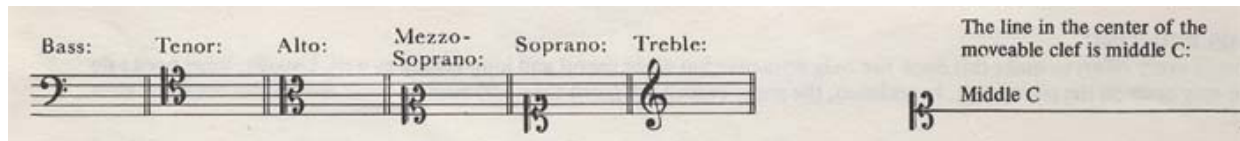


## Bach - Music Manuscript Notation (ornaments etc.)

Selected text from *J.S. Bach*, Willard A. Palmer, Editor, 1968.




Clefs used by Bach

In 18th century music-writing, an accidental was not in effect for an entire measure but applied only to the note immediately following the accidental. This has caused some confusion in many editions. Bach occasionally forgot to write the accidentals himself and added them later below the notes when there was not room to write them before the notes.

### ORNAMENTATION

It is unfortunate that the majority of pianists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries have

been "educated" to believe that the symbol  represents an "inverted mordent", to

be played . Actually, the term "inverted mordent" was never used during Bach's lifetime, and Bach makes it very clear that the symbol indicates a *trill*, beginning on the auxiliary note.

The image shows a transcription of a table of ornaments by Bach's father. It consists of two systems of musical notation. The first system has six measures, and the second system has seven measures. Each measure contains a musical example of an ornament with a label below it. The labels are: (1) Trillo, (2) mordant, (3) trillo und mordant, (4) cadence, (5) doppel-cadence, (6) idem, (7) doppel-cadence und mordant, (8) idem, (9) accent steigend, (10) accent fallend, (11) accent und mordant, (12) accent und trillo, and (13) idem.

Transcription of Table of Ornaments, by Bach's Father

[For ornaments 6 and 8, *idem.* means] that these ornaments had the same name as the previous ornament in Bach's day.

## THE USE OF ORNAMENTS IN THE INVENTIONS AND SINFONIAS

With extremely rare exceptions, all ornaments begin ON THE BEAT. They are played diatonically within the key in force at the moment they occur.

### 1. THE TRILL

In Bach's music these symbols are used interchangeably. Each may indicate a long or short trill.

It is not possible to overemphasize the fact that ALL trills begin on the UPPER AUXILIARY. In Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, he says of the trill, "it always begins on the tone above the principal note."

In the *Explication*, the manner of execution of the trill is illustrated only for the trill on a quarter note. Even this was intended only as a rough guide, and the fact that some of the time-values are not accurate indicates that a certain amount of freedom is allowed. The number of repercussions in the trill depends upon the tempo of the selection as well as the time-value of the note upon which it occurs. It is also sometimes affected by the notes preceding or following the trill (see and ).

The trill generally comes to rest on the principal note, but at times it may continue for the entire value of the note. The following examples are typical but not exhaustive. The minimum number of repercussions of the principal note is two, or a total of four notes sounding for the entire trill.




The image displays five examples (a-e) of trills on a single note. Each example shows the trill symbol (wavy line, wavy line with a vertical line, or vertical line with a wavy line) and the text 'may indicate:'. To the right of each symbol are numbered musical staves illustrating different trill patterns:




- a.** Quarter note. Shows six variations (1-6) of trills on a quarter note, with some variations including a final note on the principal tone.
- b.** Quarter note. Shows three variations (1-3) of trills on a quarter note.
- c.** Quarter note. Shows two variations (1-2) of trills on a quarter note.
- d.** Quarter note. Shows six variations (1-6) of trills on a quarter note.
- e.** Quarter note. Shows five variations (1-5) of trills on a quarter note.


