CHAPTER 7

INFLUENCES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SLURS

Slurs, like all elements of phrasing, do not exist independently, but are woven into the fabric of the music. A change in any one element (e.g. the dynamics) will usually effect other elements (e.g. articulation). Thus various elements of the music exert an influence on the performance of slurs.

7.1 Articulation

Articulation is an essential part of the interpretation of phrases; and it has a direct bearing on both the micro-level of individual notes, and on the macro-level as part of the larger musical picture.

7.1.1 The first note of a slur

Any wind player coming across a note with no slur over or under it will automatically articulate it (usually with the tongue). Equally he will articulate the first note of any slur-group.

Articulation, as defined in Chapter 3, is being taken to mean the various actions of the tongue, and the strengths thereof, in starting a note (i.e. in allowing the airstream to activate sound as if by opening a valve). The term can essentially only be applied to the initial moment of a note, and is closely allied to 'attack.'

7.1.2 Different attacks

Hinch (1991:8-12) lists different attacks and the notations thereof as culled from the wind repertoire, and provides descriptions from various sources. Attacks run basically from "the most legato-like, gentle and smooth musical effects to the shorter, most incisive and harsh effects":

Legato
Coulé
Tongued legato
Semi-sostenuto
Breath stroke
Tenuto
Portato
Syncopation
Loure (lourer)
Marcato
Bell
Détaché
pf
sf
fp
Mezzo-staccato
Semi-staccato
Soft tonguing
Legato-staccato
Pique
Pearl
Dash ("Point long" in French)
Staccato
Staccatissimo
Martellato
Spitzig

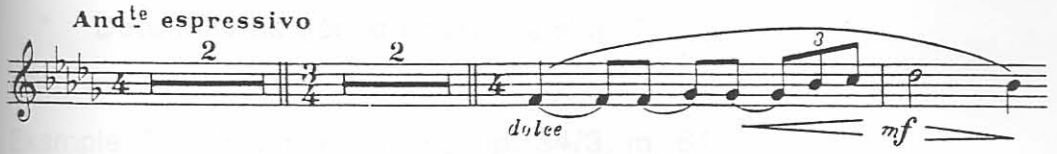
This provides us with a virtual hierarchy of emphases - starting with the gentle natural accents implied by the metrical pulse. From this to the stress on the initial note of a slurred group; through tenutos and tenutos combined with subtle breath-induced emphases (strengthened tone-colour and vibrato); to a series of ever-stronger tongue- and airstream-induced accents. The combination of regular metrical pulses with the series of attacks listed above provides a rich palette of tools for the interpretation and shaping of phrases and compositions as a whole.

7.1.3 Soft attack

Although, by both definition and implication, the first note of any slur must be tongued, the strength of attack and volume of entry of this first note must be given the widest range of possibilities, in order to enrich the performer's interpretation capabilities. But are there perhaps not even occasions where the entry of a phrase

will be even subtler if the beginning of the first note is hardly perceivable, or even not heard at all? In other words, may not this note, and hence the phrase, 'creep in' later than notated (and later than expected)? The following phrase will benefit from such a gentle attack:

Example 7-1: Busser, Andalucia, mm. 1-6



A technique exists on the flute, called either 'tongueless attack' or 'labial attack', which accommodates this creeping in (Hinch 1991:46-9). Its subtle use can ensure the gentlest of attacks. But articulation has a direct influence not only on the first note of every phrase, but also on all internal notes of a phrase that are in any sense 'articulated' by a pulsation of the airstream.

Leaving aside the different types and strengths of 'attack', there are three basic possibilities as regards the sounding of a note on any wind instrument. Notes can be either

* tongued
* not-tongued (as in legato, under a slur), or
* tongued-under-a-slur.

7.1.4 Tongued-under-a-slur

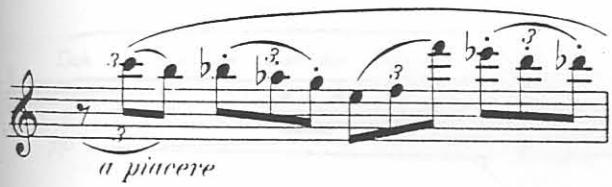
It is in the area of notes tongued-under-a-slur that ambiguity arises, where consensus is difficult to obtain and where subtlety of execution is essential. It is the author's opinion that many composers deliberately use the notation of tongued-under-a-slur in cases where they don't know themselves exactly how to write what they are mentally hearing. This is because phrasing is the very subtlest of arts. There are various ways to notate notes tongued-under-a-slur:

* Notes may be merely repeated under the slur:

Example 7-2: Busser, Andalucia, mm. 5-6

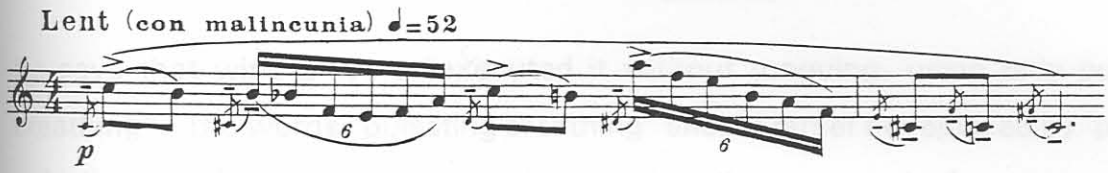
* Dots may be added under the slur:

Example 7-3: Widor, Romance Op. 34/3, m. 61



* Tenutos and/or accents may be written under the slur (this example offers a confusing array):

Example 7-4: Tomasi, Sonatine for solo flute, mm. 1-2

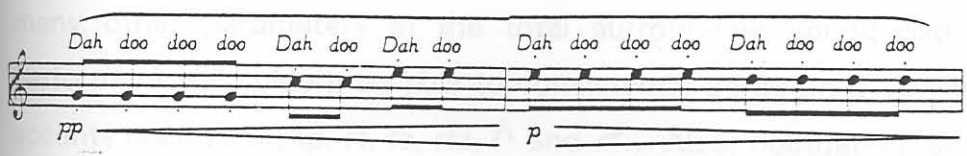


It is an interesting anomaly of notation that a single dot at the end of a slur only signifies that the last note is to be shortened, not tongued (see Ex. 5-34); whereas dots in the course of a slur indicate *mezzo staccato*, and are therefore tongued (see Ex. 7-3).

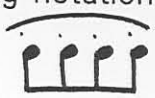
Technically the difference between a series of separately tongued notes and a series tongued-under-a-slur is that the former involves interrupting, even if for only the shortest moment, the outflow of breath from the lips; whereas the latter involves creating pulsations or waves, of a multitude of varying strengths, within

or upon the airstream as it leaves the lips. In the latter situation the tongue action, while lessening the flow of air entering the instrument, at no time fully closes the valve (lips/reed), and air is allowed to continually produce sound within the instrument. One could liken this to the effect created on the surface of a stream of water by submerged rocks - as in a rapid - where the water surface is disturbed but not actually broken. As a single example, Shotola (1991:15) suggests the following articulation syllables (also discussed in detail in Hinch 1991:24-7) to distinguish the melodic structure from the accompanying repeated notes:

Example 7-5:



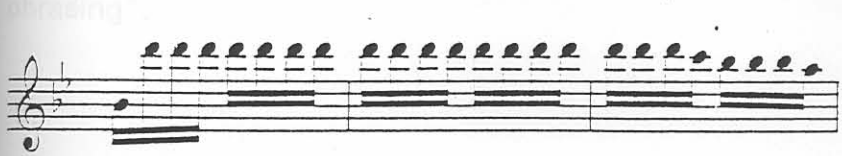
Harnoncourt (1989:114) also makes a similar reference, but one in which the diaphragm, and not the tongue, is used to create the pulsations within the tone. He discusses the meaning of the following notation apropos the articulation of repeated notes in the late 18th-century:



He says that wind players "executed it without tonguing, using only pulsating breathing". The words "pulsating breathing" should rather be replaced by 'periodic pulsations of the airstream initiated by the breathing apparatus'.

At all times one needs to consider why a composer would write a series of repeated notes, when one long note would suffice. Usually the extra impetus given to the phrase by the repetition, through re-articulation, of the same note helps drive the phrase forward, thus increasing tension and expectation:

Example 7-6: Bach (attrib.), Sonata in G min. for flute and b.c., III:43-45



The world of articulation and attack is intimately bound up with another interpretative device, namely dynamics. (Other devices such as tonecolour and vibrato fall without the scope of this dissertation and are only alluded to in passing.)

