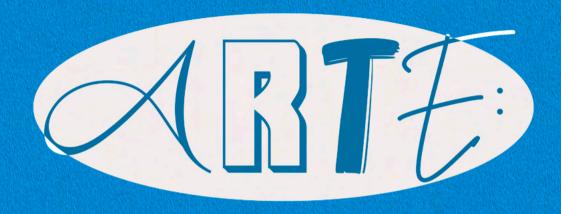
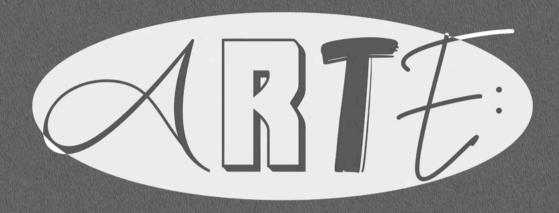
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Multiculturalismo e diversidade cultural



Fabiano Eloy Atílio Batista (Organizador)



Multiculturalismo e diversidade cultural



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Estimados leitores e leitoras;

É com enorme satisfação que apresentamos a vocês a coletânea "Arte: Multiculturalismo e diversidade cultural", dividida em dois volumes, e que recebeu artigos nacionais e internacionais de autores e autoras de grande importância e renome nos estudos das Artes.

As discussões propostas ao longo dos 39 capítulos que compõem esses dois volumes estão distribuídas nas mais diversas abordagens no que tange aos aspectos ligados à Arte, ao Multiculturalismo e a Diversidade Cultural, buscando uma interlocução atual, interdisciplinar e crítica com alto rigor científico.

Por meio das leituras, podemos ter a oportunidade de lançarmos um olhar por diferentes ângulos, abordagens e perspectivas para uma ampliação do nosso pensamento crítico sobre o mundo, sobre os sujeitos e sobre as diversas realidades que nos cerca, oportunizando a reflexão e problematização de novas formas de pensar (e agir) sobre o local e o global.

Nesse sentido, podemos vislumbrar um conjunto de textos que contemplam as diversidades culturais existentes, nacionalmente e internacionalmente, e suas interlocuções com o campo das Artes, considerando aspectos da linguagem, das tradições, do patrimônio, da música, da dança, dos direitos humanos, do corpo, dentre diversas outras esferas de extrema importância para o meio social, enfatizando, sobretudo, a valorização das diversidades enquanto uma forma de interação e emancipação dos sujeitos.

Os capítulos desses dois volumes buscam, especialmente, um reconhecimento da diversidade e a compreensão da mesma como um elemento de desconstrução das desigualdades, pois enfatizam que se atentar para a diversidade cultural e para o multiculturalismo é respeitar as múltiplas identidades e sociabilidades, de forma humana e democrática.

A coletânea "Arte: Multiculturalismo e diversidade cultural", então, busca, em tempos de grande diversidade cultural, social e política, se configurar como uma bússola que direciona as discussões acadêmicas para o respeito às diversidades, sobretudo nas sociedades contemporâneas.

Ressaltamos ainda, mediante essa coletânea, a importância da divulgação científica, em especial no campo das Artes e, especialmente, a Atena Editora pela materialização de publicações de pesquisas que exploram e divulgam esse universo, sobretudo nesse contexto marcado por incertezas e retrocessos no campo da Educação.

Ademais, espera-se que os textos aqui expostos possam ampliar de forma positiva os olhares e as reflexões de todos os leitores e leitoras, oportunizando o surgimento de

novas pesquisas e olhares sobre o universo das Artes, do Multiculturalismo e da Diversidade Cultural.

A todos e todas, esperamos que gostem e que tenham uma agradável leitura!

Fabiano Eloy Atílio Batista

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CAPÍTULO 17

HOW TO PLAY MODERN BASSOON IN A CONTINUO SECTION WITHOUT LOSING THE RESPECT OF YOUR COLLEAGUES

Data de aceite: 21/09/2021 Data de submissão: 05/07/2021

Mathieu Lussier

Université de Montréal Montréal – Canada https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0688-9301

ABSTRACT: In this article, we offer user-friendly solutions for bassoonists playing the modern bassoon in a continuo section. By referring to aspects depicted in instrumental methods of the 18th century (Leopold Mozart, François Devienne, Étienne Ozi) and drawing upon my extensive professional experience, we compare bassoon technique (vibrato, sound production, fingerings, attacks) with string instrumental technique, aiming to empower any bassoonist with enough historically informed elements to allow a critical and proactive approach and to play with appropriately supple dynamics and stellar intonation in the low register. And in the process, winning the respect of string colleagues everywhere.

