

Tempo-indication in the 18th century

1) Textbooks

The didactic books of Quantz, C.Ph.E. Bach, Marpurg, Tosi/Agricola and Leopold Mozart have often been taken uncritically as a basis for present-day performance-practice of the most different compositions of the 18th century. It was ignored that their vast distribution at the time was not based on the general validity of all of their precepts but on the fact that they were simply the most eminent schools of the century for flute, piano, singing and violin.¹⁴

In their pedagogical intention they tend, however, sometimes to generalization and simplification; they leave unmentioned what they regard as self-evident and „*produce under the constraint of their system unrealistic constructions*.“¹⁵ Charles Rosen noted in his perceptive work „The Classical Style. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven“: „Almost any rule about eighteenth-century performance-practice will find its contemporary contradiction somewhere or other. Above all, when we remember how fast musical fashions change, we must beware of applying the ideas of 1750 to 1775 or to 1800.“¹⁶

The additional information in the writings of Joseph Riepel, Jean and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Reichardt, Kirnberger, J.A.P. Schulz, Koch and Türk was strangely little regarded. Although „the works precede the doctrine“¹⁷ and „principles of performance lag behind the development in styles of composition“¹⁸ and „traditions were only fixed in writing when they began to die out“¹⁹, authors *after* the time of Mozart like Gottfried Weber, G.W. Fink, Hummel, Czerny and Sechter were only seldom consulted. Yet, apart from that, questions of tempo cannot be solved in general, but only by direct approach to the complete works of each individual composer. What did *he himself* mean by his indications?

2) The metres and their „natural“ tempo

In contrast to the abstract division of time in the modern system of notation, where, for example, 3/4 time is nothing other than 75% of 4/4-time, or twice as long as 3/8 time (the tempo of the smallest note value normally remaining the same in changes of metre), and where tempo is defined exclusively by tempo words, metronome-marks or timing, the complex metrical system of the 18th century was based on „*natural*“ differences between the playing speeds of each individual metre and their manner of execution.

LEOPOLD MOZART 1756: „C, 2 or 2/4, ♩; 3/1, 3/2, 3/4, 3/8, 6/4, 6/8, 12/8: These species of metre are already sufficient to show in some extent the *natural difference* between a slow and fast melody.“²⁰

JOHANN PHILIPP KIRNBERGER / J.A.P. SCHULZ 1776: „The composer must have acquired a correct feeling for the *natural tempo of every metre*, or for what is called *tempo giusto*. In general among the metres that have the same number of beats, the one that has larger or longer beats is naturally somewhat more serious than the one of shorter beats. Thus 4/4 metre is less lively than 4/8 metre; 3/2 metre is more ponderous than 3/4, and the latter is not as lively as 3/8. For solemn and pathe-

¹⁴ Frederick Neumann pointed out that Quantz and C.Ph.E. Bach who played music together in the same room contradicted each other in the details of their textbooks at many places, and warned of the „use of wrong sources“ and the „wrong use of sources“ (*The Use of Baroque Treatises on Musical Performance*, 1967, p. 318). ↯ See also: Neal Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 1989, chapter 12 „Performance Practice“, p. 492 bottom; and ↯ Stefan Kunze, Ausführungsprobleme im Rezitativ des späteren 18. Jahrhunderts. Ausführung und Interpretation, in *Mozart Jahrbuch* 1968/70, p. 132.

¹⁵ Nicole Schwindt-Gross, *Einfache, zusammengesetzte und doppelt notierte Takte*, in: *Musiktheorie* 4, 1989, p. 203.