7.2 Dynamics

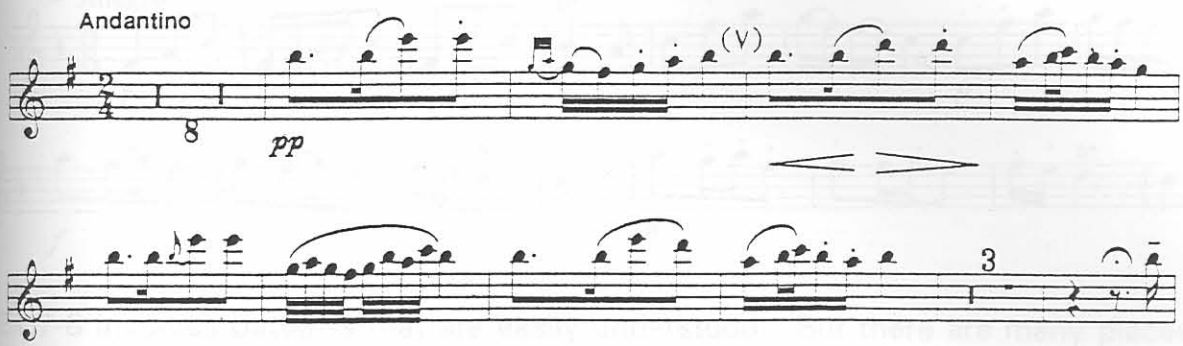
Although there is sometimes some controversy and criticism regarding the interpretation of a composer's notated dynamics, it is generally acknowledged that dynamics cannot be construed as an exact objective matter as they are relative to many other parameters in the total surrounding sound-field. For instance, performers will seldom be able to consistently agree on the relative strengths of accents such as sf, fp, rf, fz, rfz, ^ and > . Also, fluctuating factors like ambient acoustics, modern instrumental improvements, musicological discoveries and even personal taste need always to be acknowledged and taken into consideration during performance preparation.

7.2.1 The influence of dynamics

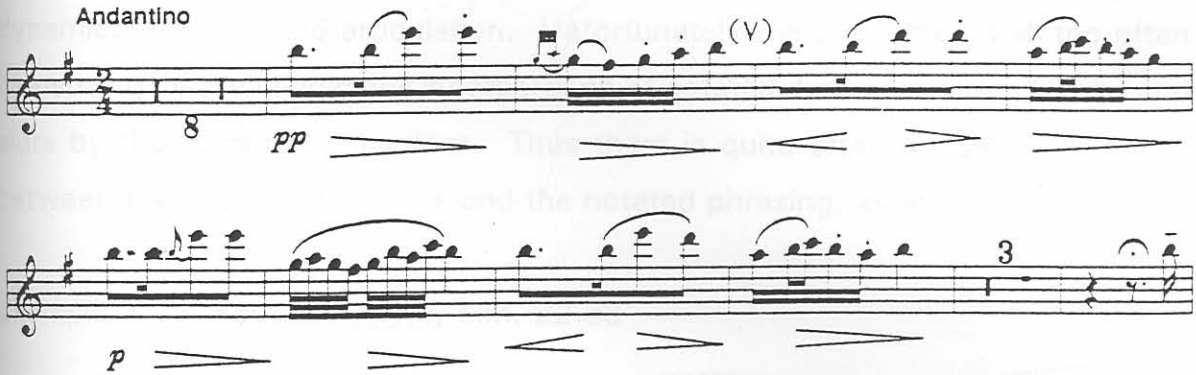
Whereas most dynamic markings (= dynamics) do not have a direct impact on the actual slur patterns of phrases, they obviously do influence the overall structure, meaning and relative importance of a phrase. For instance, a phrase played pianissimo is likely to contain more slurs than a fortissimo one; the slurs will augment the character (probably gentle) of the soft dynamic.

A notated subito forte or a diminuendo will offer vital clues as to the climax point(s) and the dynamic rise and fall of a phrase - especially where these are deliberately displaced by a composer. Floyd (1990:120) offers the following example of Geoffrey Gilbert's teaching a piece through singing its "articulation, line, and phrasing".

Example 7-7a: Schubert, Introduktion und Variationen über ein Thema Op. 160, Theme



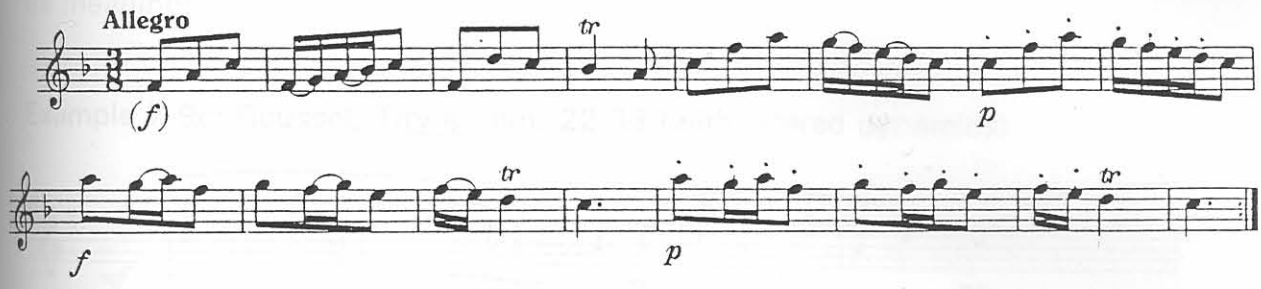
Example 7-7b: Schubert, Introduktion und Variationen über ein Thema Op. 160, Theme (dynamics added)



As can be seen in Ex. 7-7b, the actual slurring and articulation remains unchanged; all that has been notationally introduced, through 'naturally' singing the instrumental piece, are a series of undulating dynamics indicating the 'natural' ebb and flow of the phrases. The combination of original slurs and articulations, and Gilbert's suggested dynamics, working in tandem, combine to produce structurally meaningful phrasing. Thus dynamics are directly equated with the phrasing of the piece. Through this approach vital clues as to the (possible) breathing places, the type of articulation and the strength of attack will also be discovered.

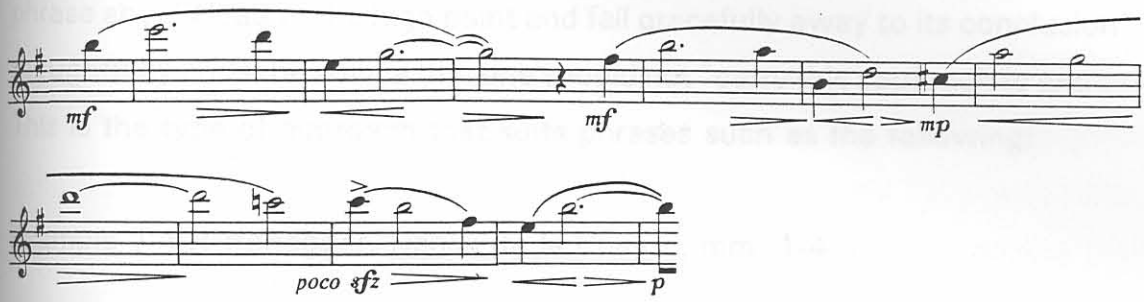
Mention must be made of the specialised case of terraced dynamics and echo effects in Baroque music where a simultaneous change of dynamics and phrasing increases the effect. Indeed, as any recorder player will know, a change in articulation is used to imply a change in dynamic too.