KEYWORDS: Bassoon, continuo, articulation, performance practice.

RESUMO: No presente artigo, buscamos oferecer soluções amigáveis para fagotistas que tocam instrumento moderno, na performance de uma seção de baixo contínuo. Referindo-me a aspectos retratados nos métodos instrumentais do século XVIII (Leopold Mozart, François Devienne,

Étienne Ozi) e valendo-me de vasta experiência profissional, comparo a técnica do fagote (vibrato, produção sonora, dedilhados, ataques) com a técnica instrumental utilizada pelos instrumentos de cordas, visando, assim, capacitar fagotistas com elementos historicamente informados, permitindo uma abordagem crítica e pró-ativa e para tocar com uma dinâmica flexível adequada e uma sonoridade brilhante, no registro grave do instrumento. E no processo, como consequência, ganhar o respeito dos colegas, instrumentistas de cordas, em todos os lugares.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Fagote, baixo contínuo, articulação, performance.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Since the invention of the orchestra, the bassoon has quickly created its niche among the low frequencies of an ever-changing ensemble.

Nevertheless, it can be quite tricky nowadays to play baroque repertoire on modern bassoon. Although it was almost common in those days to find an orchestra with an equal amount of bassoons, cellos, gambas and/or basses de violon (Handel's orchestra in London had up to 4 bassoons in its heyday), today's situation leads us to believe that our wonderful modern instrument is too often almost perceived as an intruder in the bass section: too loud, too heavy, too sharp!

Table 16.1 Handel's orchestras

| | 1707a | 1707b | 1708 | 1710 | 1718 | 1720 | 1728 | 1733 | 1737 | 1754/58 |
|----------------------|-------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|------|-------|---------------|---------|
| Violins ^a | 14 (8:6) | 2-10 | 22 | 12 ^b (6:4:2) | 4/6 | 17 (8:5:4) | } 24 | } 24+ | ? 14 (8:6) | 14:12 |
| Violas | 4 | 0-4 | 4 | 2 | 0/1 | 2 | J |) | 2 | 6/3 |
| 'Cellos |) | ? | 6 |) | 2/1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | ? | 3/3 |
| Double basses | } 8 | ? | 5 | }4-7 | 1/1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | ? | 1/3 |
| Oboes | 4 | 0-4 | 4 | 2 | 2/24 | 4 | ? | 2 | 3-4 | 4/4 |
| Bassoons | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | ?1/2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3-4 | 4/4 |
| Trumpets | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0/1 | 1 | ? | 0 | 0 | 2/2 |
| Timpani | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1/1 |
| Misc. | 0 | 0 | 1tbn | 0 | 0/2hn, hp | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2hn | 2hn/2hn |
| Continuo: | | | | | | | | | | |
| harps | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1/1+ | 1 | 2 | 2 | ?2 | ?0/0 |
| theorbo | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| organ | | 1-2 | | | | | | | | 1/1 |

Burrows, Donald: The Cambridge Companion to Handel (1997), p. 243.

What happened? How come the wonderful colors of Handel's Saül accompagnato "Why Hast Thou Forc'd me from the Realms" with its many distinctive bassoon lines or "Geloso sospetto" from Reinhard Keiser's Octavia, with its low and condensed harmonies have become curious pages from the past? What made today's conductors dare use a single bassoon in Handel's Messiah in a large bass group featuring 4 or 5 cellos and 2-3 contrabasses? Is the modern bassoon as we know it fit enough to belong in an ensemble such as the ones Europe had in the 18th century? Despite its power, focused sound and reed size, is it possible to adapt our way of playing the bassoon in order to get around the "problems" caused by the developments of our instrument? It this paper, we will try to understand the challenges today's bassoonists are facing when it comes to playing baroque music with a modern bassoon in a continuo section. Identifying the few problematic aspects of our instrument when featured in that role, we will try to provide solutions allowing a performer to get around some of these "problems".