¹⁶ The whole passage reads: „Our knowledge of contemporary performance from descriptions, memoirs, and treatises can help here, but we must beware of letting it lead us blindly. I have never read a didactic book on contemporary performance which could be trusted very far: most so-called piano methods will appear wrong or irrelevant to any pianist. We all know how misleading almost all descriptions of performances are: the few that are relatively accurate will be almost indistinguishable in twenty years from the others. There is no reason to think that writing about music was any better in the eighteenth century than it is today. Almost any rule about eighteenth-century performance-practice will find its contemporary contradiction somewhere or other. Above all, when we remember how fast musical fashions change, we must beware of applying the ideas of 1750 to 1775 or to 1800.“ (Charles Rosen, *The classical style, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, 1971, p. 103f.)

¹⁷ Charles Rosen, *The classical style*, p. 401.

¹⁸ Hans Peter Schmitz, *Einige Bemerkungen zur Wiedergabe klassischer Musik*, in: *Musica* 1982/1, p. 9.

¹⁹ Hans Peter Schmitz, *Prinzipien der Aufführungspraxis Alter Musik*. (before 1951), p. 4.

²⁰ Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* ('*Essay on a fundamental School of Violin Playing*'), 1756, p. 28, § 4; [app. p. 271]. ↯ Still in 1854 this 18th century conception was not forgotten. See Simon Sechter, *Die Grundsätze der musikalischen Komposition* ('*The Principles of Musical Composition*'), p. 4, § 1 [app. p. 347]

tic pieces, *alla breve* is especially appropriate and is therefore used in motets and other solemn church pieces. *Large 4/4 metre* has a very emphatic and serious motion and is suited to stately choruses, to fugues in church pieces, and generally to pieces where pomp and gravity is required. *3/2 metre* is emphatic and very serious. *4/4 metre* is best suited for a lively exhilarating expression that is still somewhat emphatic. *2/4* is also lively but already combined with more lightness and, for that reason, can be used well to express playfulness. *4/8 metre* is already totally fleeting, and its liveliness no longer contains any of the emphasis of *4/4 metre*. The character of *3/4* appears to be gentle and noble, particularly when it consists only, or at least mostly, of quarter notes. But *3/8 metre* has a liveliness that is somewhat frolicsome. [...]

„Therefore one must have a feeling for the special effect of each metre and choose the one that best represents the expression to be portrayed.“^{21, 22, 23}

a) *Alla breve* metre (♩)

ATHANASIOS KIRCHER 1650: „Although the whole secret of music consists of the exact and *manifold* execution of the tempo, I admit that I have seen nothing more confused, nothing treated more imprecisely than this. I read about this in the works of Franchinus, Zarlino, Glarean and almost countless others; yet they are so confused and give so little pleasure, that in the end, even if you spend a lot of time on it, you will hardly be able to understand what you have read. Moreover the opinions of musicians about this topic differ so widely, that you will hardly find anything you can adopt without reserve.“²⁴

Chaos prevailed especially in the perception of the „*tactus-alla-breve*“, a relic from the mensural notation. Around 1760 *2/1* and *4/2* metres, as well as the most diverse kinds of *2/2* metres, were still indicated by the time signature ♩. The ‚large‘, ‚small‘, ‚heavy‘, ‚light‘, ‚genuine‘, ‚divided‘, ‚proper‘ *alla breve*, the ‚antique semi-*allabreve*‘, ‚*alla capella*‘, ‚tempo maggiore‘, etc. were all spoken of with various meanings.²⁵

The time signature ‚2‘, used mainly in France, caused additional confusion; most authors regarded it as a medium or fast tempo, but it was not consistently distinguished from ♩. In addition, PRAETORIUS, LOULIÉ, JANOWKA, SAINT-LAMBERT, SAMBER AND HEINICHEN report countless mistakes in copies and prints²⁶. Most theorists like KIRNBERGER, BROSSARD and QUANTZ (and others far into the 19th century) thought the *alla breve* to be *twice as fast* as the „ordinary four-four time“ (this, the baroque ‚large‘ C-metre - see below - was generally considered to be „slow“).

