³¹ For the texts and translations of the cantata, see Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*, 358-59.

In Example 2.3, a skillfully crafted continuo theme, the sequential run of the fifths, E-A-D-G, is played in two, converging voices at mm. 2-6 (marked with long brackets). The descending three-note figure starting on C finishes the sequence in the top voice, as if to symbolize the "path" (to death), which has been taken by the heart, and followed along by the soul (the low voice). In *vivace* tempo, the quick oscillations effectively depict the afflicted soul, agonized by the departure of his/her loved one.³²

"Ne' tuoi lumi, O bella Clori" from *Ne' tuoi lumi*

*Ne' tuoi lumi, O bella Clori,
Si nascose il mio destino.
Così facile si rese
Il mio cor, ne si difese
Dallo stral d'un Dio bambino.*

*Within your eyes, O beautiful Clori,
Is hidden my destiny.
So easily my heart yielded,
Not defending itself
From the arrow of the child god.*

The image shows a musical score for a soprano part. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The score consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and the basso continuo line with figured bass notation. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics and the basso continuo line. The lyrics are: 'Ne' tuoi lu-mi, o bel-la Clo-ri, si na-'. The figured bass notation is: # 7 6 6 7, 6 7, 7 6 7, 6 5, 7.

Ex. 2.4: "Ne' tuoi lumi, O bella Clori" from *Ne' tuoi lumi*

³² For the texts and translations of the cantata, see *ibid.*, 312-13.

Andante.

H. W. 50.

— Del bell' idolo mio — 49

For-mi-da - - - - - bil gon-do

Ex. 2.6: "Formidabil gondoliero" from *Del bel idolo mio*

The lilting figures in Example 2.6, can be seen as a representation of the motion of the gondola.³³ The second layer of the mordent-like alternations³⁴ (marked with dotted brackets in Ex. 2.6) gives weight to the descending tetrachord—the classic gesture of lament—by means of chromatic auxiliary notes.

"Lontano dal mio tesoro" from *Lungi dal mio bel nume*

<i>Lontano dal mio tesoro</i>	<i>Far from my treasure,</i>
<i>Struggo l'amante cor,</i>	<i>I consume my loving heart,</i>
<i>In pena ardente.</i>	<i>In ardent pain.</i>
<i>Né trova mai ristoro,</i>	<i>The afflicted mind</i>
<i>Al fiero suo dolor,</i>	<i>Finds no respite</i>
<i>L'afflitta mente.</i>	<i>For its fierce sorrow.</i>

³³ For the text and translation of the preceding recitative, see *ibid.*, 309.

³⁴ They are not considered as mordent figures since, in eighth-note value, they have been integrated into the melodic structure.



Ex. 2.7: "Lontano dal mio tesoro" from *Lungi dal mio bel nume*

Enlivening the pickups in an ascending sequence, the mordent figures in Example 2.7 serve as a rhetorical device to emphatically express the affliction the protagonist experienced from being separated from the beloved.

"Son pur le lacrime" from *Figli del mesto cor*

<i>Son pur le lacrime</i>	<i>Tears are still</i>
<i>Il cibo misero</i>	<i>The wretched food</i>
<i>Ch'io prendo ognor.</i>	<i>That I always take.</i>
<i>Sempre tra gemiti</i>	<i>Always groaning,</i>
<i>Non spiro altr'aere</i>	<i>I breathe no other air</i>
<i>Che del dolor.</i>	<i>Than that of sorrow.</i>



Ex. 2.8: "Son pur le lacrime" from *Figli del mesto cor*

In *largo tempo*, the mordent figures in Example 2.8 add a touch of sentimental nuance to the expression of sorrow.

"In voi, pupille ardenti" from *O lucenti, O sereni occhi*

<i>In voi, pupille ardenti,</i>	<i>In you, burning eyes,</i>
<i>Ritrovo il mio piacer,</i>	<i>I rediscover my pleasure,</i>
<i>Trovo la pena.</i>	<i>[And] I find pain.</i>
<i>Per voi, luci splendenti,</i>	<i>Because of you, splendid lights,</i>
<i>Quel faretrato amor,</i>	<i>Love, with his arrows,</i>
<i>Il mio dolente cor</i>	<i>My sad heart</i>
<i>Stringe in catena.</i>	<i>Binds in chains.</i>



Ex. 2.9: "In voi, pupille ardenti" from *O lucenti, O sereni occhi*

The mordent figures, in decorating the sequence of descending fifths, can help bring out the bittersweet mood expressed in the text when performed with rhythmic flexibility and dynamic nuance.

Applications and Considerations

Looking at the examples surveyed, one may argue that they are not exactly representative of written-out mordents, in Donington's words: "Nor is it proper to describe as written-out mordents any melodic figures using the same succession of notes: for example, the figure so prominent in the first movement of J. S. Bach's Sixth Brandenburg. That is not an *ornament* at all: it is a structural element of the theme; for it is performed not free but measured."³⁵ How then may we learn the art of using mordents to adorn the bass line, a practice so common in the past as C. P. E. Bach described: "the mordent is most frequently interpolated in the bass by the performer,"³⁶ when there is no shorthand symbol, and any "mordent-like figures" in the bass are bound to appear measured and more than once, if not as a motivic element? Taking one of the examples above, the bracketed three-note pickups in "Lontano dal mio tesoro" (Ex. 2.7) are clearly a decorated version of the gesture in the opening (Ex. 2.10), yet they are in a sequential pattern, which uses "same succession of notes." Are they not a fine example of written-

³⁵ Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 267.

³⁶ Bach, *Essay*, 130.

out mordents? Besides, ornamental mordents could be played evenly, and what is shown measured on the page could be performed with a certain degree of rhythmic flexibility provided that it makes musical sense, and does not do harm to the ensemble. Especially with the continuo bass, the distinction between ornamental and structural elements can sometimes be blurred, they could be seen as two sides of the same coin. Instead of diving into a heated debate about what constitutes a written-out ornament, I propose examining all instances of a mordent-like figure that are displayed in smaller note values than the surrounding notes, hence, the three-note figure in "Formidabil gondoliero" marked with dotted brackets (Ex. 2.6) as well as the labelled ones in Examples 2.11 and 2.12 are not considered as mordent figures, but prototypes of generic lower neighboring notes.



Ex. 2.10: The opening of "Lontano dal mio tesoro"



Ex. 2.11: "E certo allor" from *Sei pur bella (La bianca rosa)*



Ex. 2.12: "Lascia di più sperar" from *Menzognere speranze*

Before we establish some rules for introducing the mordent figure in the bass, let us begin by following Handel's lead and simulating his approach of weaving the

mordent-like figure into the musical surface (for simplicity, "m-figure" will be used in the following to designate the written-out forms of the three-note pattern, inclusive of the ones possessing the signature biting quality of a true mordent, the ones dividing the bass notes equally, and the in-betweens).

The easiest method to create an m-figure is by inserting a lower auxiliary note between two same notes. Example 2.13 demonstrates such simple additions can instantly beautify and increase the expressiveness of the pickups. Another example, drawn from the first aria, "Sei bugiarda, umana speme" of *Solitudini care*, offers multiple opportunities for the simple adornment with the descending sequence at mm. 4-8 (Ex. 2.14). Referencing Example 2.5, making an m-figure at alternate measures gives a pleasant result, as shown by version A in Example 2.14. Version B presents a second option with the m-figure placed at the start of the sequence. Although both versions are alike, version A is preferred since the m-figure highlights the pattern at m. 5, where the chain of the seventh chords is set in motion. In this way, the joyous spirit of the rising pattern is obscured by the emphatic seventh-chord harmony and the inflection from the m-figure. The effect parallels the pessimistic text:

*Sei bugiarda, umana speme,
Secca il rio, languisce il fiore,
L'augelletto fugge e muore
Col diletto in un baleno.
Non è gioia senza pene,
Né piacer senza dolore;
Chi più brama gode meno.*

*You are false, human hope,
The river dries up, the flower wilts,
The bird flies away and dies,
As does delight in a flash.
There is no joy without pain,
No pleasure without sorrow;
Who desires more, enjoys less.*

Example 2.15 integrates the aforementioned procedures by decorating the pickup gesture, which suitably gives emphasis to the seventh note of the 4-2 chords, and by alternating the dotted- and even- rhythmic styles for variety.