In addressing the specific challenges of the bassoonist joining a string group, we will largely focus on the attack of the sound. The bow being up or down and the reed being only "blown", how should we achieve a difference in sound according to the bowing? How should we address the concept of articulation general in order to blend with the basses of the orchestra, reproducing with our air the movements of the bow? Similar questions will

also arise regarding dynamics and will lead us to question the role of the bassoon in a baroque-sized orchestra.

The first aspect to address is the sound volume of the modern bassoon, much more powerful than its predecessors. One could qualify the timbre of the baroque bassoon as dark, muffled and a bit grainy, in total opposition with the sound of the modern one. which tends to be present, focused and a bit clearer. Instead of trying in vain to fight the characteristics of the modern bassoon when playing in a bass section, we should in fact try to use its potential, focusing on the accuracy of the attacks (staccato), without trying to imitate the sound of a baroque bassoon. In other words, instead of working on the nature of the sound, we should use the assets provided by the modern instrument and work instead on our articulation to achieve our goal. The sparse indications that we have in some scores about the use of the bassoon show that a composer like Handel would use the bassoon "by default" in all the ritornellos of his operatic or sacred works, indicating nevertheless very precisely an indication "senza fag." when the singer would come in. Similarly, in Johann Sebastian Bach choral masterworks, as well as in Handel works, bassoon was playing practically everywhere in the instrumental sections, unless the music called for something very delicate, without flutes or oboes and would then specifically indicate the use of the strings only. Is this to say that the role of the bassoon was only to boost the volume of the bass section? That would be a great mistake. Indeed, on top of a real addition to the volume of the basses, the bassoon could and still can, by its sharp attacks, greatly help shaping bass lines. In order to do so efficiently, one should focus on the kind of staccato used, working much more on the speed of the air blown instead than the volume of air blown into the instrument. We will come back to this later.

Let's now spend some time on the concept of sound production, focusing mainly on the attack of the sound. In order to achieve an ideal blend with the string instruments, we must think about a crucial aspect of sound production for string instruments, the bow. Sadly, we can all recall the painful attempt of a beginning violinist scrubbing his bow on the string. The not-so-successful results lie on 3 factors:

- 1- The hesitant and irregular movement of the bow on the string.
- 2- The brutal initial contact of the bow on the string before it starts to move.
- 3- The lack of control of the bow, jeopardizing the sustain of the sound.

If we were to do the same exercise with a beginning bassoon player, we would also be able to identify the following 3 factors:

- 1- Starting the air production without the proper amount of energy
- 2- Rough and often brutal initial contact between the tongue and the reed
- 3- Insufficient air production past the attack phase.

Comparing these factors shows clearly that despite drastic differences in their

structure, the same parameters (initial gesture, sound control, sound attack) apply to strings and winds as well. This tells us that we should, as much as possible, use our instrument in a "string minded" approach, especially if we are the only wind instrument playing amongst a string ensemble.

In order to do so, we should focus primarily on developing a variety of ways to attack the sound. For competent strings or wind players, colors, dynamics, shapes are part of our standard music making tool kit. Just to be clear, let's simplify things: A cello (or any other string instrument) can only start its notes two different ways (let's leave pizzicato aside for now), down bow or up bow. For a wind instrument such as the bassoon, we could similarly say that there is only one way to start the sound, blowing! This being said, a cello down bow will sound guite differently from an up bow. A down bow note will sound clearer, defined at the top of the note, much clearer than the up bow note, which will sound a little more fragile and less defined at the top. The simplest way to compare this with the bassoon would be to match the down bow effect with a note attacked with the tongue, and an up bow note with a note blown only with air support, without any help from the tongue. Although quite simple, this basic principle is unavoidable if we want to blend in a section of cellos and basses. As much as one can do, it is suggested to use as little tongue, if none, when the register allows it, in order to imitate an up bow feeling. Therefore, when we do use the tongue, it will strengthen the sound, add a lot of definition as the bow does when attacking a string down how.