Example 7-8: R. Valentine, Sonata in F for recorder and b.c., mm. 5-8



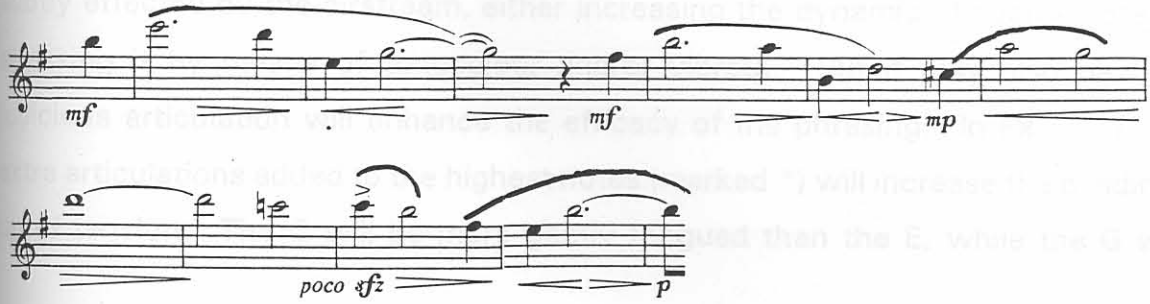
Ex.7-8 involves patterns that are easily understood. But there are many places throughout the literature where ambiguity exists as to the function of certain notes within a phrase; or even as to the function of a phrase in the larger context. Then, patterns need delineating or emphasising by means of a subtle amalgam of dynamics, slurring and articulation. Unfortunately the performer is all too often hamstrung by the injudicious incorporation of notated dynamics, articulations and slurs by the composer or editor. Thus there is quite often a clash of interests between the notated dynamics and the notated phrasing, as in this example:

Example 7-9a: Roussel, Tityre, mm. 22-33



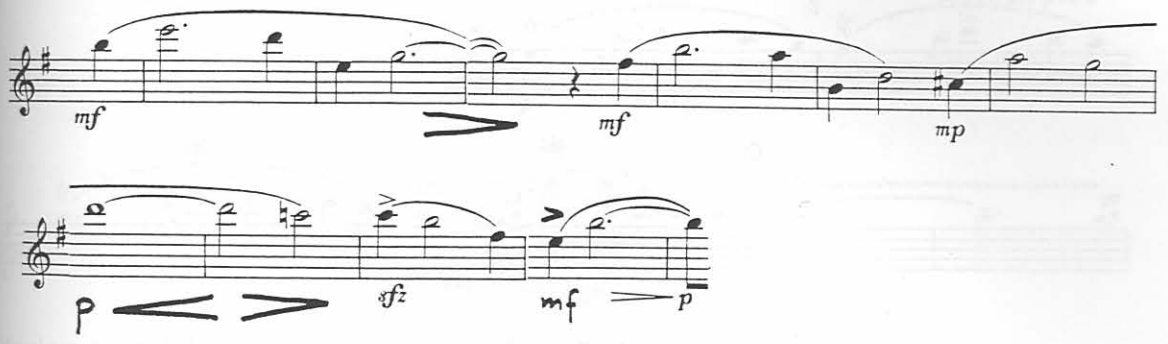
By altering the slur-patterns to work in tandem with the dynamics this phrase is rendered more meaningful:

Example 7-9b: Roussel, Tityre, mm. 22-33 (with altered slurs)



This is equally effected by altering the dynamics, although the phrase subtly alters its meaning:

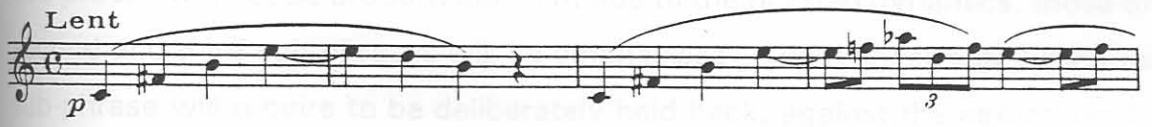
Example 7-9c: Roussel, Tityre, mm. 22-33 (with altered dynamics)



7.2.2 Melodic accents

Marion (in Goll-Wilson 1992b:9) argues that "effective phrasing" needs to be amalgamated with "dynamic variety and articulation". He says that on the simplest, most basic level one must "match the dynamic and pitch levels of the phrase, bringing out the higher tones more loudly than the lower ones [...]. A phrase should lead to the high point and fall gracefully away to its conclusion". He thoughtfully adds the advice that one should not "carry this approach to extremes". This is the type of approach that suits phrases such as the following:

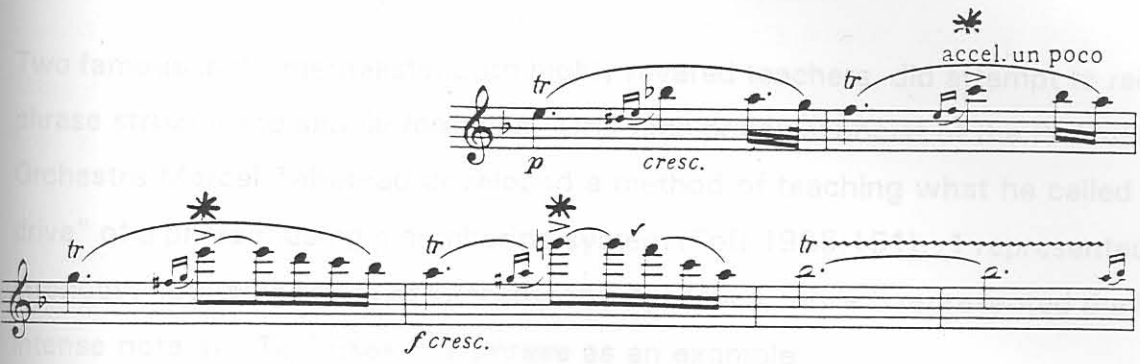
Example 7-10: Honegger, Danse de la Chèvre, mm. 1-4



In circumstances where the high note is under a slur this "bringing out" will be subtly effected by the airstream, either increasing the dynamic of such a note or stressing it by means of tonecolour and/or vibrato. But it may also be that judicious articulation will enhance the efficacy of the phrasing. In Ex. 7-11 the extra articulations added to the highest notes (marked *) will increase the building-up of tension. The C will be more gently tongued than the E, while the G will

receive a strongest attack, as already indicated by the composer:

Example 7-11: Briccialdi, Carnival of Venice Op. 78, mm. 124-129



Marion certainly does not maintain that all phrases are as easily shaped, and would surely agree that the following example offers a rich mixture of dynamics, slurring, articulation and breathing patterns:

Example 7-12: Widor, Suite Op. 34, Final, mm. 87-94

In Ex. 7-12 the initial notes of the first three sub-phrases (each sub-phrase is denoted by a long slur) will be subtly articulated, while the Fb which starts the fourth sub-phrase will be more strongly articulated. The highest note of the first sub-phrase will not be brought out, but, due to the notated dynamics, those of the second and third sub-phrases will be emphasised. The highest note of the fourth sub-phrase will require to be deliberately held back, against the natural tendency of the flute to sound this note more loudly than the surrounding notes.

In an article subtitled *Structural Levels of performance practice in Quantz's Versuch* Hefling (1987:208-11) intricately analyses an Adagio by Quantz. By means of this analysis he deduces that "the dynamics generally favour the so-called 'principal notes' of the original melody". He does not suggest that this analysis accounts for all the more subtle "dynamic inflections". Gratefully he does not fall into the trap

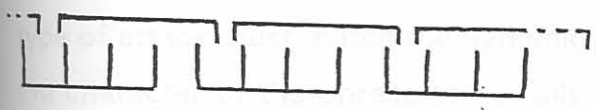
of many analysts, and over-reduce his findings to simple formulae. As he himself admits, "there is no obvious consistency in the way the dynamics highlight one sort of linear procedure as opposed to another".

Two famous instrumentalists, both highly revered teachers, did attempt to reduce phrase structure to simple formulae. One-time principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra Marcel Tabuteau developed a method of teaching what he called "the drive" of a phrase, using a numbering system (Toff 1985:151). 1 represented the strongest note(s) in terms of intensity and dynamics, while 5 represented the least intense note(s). Toff uses this phrase as an example:

Example 7-13:

Tabuteau's principal flute colleague William Kincaid adapted this concept into a system of square brackets across beats and bar-lines. This was intended to obscure the bar-lines and portray the forward progression of phrases:

Example 7-14:



While being occasionally useful as teaching tools, the author feels that these approaches are artificial and restricting. Taking Ex. 7-10 into consideration, Kincaid's square bracket system would be inaccurate; while Tabuteau's would result in a plethora of cumbersome numbers.

7.2.3 Rules of interdependence

A few general rules can be laid down that are borne out, in practice, by most of the wind literature. For instance, an accented note will generally sound more accented,

more effective, if it is also tongued. But there are a multitude of examples of accented notes under a slur - with this being effected by the airstream only, as outlined in Chapter 7.2.2 - leading to a gentler effect. This would suggest that an accent under a slur is meant to be a lesser, or more subtle, accent; this accent being more of the melodic type (probably effected with tonecolour and vibrato) than an actual audibly louder dynamic per se.