Largo

Ex. 2.13: "Non esce un guardo mai" (embellished)

Alla breve

6

Ex. 2.14: "Sei bugiarda, umana speme" from *Solitudini care*
(a comparison of the embellished versions)

Largo

Original

Embellished

Ex. 2.15: "Il candore tolse al giglio" from *Ditemi, O piante* (embellished)

Another characteristic use of the m-figure by Handel is to garnish the upper note of the jumping intervals (see Exx. 2.2 and 2.4), a design that he also applies in the vocal part (Ex. 2.16). The aria, "A sanar le ferite d'un core" from *Fra tante pene*, provides an example for which to put such an approach into practice. Example 2.17 presents two possible ways of adding the m-figure: in version A, the m-figures are ironed out to fill the space of the second and third beats of mm. 5 and 6; in version B, the m-figures are rendered in a quick, succinct fashion and kept strictly within the second beats. Musically, both versions produce agreeable results by adding sweetness (A) and sparkles (B) to the bouncing sixths. A closer reading of the text-music relationship, however, will prompt us to opt for version B, since the unaltered third beats hold the inverted v-shaped pattern intact, and therefore the motivic, symbolic figure of "lontananza" in the following verse:

*A sanar le ferite d'un core,
Lontananza bastante non è.
Che tiranno più accrese il dolore,
È un dolor che maggiore non v'è.*

*To heal the wounds of a heart,
Absence is not enough.
That tyrant increases the sadness more,
[And] is a grief greater than which there is none.*



Ex. 2.16: "Tormento maggiore" from *Irene, idolo mio*

Ex. 2.17: "A sanar le ferite d'un core" from *Fra tante pene*
(a comparison of the embellished versions)

Upon examining the intervallic relationships of the m-figures and the enveloping notes in the written-out examples, it is apparent that in most cases, the m-figures are succeeded by a dropped interval of a third or larger, and never by an upward leap. With regard to how the m-figures are introduced, the majority of the studied examples are preceded by leaps. These models conform with the guidelines laid out by C. P. E. Bach and Quantz, in respective order:

The mordent is particularly effective in an ascent by step or by leap. It appears seldom in a descent by leap, and never on descending steps of a second.³⁷

³⁷ Donington, *Baroque Music*, 140.

The *battemens* may be introduced in leaps, where appoggiaturas are not permitted, to enliven the notes and make them brilliant.³⁸

The only exception that contradicts C. P. E. Bach's theory that mordents should "never [be] on descending steps of a second" is the decorated descending passage in "Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero," where the m-figures facilitate the interlocking suspensions between the voice and the continuo (Ex. 2.18). For easy reference, a graphic summary of the intervallic and directional tendencies of the notes that precede and follow the m-figure is presented in Examples 2.19.1 and 2.19.2.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a vocal line with lyrics: "fie-ro to - - gli a me - - la vi - - ta, to -". The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a continuo line. The music features a series of descending eighth notes with mordents (m-figures) over them, creating a decorative and rhythmic pattern. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in the vocal staff.

Ex. 2.18: "Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero"

³⁸ Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, 98.

Interval of a 3rd or larger

Often	
Possible	
Possible	
Interval of a 3rd or larger	
Seldom	
Never	
Possible	

Ex. 2.19.1: Intervallic and directional note-tendencies preceding the m-figure

The image displays five musical staves in 2/4 time, each illustrating a different context for an m-figure (a half note followed by two quarter notes). The notes are G2, A2, and B2. The interval between the first and second notes is consistently a 2nd, and between the second and third notes is a 2nd. The interval between the first and third notes is a 3rd. The label 'Interval of a 3rd or larger' is placed above the first two staves.

- In most cases:** The m-figure is followed by a quarter rest, then a half note on B2.
- Never:** The m-figure is followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note on B2.
- Possible:** The m-figure is followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note on B2.
- Chain of suspensions:** The m-figure is followed by a quarter rest, then another m-figure (G2, A2, B2) followed by a quarter rest.
- As a pickup:** The m-figure is followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note on B2.

Ex. 2.19.2: Intervallic and directional note-tendencies following the m-figure

Having established a set of intervallic parameters, a final cautionary note from Tartini—though addressing the turn,— will assist us in employing m-figures in the continuo bass: "[It] should not be placed on single notes outside the bar nor on one which begins a strain."³⁹ In other words, the m-figure should never be used on the first note of a phrase, nor the pickup that begins a phrase. As demonstrated through Example 2.20, when the initial pickup is decorated with an m-figure, its motion towards the downbeat is

³⁹ Tartini, *Traité*, 90.

hampered as it becomes a stand-alone gesture, whereas adding a connective passing note would help the melody flow.

Largo

The image shows three staves of musical notation in bass clef, 6/8 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Largo'. The first staff, labeled 'Original', shows a sequence of notes: a quarter note G2, followed by eighth notes A2, B2, C3, and a quarter note D3. The second staff, labeled 'M-figure', shows a quarter note G2 with a beamed eighth-note m-figure (A2-G2-A2) on top, followed by eighth notes B2, C3, and a quarter note D3. The third staff, labeled 'Passing note', shows a quarter note G2 with a beamed eighth-note passing note (A2-G2) on top, followed by eighth notes B2, C3, and a quarter note D3.

Ex. 2.20: "Non esce un guardo mai" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

An important issue to address concerning the rhythmic behavior of the m-figure is whether a pre-beat or on-the-beat style would be more proper for the bass part. In a continuo-only ritornello, one will have more freedom in choosing between the two styles. The bass introduction of "Quando non son presente" (Ex. 2.21), for example, has a stepwise ascending framework in which the raised C# at m. 5 marks the inflection point of the phrase; by adding an onbeat m-figure (version A), the C# gains impetus to reach the melodic destination, D at m. 6; alternatively, by garnishing the C# with a pre-beat m-figure (version B), its chromatic quality takes center stage in the phrase, and the note, D that follows becomes a resolution. Either approach is admissible and will help define the melodic shape as preferred. However, when the m-figure is used in the accompanimental bass, the quick, pre-beat style will cause a flicker that distracts the voice; for this reason, an on-the-beat, measured m-figure is considered more appropriate. A comparison is given

in Example 2.22, where the m-figure functions to mark the structural cadence and underscore the emphatic adjective, "funesta" (fatal).

Original

Version A

Version B

Ex. 2.21: "Quando non son presente" from *Da sete ardente afflitto*
(a comparison of the embellished versions)

44 45 46 47

Original

Onbeat

Pre-beat

pu - pil - la lu - cen - te in — stel - la fu - - ne - sta

Ex. 2.22: "Pupilla lucente" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

"Crude stelle! Astri tiranni!" from *Se per fatal destino*

*Crude stelle! Astri tiranni!
Consigliatemi a morire,
Toglietemi amorose
S'ostinato è il mio timor.
Insegnate al core amante,
La ragion d'un bell'ardire,
O narrate almen pietose,
Al mio ben il mio dolor.*

*Cruel stars! tyrannical planets!
Counsel me to die,
Or lead me gently away
If persistent is my fear.
Teach the loving heart
The reason for a noble courage,
Or at least in pity, tell
My beloved of my pain.*



Ex. 3.2: "Crude stelle! Astri tiranni!" from *Se per fatal destino*

Devoid of an introduction, the continuo tag concludes the first stanza with an emphatic utterance of anguish, characterized by the use of rising appoggiaturas.

"Un affanno più tiranno" from *Lungi da voi*

*Un affanno più tiranno
Di crudele lontananza,
Non si trova e non si dà.
E il mio core, che si muore,
Può ridir, quanto s'avanza
La sua fiera crudeltà.*

*An anguish more tyrannical
Than cruel distance,
Cannot be found and does not exist.
And my heart, that dies away,
Can say again, how much her fierce cruelty
Increases it.*



Ex. 3.3.1: "Un affanno più tiranno" from *Lungi da voi*

largetto, this aria tells about the torment of being apart from the beloved her, even though she is cruelly unfaithful:

*Se avvien che sia infedele,
La bella mia crudele,
Mentre la miran gli occhi,
Respira questo cor.
Se gelosia m'affanna
Quando la mia tiranna
Dolce favella,
Allor pur mi ristora,
Ma il farà al fin ch'io mora;
Giunge la lontananza,
Che privo di speranza,
Mi strugge nel dolor.*

*If it happens that she is unfaithful,
My beautiful cruel one,
While my eyes gaze on her,
my heart breathes [is content].
If jealousy vexes me
When my tyrant
Speaks sweetly,
Then, however, she restores me,
But will in the end cause me to die;
But if absence is added,
Then, devoid of hope,
It destroys me in grief.*

Correspondingly, Handel employs the appoggiatura as a pronounced feature in the melody, as illustrated in Example 3.4. Taking his cue, it seems appropriate to add the leaning note to the continuo introduction. Example 3.5 presents two potential options that color the high point of the phrase, version A sticks with the characteristic semitone-resolution by garnishing the Eb from below, and version B follows the predominant, descending gesture. Both obey the "standard Italianate" practice of lengthening the appoggiatura so that it takes up two-thirds of the dotted main note.⁴³ It is immediately noticeable that version A results in a weakened, stagnant melody due to the repeated leaps from G to D. If, however, the Gs were taken out (Ex. 3.6), the line would sound more agreeable, and would conform to Quantz's rule that "If the preceding note is lower than the following one [by one or two steps], the appoggiatura must be taken from

⁴³ Kreitner et al., "Ornaments."

below.⁴⁴ Given the original melodic design, version B is preferable not only because it produces a nicer contour, but also for the reason that the widened interval, from a minor sixth to a minor seventh, echoes the theme of "lontananza" in the poetry.

