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The American Recorder

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THE AMERICAN RECORDER

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Cover: Minstrel with pipe and tabor. Detail from *The Betley Window*, English painted and stained glass, sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The window is a 26½" x 15½" panel of clear white glass cut into twelve diamond-shaped panes and painted with enamels of various colors. All but one of the panes depict dancers or musicians. The window comes from Betley Hall, which dates from 1621, and was acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1976. Reproduced by kind permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

FROM THE EDITOR

Scott Reiss, who is still responding to comments on "Articulation: The Key to Expressive Playing," which appeared last November (see Letters), has somehow found the time to write another article. Here he discusses the techniques of shading and leaking: controlling the pitch of a note by partially covering or uncovering one or more finger holes.

The next article examines the structure of the variations Jacob van Eyck composed on popular tunes of the seventeenth century. The author is Thiemo Wind, whose "Jacob van Eyck and his 'Euterpe oft Speel-goddinne'" appeared in the February 1986 issue. Mr. Wind studied oboe, recorder, and musicology in his native Holland, where he now works as a concert reviewer and music editor.

When David Lasocki proposed to write a biennial survey of articles and books that expand our knowledge of the recorder, he didn't realize how large a project he was taking on. He kept finding material right up to the deadline, and his final draft fills twelve pages of the magazine. In it he summarizes what has been published throughout the world in the past two years on—or at least touching on—the instrument and its makers, players, performance practice, and repertory. For readers who want to pursue these topics, he includes full citations and information on how to obtain the periodicals referred to.

Ken Wollitz was clearly charmed by the fourth Boston Early Music Festival—his first—and he's written a delightful account of it. His report is supplemented by several short write-ups of specific events.

The next report is considerably sadder. Susan Thompson, assistant curator of the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments, sent in a description and photographs of four instruments stolen from the Collection last June in the hope that, should any of them surface, some of our readers may recognize them. Among the instruments taken were the Collection's only recorder and an exquisite ivory harp.

Finally, since everyone seems to be enjoying music in the magazine, this issue contains an entire Baroque suite. Baroque in spirit, at least: it was composed in 1981 by Angelo Zaniol, an Italian professor of French literature whose consuming avocation is the recorder: he writes about it (his articles are discussed in David Lasocki's survey), edits music, and makes, collects, and repairs instruments.

Sigrid Nagle

Pitch Control: Shading and Leaking

Scott Reiss



PITCH IS THE MOST BASIC element of music. In order to play in tune, tune an ensemble, play with other instruments, or vary the dynamics of your playing, you must be able to control the pitch of your recorder.

Achieving this control requires effort, because all recorders have intonation problems. If they are not built into the instrument, then they are built into the player. Every player, after all, has a personal style of blowing that may temper certain notes. Notes that are particularly susceptible to differences in blowing styles include the open ones in the mid-range as well as those at the extreme high and low ends of the range.

If pitch control is such a basic problem, why does it receive so little attention? Why is tuning considered an "advanced" subject, rather than one that should be studied by all players? Why is it so fearsome, shrouded in confusion and mystery? The reason, I believe, is that it is what I call a "soft" issue, subtle and multidimensional, involving as it does the fluid and invisible movement of the breath and (as we will see) minute motions and careful placement of the fingers. Many teachers, after instructing the student to blow harder to raise the pitch of a note and blow more gently to lower it, turn their attention to "hard," black-and-white issues like speed and dexterity.

Similarly, most recorder methods have little to say on the subject, although they may deal cursorily with alternate fingerings. The use of alternate fingerings is indeed an effective way of controlling pitch, but it is limited by factors of practicality and tone quality: a different fingering system for each dynamic level would be too cumbersome, and an alternate fingering usually weakens the tone.

In this article I will concentrate on two other means of controlling pitch: shading and leaking. The partial obstruction of an open hole, resulting in the lowering of the

pitch, is called *shading*. The partial uncovering of a closed hole, resulting in the raising of the pitch, I call *leaking*.

I have used these techniques for more than ten years but only recently found a detailed description of them in print – in an article written thirty years ago by A. Rowland-Jones. It appeared in the October 1957 *ARS Newsletter* (the forerunner of *AR*) and became part of the author's *Recorder Technique*.[1] Alan Davis mentions shading and leaking in his *Treble Recorder Technique*[2] (both he and Rowland-Jones refer to leaking as slide-fingering), and Daniel Waitzman describes leaking, which he calls venting, in *The Art of Playing the Recorder*.[3] Considering the small amount of material available on this subject, a detailed "method" seems long overdue.