But one wonders whether the composer of the following example meant the notated accents to be so subtly graded, with its intricate mixture of tenutos and accents:

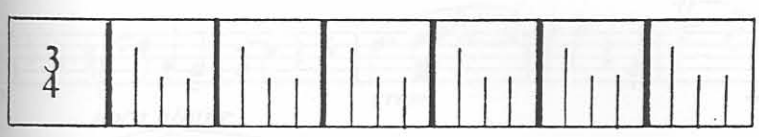
Example 7-15: Tomasi, Sonatine for solo flute, I:3-5

7.2.3.1 Integration

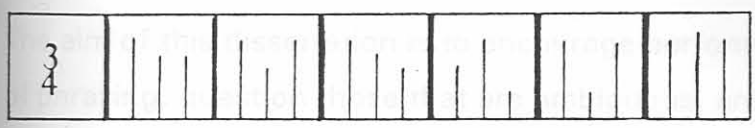
The dynamics, articulation and slur patterns of a phrase influence each other. The type of attack must match the dynamic level(s) of the note or phrase. In order for the character of the phrase to be fully realised, a certain level of consistency is usually required.

Weisberg (1975:123) provides the following two diagrams to illustrate both the "properly stressed" downbeats (Ex. 7-16a) and a more meaningful interpretation that would correspond to the actual performance of such a phrase (Ex. 7-16b):

Example 7-16a:

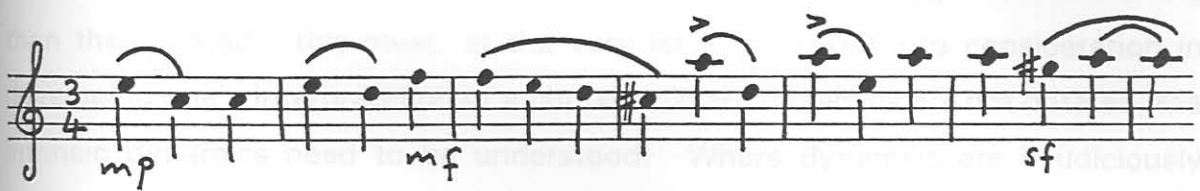


Example 7-16b:



Ex. 7-16b might infer the following slur and articulation patterns, thus effecting an integration of stresses (dynamics) with slurs and articulations into *phrasing* in its totality:

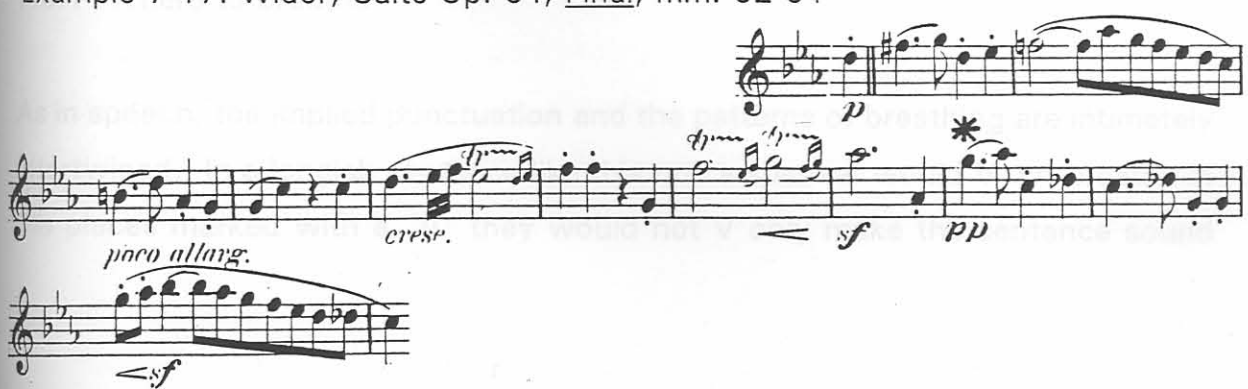
Example 7-16c:



7.2.3.2 Deliberate ambiguity

But there are those occasions where the composer deliberately instills a feeling of ambiguity in order to conjure up some tension/release dilemma. This raises the listener's expectations by creating a delay in offering up the solution to some question posed - or by being too peremptory. This is summed up by Bernstein's evocative phrase: "Violation of Expectation" (1976:105). And in these situations the notated dynamics will probably not exactly correspond with the articulation and slurring patterns. An example of this "violation" would be the following, where after eight bars of building tension and a strong up-beat, a sudden pianissimo is reached (marked *), whereupon a further unexpected surge to the top Bb occurs:

Example 7-17: Widor, Suite Op. 34, Final, mm. 52-64



7.2.4 Summary: dynamics and slurs

The aim of this dissertation is to encourage performers to investigate all elements of phrasing, question those that are ambiguous, and change the notated slurrings in places where they feel that these slurs do not fit well into the overall picture. And this is intimately bound up with both the notated dynamics and the intrinsic dynamics (which may or may not be notated). The subtlest of balances needs to be attained.

To this end the printed dynamics can sometimes be used to suggest better slurring than that printed - this must, at the very least, be taken into consideration in developing one's interpretation of a phrase. Where dynamics are not notated, the intrinsic dynamics need to be understood. Where dynamics are injudiciously notated, the performer needs to re-investigate the phrase and its place in the overall structure. In all cases the dynamics of a phrase can present clues as to the best patterns of slurs needed for the most meaningful interpretation. Dynamics and slurs usually exist in a symbiotic relationship.

7.3 Breathing

It is a well-known fact that the flute requires more breath, under most circumstances, than any wind instrument besides the tuba. The flutist frequently needs to find a place to breathe, where not only the pianist but also the oboist and often the clarinettist can play completely through that same phrase, forming one continuous arch. Both how and where players breathe have considerable impact on the interpretation of phrases in general, and the slur patterns in particular.

7.3.1 Where to breathe

As in speech, the implied punctuation and the patterns of breathing are intimately intertwined. In a longish sentence like this one a speaker would V not breathe in the places marked with a "V" they would not V only make the sentence sound

lumpy and V artificial but perhaps also render V up the wrong meaning. Punctuation is used in order to show the orator and reader both where to breathe and also where to pause (even if only for the minutest moment). Correct punctuation enlightens both meaning and clarity. So if the previous sentence were written correctly with both slight pauses in the speech rhythm, and actual breathing places suggested by means of written punctuation, then it would be written as follows: "In a longish sentence like this one, a speaker would (V) not breathe in the places marked with a "V"; they would not (V) only make the sentence sound lumpy and artificial, but, perhaps, also render (V) up the wrong meaning."

In other words, either the sentence itself, by its very construction, or the meaning as understood by the speaker (performer) should present the correct places for slight pauses and breaths. Where these are not immediately evident someone has to notate them. The writer or editor must ensure, through correct punctuation (in this sentence by a comma, a semi-colon, and these brackets), that the meaning is correctly rendered, enabling the speaker to pause and breathe in these notated places; thus ensuring unambiguous communication of the sentence's inherent message.

Besides not yet having mastered a good breathing technique, young performers are often guilty of either injudiciously breathing in the wrong places, or of chopping the phrases up unto separate sub-sections by too many breaths. This necessitates more articulations (probably each with its own accent, due to unformed breathing technique). The slur patterns will probably also be disturbed.

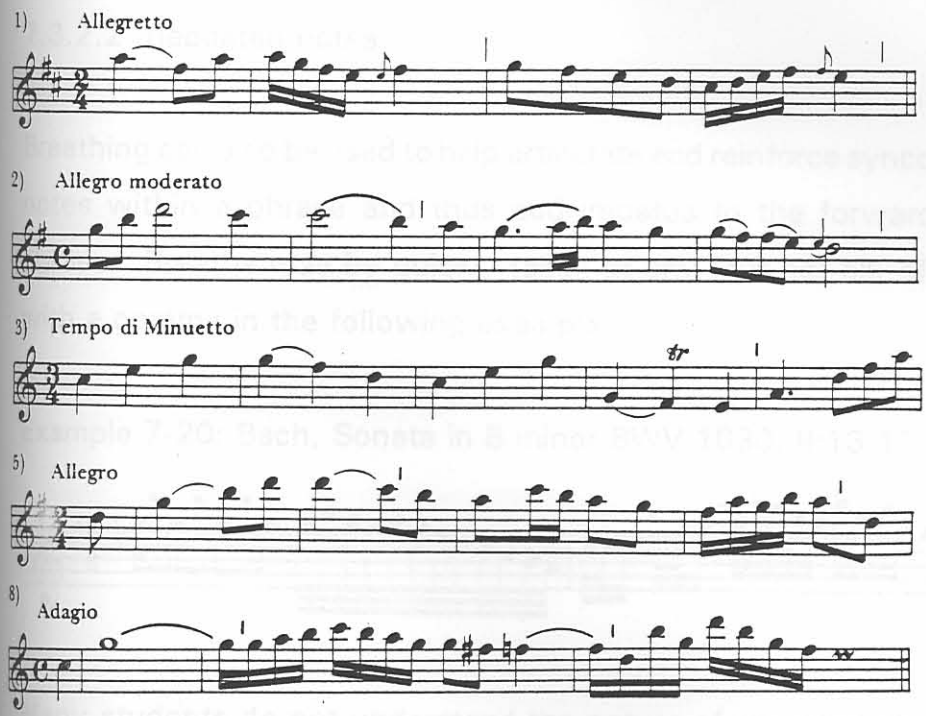
If the music does not naturally, of itself, immediately and unambiguously fall into phrases and sub-phrases, or if the composer or editor has not adequately delineated the phrases clearly, then it is the performer's and/or teacher's job to, in some way, analyse the music until the phrase structure becomes clear - thus enabling the performer to get a clearer picture of the phrase(s), breathe in the most effective places, and slur efficaciously. The unambiguous communication of the music's

inherent message depends upon the breathing patterns being woven into the natural framework of each phrase.