Trills on longer notes may consume the entire time value of the note or may stop near the end (on the principal note) on the beat or on any fraction of the beat. The long trill often includes a termination (see ). The long trill may begin slowly and accelerate as it proceeds, although this would be impossible to indicate with precise notation.


## 2. THE MORDENT





Mordents are less intricate than trills and present few problems regarding their manner of execution. In his *Essay*, C.P.E. Bach states, "The mordent is an essential ornament which connects notes, fills them out, and makes them brilliant." When the function of the mordent is to contribute brilliance it should be played quite rapidly, coming to rest on the principal note as quickly as possible. The Latin origin of the word, the verb *mordere* (to bite), suggests an incisive quality. The following interpretations are most common:




a.  may indicate: 1)  2)  3) 

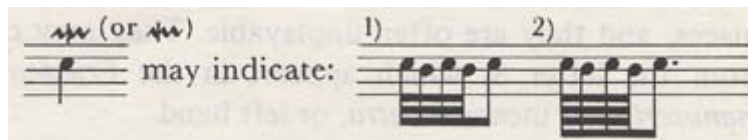
b.  may indicate: 1)  2)  3) 





c.  may indicate: 1)  2)  3) 

d.  may indicate: 1)  2)  3) 

## THE LONG MORDENT OR DOUBLE MORDENT

The sign indicates that the mordent has one additional repercussion of each of the two notes. Notice the location of the vertical stroke, so as not to confuse the ornament with , THE TRILL WITH TERMINATION.

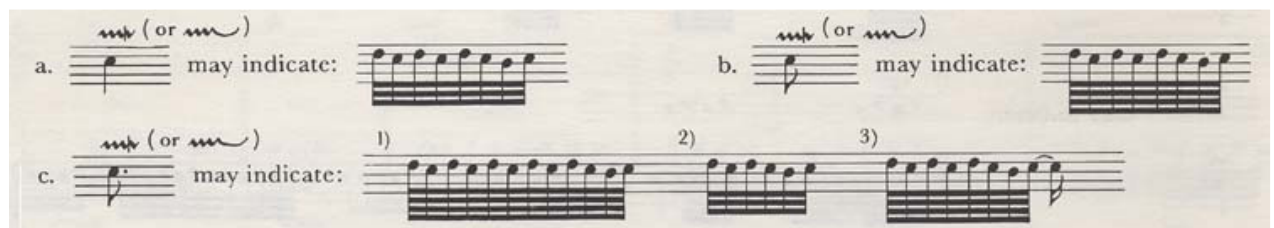


 (or ) may indicate: 1)  2) 

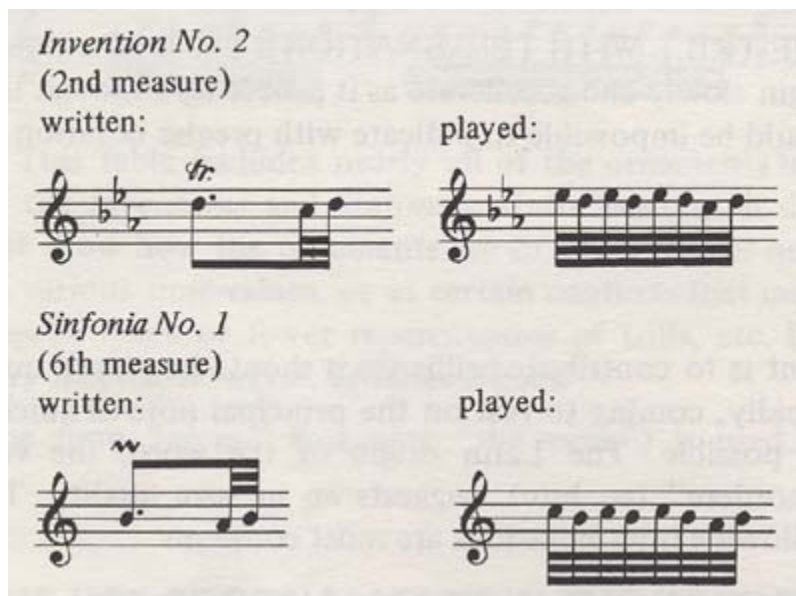
### 3. THE TRILL WITH TERMINATION

This is sometimes called THE TRILL WITH SUFFIX, or THE TRILL WITH CLOSING NOTES and, less often, THE TRILL AND MORDENT.