This being said, as the first two octaves of the bassoon do really need the use of the tongue to start the sound in a nice way, it would then be preferable to focus on finding what is the minimal amount of contact requested between the tongue and the reed, according to the registers, to start vibrating properly. The bassoon not being the wind instrument with the greatest dynamic range, one can greatly enhance its musicality by creating a whole variety of attacks, based on the principle that the "by default" attack should be as less perceptible and only marked or shaped on purpose, according to what the music calls for. To do so, it is fascinating to realize which movements involve the tongue when playing the bassoon, but more importantly, where the tongue hits the reed. Generally, for simple physical reasons, we can agree on the middle of the tip of the reed. But, instead of this standard "on-off" approach, a more fluid, circular like series of movements, covering different areas of the reed offers much more variety. We just have to think about the techniques used for doubletonguing to realize that the "KA", in a "TA-KA-TA-KA" sequence is produced by the action of the throat and therefore, that a detached sound is produced by the player without any contact between the tongue and the reed. It means that it is mainly an alteration in air speed in the mouth, rather than a real contact with the reed that can produce a detached sound.

This specific idea brings us to talk about the speed of the air blown in the bassoon, essential aspect of a successful blend between the bassoon and the cello.

In order to fully understand the objectives we are trying to reach, we have to picture

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in our mind a baroque cello bow. The bottom part of the bow, the frog, is heavier and allows the player to "bite" in the string. Then, the tip of the bow grows thinner toward the end of it. That means that the tip of the bow is much lighter that its frog, leading to the fact that a strongly attacked sound at the frog will lighten up as the bow moves to the tip. This "inequality", core aspect of the baroque style, will evolve over the years, and weight will be added at the tip of the bow in order to achieve an almost equal amount of sound throughout the bow length. If we come back to our comparison between the cello and the bassoon, a cello sound produced with a baroque bow will lighten up like the sound of a bassoon when the instrumentalist reaches its breath capacity. The modern bow would allow the sound of the cello to maintain a straighter tone regardless of the bow movements, like an organ would do. This inequality in the sound is not something that we can simply put aside, as it is at the core of the baroque esthetic for which a musical phrase is not a succession of long and short notes but a really refined language in which strong and weak beats, hemiolas and cadenzas shape a theatrical and contrasting narration.

How should we proceed, on the bassoon, to achieve a perfect blend with the smooth rendering of the bow sliding on a string? One concept has to be kept in mind in order to achieve such a thing:

1- In a French baroque phrase, for example, a string player will aim to constantly leave the bow on the string, almost without interruption, with all sorts of articulations, unless the music calls for the opposite.

On the bassoon, in order to imitate the way a cello plays with its bow never really leaving the string, we have to be blowing air constantly, making sure the action of blowing air never completely stops. It also means that once in a while, we blow air at a low speed, but not quickly enough to produce sound. We are back to this crucial aspect of air speed. It is indeed the speed of the air blown in the reed that will determine the strength and the quality of the sound that will be created, as well as the whole sustain process that will take place afterward. To use another image, the tongue touching or not the reed will only determine if each word of the phrase starts with a consonant or a vowel.

The bassoon is the bass section of the orchestra and contributes to the initial impact of a musical phrase with all the precision allowed by the modern reed. Once this is done, the bassoon has to blend back in the sound of the section, not that much by reducing the volume of sound (a certain level is require to maintain quality) but mostly in the way to sound is sustained. Let's take as an example a pedal note, sustained by the basses for 8 measures. It would be a shame if the bassoon was to stay equally present throughout the passage, especially when the texture of the bows lightens up. The bassoon should contribute to the initial dramatic impact of the note, then taper down the sound until even a complete stop for a few measures, sneaking back in, without (or almost without) attack, on a bow change, in order to contribute to the *crescendo* leading to the chord change. In a similar case, in a long sequence of repeated eight notes per bar, the bassoon can be active for 6

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of the 8 notes of the measure, increasing the intensity on the last 3 notes of the bar (toward the harmony change), then tapering down the sound to almost nothing but attack around the middle of the bar, then taking back the momentum in repeating this process. The same concept can apply for a *pizzicato* passage in which the bassoon can, with a note attacked with great air speed but no sustain, blend in very convincingly with a string section, adding a nice bassoon color to a passage where the bassoon would seems normally excluded.