Ex. 3.4: "Se avvien che sia infedele" from *Fra tante pene*

Larghetto

Ex. 3.5: "Se avvien che sia infedele" from *Fra tante pene*
(a comparison of the embellished versions)

Ex. 3.6: "Se avvien che sia infedele" from *Fra tante pene* (an illustration)

⁴⁴ Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, 92.

Next, let us examine another C-minor aria, "Se nel punto ch'io moro, ch'io spiro" from *Un sospir*. Despite the lack of a tempo indication, given the useful hint from the classic descending figure of lament (marked with the brackets in Ex. 3.7), as well as the cantata's subject on death,⁴⁵ the song is presumably rendered at a slow tempo. By making use of the gesture of a typical appoggiatura, which forms a dissonant fourth with the root of the bass and resolves to the consonant third by a stepwise descend (or resolving from the seventh to the sixth degree), the embellished version reproduces the breath of a sigh:

<i>Se nel punto ch'io moro, ch'io spiro,</i>	<i>If in the moment that I die, that I expire,</i>
<i>Dal bel petto tu getti un sospiro,</i>	<i>From that beautiful breast you breathe a sigh,</i>
<i>Prende morte d'amor la sembianza.</i>	<i>Death [will] take on the semblance of love.</i>
<i>E ingannando l'acceso desire,</i>	<i>And deceiving the strong desire,</i>
<i>Penso amore, non penso morire,</i>	<i>I think of love and not of dying,</i>
<i>Ch'il mio fato diventa speranza.</i>	<i>For my fate changes into hope.</i>

In practice, however, a major concern arises with this method of adornment. If the cellist adds in the appoggiaturas while the harpsichordist plays what is written, a harsh interval of a second will sound, and it is rather unpleasant especially when both instruments play in the same register. Shall both players embellish the bass in the same fashion, or perhaps, split the part so that the cellist plays the decorated lament figure upon an adapted keyboard realization—an idea that will most likely be refuted by the harpsichordist? Either approach will require planning and discussion beforehand. That being said, I propose an alternative way of introducing the appoggiatura in the bass, which involves a

⁴⁵ For the texts and translations of the cantata, see Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*, 361-62.

slight departure from the scripted bass notes. As illustrated through Example 3.8, the suggested part shown by the upper staves makes brief counterpoints with the original bass line by forming a third and a tenth, embellished with appoggiaturas, on the downbeats of mm. 2 and 4, respectively. The octave switch on the last note of m. 3 helps bring out the lyrical quality of the adorned, falling gesture in the next measure, and it also adheres to the customary separation of the solo cello part from the continuo by an octave in obbligato-cello arias of the time (Ex. 3.9).

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled 'Original' and 'Embellished', shows measures 1 through 6. The 'Original' staff (top) is a single bass clef staff. The 'Embellished' staff (bottom) consists of two bass clef staves. The second system, labeled '7', shows measures 7 through 8. The 'Original' staff (top) is a single bass clef staff. The 'Embellished' staff (bottom) consists of two bass clef staves. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The embellished part includes a sixteenth-note appoggiatura on the downbeat of measure 2 and a sixteenth-note appoggiatura on the downbeat of measure 4. The original part has a sixteenth-note appoggiatura on the downbeat of measure 3. The embellished part has a sixteenth-note appoggiatura on the downbeat of measure 7. The original part has a sixteenth-note appoggiatura on the downbeat of measure 8.

Ex. 3.7: "Se nel punto ch'io moro, ch'io spiro" from *Un sospir* (embellished)

Adagio

Embellished / Cello

Original / Keyboard

5

Ex. 3.8: "Basterebbe a tor di vita" (embellished)

Violoncello

Basso Continuo

Ex. 3.9: Excerpted from "Se il tiranno caderà" in *Rinaldo* by D. Gabrielli⁴⁶

The Passing Appoggiatura

Virtually identical to the passing note, the passing appoggiatura is an unaccented non-harmonic note, which is "often slurred to the following and not to the previous note";⁴⁷ that is the major difference between the two.

⁴⁶ See musical Example n. 24 in La Via, "Il violoncello a Roma," Appendix III.

⁴⁷ Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 226.

"Se al pensier dar mai potrò" from *Sarei troppo felice*

*Se al pensier dar mai potrò,
Come al piè, legge e misura,
Il mio cor pace godrà.
Dall'infido lungi andrò,
Ma la pena allor più dura
Temo, O Dio! ch'ancor sarà.*

*If I can ever give to my thoughts,
As I do to my feet, law and measure,
My heart will enjoy peace.
I will go far from the unfaithful one,
But then worse pain
I fear, O God! will ensue.*



Ex. 3.10: "Se al pensier dar mai potrò" from *Sarei troppo felice*

At variance with the steady figuration shown in the first measure of Ex. 3.10, the bracketed passing appoggiaturas give the lower voice a gentle curvature as well as a nudge to each beat to connote the proneness to unruly thoughts.

"Se più non t'amo" from *Stanco di più soffrire*

*Se più non t'amo,
Non ti doler,
Ch'amarti, O bella,
Io più non so.
Ma da te bramo
Caro piacer,
Se tu sei quella
Che mi piagò.*

*If I no longer love you,
Do not grieve,
For to love you, O beautiful one,
I no longer know how.
But from you I crave
Sweet pleasure,
If you are that one
Who wounded me.*



Ex. 3.11.1: "Se più non t'amo" from *Stanco di più soffrire*



Ex. 3.11.2: "Se più non t'amo" from *Stanco di più soffrire*

The sixteenth-note decoration is classified as a passing appoggiatura since, by referencing the parallel design in the voice part on the words "t'amo" and "bella" (Ex. 3.11.2), it gravitates and connects to the following eighth note to form a unit. The ornament enlivens the expression of the self-pitying lover.

"Sì bel foco è quel che t'arde" from *Non sospirar*

*Sì bel foco è quel che t'arde,
Che non puoi dolerti, O cor.
Soffri pur che alla costanza
È svantaggio la speranza
Quando è gloria un vago ardor.*

*Such beautiful desire is that which enflames you,
So that you cannot be sad, O heart.
Yet you suffer because hope
Is a detriment to constancy
When a beautiful passion is glorious.*



Ex. 3.12: "Sì bel foco è quel che t'arde" from *Non sospirar*

Coupled with the recurring rhythmic pattern ($\frac{2}{4}$), the descending passing appoggiatura stands out as a distinct gesture in this aria. It matches with the philosophical verse to evoke sadness that comes with having a desire.

"Un sospir a chi si muore" from *Un sospir*

*Un sospir a chi si muore,
Per pietà, labbra vezzose,
Renderà di questo core
L'agonie meno penose.*

*One sigh to one who dies,
For pity's sake, O lovely lips,
Will give this heart
An agony less painful.*



Ex. 3.13: "Un sospir a chi si muore" from *Un sospir*

The largely independent continuo part is made up of one-measure phrases that feature the falling appoggiaturas. In *largo* tempo, the thirty second-note ornament gives a strong character to the bass, which expresses agony, and thus sets a fitting "scene" for the voice to elaborate on "*un sospir*."

Applications and Considerations

Much like the passing note, the passing appoggiatura serves to add melodic quality to the bass, but with a different flavor. Whereas the passing note smoothens out the bass line, the passing appoggiatura imparts a subtle nuance through the articulation. Taking "Un sospir a chi si muore" as an example, the dotted brackets in Example 3.13 illustrate the hypothetical slurs when the non-harmonic notes, G and Bb, are read as passing notes, in which case the preceding dotted notes are brought out in a legato manner. Instead, by rendering the thirty second-note ornaments as passing appoggiaturas, they are separated from the notes before, and they gain impetus to invigorate the next beat. Such distinguishable characteristic of the passing appoggiatura can be especially helpful for reinforcing a crescendo, as illustrated through Example 3.14. By shifting the

rhythmic grouping, and adjusting the slurs accordingly, the weak notes, D, G and C are amplified, hence, the climatic build-up towards the cadence is further intensified. The resulting effect is appropriate for this aria text for the loud weak beats convey the emotion of self-reproach (see Chapter 1).