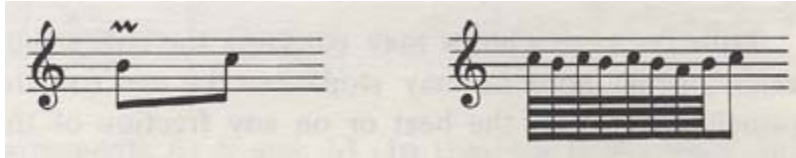
The trill requires a minimum of four notes, the suffix (or termination) consists of two



The termination is often written out in full, as in the 2nd measure of *Invention, No. 2*. In such a case the trill is played at the same speed as the closing notes.



C.P.E. Bach says that closing notes may be added to short trills when they are followed by a stepwise ascent. If this suggestion were followed, the first trill in *Invention No. 1* would be played as follows.




This particular trill is seldom performed in this manner. Bach was careful enough to indicate many other terminations in the *Inventions* and *Sinfonias* by use of the proper ornament. It seems likely he would have done this in the very first *Invention* if he had wanted it, since the *Clavier-Buchlein* was used more or less as an instruction book. This measure is also discussed under .

C.P.E. Bach further states, "Trills on long notes are played with closing notes regardless of a subsequent stepwise descent or ascent." Once again, the individual player may decide. Bach did indicate terminations on the long trills in *Invention No. 12* but did not in *Invention No. 4*.

#### 4. THE TURN ~

In his autographs, Bach used a vertical or sloping sign.

Some editions use the vertical sign . The meaning is the same. In some editions turns appear in mysterious places, and they are often unplayable. They may come from the letter S, which appears in the *Friedemann manuscript*. It means *sinistra*, or left hand.

The turn in Bach's music always begins ABOVE the principal note.

In his ESSAY, C.P.E. Bach remarks that the turn "is almost always performed rapidly." This would mean that at slower tempos the first notes of the turn may be played more rapidly, coming to rest on the principal note.

a. may indicate: 1) 2) 3) 4)

b. may indicate: 1) 2) 3) 4)

c. may indicate: 1) 2) d. may indicate: 1) 2)

e. may indicate: 1) 2) 3) 4)

When the turn is placed *between* two notes, the turn is played after the principal note has been sounded. The rhythm of the turn must then be determined by the amount of time available for it. There are usually several acceptable solutions:

may indicate: 1) 2) 3) 4)

[For an explanation of 4) above, see .]

5. THE TRILL WITH PREFIX FROM BELOW This is sometimes called the ASCENDING TRILL.

C.P.E. Bach and D.G. Turk agree that this ornament may be written

The prefix consists of two notes; the trill requires a minimum of four notes:

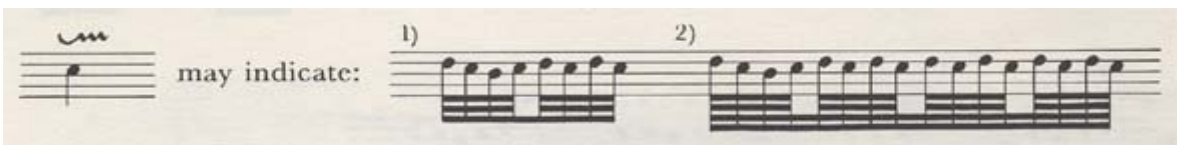


This ornament is usually used with termination (see ).

## 6. THE TRILL WITH PREFIX FROM ABOVE

This is sometimes called the DESCENDING TRILL.

