

FLUTE PHRASING: STRUCTURALLY MEANINGFUL INTERPRETATION OF SLURS

by

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Abstract

Phrasing or wind instruments is investigated with a view to establishing the principles for maximum clarity and effectiveness of phrasing.

Many key terms employed in phrasing literature by writers in a vague and inconsistent manner are defined in a consistent manner, leading to better understanding and general usage.

A performer's sense of phrasing is often confused by a poor notation which is imprecise often does not conform to the conventions of especially slurs. Composers confuse matters further by making the use of phrasing devices usually due to their limited knowledge of the procedure of phrasing in music. They are often inconsistent; and mistakes are printed. The musician, however, is often when effort do not advise performers with due regard to the phrasing and to rectify these inaccuracies, ambiguities and mistakes.

The nature of wind phrasing is investigated – principally with reference to slurs. Slurs are written notational devices which indicate that notes which follow the slur should be played as a single unit, with the same breath or articulation. But tongueing and slurs exist – with slurs being indicated within the basic legato line. This important concept is often not understood and ambiguously notated.

Composers and editors add phrase-slurs either to indicate the extent of a phrase to delineate sub-phrases, or to show that the notes are not to be articulated.

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and accompaniment figures. Discovering these intrinsic elements and phrasing accordingly can often improve the interpretation of over-slurred music.

ABSTRACT

Phrasing on wind instruments is investigated with a view to establishing groundrules for meaningful slurring.

Many key terms concerning phrasing are used by writers in a vague and inconsistent manner. These are defined - hopefully leading to better understanding and general usage.

A performer's sense of phrasing and interpretation (where music notation is imprecise) often does not coincide with printed indications - especially slurs. Composers confuse matters further by incorrectly notating their intentions - usually due to their limited knowledge of the peculiarities of wind instruments. They are often inconsistent; and mistakes are printed. The situation is further exacerbated when editors do not advise performers with due insight. The performer should rectify these inexactitudes, ambiguities and mistakes.

The nature of wind phrasing is investigated - principally slurs and slur patterns. Slurs are precise notational devices used by composers, signifying that the notes under each slur be played as a single group - with only the initial note articulated. But tonguing-under-a-slur exists - with notes being articulated within the basic legato line. This imprecise concept is often both misunderstood and ambiguously notated.

Composers and editors add phrase-slurs either to indicate the extent of a phrase, to delineate sub-phrases, or to show that the notes are not to be articulated separately. When slurs and phrase-slurs are combined, the performer must continually decide which notes to articulate, and how.

Slur patterns often help bring out the various motives, two-part lines, interpolations and accompaniment figures. Discovering these intrinsic elements and slurring accordingly can often improve the interpretation of over-slurred music. Advice is

provided by the author.

KEY FINDINGS

Composers and editors often phrase according to visual groupings. By means of testing twenty professional wind players it has been shown that performers are usually better able to phrase meaningfully. Four extracts were selected as test pieces, and the results correlated. Wind performers tend to use more and shorter slurs than composers and editors; also, they tend not to favour phrase-slurs.

Phrase

Dynamics, articulation, breathing and technique influence the performance of slurs. Phrase-slurs and slurs are often written over natural breathing places; suggestions on where and how to breathe are provided. Dynamics and slur patterns are often symbiotic, with printed (or implied) dynamics suggesting the most meaningful slur pattern. The author recommends that teachers encourage beginner wind instrumentalists to utilize technically easier phrasing where it enhances their performance.

Parallels are drawn between wind phrasing and both language and bowing techniques. In the search for the most meaningful way of phrasing, music's analogies with language (both written and spoken) can often be effectively explored. The kinaesthetic 'feel' of bowing patterns can help provide the right impetus to a phrase.

Performance tendencies of any era, if based on the music's intrinsic patterns, will very likely also be relevant to music of other eras. Slurring tendencies from the Baroque and Classical periods are listed and practical examples provided.

Most examples are from the flute repertoire; but the principles are equally applicable to all wind instruments.

KEYWORDS

Music

Notation

Performers

Interpretation

Wind instruments

Flute

Phrase

Phrasing

Slur

Articulation

Die woorde frasering op blaasinstrumente word dikwels gebruik, met die oog op die verskeie soorte boeke vir die betekenisvolle gebruik van artikulasieboeke. Die woorde frasering word dikwels gebruik deur skrywers op 'n vaak gebruikte manier gebaseer op 'n algemene notasie. Dit sal hopelik 'n beter begrip en gebruik van artikulasieboeke bring.

Komponiste en redakteurs voeg fraseboeke by om die omvang van 'n frase of enkele frases uit te beeld, of om te wys dat die note nie alsaam 'n frase moet word nie. Wanneer artikulasieboeke en fraseboeke gekombineer word, moet verskillende deurgangse bevels watter note om te artikulêre, en hoe.