²¹ Joh. Phil. Kirnberger / J.A.P. Schulz, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* ('The Art of Strict Musical Composition'), II, 1776, p. 106, 133 and 136) [app. p. 280] ⇨ „The fact that these and several other metres that we shall list are considered superfluous and obsolete today indicates either that good and correct execution has been lost or that an aspect of expression which is easy to obtain only in these metres is entirely unknown to us. Both [of these conclusions] do little credit to the art, which supposedly has reached its peak in our time.“ *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* ('The Art of Strict Musical Composition'), II, p. 120 [app. p. 277]

²² „Joh. Seb. Bach and Couperin, who were indisputably capable of the ideal execution, and have not without reason set fugues and other pieces in *6/16* and other metres that are unusual today, thereby confirm that each metre has its own manner of execution and its own natural tempo, so that it is not at all unimportant in which metre a piece be written and performed.“ (J.A.P. Schulz: „Metre“ in Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie* ('General Theory of the Fine Arts'), vol. IV, 1774, p. 496) [app. p. 290]. ⇨ See also: D.C. Türk, *Klavierschule* ('School of Clavier Playing'), 1789, p. 96, § 59 [app. p. 300].

²³ About the „nature of metre“ see also H. Chr. Koch, *Anleitung zur Composition* ('Essay as an Instruction Manual for Composition'), vol. II, 1787, p. 273, § 50 ff [app. p. 318].

²⁴ Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis*, 1650, p. 676 (translation H.B./L.F.).

²⁵ „ALLA BREVE and ALLA SEMIBREVE are expressions used now only in Italy to indicate a music which is to be executed as if in church. The expressions cause trouble for German music teachers and are explained one moment like this, one moment like that, depending on how one forms one's own idea of this musical mystery. [...] Only in Italian chapel or church music is it still usual to write in the old way. In order that the singer or player, who could take the poor things [breves and semibreves] for whole beats, should not go astray, one gives him a sign with the headings ‚*alla breve*‘, ‚*alla semibreve*‘ or ‚*alla capella*‘, by which he can immediately see that he has old-style notes in front of him, and that he must beat time faster than if they were new-fashioned ones. Therefore one habitually gives the rule that ‚*alla breve*‘ means one should play the notes *more than half as fast again*, though without giving a reason for this rule.“ (Abbé Vogler, article „*Alla Breve*“ in *Allgemeine Deutsche Enzyklopädie*, 1778, p. 353).

²⁶ MICHAEL PRAETORIUS: „Some mix it up, now ♩, now C, and one can nevertheless see no difference in the notes or in the entire song.“ (*Syntagma musicum* III, 1619); ⇨ ÉTIENNE LOULIÉ offers seven signs: circles and half-circles, crossed through or not, with or without dot: „The practice of them is not very certain; some use them in one manner, some in another.“ (*Éléments ou principes du musique*, 1696, p. 60); ⇨ THOMAS BALTHASAR JANOWKA: „Everywhere one can hear among musicians different opinions about these things [C, 2, c], and as many in fact as there are heads; and the composers mix up one with the other everywhere.“ (*Clavis ad Thesaurum*, 1701, p. 15f).

⇨ SAINT-LAMBERT, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, 1702, p. 24f; ⇨ JOHANN BAPTIST SAMBER: „Many mistakes are made by copyists who believe it to be all the same whether the signs C stays open or is crossed through [c].“ (*Manuductio ad organum*, 1704, p. 9);

⇨ JOH. DAVID HEINICHEN, *Der General-Bass in der Composition*, 1728, p. 350.

Other authors said c was „somewhat faster“.²⁷ JEAN ROUSSEAU's and MARPURG's: „um die Hälfte geschwin-der“²⁸ could mean either half as fast again or twice as fast! JOHANN MATTHESON's²⁹ and JOHANN GOTTFRIED WALTHER's³⁰ *alla breve* was „very fast“ (since it contained only quarter-notes), JOSEPH RIEPEL on the other hand complained that c was performed „much too fast“.³¹ The verbal heading „*alla breve*“ or „*alla capella*“ was regarded by some as a mere indication of something written in fugal style, by others as an addition indicating greater speed,³² by still others as a doubling of the c . Yet most composers handled it either carelessly³³ or generally omitted it - as Mozart did.