The prefix from above consists of four notes and is similar to the turn; the trill requires a minimum of four notes:

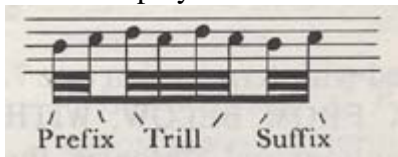


Like the ASCENDING TRILL, this ornament usually has a termination (see ).

## 7. THE TRILL WITH PREFIX FROM BELOW, WITH TERMINATION

This is sometimes called the ASCENDING TRILL, WITH TERMINATION.

This ornament consists of three parts: the prefix, the trill and the suffix or termination. It cannot be played with fewer than eight notes, as shown in the *Explication*::



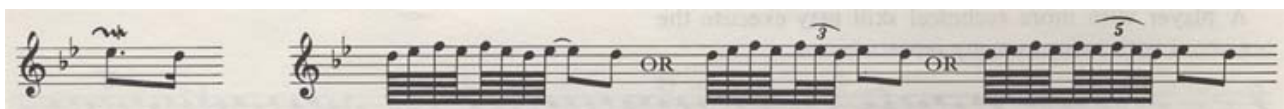
The termination is sometimes written out in full. It may also be added to a trill with a prefix when followed by a stepwise ascent.

This ornament is usually executed only on notes of considerable length, but it appears in *Invention No. 11* over a dotted eighth note.

*Invention No. 11*

(10th measure)

written: played:

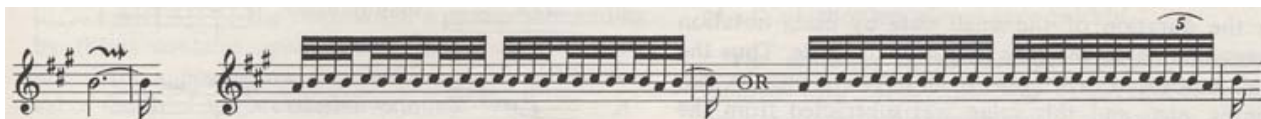


The ornament is used several times in *Invention No. 12*:

*Invention No. 12*

(1st measure)

written: played:



A trill of this length does not require an exact number of repercussions. Like a normal trill, it may begin slowly and accelerate as it proceeds.



## 8. THE TRILL WITH PREFIX FROM ABOVE, WITH TERMINATION

This is sometimes called the DESCENDING TRILL, WITH TERMINATION.

This ornament requires at least two more notes than the one previously discussed, since



the prefix consists of four notes rather than two:

Because the last two notes of the trill combine with the termination to produce a sound exactly like the prefix, it is best to include several additional repercussions of the trill whenever the length of the note permits. The *Explicaton* makes this clear:

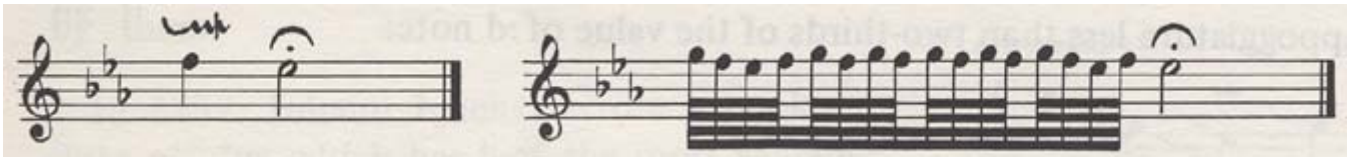


This ornament is most frequently used on long notes, but it appears in *Invention No. 5* over a quarter note:

*Invention No. 5*

(32nd measure)

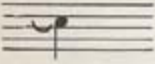
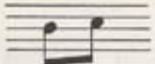
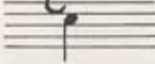
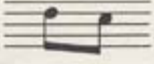
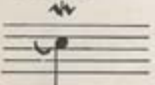
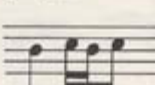
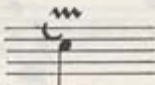
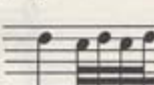
written: played:



## 9-12. THE APPOGGIATURA, INDICATED BY ORNAMENT ONLY

The small hook is probably derived from the slur used with the written appoggiatura. It indicates an appoggiatura from the diatonic note above or below the principal note. The double hook means the same as the single hook. The location of the hook in relation to the note determines whether the appoggiatura ascends or descends.