Ex. 3.14: "Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

The Trill

The trill is a quick oscillation between a main note and its upper neighbor. There are two major styles of rendering a trill: one that gives rhythmic spark or melodic grace with fast note alternation, and one that carries harmonic impact with lengthened initial oscillations. The two examples found belong to the former type, which is more commonly used in the bass part.

"Auretta vezzosa" from *Zeffiretto*

<i>Auretta vezzosa,</i>	<i>Lovely little breeze,</i>
<i>Favella pietosa</i>	<i>Speak piteously</i>
<i>Al vago mio sol.</i>	<i>To my wandering love.</i>
<i>E digli ch'un giorno</i>	<i>And tell him that one day</i>
<i>Ei faccia ritorno</i>	<i>He should return</i>
<i>Avanti ch'io mora,</i>	<i>Before I die,</i>
<i>Uccisa del duol.</i>	<i>Killed by grief.</i>

Ex. 3.15.1: "Auretta vezzosa" from *Zeffiretto*



Ex. 3.15.2



Ex. 3.15.3

This aria presents an exceptional case in which the trill sign is notated in the continuo part. An ornamented version of the second measure, the written-out variation (Ex. 3.15.1, m. 3) reproduces the imploring gesture of "speak piteously" in the text. Apart from the introduction, the trill appears in the brief continuo intersection as well as the concluding tag, illustrated in Exx. 3.15.2 and 3.15.3 respectively. It is interesting to note that the trill is not marked in all parallel instances, and it is up to the performer to determine whether it is naturally implied or an intended detail of variance.

"Torna il core al suo diletto" from *Torna il core*

*Torna il core al suo diletto,
Mentre torna a te, mio ben.
(Il cor ritorna a te, ritorna al suo diletto
Mentre torna.)
Dagli, O cara, quel ricetto,
Che ti chiede nel tuo sen.*

*The heart returns to its delight,
When it returns to you, my beloved.
(The heart returns to you, returns to
Its delight, when it returns.)
Give it, O dear one, that shelter,
That it asks for in your breast.*



Ex. 3.16.1: "Torna il core al suo diletto" from *Torna il core*



Ex. 3.16.2: "Torna il core al suo diletto" from *Torna il core*

The written-out trills symbolize the delighted heart by giving a light flourish to the words, "core" and "diletto" in the vocal subject (Ex. 3.16.2).

Applications and Considerations

The trill is often grouped with the mordent into the same family of ornaments as they both consist of oscillations between a main note and its neighbor note. A common way of differentiating the two is by the number of oscillations, hence, the trill is easily seen as an elongated mordent, and the mordent resembles a short trill. In fact, the most important distinction between these two like ornaments is their paired neighbors; simply put, the trill involves the upper subsidiary of the principal note, and the mordent engages the lower auxiliary. For this very feature, the trill gives a natural flair to a stepwise ascending melodic gesture (Ex. 3.17), and it also works well in filling the leap of a third via the upper auxiliary (Ex. 3.18, mm. 6-7). Needless to say, the trill, as do all ornaments, serves to emphasize a note, but on top of this, it gives a sense of continuity as the directional feel of the upper neighboring note helps propel the music forward (Ex. 3.19). Moreover, the bright shade of the upper neighbor, as opposed to the darker lower neighbor in a mordent, makes the trill effective in music that is set in a brisk tempo, especially in lively 3/8 time, and it is particularly suited for rendering texts about joy, positivity, and admiration. Though less commonly used in the bass line, the trill can certainly be employed in slow arias. For instance, "Il bosco, il prato, il rio" from *Clori, vezzosa Clori*, has a sarabande-like rhythm that offers favorable opportunities for the

addition of trills on the accented second beats (Ex. 3.20). The embellished version shows one possible way of varying the trills when given a sequential pattern. Two styles of trills are used, one starting on the upper neighbor for a more emphatic, appoggiatura-like effect, and the other one starting on the main note. After sounding the trill twice, at m. 4, instead of placing a trill on the long note, a mordent is used on the last eighth note to create the feeling of a delayed trill. The oscillating decorations express the nostalgic text in a befitting manner:

<i>Il bosco, il prato, il rio,</i>	<i>The wood, the field, the river,</i>
<i>Di te, caro ben mio</i>	<i>My dear beloved,</i>
<i>L'immagine adorata</i>	<i>Carry back the adored image</i>
<i>Riportano al pensier.</i>	<i>Of you to my thoughts.</i>
<i>E se zampilla il fonte</i>	<i>And if the fountain gushes forth,</i>
<i>Mi par di star à fronte</i>	<i>I seem to stand in front of</i>
<i>De lumi tuoi vivaci</i>	<i>Your sparkling eyes</i>
<i>E del tuo guardo arcier.</i>	<i>And your dart-like glance.</i>



Ex. 3.17: "S'altri gode pensando al suo bene" from *Qualor l'egre pupille* (embellished)



Ex. 3.18: "Bella gloria in campo armato" from *Solitudini care* (embellished)

Andante

7

11

Ex. 3.19: "Benché tradita io sia" (embellished)

Adagio

Original

Embellished

Ex. 3.20: "Il bosco, il prato, il rio" from *Clori, vezzosa Clori* (embellished)

The Slide

The slide is a decorative gesture comprising a prefix of two notes leading to the main note in conjunct ascending or descending motion. It can be rendered either as an on-beat or a pre-beat ornament that gives energy to the target note. In practice, the slide is most effective when it is performed slurred and with acceleration to the main note.

"Tirsi amato, adorato mio Nume!" from *Lungi da me, pensier tiranno!*

*Tirsi amato, adorato mio Nume!
Vieni, O caro, ritornami in sen.
Farfalletta son io, che le piume
Ardo al lume del caro mio ben.*

*Beloved Tirsi, my adored god!
Come, my love, come back to my breast.
A butterfly am I, whose wings
I burn at the light of my dear beloved.*



Ex. 3.21.1: "Tirsi amato, adorato mio Nume!" from *Lungi da me, pensier tiranno!*



Ex. 3.21.2: "Tirsi amato, adorato mio Nume!" from *Lungi da me, pensier tiranno!*

The ascending triplets in part A of the aria (Ex. 3.21.1) appear as a regular melodic pattern with stresses on each start of the triplets. However, when compared with the closing phrase in part B (Ex. 3.21.2), the varied rhythm suggests an alternate interpretation—that is to treat the rising figures as slides and place emphasis on the upper notes. The two notational variants may imply a certain rhythmic flexibility in rendition. While the sentiment of wishing Tirsi to reciprocate the protagonist's affection is already expressed through the decorated ascending scale segments, the rhythmic drive of the slides further heightens the tone of expression.

"Penso al rio, ma penso insieme" from *Da sete ardente afflitto*

*Penso al rio, ma penso insieme
 Che deluso dal pensiero,
 Più s'affanna il mesto core.
 E nel sen ch'acceso geme,
 Più si avvanza un duol sereno
 Più si fa grave l'ardore.*

*I think of the stream, but at the same time
 I think that deluded by the thought,
 My sad heart is more distressed.
 And in my breast that, inflamed, groans,
 The more a steady sorrow grows
 The more intense the burning becomes.*



Ex. 3.22: "Penso al rio, ma penso insieme" from *Da sete ardente afflitto*

In addition to embellishing the lament motive (E - D - C - B), the downward slides shape a cantabile bass that speaks sorrow.

Applications and Considerations

In a straightforward manner, the upward slide excites a note and promotes a sense of eagerness, and the falling slide adds gravity to a note and communicates deep sadness. An interval of a fourth is a potential place for adding the two accessory notes, as demonstrated in Example 3.23, the fillers add weight to the dropped fourths and effect a heavy closure of the phrase, which echoes the text (see Chapter 1). Slides may also be used to color a scalar passage as in "Tirsi amato, adorato mio Nume!" The following example (Ex. 3.24), drawn from the aria "Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero," shows, with a descending scale, how different ways of rendering the slides may add musical meaning to the poetry. In version A, the gentle falling gesture paints a layer of melancholy on top of the somber expression of "before such a dreadful day dawns." In version B, the pre-beat slides convey the bitterness of being "pierced with grief" by giving each descending note a sharp, biting accent.

Larghetto

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a bass line. The top staff is labeled 'Original' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Embellished'. Both are in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is marked 'Larghetto'. The original version consists of a descending scale: G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1. The embellished version follows the same notes but includes a sharp, biting accent on each descending note, achieved through a series of pre-beat slides.

