

Opera, Orchestral & Ensemble Director

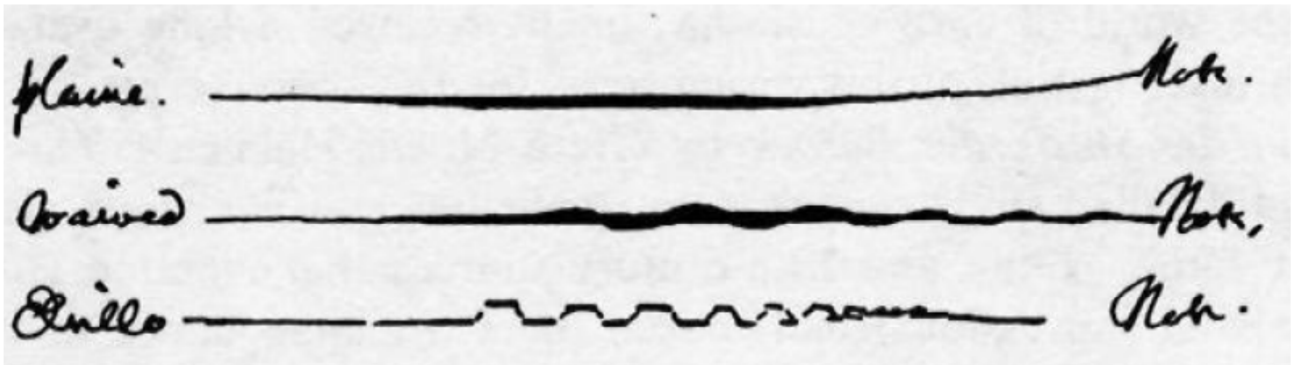
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Early Harps & Research

The Long Note Kit

When you have a Good Syllable on a long note, employ this Long Note Kit.

1. If the text allows, make a separation before the Long Note
2. Start the Long Note with a slow articulation
3. ... and without vibrato
4. Have the intention to make a crescendo
5. ... but make us wait for it
6. The full flowering of the sound comes only towards the end of the Long Note
7. ... releasing the sound after waiting so long
8. ... and adding vibrato



Plaine Note (with *messa di voce*), Waived Note (With *messa di voce* and late-arriving vibrato) and Trillo (with accelerating trill and *diminuendo*) from Roger North's commonplace book *Notes of me* (c 1695) cited in Greta Moens-Haenen *Das Vibrato in der Musik des Barock*.

For string players, use as little bow as possible at the start and during the sustain of the note, releasing the bow to travel more easily towards the end of the note.

The vibrato comes as a release from the aesthetic tension of the sustain, a moment of relaxation after the long-indicated intention to crescendo.

Jazz singers do this all the time. Listen to Whitney Houston *And I* [Long Note Kit here] *will always love you* [another Long Note Kit].

Or Shirley Bassey *Hey, big spender, spend* [Long Note Kit here] *a litte time on me*

BUT

This Long Note Kit is a an ornament (a slow messa da voce plus late-arriving vibrato). So, like any ornament, it belongs on the Good Syllable and not on the Bad. Composers usually write long notes on Good Syllables, but if you find a long note on a Bad Syllable, just sing it straight, and put the word-accent, the passionate intensity and the musical interest on the Good Syllable, where it belongs.

Where you have a long note as the last note of the phrase, it will very likely be a Bad Syllable. Don't separate before it, don't accent it, don't crescendo, but do shorten the note to about half its written length.