Examples 9 and 10 of the *Explicaton* show the ascending and descending appoggiaturas. 11 and 12 show the appoggiatura used in combination with other ornaments. Note that 12 treats the appoggiatura as the starting note of the trill (see [12](#)).

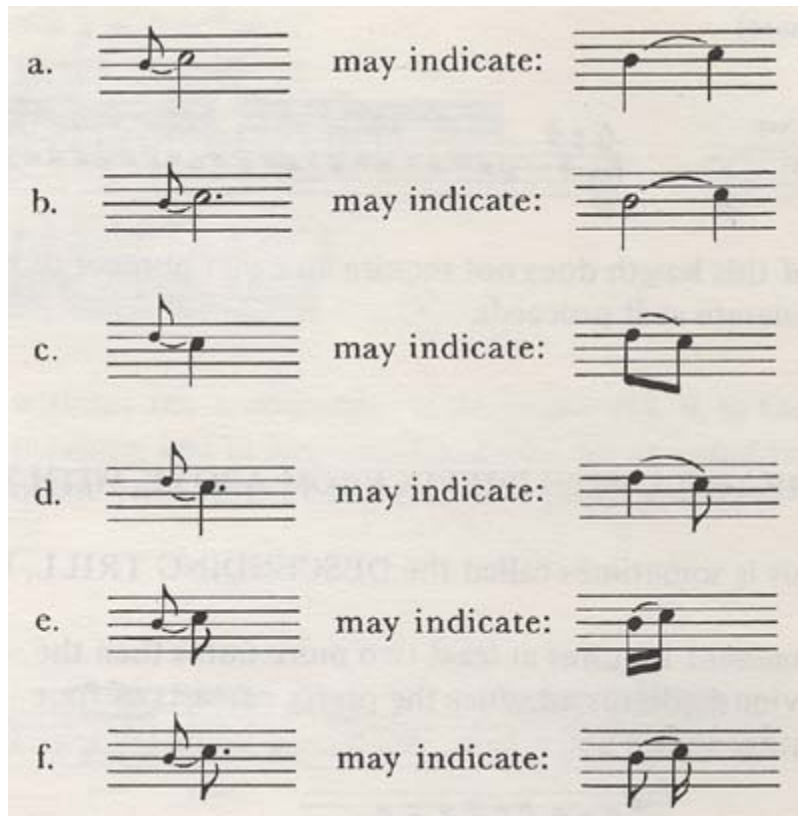
<p>9. <i>Ascending Appoggiatura</i></p> <p>written: </p> <p>played: </p>		<p>10. <i>Descending Appoggiatura</i></p> <p>written: </p> <p>played: </p>	
<p>11. <i>Appoggiatura and Mordent</i></p> <p>written: </p> <p>played: </p>		<p>12. <i>Appoggiatura and Trill</i></p> <p>written: </p> <p>played: </p>	

## THE WRITTEN APPOGGIATURA

C.P.E. Bach possibly originated the practice of showing the duration of the small note by using notation corresponding to the true length of the note. Thus the small notes were written as small quarters, eighths, sixteenths, etc., and this value was subtracted from the following note. Since J.S. Bach did nothing to indicate the value of the notes of his appoggiaturas, we must use the general rules set forth by the writers of the period, including C.P.E. Bach and Quantz, which state:

1. The appoggiatura is played ON THE BEAT.
2. The appoggiatura takes half the time of the following note, except when followed by a dotted note. It then usually takes two-thirds of the value of the note.