Shading

To lower the pitch of a note slightly, partially cover the first or second open hole below it. Either put the tip of your finger just over the edge of the open hole (Figure 1), or place a *straight* finger lightly on the side of the recorder next to the open hole, pivoting that finger around toward the hole until enough air is impeded to lower the pitch the desired amount.

I prefer the straight-finger technique because it provides more flexibility in finding the exact pitch, and it is better for executing some of the refinements described below. In this method, the shading finger rests, near its second joint, at a tangent to the recorder (Figure 2). If the finger approaches the recorder at too flat an angle to the hole, the pitch will dip drastically, so it is often necessary to drop the wrist slightly to increase the angle between finger and hole.

You can often use more than one finger for shading, particularly with the left-hand notes in the lower octave (c″–g″ on the alto recorder). On these notes you can shade with two, three, or even four fingers of the right hand (Figure 3).

Leaking

To raise the pitch of a note, you can leak air slightly from one or more holes. Generally you partly uncover the lowermost covered hole, although other holes may also be used to good effect.[4] You can leak air in any of four directions: you can roll your finger up (Figure 4) or down (Figure 5); pull it back, leaking at the fingertip (Figure 6); or counter-roll the finger, leaking on the side of the hole toward the palm (Figure 7).

Leaking is a much more delicate and difficult technique than shading. It works better and is accomplished more easily on

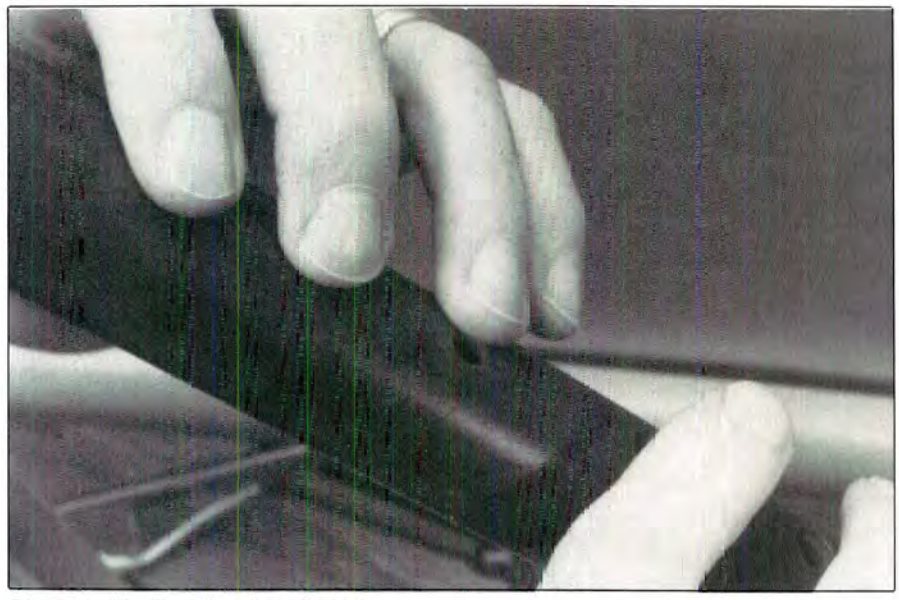


Figure 1. Shading the edge of a hole.