Boogpatrone help dikwels ons die verskillende maniere te identifiseer

OPSOMMING

Frasering op blaasinstrumente word ondersoek, met die oog op die vasstelling van grondreëls vir die betekenisvolle uitvoering van artikulasieboë.

Baie sleutelwoorde betreffende frasering word deur skrywers op 'n vae en onkonsekwente manier gebruik. Hierdie terme word gedefinieer. Dit sal hopelik lei tot 'n beter begrip en algemene gebruik daarvan.

Voordraers se gevoel vir frasering en interpretasie (waar die musieknotasie onnoukeurig is), stem dikwels nie ooreen met die gedrukte aanduidings, veral van fraseboë, nie. Komponiste vertroebel die saak verder deur hulle bedoelings verkeerd te noteer, gewoonlik weens hulle beperkte begrip van die spesifieke eienskappe van blaasinstrumente. Hulle is dikwels inkonsekwent; en foute word dikwels gedruk. Die saak word vererger wanneer redakteure voordraers nie met insig adviseer nie. Voordraers moet self hierdie onnoukeurighede, dubbelsinnighede en foute regstel.

Die aard van frasering op blaasinstrumente word ondersoek - veral artikulasieboë en boogpatrone. Artikulasieboë is presiese notasie-middele wat deur komponiste gebruik word om aan te dui dat die note onder die boog as 'n enkele groep gespeel moet word. Slegs die eerste noot word geartikuleer. Maar tongslag-binne-die-fraseboog bestaan ook, met note wat binne die basiese legato-lyn geartikuleer word. Hierdie onduidelike konsep word dikwels albei verkeerd verstaan en dubbelsinnig genoteer.

Komponiste en redakteurs voeg fraseboë by om die omvang van 'n frase aan te dui, om sub-frases uit te beeld, of om te wys dat die note nie afsonderlik geartikuleer moet word nie. Wanneer artikulasieboë en fraseboë gekombineer word, moet die voordraer deurgaans besluit watter note om te artikuleer, en hoe.

Boogpatrone help dikwels om die verskillende motiewe, tweestemmige lyne,

invoegings en begeleidingfigure uit te beeld. Die ontdekking van hierdie intrinsieke elemente, en die frasering daarvolgens, verbeter dikwels die interpretasie van 'n musiekpartituur wat te veel fraseboë bevat. Advies hieroor word deur die skrywer verskaf.

TIEN VRYE WAAKBLADE TERME

Komponiste en redakteurs fraseer dikwels volgens visuele groeperings. Deur middel van 'n toets waaraan twintig professionele blasers deelgeneem het, is bewys dat voordraers gewoonlik beter in staat is om betekenisvol te fraseer. Vier uittreksels is as toetsstukke gekies, en die uitslae is vergelyk. Blasers is geneig om meer en korter artikulasieboë as komponiste en redakteurs te gebruik; hulle gebruik gewoonlik nie fraseboë nie.

Dinamiek, artikulasie, asemhaling en tegniek beïnvloed die uitvoering van artikulasieboë. Fraseboë en artikulasieboë word dikwels bo-oor natuurlike asemhalingsplekke geskryf; voorstelle oor waar en hoe om asem te haal word aangebied. Dinamiese aanduidings en boogpatrone hou dikwels nou verband met mekaar, en die gedrukte dinamiek (of die geïmpliseerde dinamiese vlakke) gee dan die mees veelseggende boogpatroon aan die hand. Die skrywer beveel aan dat onderwysers beginners op blaasinstrumente sal aanmoedig om tegniese makliker frasering te gebruik wanneer dit hulle uitvoerings sal verbeter.

Vergelykings word getref tussen frasering op blaasinstrumente, taal en stryktegnieke. Wanneer daar na die mees veelseggende frasering gesoek word, kan musiek se verwantskap met taal (geskrewe en gesproke) dikwels doeltreffend ondersoek word. Die kinestetiese 'gevoel' van strykpatrone kan die regte beweging aan 'n frase verleen.

Die uitvoeringspraktyk van enige eeu, indien dit gebaseer is op die musiek se innerlike patrone, sal heelwaarskynlik ook relevant in musiek uit ander eeue wees. Tendense in frasering en artikulasie uit die Barok- en Klassieketydperk word in 'n lys aangegee en praktiese voorbeelde word verskaf.

Die meeste voorbeelde kom uit die fluitrepertoire; maar die beginsels is by ander blaasinstrumente net so toepaslik.

TIEN VRYETAAL SLEUTELTERME

Musiek

Notasie

Voordraers

Interpretasie

Blasers

Fluit

Frase

Frasering

Artikulasieboog

Artikulasie

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