In some cases a certain freedom may be allowed in the application of these rules, to preserve the improvisatory character of the appoggiatura.



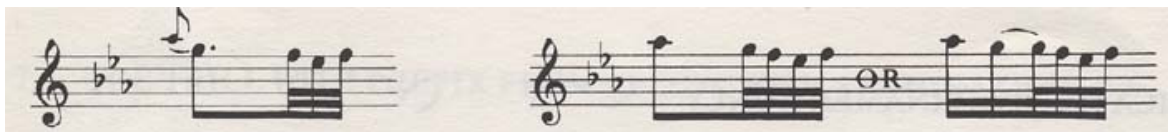
IMPORTANT!



The modern acciacatura or "grace note" appears in many modern editions of the music of J.S. Bach. It was never used by Bach and it is always incorrect!

Of the relatively few appoggiaturas indicated in the authentic sources of the *Inventions* and *Sinfonias*, those which occur before dotted notes are the ones most subject to varying interpretations. In *Invention No. 5*, in the last measure, many artists prefer to give the appoggiatura less than two-thirds of the value of the dotted note:

*Invention No. 5*  
 (last measure)  
 written: played:

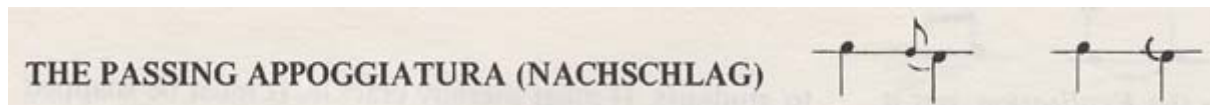
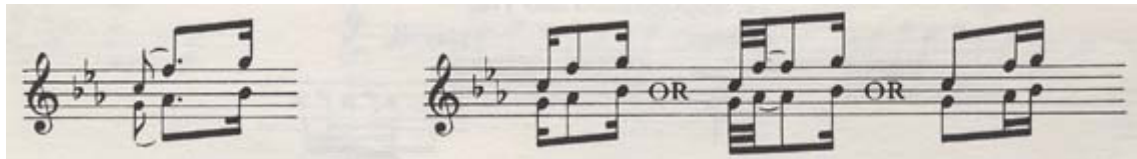


In this case, the time value of the group of notes is mathematically incorrect as it contains one thirty-second note too many. It would seem that Bach intended for the appoggiatura to be played as an eighth note. The principal note would then fit in as the missing thirty-

second note. For this reason, the first example seems to be the best solution, however, the second example is acceptable and frequently used.

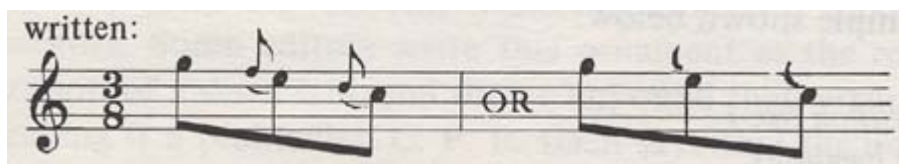
In the ornamented version of *Sinfonia No. 5* there are many appoggiaturas before eighth notes and before dotted eighth notes. Those before eighth notes receive half the value of the note. Most performers give the appoggiaturas before the dotted eights only one-third of the value of the notes, or even less, possibly to keep the principal note from losing its identity. The performer may prefer to play these appoggiaturas as prescribed by C.P.E. Bach, Quantz and other writers of the period, giving them two-thirds of the value of the dotted note.