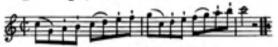
On top of being really efficient, this way of playing is much less tiring and allows the bassoonist to survive through long bass lines which seem to have been conceived for players who could play for many minutes without breathing or resting. Another interesting fact is that psycho-acoustical researches show that if you cut the attack of a sound, it is very difficult to perceive the nature of it. It is therefore the initial impact, the quality and the variety of attacks used in playing that give the bassoon its importance in a bass section. If we just let our beautiful but powerful modern instrument unleashed, if we consider our playing more like an organ which would be on or off and if we are not keeping in mind the physical component of the bows which with we play, we will undoubtedly be too loud, too heavy and too sustained.

The concept of the attack is inseparable from the whole articulation parameter. This aspect is crucial as it is at the very core of the musical narrative process. To pretend that playing "in the baroque style" means to play every note short is as wrong as pretending that romantic music needs to be played loud and sustained all the time. This misunderstanding of the baroque concepts can perhaps be explained by the almost total absence of articulation markings in original prints. When some slurs are added, it is most of the time in order to show a specific bowing or phrasing wished by the composer, most of the time only when the idiomatic patterns could be played in different ways. What should we do then when a long slur indicates a long bowing over several notes? What should we do when, at the contrary, all the notes are the same, without any indications like in the fast part of the first movement of Bach's orchestral suite in C major? First, in the case of a printed bowing, it is important to start by understanding what that indication implies for a string instrument. Then, to keep in mind that it is by far preferable to come up with a self-made solution, making sense on the bassoon, instead of reproducing with exactitude the effect of the bowing in order to be more "authentic". For instance, all the ascending scales in sixteen or thirty-second notes what we commonly find in a French overture are generally articulated by the strings. If bassoons and oboes would try to match that, regardless of a stellar technique, that would be totally counter-productive, these scales being theatrical and noble musical gestures and not machine-gun effects! We should therefore not hesitate to add slurs here and there in order to match our gesture to the strings one, but also in other cases to cut some slurs with a subtle attack from the tongue to avoid note slides or other acoustical problems proper to the bassoon.

Similarly, several methods from the 18th century, among which François Devienne's

flute method, mention something called the "brilliant tonguing" or "coup de langue brilliant" in French, which would be the equivalent, on a 4 sixteen notes pattern, to 2 slurred, 2 detached. Virtually all methods of the time insist on the fact that music should be articulated according to the performer wishes while always considering the character of the music performed.

Articulation qui s'employe dans certains traits en double - Croches .



C'est un des Coups de Langue le plus brillant quand on le possede avec perfection lorsqu'un trait n'est articule d'aucune maniere par l'Auteur, l'executant peutemployer l'articulation qui la est la plus famillière surteut quand le trait est ce qu'on appelle ordinairement Roulobe il ya cependant des exceptions, elles seront démontrées dans les Exemples suivants,

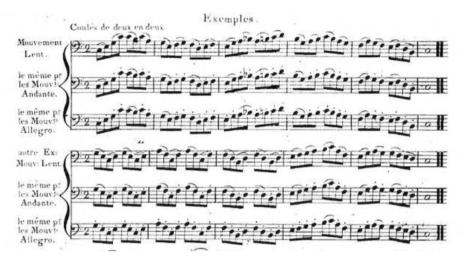
En général l'Articulation de deux coulés et deux détachés est la plus britante il en est de même pour les Croches et les Triples Croches suivant le mouvement du morceau, excepté l'Adagio, le l'Argo et le Catalole ou la Langue doit être tres peu employée, ces Articulations peuvent être missen usage.

Devienne, François: Nouvelle Méthode théorique et pratique pour la flûte, Paris, Naderman, 1794.

Étienne Ozi, another famous bassoonist of the end of the 18th century mention about this in his new bassoon method or "*Nouvelle méthode de bassoon*" (1802), that "one has to first impregnate himself with the character of the piece played in order to use the proper articulation1".

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¹ Original quote: il faut surtout se pénétrer du caractère du morceau qu'on exécute, afin d'y employer l'articulation qui lui convient.



Ozi, Étienne, Nouvelle Méthode de basson. Paris 1802 Imprimerie du conservatoire de musique p.7.