An analysis of the phrase structure of the music can be done by playing the passages through repeatedly until the music reveals its secrets; or by singing the music through; or by listening to recordings and concerts; or by visually searching the score for the phrase patterns - taking cognisance of aspects including sequences, imitations and anacruses. In all this the harmonic structure, the overall form, the dynamics and the printed phrasing must be taken into account, wherever applicable.

Tromlitz (1991:277-9) provides the following examples for discovering the subdivisions of phrases, and therefore the possible breathing places (indicated by the strokes):

Example 7-18:



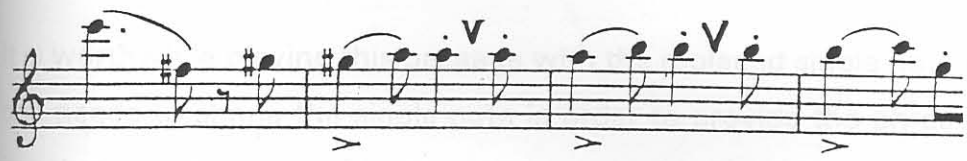
In most cases which require some form of search for the best place to breathe in the course of a phrase, the requirement that the flow of the phrase not be interrupted is of paramount importance.

7.3.2 Special cases

7.3.2.1 Snatched breaths

A passage such as that in Ex. 7-19 invites quick, choppy breaths which are not only entirely appropriate, but actively add to the effect. The many snatched breaths ensure that the attacks will be abrupt and accented, that the energy level of the music will match that of the breathing, and that the phrase's dynamic flow will consequently be actively enhanced:

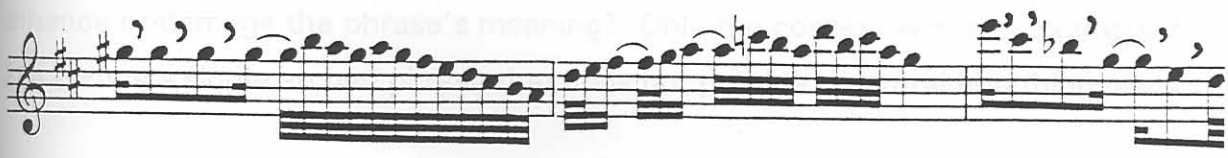
Example 7-19: Saint-Saëns, Tarantelle, Op. 6, mm. 102-105



7.3.2.2 Repeated notes

Breathing can also be used to help articulate and reinforce syncopations or repeated notes within a phrase and thus add impetus to the forward movement of the phrase. Breaths may be quickly taken at any (but not all) of the places marked with a comma in the following example:

Example 7-20: Bach, Sonata in B minor BWV 1030, II:13-15



Many students do not understand the nature of repeated notes within a phrase. One cannot equate them to, say, the second violin part in a Haydn string quartet, where the function of a repeated note passage may be almost totally rhythmic, playing only a supportive role to the main musical elements.

In Ex. 7-21a the composer could have written a single A and a single E instead of the six A's (m. 2) and two E's (m. 3). But he repeated them in order to give the phrase more momentum, more forward drive. Repeated notes are written for a purpose - merely to articulate them equally does not give them that required momentum and direction.

Example 7-21a: Prokofiev, Sonata Op. 94, I:1-4

It is worthwhile playing this passage with the replaced single note and seeing how one needs to shape the single note in order to provide the phrase with the same impetus. This will provide an answer as to whether one can breathe and, if so, where:

Example 7-21b: Prokofiev, Sonata Op. 94, I:1-4 (repeated notes excised)

Do repeated notes, then, offer the performer a chance to breathe? And will breaths enhance or damage the phrase's meaning? Only the context will tell. Example 7-21a shows a single arched phrase that does not provide a natural breathing place.

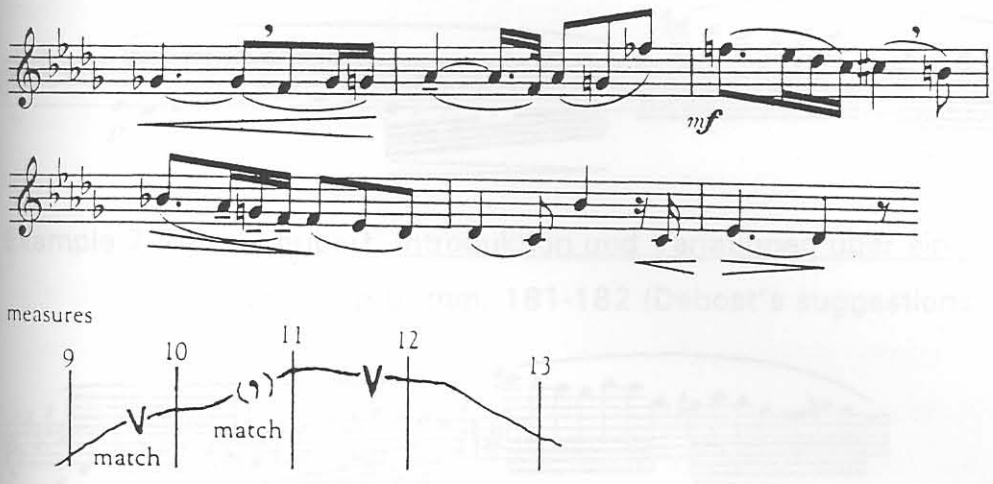
7.3.2.3 Melodic matching

Most melodically-oriented phrases require, to a greater or lesser extent, some more subtle form of breathing approach and technique. As with the bowing patterns of a string player, the audience should not be aware of the performer's breathing -

except where it may enhance the musical effect. There should, obviously, not be any audible sound of breathing.

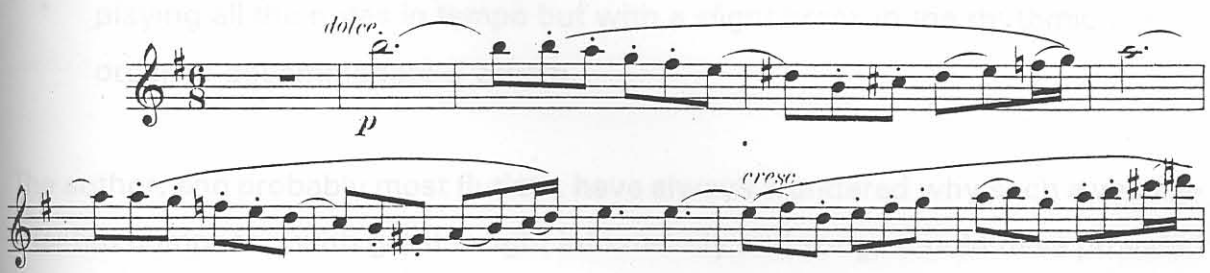
The breathing patterns and the feeling engendered thereby, both within the performer and on the musical product (i.e. the phrases), must match the character of the music. As Michel Debost says (1993:2), "always breathe in the direction of the phrase". He provides, as an example, the opening phrases of Gaubert's *Nocturne* and a diagrammatic representation of the musical contour of the passage:

Example 7-22: Gaubert, Nocturne, mm. 8-13



Debost refers to the necessity of "matching" the tonecolour and the musical drive of the note(s) immediately before and after the breath. This is even more critical in the opening of Fauré's *Fantaisie*, where the music must not be chopped up into three-bar phrases - rather the feel of one long phrase with internal sub-phrases should be cultivated:

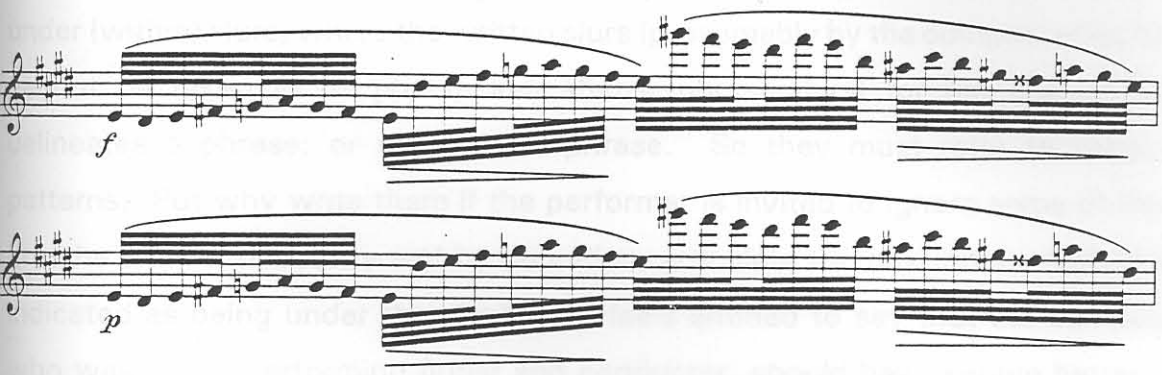
Example 7-23: Fauré, Fantaisie, mm. 1-10



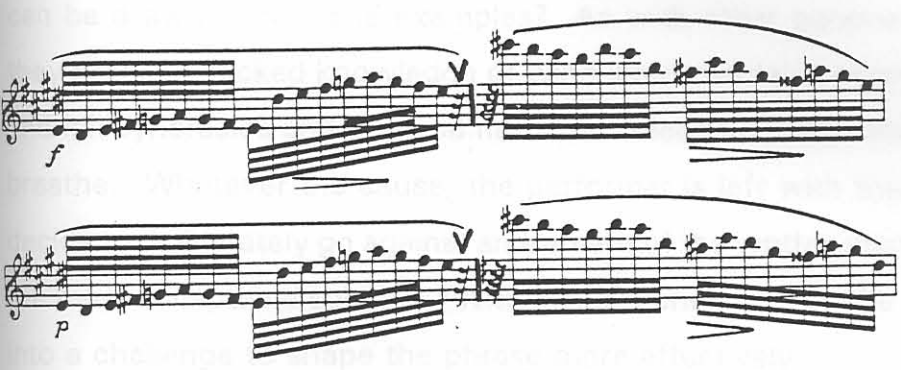
7.3.2.4 Making space for breaths

Debost openly admits (1993:4-5) to 'cheating' in the following passage in order to accommodate some breaths:

Example 7-24a: Schubert, Introduktion und Variationen über ein Thema Op.160, Variation 5, mm. 181-182



Example 7-24b: Schubert, Introduktion und Variationen über ein Thena Op. 160, Variation 5, mm. 181-182 (Debost's suggestions):



Debost's solution to Schubert's breathing problem is an attempt to both play all the written notes and to keep the pulse even - but at the expense of making each individual phrase sound slightly rushed at the end. Other solutions include:

* leaving out a note or two in order to create a breathing place and
* playing all the notes in tempo but with a slight break in the rhythmic flow in order to accommodate a breath.

The author, and probably most flutists, have always wondered why such a vocally-oriented composer, with great insight into melody and song, should have provided

us with passages that necessarily require us to compromise the written notes or rhythms in some way. (See also Ex. 5-45b for a re-slurring of the same variation.)

7.3.3 Notated anomalies

There are many examples of ambiguities, from composers, editors and players alike, regarding breathing places. Example 7-22 contains breathing indications under (within) slurs, where the written slurs (presumably by the composer Gaubert) cannot be taken to be phrase indications (phrase-slurs) for not one of them delineates a phrase; or even a sub-phrase. So they must refer to tonguing patterns. But why write them if the performer is invited to ignore some of them, breathe and, of necessity and by definition, articulate the next note which is still indicated as being under the slur? One feels entitled to say that the composer, who was also a performing flutist and conductor, should have known better.

Whether the composer, the editor or the publisher is to blame, what conclusions can be drawn from these examples? As with other parameters of wind playing they probably lacked knowledge of wind instruments' characteristics, capabilities and idiosyncrasies and thus did not acknowledge or 'feel' the need for players to breathe. Whatever the cause, the performer is left with the problem and has to decide to deliberately go against an element of the written score in order to achieve the most acceptable solution. With insight, one can turn the necessity to breathe into a challenge to shape the phrase more effectively.

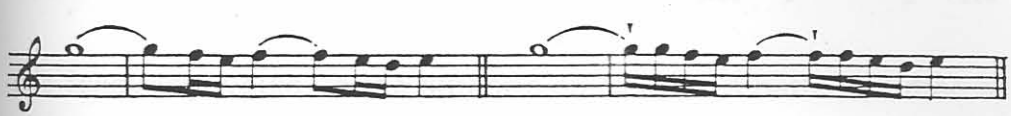
7.3.4 Deciding where to breathe

As depicted in Ex. 7-24 the wind performer is often faced with a situation where some 'rule' or other has to be broken in order to accommodate a breath. In all cases the correct solution must always be the most musical one, whatever 'rule' has to be broken.

Quantz (1966:88) makes some intriguing suggestions that highlight how today's

'rules' (taste?) differ from those of, in this case, the 18th-century. He says that one may add in a note after the breath that follows a long note, as in this example:

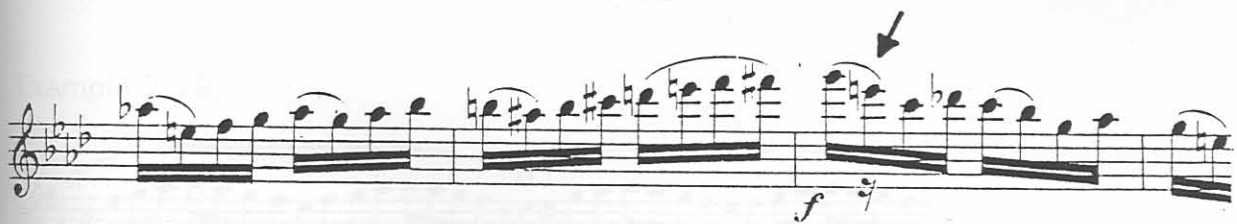
Example 7-25:



Regarding snatching quick breaths between successions of quick notes Quantz (1966:88-9) suggests that one "make the preceding note very short [...] and rush the following two or three notes a little, so that the beat is not retarded and none of the notes are omitted". This amounts to virtually the opposite of Debost's solution to the above Schubert problem, where the rushing of notes occurs *before* the breath (see Chapter 7.3.2.4). In both approaches the idea is to make room for a breath in the course of a phrase without discarding a note or notes and without altering the basic metrical pulse.

If one looks at Gaubert's *Allegro Scherzando* it is obvious that he does not sanction this 'rushing' of notes - and he was very much a performer/composer. On the contrary, he offers the following solution which necessitates the leaving out of a note (the E) in order to, at all costs, keep the even flow of quick notes:

Example 7-26: Gaubert, Allegro Scherzando, mm. 28-31

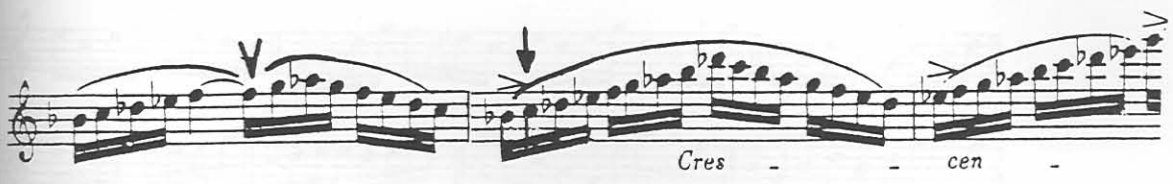


There are other examples of composers (or editors, with or without the composer's consent) offering suggestions as to how to accommodate breaths in difficult circumstances so as not to interrupt the flow of a phrase. In Ex. 7-27a the (presumed omitted) notes are not even printed:

Example 7-27a: Mouquet, La Flûte de Pan, I:53-55

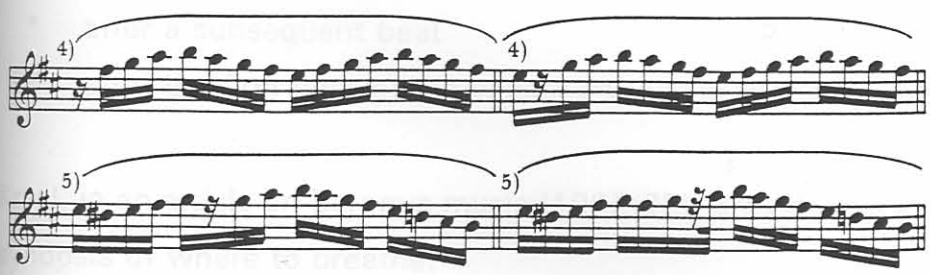
The following would, in the author's opinion, be a better solution as it subdivides the phrase in a more logical place and leaves both the flow of the phrase and the slur patterns more intact:

Example 7-27b: Mouquet, La Flûte de Pan, I:53-55 (altered by author)



Tromlitz (1991:282) fully sanctions the leaving out of notes in passages of running notes where breathing presents problems. The choice, he says, must be made between leaving out the first or last of four equal notes. In choosing, one must both "take council with one's feelings", and analyse which notes belong to the harmony. According to Tromlitz a harmony note may not be left out. He provides the following music example and then leaves out certain notes in order to accommodate the breathing:

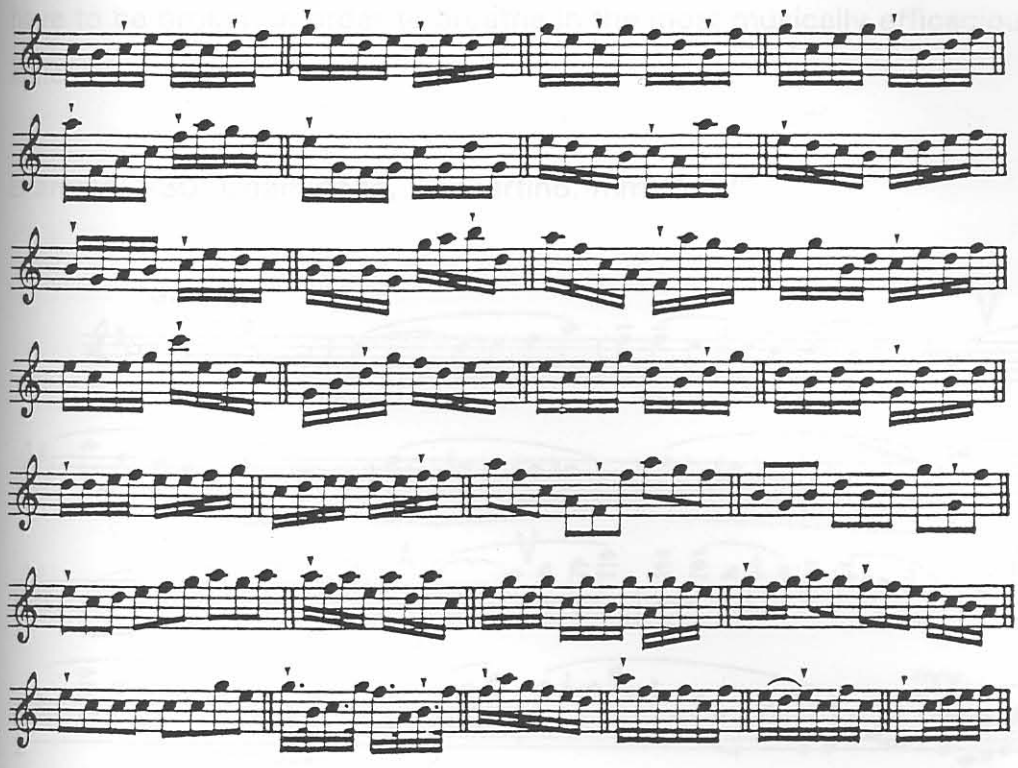
Example 7-28:



Certainly not all writers (or performers) advocate this approach. Regarding where to snatch quick breaths in running passages Quantz (1966:89) provides the

following table - the possible breathing places are after any of the notes marked with a stroke above them:

Example 7-29:



He warns that it is "self-evident that you must take breath only when necessity requires, and not whenever notes like these occur". If one peruses the table carefully one sees that, apart from three, all the suggested breaths occur consistently in one of three places:

* immediately after the first beat of the bar
* after a subsequent beat
* after the first note of the widest interval in that sequence of notes.

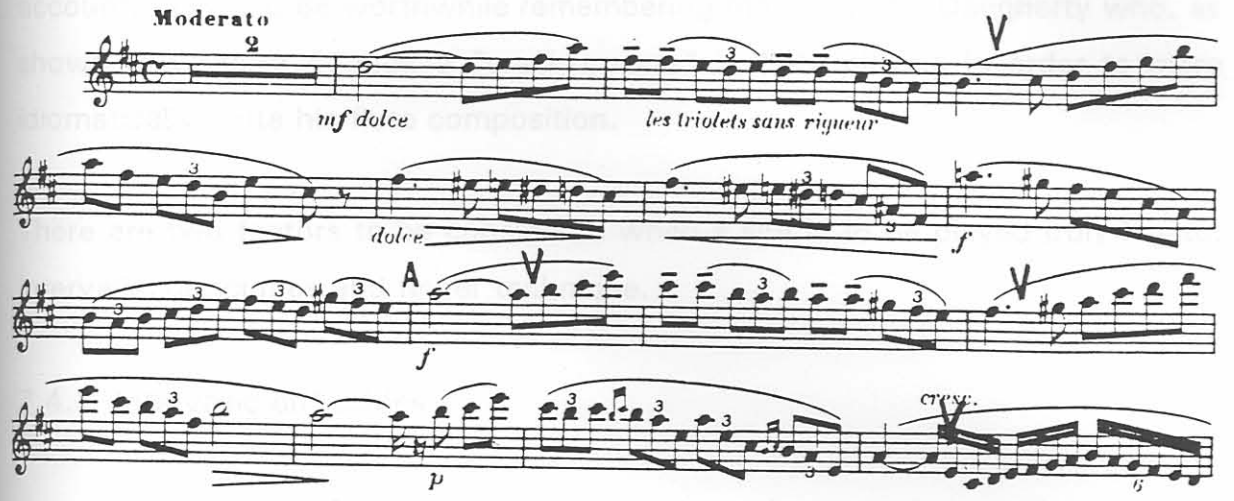
Krysl, in an article on Baroque music (1992:23), provides an even more complete synopsis of where to breathe:

> [...] before wide melodic leaps; after long notes in the context of shorter note values; after the first note of a measure in quick passagework; before rhythmic patterns change; before notes that

function as an anacrusis; at most notated rests; after harmonic cadences; after certain ornaments; and before a sudden change in dynamics.

The oft-played Concertino by Chaminade provides many examples of slurs that have to be broken in order to breathe in the most musically efficacious places, as indicated:

Example 7-30: Chaminade, Concertino, mm. 1-17



Both how the performer breathes and where he breathes has an influence on the interpretation of music (see Hinch 1991:83-87). A full integration of breathing into the flow of phrases often requires a considered approach. In all cases the music itself should dictate the breathing places; and these need not necessarily agree with any printed breathing suggestions, and may often necessitate the breaking of printed slurs.

7.4 Technique

With regard to the technical possibilities and deficiencies of the various musical instruments one may perhaps adapt George Orwell's oft plagiarized aphorism and state that 'No instruments are equal, but some are more unequal than others'. A

composer, when writing for a specific instrument, should possess certain information regarding that instrument. He should, for instance, know that one cannot expect a smooth trombone glissando over a range more than three whole-tones - and even then the possible range is dependent upon the starting note.

A composer, when writing for a wind instrument, must take into consideration factors such as: the highest and lowest possible notes; the tone-colours of the various registers; the dynamic possibilities and limitations. Subtler technical factors that influence articulation and the interpretation of phrases are often not taken into account. It would be worthwhile remembering the composer Daugherty who, as shown in Chapter 4, took a "crash course" in flute playing in order to more idiomatically write his flute composition.

There are two factors to be considered when a slur is to be played truly legato: intervallic difficulties and finger technique.

7.4.1 Intervallic difficulties

Only an intimate knowledge of an instrument will reveal all the subtle intrinsic problems related to smoothly and easily slurring intervals.