Quite contrary to the theory of Walter Gerstenberg and his disciples in the 1950s, who claimed the „integer valor notarum“, a system of invariable durations of the note values and consequent „tempo proportions“,³⁴ to be valid far into the 19th century; many authors of the 17th and 18th centuries, however, spoke in astonishingly differentiated and practical ways about the tempo problem of the *alla breve*:

- MICHAEL PRAETORIUS 1619: „One must consider text and harmony in order to know where the beat must be taken more slowly or more quickly.“³⁵
- MARIN MERSENNE 1636: „As conducting gestures can be done *faster or slower*, he who conducts the concert determines the tempo suitable for the kind of music and its contents, or *according to his will*.“ [!]³⁶
- PIER FRANCESCO VALENTINI 1643: „The beat is sometimes *adagio*, sometimes *presto*, and sometimes midway between *presto* und *adagio*, according to the styles of the compositions and the meaning of the words.“³⁷
- DANIEL FRIDERICI 1649: „In singing, not one and the same beat shall be felt throughout: but the beat must comply with the words of the text. Because sometimes a swift, sometimes a slow beat is necessary.“³⁸
- JOHANN DAVID HEINICHEN 1728: „It is a matter of course that the normal measure [bar] of the *alla breve* can be either more retarded or more driven forwards.“³⁹
- FRIEDRICH WILHELM MARPURG 1763: „The tempo may be swifter or less swift since there are *different grades of liveliness* also in the *alla breve* style.“⁴⁰

Accordingly, except in superficial, approximate gradings of tempo words into 3, 4, or 5 „classes“ in instructions for beginners (e.g. the list of pulse-regulated tempos in „On playing the flute“ by Quantz), or in Saint-Lambert's naive *multiplication by eight* of the tempo from the C-metre via c and $2'$ to $4/8$, „tempo proportions“ can no longer be found in any author's treatise of the 18th century.⁴¹

During the second half of the century „the traditional notational practices of the church style are thrown overboard. The younger composers abandon the traditional *alla breve* metre, which had been the norm for

²⁷ See Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, New Version 1979, p. 410 ff.

✧ George Houle, *Metre in Music 1600-1800, Performance, Perception and Notation*, 1987, p. 57.

²⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Kritische Briefe über die Tonkunst* ('Critical Letters about the Art of Music'), II, 67th letter, § 71, p. 333)

²⁹ Johann Mattheson, *Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre* ('The newly revealed orchestra'), 1713, p. 145, § 7 [app. p. 339].

³⁰ Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon* ('Musical Dictionary'), 1732, p. 26f.

³¹ Jos. Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musicalischen Setzkunst* ('Basic Principles of the Art of Composition');

„De Rhythmopoeia, oder von der Tactordnung“, 1752, p. 78 [app. p. 320]

³² Telemann often wrote - probably in the same sense - „*Alla breve*“ even over movements in C metre.

³³ Thus Johann Sebastian Bach, who in his Mass in B minor did not indicate the *Dona nobis pacem*, whose music is nearly identical with that of the *Gratias*, once again verbally with „*Alla breve*“ in addition to the time signature c .

³⁴ Among others, Walter Gerstenberg, *Die Zeitmaße und ihre Ordnungen in Bachs Musik*, 1952, p. 20.

³⁵ Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III*, 1619, p. 51.

³⁶ Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, 1636, Bd. II, p. 255. Livre 4^{me} de la Composition, Prop. XX. („La Mesure est l'espace du temps que l'on employe à hausser & à baisser la main: & parce que l'on peut faire ces deux mouvemens opposez plus vistes, ou plus lents, celui qui conduit le Concert, détermine la vistesse suivant le genre de Musique & la matière qu'il employe, ou suivant sa volonté.“)

³⁷ Tactus: „tal volta adagio, e tal volta presto, e tal volta tra'l presto e l'adagio mediocrementemente, secondo richiedono li stile delle compositioni, e il tal delle parole.“ (Pier Francesco Valentini, *Trattato della battuta musicale*, 1643, p. 138, § 230).