Ex. 3.23: "Vedrò teco ogni gioia, ogni bene" (embellished)

Vivace

The image shows three staves of music for the piece "Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero". The tempo is marked "Vivace". The first staff is the "Original" version, the second is "Version A", and the third is "Version B". All staves are in bass clef with a common time signature. The music consists of a sequence of notes, with Version A and B adding slurs and accents to the notes to enhance the performance.

Ex. 3.24: "Pria che spunti un dì sì fiero" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

Apart from its function to enhance affective expressions, the slide is also helpful for giving energy to a repeated-note design, especially when the first note acts as a pickup to the second. For instance, the sequential pattern in Example 3.25 features the chain of 4-2 chords with the seventh note of the chords prepared then spotlighted on the strong beats. While the harmonization from the keyboard steers the movement of the continuo line, the supplementary embellishments, either through lifting the pickups as in version A or inspiring the seventh notes as in version B, further induce impetus for a flowing performance.

Largo

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Il candore tolse al giglio" in a Largo tempo. It is organized into two systems. The first system contains three staves: "Original", "Version A", and "Version B". Each staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The "Original" staff shows a sequence of eighth notes. "Version A" and "Version B" include additional ornaments, such as grace notes and slurs, over the eighth notes. The second system, starting with a measure number "4", continues the musical line across three staves. This system features more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth notes and slurs, with the "4/2" time signature appearing below the staves.

Ex. 3.25: "Il candore tolse al giglio" (a comparison of the embellished versions)

CHAPTER 4

The Figurate Arpeggio

The arpeggio technique, which refers to the spreading of the chords in various patterns, is essential to continuo playing, especially for keyboardists and lutenists. It is typically performed in an improvised manner, viz., the accompanist spontaneously adjusts the degree of elaboration, the rolling speed, and the shape of the broken chords to complement the solo part. When those three elements are carefully designed and given "a melodic value," the resulting patterns become figurate arpeggios.⁴⁸

"Chi rapì la pace al core?" from *Chi rapì la pace?*

*Chi rapì la pace al core?
Chi dal sen l'alma rubò?
Ah! lo so,
Con un guardo fatto dardo,
Nume cieco mi piagò.*

*Who stole peace from my heart?
Who robbed the soul from my breast?
Ah! I know,
With a dart-like glance
The blind god wounded me.*



Ex. 4.1.1: "Chi rapì la pace al core?" from *Chi rapì la pace?*



Ex. 4.1.2: "Chi rapì la pace al core?" from *Chi rapì la pace?*

⁴⁸ Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 277-78.

The basic design of the arpeggiation, specifically the syncopated descending thirds (Ex. 4.1.1), depicts a stirred heart, while the interrupted form that stops on the high note (Ex. 4.1.2) mirrors the figurative questions in the text.

"Pupilla lucente" from *Chi rapì la pace?*

<i>Pupilla lucente</i>	<i>The shining eye[s]</i>
<i>In stella funesta,</i>	<i>Love changed</i>
<i>Amore cangiò.</i>	<i>Into a fatal star.</i>
<i>Così quel splendore,</i>	<i>Thus that splendor</i>
<i>Con empio rigore</i>	<i>With pitiless severity</i>
<i>La morte additò.</i>	<i>Pointed to death.</i>



Ex. 4.2.1: "Pupilla lucente" from *Chi rapì la pace?*



Ex. 4.2.2: "Pupilla lucente" from *Chi rapì la pace?*

The broken chords are specially employed in this aria when the voice has held notes (Ex. 4.2.1) as well as in sequential passages (Ex. 4.2.2).⁴⁹

"Non le scherzate intorno" from *Udite il mio consiglio*

*Non le scherzate intorno,
Ch'il cor v'accenderà.
E in chiederle pietà
Del concepito ardore,
Dirà che nel suo core
Stilla d'amor non ha.*

*Do not joke around her,
Because she will set your heart on fire.
And when you ask for pity
For your engendered passion,
She will say that in her heart
She has not a droplet of love.*



Ex. 4.3: "Non le scherzate intorno" from *Udite il mio consiglio*

This playful aria features a motivic bass characterized by the interweaving of ascending arpeggios and the pedal chord root.

"Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira" from *Lucrezia* ("O numi eterni!")

*Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira
L'empio Romano, s'apra, s'infetti.
Se il passo move, se il guardo gira,
Incontri larve, ruine aspetti.*

*May the ground beneath his feet open up,
And the air the evil Roman breathes grow foul!
Wherever his step leads him, or his eyes turn,
May he meet ghosts, and expect destruction.*

⁴⁹ A discussion on the use of mordent figures in this aria is covered in Chapter 2.



Ex. 4.4: "Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira" from *Lucrezia* ("O numi eterni!")

The raging expression of the verse is effectively rendered by the rapid (Allegro), offbeat, downward arpeggiations.

"Pronti l'ale dispiegate" from *Fra pensieri*

*Pronti l'ale dispiegate,
Miei pensieri, ratti volate,
A trovar la bella Clori.
E, fissandovi in costei,
Dite pur che al par di lei
Non v'è oggetto che innamori.*

*Quickly, spread your wings,
Quickly fly, O my thoughts,
And find the beautiful Clori.
And clinging to her,
Say that compared to her,
There is no other object that can inspire love.*



Ex. 4.5: "Pronti l'ale dispiegate" from *Fra pensieri*

The buoyant figuration of paired thirds with an integral deceleration from sixteenth- to eighth-notes convincingly mimics the fleeting affection towards Clori.

"In un folto bosco ombroso" from *Vedendo Amor*

*In un folto bosco ombroso,
Io predea dolce riposo,
Una notte fredda e scura.
A un tempo così strano,
Io credea Amor lontano,
Ma la mia libertà non fu sicura.*

*In a dense, shady wood,
I was taking a sweet rest,
On a cool, dark night.
At such an unusual time,
I thought Love far away,
But my freedom was not secure.*



Ex. 4.6: "In un folto bosco ombroso" from *Vedendo Amor*

Following a synoptic recitative, this aria begins the narrative of the scene in which the protagonist was fallen prey to Amor (Love). The descending broken chords that bounce off the downbeats are used in the continuo part to paint the ominous dark night.⁵⁰

"Ride il fiore in seno al prato" from *Nella stagion*

*Ride il fiore in seno al prato
A tornar la primavera
E con soffio delicato
Spira l'aura lusinghiera.
Solo tu, crudele ingrato,
Sdegni ognor la fè sincera
Del mio petto innamorato
Con sì barbara maniera.*

*The flowers smile in the meadow
At the return of spring,
And with gentle breath
The caressing breeze blows.
You alone, cruel and unkind,
Do ever scorn the loyalty
Within my loving breast,
In such a heartless fashion.*



Ex. 4.7.1: "Ride il fiore in seno al prato" from *Nella stagion*



Ex. 4.7.2: "Ride il fiore in seno al prato" from *Nella stagion*

⁵⁰ For the text and translation of the preceding recitative, see Harris, *Handel as Orpheus*, 362.

Both the v-shaped (Ex. 4.7.1) and the inverted v-shaped (Ex. 4.7.2) arpeggios are employed in part A to portray a genteel pastoral atmosphere.

"Lascia di più sperar" from *Menzognere speranze*

<i>Lascia di più sperar</i>	<i>Leave off hoping</i>
<i>Se non vuoi lacrimar,</i>	<i>If you do not want to weep,</i>
<i>Povero core!</i>	<i>Poor heart!</i>
<i>Non usar fedeltà,</i>	<i>Do not practice fidelity,</i>
<i>Vanta sol crudeltà,</i>	<i>Value only cruelty,</i>
<i>Se brami trionfar</i>	<i>If you desire to triumph over</i>
<i>Del Dio d'amore.</i>	<i>The god of love.</i>



Ex. 4.8: "Lascia di più sperar" from *Menzognere speranze*

Here, the descending zigzag pattern in the bass punctuates the verse lines with melancholic exclamations.

"Superbetti occhi amorosi" from *Ne' tuoi lumi*

<i>Superbetti occhi amorosi,</i>	<i>Proud, loving eyes,</i>
<i>Sì crudeli, sì vezzosi,</i>	<i>So cruel, so charming,</i>
<i>Perché siete, O Dio, con me?</i>	<i>Why are you, O God, with me?</i>
<i>Se già vostra è l'alma mia,</i>	<i>If my soul is now yours,</i>
<i>Vantar seco tirannia,</i>	<i>Boasting that tyranny sides with you</i>
<i>Vostra gloria alfin non è.</i>	<i>Is not in the end your [greatest] glory.</i>



Ex. 4.9: "Superbetti occhi amorosi" from *Ne' tuoi lumi*

The turbulent feelings of unrequited love are reflected through the interspersing of the plain falling arpeggios with the decorated broken-chord figurations (Ex. 4.9, mm. 1 and 3).

