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### **Chapter 1** Answering Your Questions about Ornamentation



### What is ornamentation?

Ornamentation is the practice of adding notes to a melody to allow music to be more expressive. This practice is also called "embellishment." Additional uses are to emphasize a note and to prolong its length because the earliest keyboard instruments had little capacity for sustaining a sound.

## When did the practice of ornamenting melody begin?

There is evidence of ornamentation as early as the 14th century.

# Why does this book begin with the Baroque era?

This book begins with the Baroque era because there is very little literature available prior to that time. During the Baroque, an enormous quantity of music was written, much of which has been edited by scholars and is readily available.

## When did the Baroque era begin?

The Baroque era was so dominated by Johann Sebastian Bach that the dates of his birth and death (1685–1750) were used to define it. It is now generally accepted that the Baroque era began with a meeting in the early 1600s of a group in Italy called the Florentine Camerata.

The Florentine Camerata met to examine expressiveness in music and to discover ways of allowing a performer more freedom. It also examined the functions of ornaments that were expected to be added by performers.

#### What is an ornament?

An ornament is a set of *auxiliary* notes associated with a *main* note. Before an ornament can be performed, it must be *realized*. To realize an ornament, the notes of the ornament and their time values must be precisely specified.