³⁸ Daniel Friderici, *Musica figuralis*, 1649, Cap. VII, Regula 19.

³⁹ Johann David Heinichen, *Der General-Bass in der Composition*, 1728, S. 947, (Supplementa, ad p. 332).

⁴⁰ Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Anleitung zur Musik überhaupt* ('Guide to Music in general and to the Art of Singing in particular') 1763, part 2, Chap. 4, § 10, 3 [app. p. 335].

⁴¹ Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, 1702, p. 17-18. - On the basis of his indication of a walking speed of 3-3.5 m.p.h. (i.e. MM=108-120 per stride!) for the quarter notes in C-metre the result is MM=864-926 for the eighth notes in $4/8$ metre.... (See my essay „Mälzels Mord an Mozart. Die untauglichen Versuche, musikalische Zeit zu messen“ - www.mozarttempi.de/maelzel.html).

choral fugues during the forties and fifties. From about 1770 most composers write their fugues in [„large“] four-four metre.”⁴² In ten cases Mozart did so as well.

The entirely different \mathfrak{c} -metre of the *classical* style will be discussed from p. 046 under „Mozart’s metres, B) Secular music“.

b) ‚Large‘ four-four time (C) - *tempo ordinario*

As a ‚whole bar‘, the 4/4 metre is the matrix for our present day note values: *whole note*, *half note*, *quarter note*, *eighth note*, etc., the mathematical relations of which remain always the same even in smaller groupings like 3/4, 2/4, 3/8, 6/8⁴³ - in contrast to the variable values of the mensural *brevis*, *semi-brevis*, *minima*, *semiminima*. (The eighteenth century, however, considered the tempos of the metres as different „by nature“, see above).

„*Tempo ordinario* means that all notes must be executed with their natural and normal validity“⁴⁴ - not their values *halved* as they are in the \mathfrak{c} of the baroque style. The term refers exclusively to C metre and, contrary to widespread opinion,⁴⁵ has nothing to do with *tempo giusto* or a „standard tempo“, as we shall see.

The ancient kind of C-metre, the ‚large‘ four-four metre, which today is often confused with the *classical* 4/4-metre, is mentioned by only few authors, since it was apparently still self-evident. They write that it is half as quick as the *alla breve* and is also used in place of the heavy 4/2-metre - undemandingly without indicating their tempos. But even without tempo word the ‚large‘ four-four metre was regarded as „slow“⁴⁶, „very slow“⁴⁷, „very heavy“⁴⁸; „This sign (C) denotes a *slow* and *grave* singing“.⁴⁹ For HEINICHEN it was the „ordinary slow metre“, to be harmonized throughout from eighth note to eighth note.⁵⁰ RIEPEL spoke about „the old common 4/4 metre with its *leisurely quarter-notes*“,⁵¹ JOHANN GOTTFRIED WALTHER: „C; if nothing is additionally notated, it is always understood as *adagio*, and a *slow* beat is given, which the Italians call *tempo ordinario*.“⁵² DANIEL GOTTLÖB TÜRK: „the large four-four metre (C or 4/4) has a *strong and heavy* execution and a *slow* tempo.“⁵³

JOHANN PHILIPP KIRNBERGER: „Four-Four metre, which is designated by C, is of *two types*: either it is used with the adjective *grave* in place of the 4/2 metre, in which case it is called ‚large‘ 4/4 time; or it is the so-called common even metre, which is also called ‚small‘ 4/4 time. ‚Large‘ 4/4 time is of *extremely weighty tempo and execution* and, because of its emphatic nature, is suited primarily to church pieces, choruses, and fugues. Eighth and a few sixteenth notes in succession are its fastest note values.“⁵⁴

⁴² Bruce C. MacIntyre, „Die Entwicklung der konzertierenden Messen Joseph Haydns und seiner Wiener Zeitgenossen“, in: *Haydn-Studien* VI, Heft 2, 1988, p. 87.