"Benché tradita io sia" from *Manca pur quanto sai*

<i>Benché tradita io sia,</i>	<i>Although I am betrayed,</i>
<i>Sempre fedel sarò.</i>	<i>I shall always be faithful.</i>
<i>Moro di gelosia;</i>	<i>I die of jealousy;</i>
<i>Eppur, O mio tiranno,</i>	<i>And yet, O my tyrant,</i>
<i>Inganno per inganno</i>	<i>Deception for deception</i>
<i>Giammai ti renderò.</i>	<i>Shall I never render you.</i>



Ex. 4.10.1: "Benché tradita io sia" from *Manca pur quanto sai*

Ex. 4.10.2: "Benché tradita io sia" from *Manca pur quanto sai*

Composed of an octave leap, with occasional variants, and a wedge-shaped arpeggiation, the steady flowing pattern forms a musical parallel to the attribute of fidelity. It is especially noticeable during the vocal melismas on the stressed syllable of "fedel" (Ex. 4.10.2).

"Voglio darti a mille a mille" from *Quando sperasti*

*Voglio darti a mille a mille
Dolci baci, O cara Fille,
Perché servan di catene,
A restar sempre con me.
E vuoi darti a cento a cento
Tali vezzi in un momento,
Che soffrir dovrai ben pene,
Se lontan ne porti il piè.*

*I wish to give you thousands and thousands
Of sweet kisses, O dear Fille,
So that they serve as chains,
To keep you always with me.
And I want to give you hundreds and hundreds
Of such caresses in a moment,
That you will have to suffer much pain,
If you carry yourself far away.*



Ex. 4.11: "Voglio darti a mille a mille" from *Quando sperasti*

The half-bar harmonic rhythm, expressed through the descending arpeggios in the continuo, is juxtaposed against the 4/4 meter in *allegro* tempo to capture the protagonist's passionate feelings towards Fille.

"Se pari è la tua fè" from *Se pari è la tua fè*

<i>Se pari è la tua fè</i>	<i>If your faithfulness is equal</i>
<i>Al foco che ho nel sen,</i>	<i>To the fire I have in my breast,</i>
<i>Ardo contento.</i>	<i>I burn contented.</i>
<i>Perché egual mercè</i>	<i>Because my torment</i>
<i>Avrà da te, mio ben,</i>	<i>Will have from you, my love,</i>
<i>Il mio tormento.</i>	<i>Equal reward.</i>



Ex. 4.12: "Se pari è la tua fè" from *Se pari è la tua fè*

Dovetailing the primary motive (indicated by the dotted bracket in Ex. 4.12), the wiggly descending broken-chord pattern forms a part of the virtual ground-bass theme that portrays the rich feelings of desire, fire and torment.

"Son qual cerva ferita che fugge" from *Allor ch'io dissi addio*

*Son qual cerva ferita che fugge,
Dalla man che l'ancide e l'impiega.
Ma se meco è lo stral che mi strugge
Lontananza non salda la piaga.*

*I am like the wounded doe that flees
From the hand that kills and wounds it.
But if the arrow that afflicts me is [lodged] in
me,
Distance will not heal the wound.*



Ex. 4.13: "Son qual cerva ferita che fugge" from *Allor ch'io dissi addio*

The title of the aria is depicted through the bracketed motive (Ex. 4.13), which uses a skipping, asymmetrical broken-chord figure to animate the image of the wounded doe.

"Quella che miri" from *Clori, degli occhi miei*

*Quella che miri
Aura scherzosa
Muover le fronde
Di querce annosa,
Sai ciò ch'intanto
Dicendo va.
Co' miei sospiri
Dice di Clori:
Qui si nasconde
Alma ritrosa
Che tien per vanto
La crudeltà.*

*That playful breeze
That you see
Move the leafy branches
Of an ancient oak,
Do you know meanwhile
What it is saying?
With my sighs
It says of Clori:
"Here hides
A reluctant soul
That makes a boast
Of its cruelty."*



Ex. 4.14: "Quella che miri" from *Clori, degli occhi miei*

The alternate version of this aria, albeit incomplete, includes the sinuous arpeggios that represent the "playful breeze."

"Son come navicella" from *Lungi dal mio bel nume*

*Son come navicella
Esposta in mezzo al mar,
De 'venti al rio furor.
Scorre fra la procella,
Né può lido trovar,
Immersa nel timor.*

*I am like a small boat
Exposed in the middle of the sea,
To the terrible fury of the winds.
It runs before the storm,
And cannot find the shore,
Immersed in fear.*



Ex. 4.15: "Son come navicella" from *Lungi dal mio bel nume*

An allegorical representation of the rocking boat, or perhaps the aggressive winds, the wave-like broken chords symbolize the afflicted mind.

Based on the examples found, the figurate arpeggio is a useful tool for Handel to create atmospheric settings, render metaphorical subjects, and convey intense emotions. It is noteworthy that, without exceptions, only one devised broken-chord pattern is used in each of the arias. Moreover, when it is used to support sequential passages, such as the excerpted phrase shown in Ex. 4.2.2, its rhythmic activeness can efficiently compound the effects of sequences in heightening the expressions.

Applications and Considerations

The figurate arpeggio is the most elaborate form of ornaments. It not only requires trained dexterity of the player, but more importantly, the ability to retrieve stock figured

patterns and to apply them in appropriate places with absolute harmonic accuracy. For modern-day players, we may reference the aforementioned early solo cello works to learn the standard figurations of the time and develop variation techniques; with practice, it is possible to "make a prelude."⁵¹ Yet, applying the learned patterns in accompanying arias, which seems to be customary though controversial, poses exceptional challenges for it is difficult to objectively identify the appropriate places to display such creativity. Setting aside, for the time being, the "proper" way of introducing figured variations, I propose using the existing aria examples in this chapter as our basis for further experimentation and analysis, in light of Le Cerf de La Viéville's account: "To go one better (*rencherir*) on these basses, already varied in themselves, they vary them further."⁵²

The first and easiest method to "vary" the "varied" bass is to reshape the broken chords, as shown in Example 4.16. A total of eleven combinations can be derived from the five-note basic pattern. It is immediately apparent that versions 6 to 11 fundamentally change the principal affect of the aria due to the flipped direction of the fourth and fifth notes, i.e., from B - G to G - B. When the pattern is set in motion from m. 3, the upward gesture of those two notes in conjunction with the succeeding rests on the downbeats create a question-like effect as in "Chi rapi la pace al core?" (Ex. 4.1.2). Of the first five versions, version 2 also significantly alters the raging affect since the caret-shaped figuration evokes a pastoral feel similar to Example 4.7.2. While the general descending contour has been kept in versions 3 and 4, the displaced top notes result in a much weaker

⁵¹ Buelow, "Der General-Bass," 353 (see Introduction, n. 11).

⁵² Donington, *Interpretation of Early Music*, 369-70 (see Introduction, n. 15).

effect. A closer examination of versions 1 and 5 reveals an interesting detail: despite the fact that both versions possess a jagged-shaped pattern, version 1 retains the angry expression, yet, version 5 conveys a sense of sorrow owing to the initial falling thirds. We can thereby infer that keeping the two end regions of a broken-chord figuration unmodified is especially crucial to preserving the basic musical affect.

Since the shape of the arpeggiation contributes meaningfully to the expression of the texts, we are left with limited possibilities to further vary the bass without distorting the original motive. One possibility is to add to the written figurations the two most convenient yet mighty ornaments, the passing note and the mordent figure, as demonstrated by Example 4.17. The rhythm of the two enlivened beats is made identical to facilitate a spontaneous and natural delivery, and its character mimics the embellished bass pattern in "Il mio pianto sembra un gioco" (Ex. 4.18), an aria that similarly uses "foco" (fire) as the representational object, from Gasparini's cantata, *Tormentosi pensieri*.

