

III

ON THE TRILL

Although we also consider the correct execution of a trill to be one of the requirements of a fine delivery, we devote a separate chapter to the discussion of this matter ; first, because we cannot give our readers much positive information regarding Beethoven, and, secondly, because a review of the question compels us to begin at a considerably earlier date. We shall not deal, of course, with æsthetic directions touching evenness, rapidity, and the like, but rather with a point more or less in dispute in other cases as well, namely,

Shall the trill begin on principal tone or auxiliary ?

Now, in accord with the great majority of the hints and teachings of German and French composers and theorists of the eighteenth century,

The ordinary trill should begin on the higher auxiliary, which may, however, be written in the form of a long appoggiatura.

Real or apparent deviations from this fundamental rule will be noted later, while discussing the several musicians.

To elucidate the reason for this phenomenon, it might be of utility to trace back the theory of appoggiaturas to its beginning. However, as we have to do with facts only, we may be satisfied with the exact explanation given by Marpurg concerning the Development of the Trill out of the Appoggiatura.*

"The Trill originated in the conjunct appoggiatura from above downward, and is, fundamentally, nothing more than a series of appoggiaturas following each other with the greatest rapidity. The usual

* Marpurg, "Anleitung zum Clavierspielen," 1st ed., Berlin, 1755 ; Chap. I, Sec. 9, "On the Trill," § 1.

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definition, which describes it as the swift alternation of a tone with the second above, does not conflict with this new explanation."

The further development of the trill is described by Ph. E. Bach. *

"Before this they [trills] were not lightly employed, except after an appoggiatura or on the repetition of the preceding note; in the former case they are termed "angeschlossene Triller" (conjunct trills); but nowadays they occur after leaping notes, directly at the beginning, often one after the other, at Cadenzas, over long *fermate*, at the ends of divisions, *without* a preceding appoggiatura, and also *after* one. Consequently, this grace is much more arbitrary now than formerly."

We learn where the proper and regular place for the trill was from Tosi's "Anleitung zur Singkunst," translated and provided with explanations by Agricola, Royal Prussian Court Composer. [Berlin, 1757.] "Any one who can execute a really fine trill, has the advantage of being able to finish the cadences or closes of a song creditably, the place where the trill is most decidedly essential." [Tosi.]

Probably because of this association with the cadences, the trill was called "cadence" (besides "tremblement") in France.

On this head J. J. Rousseau's "Dictionnaire de Musique" says: "As a term in singing, *cadence* means the beating in the throat which the Italians call *trillo*, which we otherwise call *tremblement*, and which is usually made on the penultimate note of a musical phrase; whence it doubtless took the name of Cadence."


Having thus sufficiently informed ourselves concerning the origin and regular place of the trill, we give in chronological order the most important directions for its

Execution.

Couperin, surnamed *le Grand* [1668-1733], gives in his "Pièces de Clavecin" [1713] the following "explication" of the trill. [Plate and Explanation of the Embellishments.]

* "Essay on the True Method of Playing the Pianoforte"; 1st ed., 1753; 3d ed., 1787. Chap. III, "On Trills," § 1.

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NOTE. "  is a sign to mark notes which should be bound and slurred."



The musical examples are arranged in five systems, each on a single staff:

- System 1:** Shows two trills. The first is labeled "Tremblement appuyé." and the second is labeled "Tremblement ouvert." Both have a slur mark above them.
- System 2:** Shows two trills. The first is labeled "Trblt. fermé." and the second is labeled "Tremblement lié sans être appuyé." Both have a slur mark above them.
- System 3:** Labeled "Execution: [N. B!]" on the left. It shows a trill with a slur mark above it.
- System 4:** Shows two trills. The first is labeled "Trblt. détaché." and the second is labeled "Execution." Both have a slur mark above them.
- System 5:** Labeled "Finally," on the left. It shows a trill with a slur mark above it, followed by a series of notes with a slur mark above them, ending with "etc."

In "L'art de toucher le clavecin" [1717], Couperin adds the following explanation :

"Trills of any considerable extent comprise three parts, which coalesce to one in execution : (1) The suspension, which should be formed on the note above the principal note ; (2) The trill-beats ; and (3) the final tone * (point of repose).



The musical notation shows a trill on a single staff, divided into three parts labeled (1.), (2.), and (3.). Part (1.) is the suspension, part (2.) is the trill-beats, and part (3.) is the final tone. The label "Tremblement." is placed above the first part.

"As to the other trills, they are arbitrary. Some have the suspen-

* Cf. Marpurg's trill-terminations, further on.