In a long *allegro* passage, with constant sixteenth notes, played solo or *tutti*, it is then not wrong at all to add slurs here and there. It is preferable to do so on the first and/or third beat of a 4/4 bar, not on every beat, and generally only on the first two sixteenth notes of those beats. This being said, it is one's challenge, and privilege, to lengthen some notes, shorten some others in order to give the impression that some melodic elements are longer than other, without necessarily using slurs to do so. The slur is only one possible solution in the toolbox we have to create variety in our playing and should not become a "by default" solution.

"the question is: should we slur the first two, or the last two? And another question: should we phrase them long or detached them? On these two subjects, it depends on the character of the piece, cantabile or not, on the good taste and on the capacity of the performer to judge this matter if the composer as forgot to show it, or might not have even understood it. But the following rule can be useful: one should play long notes when conjuct (i.e. stepwise) and detached with the bow disjunct note (i.e. intervallic); keep in mind that one's playing should be nicely varied." (ROUSSEL, 2014, p.80)

One important fact is to be underlined about this. Nowadays, without even thinking about it, when we do a slur, we almost inevitably do a *crescendo* on it. But Leopold Mozart, mentioned above in a quote from his "Violin school" explains clearly that a slur should almost always be, instead, a sign of *diminuendo*, the second (or last) note of the slur being always a weak part of a beat (strong of weak).

"the first note of a group of two, three, four or more notes slurred together should always be attacked a little stronger and held a little longer; the following notes to be phrased a little later, and played softer. But one should make sure to do so with rigor, in order to make sure that the pulse is not at all altered. The small lengthening for the first note, obtained by the well-balanced shortening of the others slurred notes, played a little faster, should not only be acceptable

It is then crucial to make sure that if the music shows a written slur indicated by the composer, therefore a clear sign of a musical gesture, it is preferable to perform these slurs subtly, diminishing the second (or last) notes of the slurs. To be clear, articulations added to enhance the musical narration, to make it lively and clear are most welcomed. They should nevertheless sound as natural as possible to the listener, they should never catch its attention and just be on the list of all the small things a musician should do in order to breath live into music, like bowings, breathings, attacks or the use of pedals on the piano.

We also have to add to our "typical bassoon problem list" intonation issues. How often are we accused of being too sharp, when we play unison with cellos and basses? This can be explained in many ways and can, most of the time, be avoided. The first question to address is the way instruments are tuned. Although our instrument is already tuned in part at the factory, there is a general consensus among bassoonists that the tuning of one note does not guarantee the tuning of another one. This also means that each modern bassoon has generally a couple "bad notes". Many notes are quite bad on almost every bassoon. The first two F# are generally a little sharp and a little loud, as the low C, very resonant and often quite sharp.

Alas, the low C is the lowest string on the cello and on some contrabasses. And regardless of the way they will tune their strings (pure fifths, short fifths), this note will always be lower compare to where our low C normally lies. It would be easy if this was our only problem. But we could also think about the low E, also a little loud and sharp, which will rarely blend with the basses' low string tuned on E. Not to forget the low G, second string of the cello and the A, potential second string on the contrabass. So in our first octave only, we have at least 5 problematic notes, and that is if we leave aside the low C#, almost impossible to tune with any low strings.

Here are some recommendations to help solve these issues.

- 1- Make longer or wider reeds in order to tune a bit lower than your ensemble. If your orchestra tunes at A-442, aim for 440 or 441 at the very most. You might have to work a bit more in the tenor register to start the rehearsal or the concert but when you will get warmed-up, therefore a little sharper (inevitable physical phenomenon), and that the strings will start to get lower (another inevitable physical phenomenon), you will be much closer to a common ground with your colleagues. The harpsichord also goes down as the concert goes, you will be able to follow the tendency. But Chamber organs sometimes go sharp... never a dull moment!
- 2- For low C, you can have a short extension screwed under the low Bb key allowing you to add the Bb to the low C fingering. You might need the alternative C square key in order to so. But this will make your low C much softer and lower. On certain bassoons, that also helps the low D.



Basson Benson Bell # 163 (2017).