Allegro

Original

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

Ex. 4.16: "Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira" (an illustration)

Ex. 4.17: "Se pari è la tua fè" (embellished)

Ex. 4.18: "Il mio pianto sembra un gioco" from Gasparini's *Tormentosi pensieri*

Whether or not cellists in the past would carefully devise figurate arpeggios to match the aria texts is left to conjecture. Given Marcello's and Le Cerf de La Viéville's criticism about the virtuosos' practice, it is entirely possible that they habitually drew from a developed vocabulary of broken-chord patterns, like the ones in Corelli's Op. 5 (Ex. 4.19), for the sole purpose of exhibiting their skills in variation. In an effort to approximate the historical practice and respect the carefully thought-out composition at the same time, I suggest tapping into the composer's *oeuvre* with obligato cello and drawing on the relationship between the texts and figuration designs in order to expand the usable options of figurate arpeggios. For instance, the obligato cello part in the aria, "Non hò cor che per amarti" from Handel's opera, *Agrippina*, uses an M-shaped arpeggiation (Ex. 4.20) to accompany the text, which expresses faithfulness:

*Non hò cor che per amarti;
sempre amico a te sarò.
Con sincero e puro affeto*

*My heart exists only to love you;
I shall always be your friend.
With pure and sincere affection*

*io ti stringo a questo petto;
mai di frodi, inganni ed arti
sia trà noi l'infedeltà.⁵³*

*I bind myself to your breast;
may trickery, deception and cunning
never come between us.⁵⁴*

The same design could perhaps be used to substitute the broken-chord pattern in "Se pari è la tua fè" as a symbolic representation of "faithfulness" (Ex. 4.21). By further embellishing it with passing notes, the changes can be more easily noticed by the listeners, and therefore fulfilling the purpose of variation.



Ex. 4.19: Samples of broken-chord figures in Corelli's Op. 5, Folia



Ex. 4.20: "Non hò cor che per amarti" from *Agrippina*

⁵³ "Non ho cor che per armarti," Operas Arias Composers Singers, accessed April 22, 2021, <https://www.opera-arias.com/handel/agrippina/non-ho-cor-che-per-armarti/>.

⁵⁴ "Agrippina Libretto English Translation," Operas Arias Composers Singers, accessed April 22, 2021, <https://www.opera-arias.com/handel/agrippina/libretto/english/>.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in bass clef, 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff, labeled 'Original', shows a sequence of eighth notes: B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1, D1, C1, B0. The second staff, labeled 'Substitute arpeggiation', shows the same sequence of notes but with a broken-chord texture, where notes are grouped into pairs and triplets. The third staff, labeled 'Embellished', shows the original sequence with a sustained pedal point on the B1 note (the second line of the staff) throughout the piece.

Ex. 4.21: "Se pari è la tua fè" (an illustration)

Finally, inspired by the use of the pedal note in the above example as well as in arias that communicate fervent feelings, such as "Non le scherzate intorno" (Ex. 4.3), "Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira" (Ex. 4.22) and "Superbetti occhi amorosi" (Ex. 4.23), another possible way to enhance the figurate arpeggios is by interpolating the broken-chord notes with a pedal, as demonstrated in Example 4.24. The dominant D being playable with an open string makes extempore elaboration more practicable.

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 4.22. The top staff is a vocal line in G major, 3/4 time, with lyrics: "- ti, l'em_pio Ro_ma_no, s'a". The bottom staff is a bass line with arpeggiated chords. The arpeggios are in a broken-chord texture, with notes grouped into pairs and triplets. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

Ex. 4.22: "Il suol(o) che preme, l'aura che spira"

The image shows a musical score for Ex. 4.23. The bottom staff is a bass line with arpeggiated chords. The arpeggios are in a broken-chord texture, with notes grouped into pairs and triplets. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4.

Ex. 4.23: "Superbetti occhi amorosi"

The image displays two staves of musical notation for the piece "Voglio darti a mille a mille". The top staff, labeled "Original", is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It contains a simple melody of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F#8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F#9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F#10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F#11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F#12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F#13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F#14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F#15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F#16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F#17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F#18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F#19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F#20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F#21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F#22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F#23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F#24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F#25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F#26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F#27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F#28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F#29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F#30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F#31, G31, A31, B31, C32, D32, E32, F#32, G32, A32, B32, C33, D33, E33, F#33, G33, A33, B33, C34, D34, E34, F#34, G34, A34, B34, C35, D35, E35, F#35, G35, A35, B35, C36, D36, E36, F#36, G36, A36, B36, C37, D37, E37, F#37, G37, A37, B37, C38, D38, E38, F#38, G38, A38, B38, C39, D39, E39, F#39, G39, A39, B39, C40, D40, E40, F#40, G40, A40, B40, C41, D41, E41, F#41, G41, A41, B41, C42, D42, E42, F#42, G42, A42, B42, C43, D43, E43, F#43, G43, A43, B43, C44, D44, E44, F#44, G44, A44, B44, C45, D45, E45, F#45, G45, A45, B45, C46, D46, E46, F#46, G46, A46, B46, C47, D47, E47, F#47, G47, A47, B47, C48, D48, E48, F#48, G48, A48, B48, C49, D49, E49, F#49, G49, A49, B49, C50, D50, E50, F#50, G50, A50, B50, C51, D51, E51, F#51, G51, A51, B51, C52, D52, E52, F#52, G52, A52, B52, C53, D53, E53, F#53, G53, A53, B53, C54, D54, E54, F#54, G54, A54, B54, C55, D55, E55, F#55, G55, A55, B55, C56, D56, E56, F#56, G56, A56, B56, C57, D57, E57, F#57, G57, A57, B57, C58, D58, E58, F#58, G58, A58, B58, C59, D59, E59, F#59, G59, A59, B59, C60, D60, E60, F#60, G60, A60, B60, C61, D61, E61, F#61, G61, A61, B61, C62, D62, E62, F#62, G62, A62, B62, C63, D63, E63, F#63, G63, A63, B63, C64, D64, E64, F#64, G64, A64, B64, C65, D65, E65, F#65, G65, A65, B65, C66, D66, E66, F#66, G66, A66, B66, C67, D67, E67, F#67, G67, A67, B67, C68, D68, E68, F#68, G68, A68, B68, C69, D69, E69, F#69, G69, A69, B69, C70, D70, E70, F#70, G70, A70, B70, C71, D71, E71, F#71, G71, A71, B71, C72, D72, E72, F#72, G72, A72, B72, C73, D73, E73, F#73, G73, A73, B73, C74, D74, E74, F#74, G74, A74, B74, C75, D75, E75, F#75, G75, A75, B75, C76, D76, E76, F#76, G76, A76, B76, C77, D77, E77, F#77, G77, A77, B77, C78, D78, E78, F#78, G78, A78, B78, C79, D79, E79, F#79, G79, A79, B79, C80, D80, E80, F#80, G80, A80, B80, C81, D81, E81, F#81, G81, A81, B81, C82, D82, E82, F#82, G82, A82, B82, C83, D83, E83, F#83, G83, A83, B83, C84, D84, E84, F#84, G84, A84, B84, C85, D85, E85, F#85, G85, A85, B85, C86, D86, E86, F#86, G86, A86, B86, C87, D87, E87, F#87, G87, A87, B87, C88, D88, E88, F#88, G88, A88, B88, C89, D89, E89, F#89, G89, A89, B89, C90, D90, E90, F#90, G90, A90, B90, C91, D91, E91, F#91, G91, A91, B91, C92, D92, E92, F#92, G92, A92, B92, C93, D93, E93, F#93, G93, A93, B93, C94, D94, E94, F#94, G94, A94, B94, C95, D95, E95, F#95, G95, A95, B95, C96, D96, E96, F#96, G96, A96, B96, C97, D97, E97, F#97, G97, A97, B97, C98, D98, E98, F#98, G98, A98, B98, C99, D99, E99, F#99, G99, A99, B99, C100, D100, E100, F#100, G100, A100, B100, C101, D101, E101, F#101, G101, A101, B101, C102, D102, E102, F#102, G102, A102, B102, C103, D103, E103, F#103, G103, A103, B103, C104, D104, E104, F#104, G104, A104, B104, C105, D105, E105, F#105, G105, A105, B105, C106, D106, E106, F#106, G106, A106, B106, C107, D107, E107, F#107, G107, A107, B107, C108, D108, E108, F#108, G108, A108, B108, C109, D109, E109, F#109, G109, A109, B109, C110, D110, E110, F#110, G110, A110, B110, C111, D111, E111, F#111, G111, A111, B111, C112, D112, E112, F#112, G112, A112, B112, C113, D113, E113, F#113, G113, A113, B113, C114, D114, E114, F#114, G114, A114, B114, C115, D115, E115, F#115, G115, A115, B115, C116, D116, E116, F#116, G116, A116, B116, C117, D117, E117, F#117, G117, A117, B117, C118, D118, E118, F#118, G118, A118, B118, C119, D119, E119, F#119, G119, A119, B119, C120, D120, E120, F#120, G120, A120, B120, C121, D121, E121, F#121, G121, A121, B121, C122, D122, E122, F#122, G122, A122, B122, C123, D123, E123, F#123, G123, A123, B123, C124, D124, E124, F#124, G124, A124, B124, C125, D125, E125, F#125, G125, A125, B125, C126, D126, E126, F#126, G126, A126, B126, C127, D127, E127, F#127, G127, A127, B127, C128, D128, E128, F#128, G128, A128, B128, C129, D129, E129, F#129, G129, A129, B129, C130, D130, E130, F#130, G130, A130, B130, C131, D131, E131, F#131, G131, A131, B131, C132, D132, E132, F#132, G132, A132, B132, C133, D133, E133, F#133, G133, A133, B133, C134, D134, E134, F#134, G134, A134, B134, C135, D135, E135, F#135, G135, A135, B135, C136, D136, E136, F#136, G136, A136, B136, C137, D137, E137, F#137, G137, A137, B137, C138, D138, E138, F#138, G138, A138, B138, C139, D139, E139, F#139, G139, A139, B139, C140, D140, E140, F#140, G140, A140, B140, C141, D141, E141, F#141, G141, A141, B141, C142, D142, E142, F#142, G142, A142, B142, C143, D143, E143, F#143, G143, A143, B143, C144, D144, E144, F#144, G144, A144, B144, C145, D145, E145, F#145, G145, A145, B145, C146, D146, E146, F#146, G146, A146, B146, C147, D147, E147, F#147, G147, A147, B147, C148, D148, E148, F#148, G148, A148, B148, C149, D149, E149, F#149, G149, A149, B149, C150, D150, E150, F#150, G150, A150, B150, C151, D151, E151, F#151, G151, A151, B151, C152, D152, E152, F#152, G152, A152, B152, C153, D153, E153, F#153, G153, A153, B153, C154, D154, E154, F#154, G154, A154, B154, C155, D155, E155, F#155, G155, A155, B155, C156, D156, E156, F#156, G156, A156, B156, C157, D157, E157, F#157, G157, A157, B157, C158, D158, E158, F#158, G158, A158, B158, C159, D159, E159, F#159, G159, A159, B159, C160, D160, E160, F#160, G160, A160, B160, C161, D161, E161, F#161, G161, A161, B161, C162, D162, E162, F#162, G162, A162, B162, C163, D163, E163, F#163, G163, A163, B163, C164, D164, E164, F#164, G164, A164, B164, C165, D165, E165, F#165, G165, A165, B165, C166, D166, E166, F#166, G166, A166, B166, C167, D167, E167, F#167, G167, A167, B167, C168, D168, E168, F#168, G168, A168, B168, C169, D169, E169, F#169, G169, A169, B169, C170, D170, E170, F#170, G170, A170, B170, C171, D171, E171, F#171, G171, A171, B171, C172, D172, E172, F#172, G172, A172, B172, C173, D173, E173, F#173, G173, A173, B173, C174, D174, E174, F#174, G174, A174, B174, C175, D175, E175, F#175, G175, A175, B175, C176, D176, E176, F#176, G176, A176, B176, C177, D177, E177, F#177, G177, A177, B177, C178, D178, E178, F#178, G178, A178, B178, C179, D179, E179, F#179, G179, A179, B179, C180, D180, E180, F#180, G180, A180, B180, C181, 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CONCLUSION

The only source of literature relating to the present topic of study comes from Gasparini's *L'armonico pratico al cimbalo* (1708), in which he writes that "I do not approve of the diminution of the bass itself, because it is very easy to miss or depart from the intention of the composer and from the proper spirit of the composition—and to offend the singer."⁵⁵ This strong-worded phrase is frequently quoted in various studies of baroque performance practice, and the stern warning is probably the major reason that holds scholars and performers back from exploring further into adorning the aria bass. Nonetheless, Gasparini provided examples of bass variations, stating that "as to their use, I completely approve it in ritornellos and when the singer is silent,"⁵⁶ underlying his intention "to suggest how to play with grace and not with confusion."⁵⁷ The fact that he penned a full chapter on this subject suggests diminution of the bass in aria accompaniment was not uncommon at the time. Whether it was practiced by harpsichordists alone or by other continuo members, specifically cellists and lutenists as well, is not traceable. In the present introduction, circumstantial information points to a high likelihood of cellists joining the creative display. In view of the purely negative comments about performers' impromptu embellishment, as well as the existence of inventive aria basses by Bononcini and other composers showing appropriately florid elaborations in the ritornellos, it is fair to consider the written bass a complete form of

⁵⁵ Gasparini, *Practical Harmonist*, 90 (see Introduction, n. 10).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 90 (see Introduction, n. 10).

embellishment and to leave it untouched. That being said, if we could find a way to adorn the bass without departing from the "proper spirit" of the piece, limit the elaborations to the ritornellos only so as to not "offend the singer," and perform them in the da capo sections for keeping the repeats alive, the ornamentation may well serve to complement the "intended" expressions and support the singer's skillful renditions.

This study presents an attempt to understand the "intention" of the composer and the proper "spirit" of the composition in order to devise appropriate ornamentation for the aria bass. Hence, I have focused on analyzing solo arias from exclusively continuo cantatas—a genre characterized by its exquisite poetry-music relationship, by a single composer, Handel, in order to identify the composer's unique style of writing and more importantly, his method of creating ornaments-filled bass-ritornellos that convey the affects of the texts. To summarize my observations, the arpeggiation-driven bass always sustains throughout the aria to paint an atmospheric backdrop or communicate strong emotions, whereas the simple ornaments are often incorporated into the motivic figures to add inflections to the tones of expression. The more technical ornaments, specifically the appoggiatura, the passing appoggiatura, the trill and the slide are mostly reserved for the ritornellos as musical portrayal of the protagonist's frame of mind. Since the bass lines are meticulously crafted, replacing them with variations demonstrated by Gasparini, or even the elaborate figurations shown in Supriani's *Sonate a due Violoncelli*⁵⁸ would

⁵⁸ According to Olivieri, these sonatas are built on Supriani's set of twelve toccatas, and they might "represent written-out examples of the type of elaborations that cello players improvised when accompanying arias." Guido Olivieri, "Cello Teaching and Playing in Naples in the Early Eighteenth Century: Francesco Paolo Supriani's *Principij da imparare a suonare il violoncello*,"

detract from Handel's original intent and upset the balance between the solo and the continuo. Therefore, my proposed approaches to ornamentation are to reference and emulate Handel's procedures, and recycle his embellishments in the surveyed collection of arias as extended applications. It can be argued that the suggested methods contradict the essence of extempore adornment, however, given that "good taste" is the ultimate trait required of "a skillful accompanist,"⁵⁹ I believe that a scrupulous study into individual composers' works towards understanding their musical techniques for conveying poetic texts is the key to comprehend the elusive concept of "good taste." For instance, both Handel and Scarlatti set music to one of the studied arias, "Se non giunge quel momento" from *Filli adorata e cara* (see Chapter 1, Ex. 1.12 for Handel's setting), and while both settings make use of the dotted rhythm in the bass as a motivic element, Handel further articulates the words, "I will weep" with the descending three-note gesture. The question is then whether it would be appropriate to transfer that gesture to Scarlatti's version as illustrated in Ex. 8? A detailed study into Scarlatti's settings of arias that contain the word, "weep" would reveal whether he does, in fact, employ the same figure to symbolize "weep," or whether he even resorts to such explicit word painting. The online cantata archive, *Clori. Archivio della Cantata italiana* serves as a great resource for further research in this area.⁶⁰ As touched on in chapters one and four, extending our studies into

in *Performance Practice: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Timothy D. Watkins (Ann Arbor: Steglein Publishing, 2009), 124.

⁵⁹ James Frederick Burchill, "Saint-Lambert's 'Nouveau traité de l'accompagnement': A Translation with Commentary" (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1979), 122.

⁶⁰ *Clori. Archivio della Cantata italiana* (website), accessed April 22, 2021, <http://www.cantataitaliana.it>.

the theatrical continuo-arias as well as arias with solo obbligato cello will also deepen our understanding on the composers' practice and equip us with a richer vocabulary for "proper" ornamentation. It is hoped that this study will assist in reviving a valuable performance tradition, and encourage a fresh appreciation of text-music interplay in the arias for a more enriching musical experience.

Adagio

The image shows a musical score for a cello part, comparing an original version with an embellished version. The score is in 3/8 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The original version (top staff) features a series of sixteenth-note patterns in the first two measures, followed by a melodic line in the third measure. The embellished version (bottom staff) adds a triplet of sixteenth notes in the third measure, indicated by a bracket and the number '3' below it.

Ex. 8: Scarlatti's setting of "Se non giunge quel momento" (embellished)⁶¹

⁶¹ Alessandro Scarlatti, *Filli adorata e cara, Filli che fosti*, H. 272, manuscript, 1705, IMSLP Petrucci Music Library.

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VITA