On any wind instrument there are certain notes which are more responsive, more resonant, more flexible than the norm; and others which are less responsive, duller and more stubborn. One learns these anomalies as one progresses and (in most cases) learns to accept them and adapt to them. Playing techniques are developed which compensate for the unhomogeneousness of the sound quality throughout the range of the instrument and the unevenness of response of different notes to various attacks. Quite simply, certain intervals are more difficult to play slurred, and others more difficult to sharply detach.

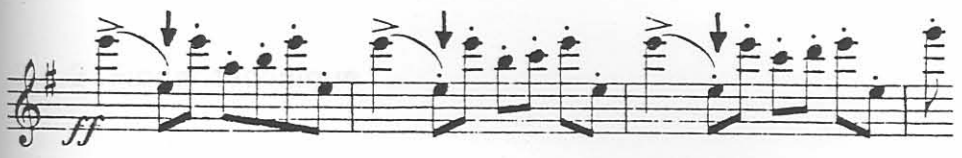
Many students struggle with the slurred motives in the following phrase because, although the fingers may cope well enough with the patterns, the instrument does

not speak the intervals clearly without perfect embouchure control:

Example 7-31: Poulenc, Sonata for flute and piano, I:30-31

Similarly with the following phrase, where the descending slurred octave E's do not speak easily:

Example 7-32: Roussel, Tityre, mm. 49-51



One might be able to simply list and grade, for every instrument, the most easily produced to most difficult slurred intervals - but imagine the cramping effect this would have on a composer's creative processes if he had to continually refer to some handbook of instrumental possibilities and impossibilities.

Within reason, it becomes the performer's task to overcome the deficiencies of his instrument in order to accommodate the creativity of the composer. For example there is a technical 'trick' (which involves lifting the right-hand little finger on the E) which facilitates the production of this smooth slurred interval:

Some performers even leave out the lower E (on the second beat) in Ex. 7-32 in order not to compromise the excited character of the passage. (This lower E is, in this particular case, doubled by the piano.)

On the other hand the slurred intervals in Ex. 7-31 remain uncomfortable (nothing could possibly be left out). No-one, it seems, considers changing the slurring.

Would not, in any case, the following phrasing make the motive not only technically easier but also more musically effective?

Example 7-33: Ex. 7-31 re-slurred by the author

This re-phrasing makes the character of the motive (and hence the whole passage) more in keeping with the pert, bubbly, Neo-Classical character. This type of approach can often, if judiciously applied, improve the character and general interpretation of over-slurred music.

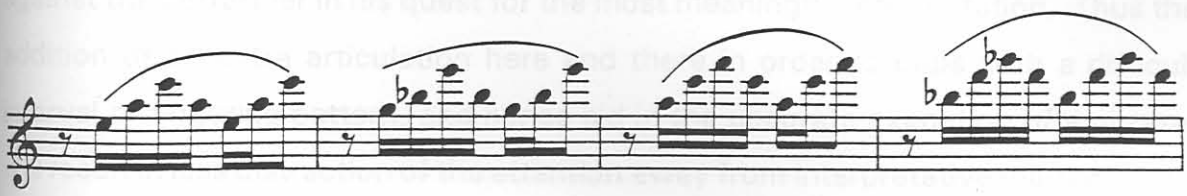
7.4.2 Finger technique

The technical aspect of the performer's control over his finger movements in effecting the succession of notes - what is usually succinctly referred to as 'technique' - can also influence the performance of slurs.

Players often make unnecessarily large finger movements when playing tricky passages. This has many drawbacks; including causing the instrument to move on (or in) the lips, and making passages rhythmically uneven. Galway (1982:122) mentions a subtler aspect by contrasting the technique of playing Indian bamboo flutes with that of the Boehm flute. The main difference being that the Boehm flute has a complex of keywork and levers to cope with. He concludes that in order to play legato the player must make "as little motion as possible with the fingers, and coax the music out of the flute" in order to obviate the sound and effect of a "rackety typewriter". The finger action should be that of caressing the keys. He makes the valid point that legato implies a "feeling of smoothness, of tenderness, of serenity" that should not only be evident in the finger actions, but "should be inside you, transmitting the caress through the fingers to the keys".

The situation regarding the playing of, and phrasing on, the recorder, with its complexity of contrary finger movements, is certainly not an exact equivalent of that on other wind instruments, but Rowland-Jones (1992:85) makes the point that "a touch of tonguing [...] helps to achieve a smooth slur whenever a complex finger movement is involved". He speaks of "the impulse of a tiny tongue-movement". This is a technique often used by performers to overcome difficult intervals, especially complex large intervals in the high register. The following type of passage is often articulated in some way in order to make it sound more even and rhythmical:

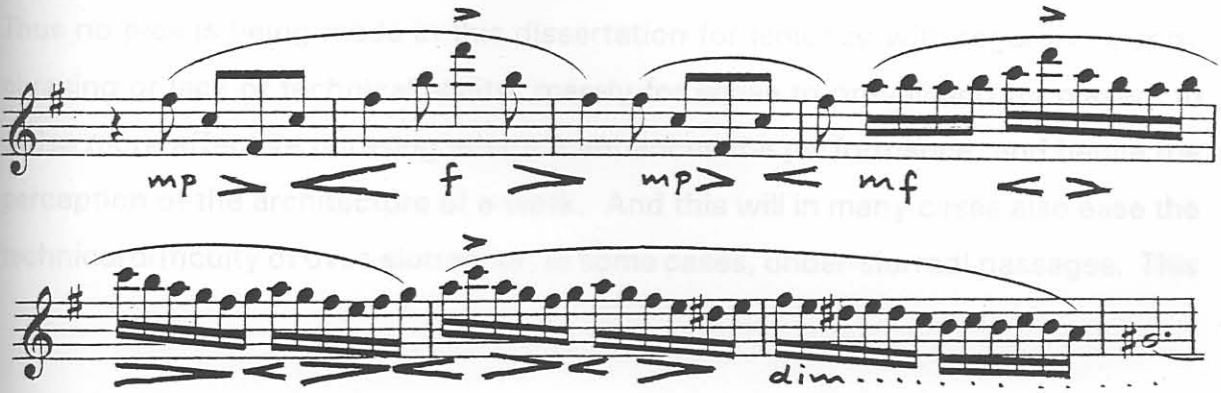
Example 7-34: Rutter, Suite Antique, Rondeau, mm. 83-87



7.5 Overcoming deficiencies

Students usually, to a greater or lesser extent, instinctively learn that difficult slurred sections of a motive or phrase can be more 'safely' negotiated (i.e. without notes cracking or not sounding) by means of simply alternately blowing softer and louder. These difficulties may be engendered by either intervallic or technical problems. Thus passages such as the following will be 'safer' with dynamics controlled and contoured more or less as indicated:

Example 7-35: Reinecke, Sonata Undine, I:86-93



This does not actually result in a phrase that is non-legato, but the resulting dynamic undulations retard the feeling of smoothness, tenderness and serenity (Galway 1982:122). The resulting phrase may even be played so choppily as to sound tongued.

As part of the process and discipline of mastering their instrument students practise in order to overcome the inherent deficiencies and idiosyncrasies thereof. If these are not mastered to the extent that they become integrated into the playing technique (thus requiring no conscious directing) part of the attention must be withdrawn from interpretative matters in order to cope with these technical problems. Anything that distracts the attention while performing can only work against the performer in his quest for the most meaningful interpretation. Thus the addition of an extra articulation here and there in order to cope with a difficult interval or fingering pattern, and hence aid in the accurate execution of a phrase, will result in less distraction of the attention away from interpretative matters. This is especially true where a composer or editor has over-slurred a phrase.

Auer (1980:72) wrote that "[a]ll really beautiful phrasing depends, of course, in the last analysis, on technical perfection". If the techniques of articulation are defective the character and the nuances of the music will not be perceived by the listener; this will often be referred to as 'poor phrasing'. This is equally true if the finger technique is defective. With legato, a defective technique will lead to a discontinuity in the flow of the notes; the phrase will sound unrhythmical. As Pleeth states (1982:72): "It is first and foremost the architecture of a work [...] which imposes upon the player the technical command needed to achieve its fulfilment."

Thus no plea is being made in this dissertation for leniency with regard to sloppy phrasing or lack of technical ability; merely for sense to prevail and for players to utilise more effective phrasing where it enhances the performance, and hence the perception of the architecture of a work. And this will in many cases also ease the technical difficulty of over-slurred (or, in some cases, under-slurred) passages. This

in turn allows the performer to most fully concentrate his attention on interpretative matters.