*Sinfonia No. 5*  
 (3rd measure)  
 written: played:

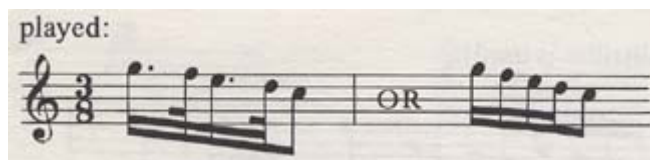


The passing appoggiatura is one of a very few ornaments played AHEAD of the beat. When a passage descending by thirds contains appoggiatura signs (hooks or small notes) the appoggiaturas may be used to fill in the interval of the third and are played very quickly.

the following examples are identical in meaning:



If the above ornaments are interpreted as nachschlags, the measure may be played in either of the following ways, depending on the tempo and rhythmic character of the selection:



C.P.E. Bach condemned the nachschlag and called it a "dislocation" and a "repulsive unaccented appoggiatura." This may have been a condemnation of musicians who used the nachschlag where the long appoggiatura was intended rather than a dislike of the ornament when it was used in the proper context.

At any rate, other musicians of the period did not agree with C.P.E. Bach's statements and were disturbed by them.

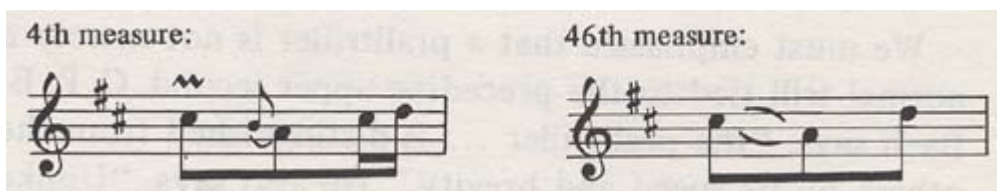
In 1752, Johann Joachim Quantz wrote a book on flute playing which has been one of the most valuable sources of information regarding musical practices of this period. Quantz not only accepts the nachschlag but goes into considerable detail concerning its performance.

In his ESSAY, C.P.E. Bach mentions "short appoggiaturaras" which "appear most frequently before quick notes." He remarks that they are "played so rapidly that the following note loses scarcely any of its length." He also says, "When these appoggiaturaras fill in the interval of a third, they are played very quickly."

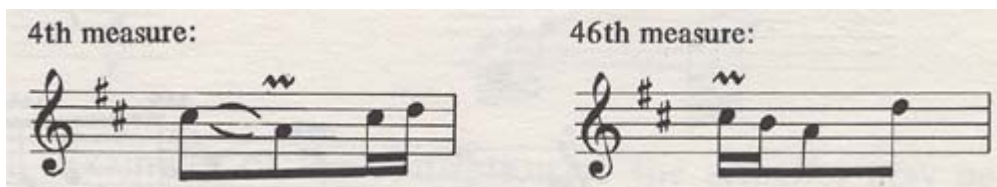
The tendency of modern performers, who are not familiar with the correct way of playing J.S. Bach's ornaments, is to play nachschlags everywhere, interpreting all appoggiaturas as a modern "grace note." Many other players who are more familiar with the general practices of this period ignore the nachschlag completely, because, like C.P.E. Bach, they have heard it used where it does not belong and have learned to prefer the sound of appoggiaturas that occur ON THE BEAT. As usual, the player must approach the problem with a minimum of bias, then make an intelligent decision based on the musical context of the selection involved.

*Invention No. 3* contains examples that may be considered important evidence for the nachschlag.

In the *Autograph of 1723*, these measures appear as follows:



In the *Clavier-Buchlein*, the same measures appear as follows:



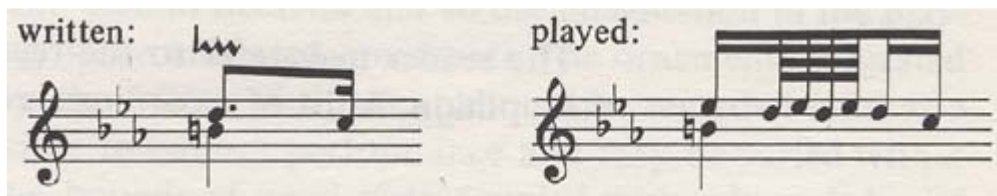
While it is true that measure 46 is not identical to the 4th measure, it seems clear that Bach wanted the passing appoggiatura in the 46th measure because he writes it out in full in the *Clavier-Buchlein*. This makes it possible to assume he also expected a nachschlag in the 4th measure.

