

2015 National Flute Association Convention

Go Baroque! Historically Informed Performance for Modern Flutists

Leela Breithaupt
www.leelabreithaupt.com

Historical Informed Performance (HIP)

HIP is a movement that cherishes the challenge and discovery of playing music as it could have been played when it was originally composed.

Have you ever wondered how Baroque composers like Bach and Telemann might have imagined their pieces, or how flutists like Frederick the Great or Jacques Hotteterre might have played them while the ink was still fresh?

Learning about HIP is not rocket science. It can inspire you to look at music in a different way and will require patience – like learning any new language!

Traverso demonstration

Suite in b minor op 35/5 (1731)

Joseph Bodin de BOISMORTIER

Prélude

1689 - 1755

Bourrée en rondeau

Rondeau

Fantaisie

Gigue

HIP goal: declamatory and rhetorical musical phrasing

“If the words were not separated from one another by the accents associated with the length and brevity of the syllables, [...] the most beautiful speech [would] sound no better than the letter-by-letter reading of children.” – Johann Phllipp Kirnberger, 1776

The Big Three: HIP concepts that will change your Baroque playing.

1. Beat hierarchy
2. Micro-dynamics
3. Varied Articulations

I. Beat hierarchy

Strong and weak beats within each bar - strict order of importance

As a rule, beat one is the strongest in all meters

In common time:

In triple time:

1 2 3 4

1 2 3

Pickups don't lead in to downbeats

Hierarchy extrapolates to divisions of beats

Example: 4 sixteenth notes in a quarter note have the same hierarchical order as 4 quarter notes in bar

Beat hierarchy eliminates sewing machine effect of equally emphasized running passages
Musical example #1: JS Bach, Sonata in b minor, BWV 1030 (c.1736), Andante

2. Micro-dynamics

Small-scale dynamics affecting single notes or small groups of notes
Notes on strong beats are played more loudly, and notes that fall on weak beats are played more softly.
Few if any dynamic markings in Baroque manuscripts and facsimiles
Basis of dynamics vocabulary in HIP
Unwritten convention
Dynamic representation of beat hierarchy
In common time:

f mp mf p

Messa di voce - Italian vocal technique of swelling in dynamics and intensity over a long note
Diminuendo over slurs
Musical example #2: Telemann Fantasia in E minor (1733), Largo

3. Varied Articulations

Modern articulations
Accents, staccato, legato, double tonguing, triple tonguing, tongueless or breath attacks, and more
Baroque articulations
Ti, di, du, ru, tiri, did'll, and more
Tongue stops finishing ends of notes was common practice
before a repeated note
before a harmonically interesting note
before a note on an important beat
Articulation was used as diction – pay attention to excellent enunciation
Read Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, chapter 6 and try out examples
Musical example #3: JS Bach Orchestral Suite No.2 in B minor, BWV 1067
Polonaise

Group traverso reading session: try a traverso and join in!

Musical example #4: Boismortier, Concerto No. 3 for 5 Flutes (1727)

Suggested reading

On Playing the Flute by Johann Joachim Quantz (1752)
Principles of the Flute, Recorder, and Oboe by Jacques Hotteterre (1707)
The Notation is Not the Music by Barthold Kuijken (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013)
The End of Early Music: A Period Performer's History of Music for the Twenty-First Century by Bruce Haynes (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Facsimiles can be found on imslp.org