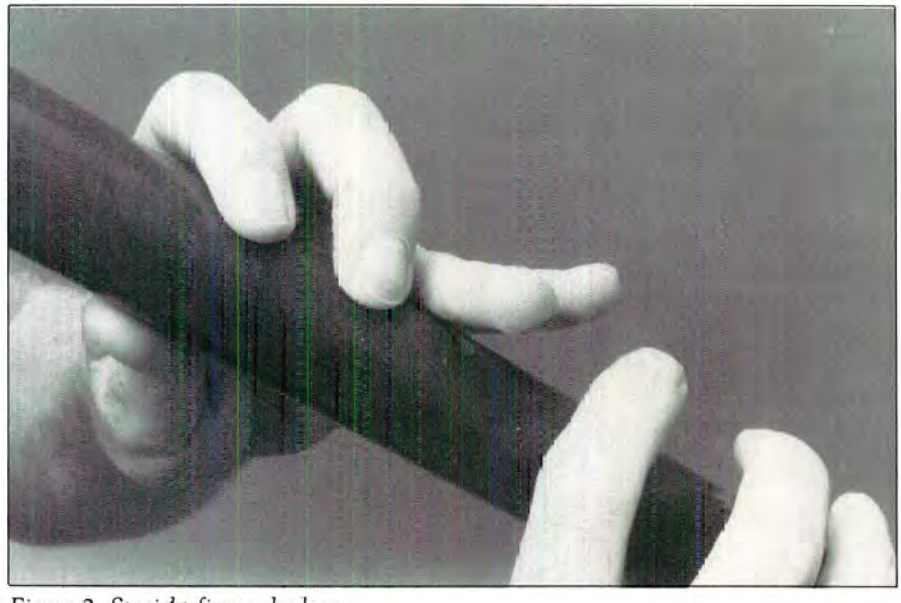


Figure 2. Straight-finger shading.



Figure 3. Multiple-finger shading.



Figure 4. Lecking at the lower edge of a hole.



Figure 5. Lecking at the upper edge.

a large-bore Renaissance recorder than on a Baroque-style instrument, although it is possible on any recorder. The opening must be just the slightest hairline crack, or the pitch will soar out of control.

Practice and application

You need to practice the techniques of shading and leaking carefully on individual notes, using a tuning meter to check your pitch. Be careful to blow the same when tuning as you do when playing. If a note is sharp or flat, shade or leak it to bring it into tune.

After you are familiar with the proper adjustment of a particular note, try correcting the pitch of that note in the context of a piece of music. When that pitch occurs in a long-note value, check your meter to see if you have adjusted correctly. (If a tuning meter is not available, you can check your pitch against a keyboard instrument, providing this instrument is itself in tune.) Practice this tuning exercise on each note of your instrument.

Careful shading and leaking can be done only on long notes, but "general shading" can be done in faster passages by keeping the fingers close to *all* the open holes, and by using the right-hand fingers especially for shading when they are not otherwise in use. General shading will keep the pitch down when you are playing loudly. When playing softly, try leaking gently on all notes to keep the pitch up. It is also possible to leak a left-hand finger or the thumb slightly to raise the general pitch.

One of the most common problems recorder players discover when using a tuning meter is wide octaves. On many modern recorders, the notes of the upper octave are more than an octave higher than their counterparts in the lower octave: the high notes are sharp. Here the upper notes need to be shaded.[5]

In ensemble playing, being in tune with the other players is even more important than being absolutely in tune with a meter. If the bass is flat on a final chord, for example, the upper parts don't have much choice but to adjust to this pitch. Otherwise the whole ensemble will be out of tune. I have often heard elementary or lower-intermediate groups that sounded advanced simply because they took the time to tune. Conversely I have heard advanced groups sound much less so because they had not made the effort.

When playing recorder in a mixed ensemble of strings or voices, one often encounters a different problem with final notes: the strings or voices taper the final at cadences, leaving the recorder sticking out. The recorder player can, however, match the strings' taper by leaking very gradually while reducing breath pressure, thus producing a diminuendo. It is even possible to *morendo,* tapering off to nothing, by continuing to leak until the finger is completely off the hole and the sound has died away completely.

The use of shading and leaking for dynamics is the first step in using pitch control for expressive purposes.[6] Several other applications of these techniques also enhance expressiveness. Note-shaping, which is frequently used on viols and other bowed strings, as well as by singers, can be done on recorders by shading and leaking. To make a note swell, simply blow harder, and shade it to keep the pitch from rising. To give a note a "pear shape" or other crescendo-diminuendo shape (< >), the shading finger makes a corresponding movement, pivoting down toward the hole on the crescendo, then back on the diminuendo.

Technically speaking, finger vibrato is also a pitch-variation technique. The vibrato is created by intermittently shading an open hole, causing the pitch to waver in a downwards direction. In the French Baroque this practice was called "flattement." In chapter 4 of the recorder treatise in his *Principes,*[7] Hotteterre gives fingerings for the flattement on each note. His description of flattement calls for a finger-

tip on the edge of the hole.