### 13. THE PREPARED TRILL

J.S. Bach used the same name for this ornament as for the *Appoggiatura*. The *Appoggiatura* is treated as a prolongation of the starting note of the trill.

A prepared trill appears in *Invention No. 9*, in the 15th measure, and in *Sinfonia No. 5* (the ornamented version), in the 12th and 23rd measures:

*Sinfonia No. 5*  
(12th measure)



*Invention No. 9*  
(15th measure)



14.

## THE PRALLTRILLER

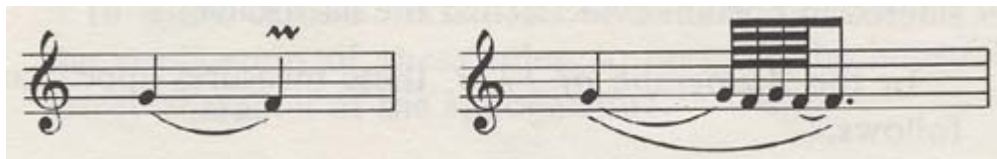


The pralltriller is not included in the *Explication*, but it is discussed by C.P.E. Bach, by J.F. Agricola (one of J.S. Bach's students), and by F.W. Marpurg, in his book on clavier playing.

The pralltriller may occur only after a descending second. The note that is ornamented with the trill must be preceded by the note one diatonic step higher. The pralltriller is played like an extremely rapid trill. It contains only four notes, the first of which is tied to the preceding note.

C.P.E. Bach says that it "joins the preceding note to the decorated one, and therefore never appears over detached notes." In every example in his *ESSAY*, he joins the two notes with a slur:

written: played:



We must emphasize that a pralltriller is not merely a normal trill tied to the preceding upper second. C.P.E. Bach says, "the pralltriller ... is distinguished from the others by its speed and brevity." He also says, "Unlike other embellishments, it cannot be demonstrated slowly to students. It must literally crackle. It must be snapped on its final appearance ... with such exceeding speed that the individual tones are heard with difficulty. Because of this, its acuteness stands beyond comparison with other trills."

If a pralltriller is employed in the first measure of the first *Invention*, it cannot be played any slower than the example shown below:

*Invention No. 1*

(1st measure)

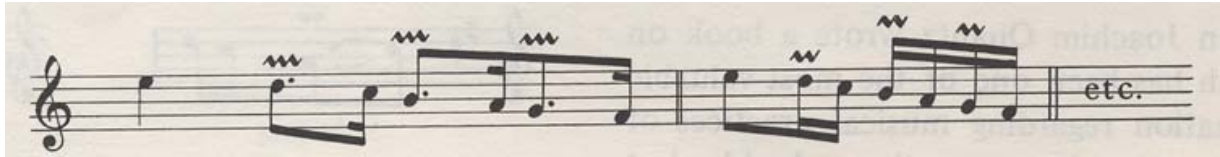
written:



played (if pralltriller is used):



There are many who believe that the pralltriller should be employed in every case in which a trill is preceded by the note that is the same as the auxiliary note of the trill, but C.P.E. Bach gives a number of examples of normal trills used in descending successions:



In the above examples, he says that the unsuffixed (normal) trill should be used, which he states, "always begins on the tone above the principal note."

In J.S. Bach's manuscripts we find examples of every ornament discussed thus far written out in full, except the pralltriller. For this reason, and because of the absence of a slur from the previous note, we believe that the first trill in *Invention No. 1* should be played as a normal short trill:

