

Boston University—Center for Early Music Studies
Mini-Course (Spring 2018)
Cadenzas and Embellishments in Eighteenth-Century European Music (MH 629 A1)

Meetings: Saturday–Sunday, April 21–22, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 2 p.m.–5 p.m. each day, room 418

Office hours: immediately after class

Instructor: David Schulenberg (617-851-3471; email: dschulen@wagner.edu). *The best way to reach me is by email.*

This mini-course provides an intensive, hands-on introduction to the creation and performance of cadenzas and embellishments in European music of the eighteenth century, including both late-Baroque and early-Classical compositions. The focus is on soloist music by Italian and German composers for voices as well as instruments—sonatas, concertos, and arias—because these are repertoires about which we have substantial relevant documentation, which will be an important element of the course.

Our objectives include:

- understanding what types of music call for embellishment or cadenzas and at what points
- identifying and gaining familiarity with eighteenth-century sources for information about, and examples of, embellishment and cadenzas
- discovering principles that underlie embellishment and the creation of cadenzas as presented in eighteenth-century sources
- improving expertise in performing written-out examples of eighteenth-century embellishments and cadenzas in various styles and genres
- gaining practice in creating and performing original embellishments and cadenzas for music in various styles and genres.

Our meetings on the first day will consist primarily of lecture and discussion aimed toward the first three objectives listed above. We will identify the types of music and specific places within compositions that call for embellishments, cadenzas, and other types of additions, and will also consider relationships between harmony, continuo realization, and eighteenth-century approaches to improvisation. We will examine verbal sources, including treatises by Quantz and C. P. E. Bach, and will analyze musical sources containing written-out “variations” and cadenzas from Corelli, Handel, and J. S. Bach to Haydn and Mozart.

The second day will be devoted to workshops in which members of the class perform excerpts works in various styles and genres that incorporate or require embellishments, variations, or cadenzas. In most cases the selections will be limited to brief passages, although it may be necessary also to perform an opening section or other portion of a work in order to give us a clear idea of its general style. During the first session, class members will perform notated examples of embellishments and cadenzas; in the second session, students will offer their own improvised or written-out examples of the same in differing repertoire. Our aim will be not finished performances but rather a positive learning environment in which those performing as well as those listening improve their understanding of what “works” when adding embellishments or cadenzas in different types of music.

At the end of the first day we will choose presentations for the workshops. Students who do not already have repertoire prepared for the workshops should plan to spend the evening of the first day preparing their presentations.

Student work and grading. Each class member is expected to participate in discussion by asking questions and offering ideas and comments. Everyone will also be expected to participate in some way in the workshops, both by playing or singing and by making positive contributions to our analysis of each performance. Those who feel unprepared to offer original embellishments or cadenzas will have the opportunity to focus on performance of written-out examples.

Evaluation will be based not on the perceived success of performances but on participation in discussions and in the workshops (including the asking of thoughtful questions).

Tentative Plan for Our Four Sessions

Each session comprises two 90-minute periods, with a brief break in between.

session topics

- 1a Historical background; overview of sources; identifying music that needs embellishment or cadenzas
- 1b Theories of “variation”; finding relevant writings and examples
- 2a Analyzing examples of late-Baroque embellishment (Corelli, J. S. Bach, Handel, Farinelli)
- 2b Analyzing examples of *galant* and Classical “variations” and cadenzas (Quantz, C. P. E. Bach, J. C. Bach, Mozart)
- 3a Workshop: performing written-out embellishments from the late Baroque (Corelli, J. S. Bach, Handel or Farinelli)
- 3b Workshop: “variations” and cadenzas by Quantz, C. P. E. Bach, Haydn, and Mozart
- 4a Workshop: embellishments for Baroque sonatas, concertos, and arias
- 4b Workshop: embellishments and cadenzas for *galant* and Classical works