Finger vibrato is very effective on the recorder. It is a flexible ornament because the parameters of the vibrato's speed and width can be controlled with great precision. Although its use is clearly documented only in the Baroque period, it can enhance the music of other periods as well.

Other pitch-related devices are somewhat more radical. A variation of note-shaping is note-bending—leaking or shading a note to raise or lower the pitch deliberately. Note-bending can be extremely expressive. The various models for this practice come from many sources. Open-hole flutes throughout the world employ note-bending techniques. The flute music of Asia, the Middle East, eastern Europe, and Africa abounds with them. Closer to home consider the sounds of jazz flute, jazz trumpet, blues harmonica, or country fiddle. I use note-bending in certain Medieval and Renaissance styles of playing. There is no direct historic evidence for this kind of application, but the early sources contain so few details of performance practice that this omission hardly constitutes proof to the contrary.

The logical extension of note-bending is glissando. If you begin by leaking one finger and continue the motion with that and adjacent fingers, the pitch will eventually rise up through the next step. You can continue the glissando until all your fingers are off the recorder, and with practice you can even make the transition from the lower to the upper register. This is precisely the technique used in the famous clarinet glissando at the beginning of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. A glissando can also be made in a downward direction by the progressive shading of more than one hole. If you gradually slide or roll the fingers onto the holes, the pitch will slide down evenly. Note-bending and glissando are both important in the contemporary recorder repertoire.

The techniques of shading and leaking require patience and practice, but they can usually be mastered by anyone willing to take the time to do so. Once perfected, they can improve your intonation immeasurably as well as enhance your performance of any type of music playable on the recorder.



Figure 6. Leaking at the fingertip.



Figure 7. Leaking at the palm side.

Photographs by R.R. Ronkin.

NOTES

[1]London: Oxford University Press, 1959, 67–70.

[2]London: Novello, 1983.

[3]New York: AMS Press, 1978.

[4]Daniel Waitzman also describes leaking or venting the thumb. See *The Art of Playing the Recorder*, p. 61.

[5]A small piece of beeswax about the size of a pea, placed in the bore of a recorder just above the thumb hole, will usually correct wide octaves as well.

[6]The issue of dynamics has been a popular topic in this magazine of late: see "Letters" in the May and November 1986 issues (XXVII/2, 85; XXVII/4, 169) and the interview with Paul Leenhouts and Han Tol in May 1987 (XXVII/2, 52–54). On page 53 Leenhouts lists the many methods of achieving dynamic control on the recorder: "One: using alternate fingerings. Two: leaking just a bit when covering the finger holes. Three: tonguing, 't' and 'd' and stuff like that. Four: vibrato. Five: just lowering the breath pressure a bit. . . . Six: leaking from the sides of the mouth. Seven: covering the labium a millimeter with the finger" (he is speaking of playing softly). Actually, all these methods except manipulating the labium are two-part techniques. The first part always involves blowing harder to get louder and blowing more gently to get softer. The second part consists of doing something to keep the pitch even while changing the breath pressure.

[7]Jacques-Martin Hotteterre, *Principles of the Flute, Recorder, and Oboe*, trans. Paul Marshall Douglas (Mineola: Dover, 1983).

Contributions to *The American Recorder*, in the form of articles, reports, and letters, are welcome. They should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted to the editor three months prior to the issue's publication date. (Articles are often scheduled several issues in advance.) Contributions to chapter news are encouraged and should be addressed to the chapter news editor.

LETTERS

The business end of recorder making:

It was fun reading Alec Loretto's article "So you'd like to become a recorder maker" (August), yet I would like to add something. Even with the best of skills, there is not just the problem of making recorders but "to make a living making them." This takes discipline and setting of priorities. There are so many working hours that one might just as well consider the whole thing a "lifestyle" and stop counting the hours. One has to learn about bookkeeping (for the sake of the Internal Revenue Service), correspondence, file keeping, bill paying, overhead expenditures, information gathering, talking and listening to people you don't agree with, the fine art of cash flow, etc. If one is married, one has to find a spouse willing to go along with enthusiasm. Yes, many fine young apprentices have passed through our workshop, and a few are still making instruments since they left. I'm told that eighty percent of all small businesses in this country fail within two years, not because they don't make or sell a good product, but because they don't know how to run a business. Even if you detest the word "business" and prefer calling yourself an artist, the government will nevertheless look at your figures and demand proof of income and expenditures. Keep this in mind when you'd "like to become a recorder maker."