- 3- For low E, add the low C# key. While this might seem to give more body to the E, adding the low C# key also improves and refines the intonation and blends better with the strings.
- 4- For Low C#, you can finger a low B, but adding the C# key. This will play a soft C#, a little flat, but you can push it a bit with air support.
- 5- Low F# is not only problematic on the bassoon but also for cellos and basses tuned in fifths. They generally have a "wolf" on this note and that makes the tuning harder. Our mute fingering (adding low D and the Eb key) can lower the intonation and smooth the sound of this note, often played as a third, which would mean it would have to be played softer.
- 6- For all the less flexible and sharp notes (low F, A, G#), a wider and/or longer reed will really help and allow you to match your intonation with the strings, overpowering us by the number.

Many other notes are tuned a bit low on the bassoon, like the second and third B and the middle E. This is ideal in order to play tempered chords, especially important because most organ and harpsichord tuners will use uneven temperament for baroque programs. This kind of intonation system modifies greatly the position of the note compare to the equal temperament of a piano. On the bassoon, the lower B and E are convenient as these notes are often played as thirds (tuned lower) in G major chords (for the B) or C major chords (for the E). But for the same reason, it is a bit more difficult to play with brilliance and projection in Vivaldi's bassoon concerto in e minor RV484, the E and B on the bassoon being a bit "sad notes". For today's standards, we are trying to achieve a similar level of projection, regardless of the key we are playing in but in the 18th century, e minor meant something plaintif for Charpentier or troubled and sad for Mattheson. Knowing this, we can realize that most works calling specifically for a bassoon are normally written in bassoon-friendly keys, getting around the "bad" notes or, at the contrary, deliberately assuming them. However, this does not apply to masterworks of the baroque repertoire like the B-minor Mass, Matthew's

Passion and many cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach, written in keys where the bassoon has to go through many traps and very difficult passages.

This music is nevertheless a treasure in which the bassoon occupies a central role and this is why we should set aside sound concepts inherited from the centuries following baroque era and adapt our playing. That means using articulations intelligently and sparingly, and strong, intentional attacks. That also means to blow air into our instrument in a much less sustained way, constantly shaping air speed in order to underline the shapes of the musical lines played by bowed instruments. Finally, that requires to realize that vibrato was one of the tools used at the time, but as an ornament and not a constant component of the sound. We should then, as a singer would do, in the long harmonic suspensions of Handel's greatest arias such as *Scherza infida (Ariodante)*, *Pena Tiranna (Amadigi di Gaula)*, *Ah Crudel (Rinaldo)* use vibrato only at the moment where our modern instrument seems to be restraining us in the opening of the sound, when the notes become dissonances.

We should keep in mind that we are, before everything else, part of a group. We have to realize that the bassoon is not there to hold the sounds, the chamber organ is there for this purpose. We don't have to play everything long or everything short. The bassoon is able to give life to a bass line in Handel's masterworks like no other instrument. But to do so efficiently, we have to also be able to blend in with cellos, basses, lutes, harpsichord and organ of the continuo section. Sometime completely blended the general sound, giving it warmth and body. Some other time coming out of the texture, with a sharp and agile articulation. Often a favorite of conductors but also the first to be accused if the bass section is too loud, out of tune or too heavy, modern bassoon has all what it needs to bring on life and beauty to baroque masterworks. Let's show everyone that our instrumental is still a magic ingredient to a top-notch continuo section!

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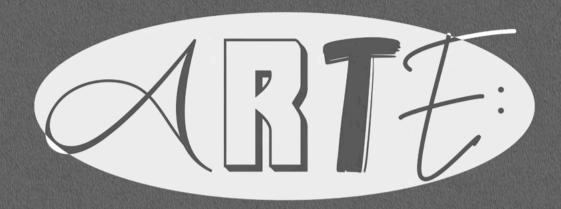
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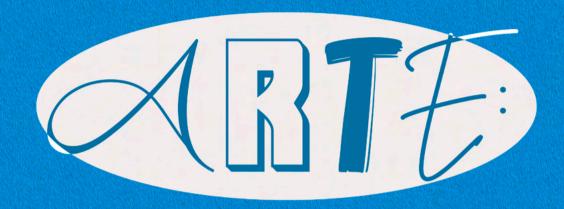


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