

Bouquet on the skyscraper — Bach's Ornamentation and our Era

THEMATIC PAPER FOR THE AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION BOSTON, June 2014 by Sebestyén Nyírő

This presentation reviews:

- the relation between the ornament's character and tempo as a new tool of understanding text
- Marpurg's writings on the structural role of ornaments and the execution of them
- metrics, character of Bachian ornaments, and their role in determining tempo;
- conflicts between our tempo feeling and the tempo suggested by the ornaments—the dialectic struggle of instinct and intellect in the interpretation of the signs.

The presentation includes case studies from Bach's organ works (citing the autographs), demonstrating the problems at hand.

Please, if you could, look and listen in advance to the following spots of any available recording in the works listed below:

C1	Case one — Duet BWV 802	At the end of the piece	Doppelschlag (turn) on the note
C2	Case two — BWV 653 Choral 'An Wasserflüssen Babylon'	Measure 35	Trill
C3	Case three — BWV 641 Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein	Measure 3	accent and mordent
C4	Case four — BWV 662 Allein Gott in der Höh	Measure 15	trill versus accent – what does Bach if the trill is not doable
C5	Case five BWV 994 — Applicatio.	Measure 2	Trill and mordent (incorrectly usage is: trill and nachschlag)
C6	Case six — BWV 676 Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr	Measure 14	Bach's own invention: doppelschlag + trill + mordent
C7	Case seven — BWV 769 Vom Himmel Hoch	Measure 29	Melodic trill with nachschlag (confluent, no point d'arrêt)