Ingeborg von Huene
Brookline, Mass.

More on dynamics:

The May issue of *The American Recorder* carries a letter from Michael Copley relating to the wide-ranging recorder dynamics obtainable with no loss of essential intonation control. Being resident in Cambridge, England, Michael can be spared a trans-Atlantic fare and has, indeed, been invited to pay a return visit to Haslemere where, at the age of twelve (he tells me), he was a student in my class at the annual Dolmetsch Summer School.

It has been my consistent policy to practice – and readily demonstrate – what I preach. But I am constantly amazed at how few earnest people *consciously* listen to and evaluate what one has meticulously researched, prepared, and applied. All too many fail to discriminate between a *cultivated* recorder sound and mere blowing. The majority seem well satisfied with finger dexterity combined with swift tonguing, apparently blissfully unaware of poor tone quality and intonation.

Refinements of tone production, nuance, dynamics, and expression should be heard and studied "live" rather than read about. However, for the benefit of those unable to cross the Atlantic for whatever reason, my methods are fully described in my book, *Advanced Recorder Technique*.

For readers new to this correspondence, I reiterate that there are six natural methods of obtaining dynamic contrasts (on a good recorder) while remaining in tune, plus a seventh with the lip key of my invention. All these and much besides have been demonstrated in countless lectures and workshops throughout sixteen different countries and twenty tours of the United States.

Carl Dolmetsch
Haslemere, England

Wet windways are for the birds:

Do you have moisture in your mouthpiece? Ever try to hit a high G on an alto when the instrument is starting to clog up? Let me tell you, it's no fun. I've watched fellow players blow out their windways, suck on their mouthpieces, and – like mountain men cleaning the barrel of a squirrel rifle – disassemble their recorders completely to swab out every section. All this fuss to get their instruments to sound right. A wet windway is the bane of a recorder player's existence.

Ever since I began playing two-and-a-half years ago, I have employed a simple, foolproof drying method shown to me by my talented tutor. She used feathers. They are absorbent and, with their tapered shape, fit perfectly into the mouthpiece. Best of all, they are readily available.

Every morning I follow the flight patterns of the pigeons, doves, finches, and occasional yellow-bellied sapsuckers that swoop over my back yard. Sooner or later a feather or two floats down. Then, during my daily practice session, I keep a collection close at hand, ready to be pushed into service at the first stuffy sound. Feathers help me maintain a mellifluous and undistorted tone, and my composure remains unruffled as well.

To the stubborn, swabbing fanatics out there who will surely insist that theirs is the only true way to an arid salvation, I say, horsefeathers, oops, I mean bird feathers. They'll never let you down.
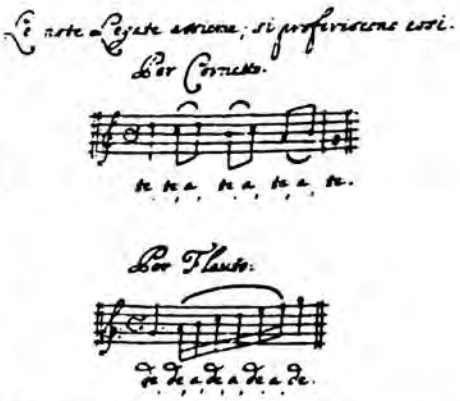
Philip Feld
Phoenix, Ariz.

Articulation and the recorder (cont'd.):

I read with great interest Scott Reiss's article on articulation in the November 1986 issue and the lively discussion it has generated.
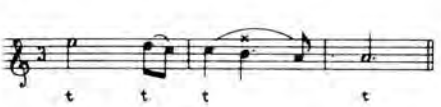
After defending his admonition against slurring on the recorder by maintaining that those eighteenth-century authorities who advocated it were primarily concerned with the flauto traverso, Mr. Reiss goes on to say: "The only mention of slurring with specific reference to the recorder that I am aware of is found in an obscure English tutor for beginners."

Slurring is in fact clearly described in two unpublished Baroque treatises dealing specifically with the recorder. The first is Bartolomeo Bismantova's *Compendio Musicale* of 1677; in his "Regola per suonare il Flauto Italiano," the author includes the following:



I have included his example for the cornetto because it clarifies the intended two-note slurs indicated by the syllables in the recorder example that follows, and because – by changing the consonants of the same basic articulation pattern – Bismantova shows that he is sensitive to the particular playing qualities of the recorder. (That the six notes under the ⌒ should in fact be slurred in pairs is supported by Marcello Castellani in an article on Bismantova's treatise in *The Galpin Society Journal* XXX, [May 1977], pp. 76–85.)

The second treatise is Etienne Loulié's recorder method, written sometime between 1700 and 1707, which appeared in the November 1983 issue of this journal in a translation by Richard Semmens (XXIV/4, pp. 135–45). Having said that "it is necessary to pronounce the syllable *tu* on each note," Loulié makes the following exception: "When 2, 3, or more notes are contained within the same slur, an articulation is given only to the first note, which serves for all the other notes under this slur." He gives this example:



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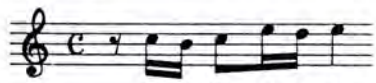
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It might also be mentioned that slurs are common in eighteenth-century music specifically for the recorder—including that of Telemann, who was himself a recorder player.

In regard to Mr. Krainis's discussion of the relationship between tonguing and inequality (Letters, May), I would like to add—for the sake of clarity—that only when *tiri* (or *turu*, etc.) is taken off the beat does it produce the "lilt" of French *notes inégales*. This convention calls for a slight lengthening of strong notes with a corresponding shortening of weak notes; when *tiri* starts on the beat we do not have *notes inégales* because both strong and weak notes enter exactly at the time specified by the notation. Frederick Neumann has covered this subject thoroughly in several articles. Nor is the trochaic *tiri* "exceptional," as Mr. Krainis states: Freillon-Poncein, Hotteterre, and Quantz all call for it when a pair of sixteenth-notes follows an eighth-note:



Concerning the guttural double-tonguings suggested by Mr. Reiss, I can find no evidence that eighteenth-century woodwind players used them. The last reference to this type of double-tonguing is found in Bismantova's treatise, and he says it was rarely used ("non usate"). After that, guttural double-tonguing seems to disappear from the vocabulary of woodwind articulations until the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Its disappearance coincides with the transition from the Renaissance recorder with its cylindrical bore to the Baroque recorder with its conical bore. A similar change in bore occurred with the transition from Renaissance to Baroque flute. It is interesting to note that the revival of guttural double-tonguing occurred at about the same time as the ascendancy of the modern Boehm flute, which restored the instrument's cylindrical bore. It may also be that eighteenth-century woodwind players found the harsh sound of guttural double-tonguing inappropriate to their music.

Frederic Palmer
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I would like to comment on some points in the article and the responses to it, not in the spirit of controversy but in order to give readers a slightly different point of view.

First, as far as woodwind tutors are concerned, I find that while each is valuable in itself, a comparison enables us to learn a great deal about the development of articulation patterns and to speculate on the reason for this development. For example, Bismantova uses the syllables favored by treatise writers at the beginning of the seventeenth century except that he introduces a hard "t" to every four-note grouping—perhaps because the music of this time called for a more rhythmic interpretation than did the long melodic lines of the Renaissance and early Baroque era. The increasing importance of dance music may have been a factor here.

As far as the syllables themselves are concerned, I must disagree with Mr. Reiss's statement that there was an unbroken tradition of using the guttural double-tonguing *teke* or *dugu*. It is true that *Fontegara* (1535) mentions *teke* among many others, including *kara* and *karu*. However, by the 1580s all but *te, de, le,* and *re* have practically disappeared. Dalla Casa mentions *teke (teche)* in 1584, but only to condemn it. This tonguing disappears from the treatises until the early nineteenth century, after the embouchure holes of flutes had been enlarged—enabling *teke* to sound pleasant.

I must also differ with Mr. Krainis when he says that *did'll* is basically the same as the *tere lere lere* of the eighteenth-century treatises. It is very similar, but as I hear it *did'll* tends to group notes more by twos and is more unequal than *lere*, which produces a more uniform vocal line. The difference is accentuated if one follows Quantz's direction to linger a little on the first of the two notes. These differences, however small, give us clues to the musical effects desired by the composer. The smallest clue is valuable when we study music about which we have little information.

I agree with Mr. Reiss that information on slurring on the recorder is scarce, but it is not lacking. During the Renaissance the slur seems not to have been used on the recorder or any other instrument—even trills were tongued or bowed—but in the early Baroque period specific ornaments such as the *cascatta* and other ornamental *affetti* seem to have been slurred in imitation of the voice, which was always called the most perfect of instruments.

In the middle and late Baroque periods the practice appears to have been extended to groups of notes, either in florid ornamentation or for special effects, which composers like Telemann and Barsanti were careful to notate. Slurring was considered an ornament, and in some tutors (such as Peter Prelleur's *Modern Musick Master* of 1731) there are instructions about when the slur should be applied even when not written into the music.

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I am extremely pleased with the voluminous response to my article. I had hoped it would stimulate people to think about performance issues in a new way, and to think through their own approaches to articulation—and it clearly has. It in no way reduces the value of this response that some have taken exception to my views.

In the article I reviewed the various historical descriptions of articulation in order to formulate a basic vocabulary modern performers could use. At that point I *left* this considera-

tion of historical sources in order to expand that vocabulary with articulations that I had derived in my own practice. Finally I urged players to become familiar with the original sources and fluent in the vocabulary of tonguings I had provided so that they might make their own decisions about how and when to use the various options. This is fundamentally different from an approach in which one tries to establish a specific technique for each historical style by studying the writings of that period and provenance.

The most controversial aspect of my article has been my position on slurring. I use slurring only for special effects and not to create a legato articulation between notes connected by a ⁀. I find the *articulated slur,* executed with an extremely light single tonguing or lateral double tonguing, far more effective on the recorder than a conventional slur. This is my own technique, based on my perceptions of the recorder's acoustical properties and my experience with the circumstances of modern performance. The bottom line is that it works for me. My articulated slur has the smoothness of an unarticulated slur on other woodwinds, but it also gives a line a clarity that a conventional slur doesn't. I urge students to try to master the articulated slur both because I have found it effective and because I perceive that, historical considerations aside, many modern performers overuse slurring.

Since the historical evidence for slurring is attracting such intense interest, let me try to construct a more complete overview of this subject than I have until now. Attitudes toward slurring seem to have changed somewhat between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. In my article I used sixteenth-century examples because writers of that time were surprisingly uniform in opposing slurring on woodwinds. These writers were primarily Italian, as Italy produced the premier players of wind instruments, supplying musicians to courts throughout Europe until well into the seventeenth century.

Bismantova's manuscript indeed shows six sixteenth-notes under a slur. But by changing the vowel on the second note of each pair (*de a de a de a*), he indicates some change inside the mouth between the two notes.

In the eighteenth century, the transverse flute and oboe became the prominent woodwinds as the recorder and (somewhat earlier) the cornetto fell out of favor in professional circles. As the instruments favored by the Italians diminished in importance, so did Italian influence diminish and French influence, in particular, increase.

Loulié, Freillon-Poncein, and Prelleur all describe the use of the slur on the recorder, and Hotteterre tells recorder players to refer to the instructions on the slur in his flute treatise. (My response to Ben Dunham's letter [May 1987] was regrettably careless on this point.) Yet the examples in these early eighteenth-century sources almost always limit the slur to 1. pairs of eighth-notes and 2. three or more notes only when they are part of a cadential figure consisting of appoggiatura, trill, and termination.

By providing examples in which the only non-ornamental slurring consists of pairs, these writers are replacing the traditional double-tonguings (which they never mention) with slurred pairs. To my knowledge, there is no mention of double-tonguing in eighteenth-century treatises until Quantz, in 1752. Are we to assume that double-tonguing fell into disuse in the late seventeenth century, only to be rediscovered by Quantz three-quarters of a century later? If, on the other hand, double-tonguing *was* in use throughout the Baroque era, it could have been employed as a substitute for slurring, as it was in the Renaissance.

The purpose of my article was not to limit but to expand a player's choices. To use in any given style only the techniques that were expressly permitted by a treatise writer of that time is very limiting. What do you do with all the styles that have no spokesman? And how do you reconcile what is said with what is *not* said? I encourage a thorough understanding of the possibilities inherent in the recorder. Then each player can determine how best to incorporate all the devices into his or her own technique.

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