⁴³ JOHANN SAMUEL PETRI: „4/4 or common metre is the main metre of all; it has given the notes their values. For the name the notes have in the bar [measure] is kept even when [...] the relation of the parts or notes to the whole changes. This happens because the same note would otherwise have to be named differently, now this, now that. For example ♩ is in 4/4 metre an *eighth*; in 4/8, i.e. 2/4 metre, it would be a *quarter*; in 3/4 metre a *sixth*; in 3/8 metre a *third*; in 12/8 a *twelfth* [...] Since this, however, would make it very complicated not only for beginners to learn the measure, but would generally cause frequent confusion among all musicians, the basic names that come from 4/4 metre, as the main metre, have been adhered to, so that one can always represent one and the same note-value by one and the same name.“ (*Anleitung zur praktischen Musik*, Leipzig 2¹⁷⁸², p. 143).

⁴⁴ Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon*, 1732.

⁴⁵ e. g. Klaus Miehling, *Das Tempo in der Musik von Barock und Vorklassik*, 1993, p. 326 ff;

✧ Siegbert Rampe, *Mozarts Claviermusik*, 1995, p. 154.

⁴⁶ Johann Rudolf Ahle, *Brevis ... introductio in artem musicam*, in: *Deutsche kurze doch deutliche Anleitung zu der ... Singekunst*, 1690, „Von den *signis*“. ✧ Daniel Merck, *Compendium musicae instrumentalis chelicae*, *Das ist: Kurzer Begriff, welcher Gestalten die Instrumental-Musik ... zu erlernen seye*. 1695.

⁴⁷ W. Caspar Printz, *Compendium Musicae*, 1689, p. 21. ✧ According to Étienne Loulié the sign C served for the indication of a slow tempo also in other metres, so C2, C3, C3/2 (*Éléments ou Principes de Musique*, 1696, p. 60) whereas \mathfrak{c} accelerated them.

⁴⁸ Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, 1702, p. 18;

✧ Michel l’Affilard, *Principes très faciles pour bien apprendre la Musique*, 1705, p. 153.

⁴⁹ Johann Baptist Samber, *Manuductio ad organum*, 1704, p. 9. ✧ and: Michael Praetorius in *Syntagma musicum* III, 1619, p. 50.

⁵⁰ Joh. David Heinichen, *Der General-Bass in der Composition*, 1728, p. 268.

⁵¹ Joseph Riepel, *Anfangsgründe zur musikalischen Setzkunst* (‘Basic Principles of the Art of Composition’), Chap. 4. „Erläuterung der betrüglichen Tonordnung“, 1752, p. 79. [app. p. 321]

⁵² Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon* (‘Musical Dictionary’), 1732, p. 123.

⁵³ D.G. Türk, *Klavierschule* (‘School of Clavier Playing’), 1789, p. 95, § 58, b [app. p. 300].

⁵⁴ Kirnberger / Schulz, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* (‘The Art of Strict Musical Composition’), II, 1767/81, p. 122/123 [app. p. 278].

JOHANN ABRAHAM PETER SCHULZ: „Large four-four metre. Its swiftest notes are eighths which like the quarter notes and all longer notes are executed on the violin with the *full weight of the bow without the least shading of piano and forte* except the particular stress on the first note in every bar which is necessary in all metres. Because of its *grave and solemn* pace it is therefore appropriate only for church music and especially for the magnificent and majestic expression of many-voiced polyphonic choruses and fugues. Some, instead of this metre, use 4/2 time where the heavy execution is shown still more clearly by the doubly long notes.“⁵⁵

FRIEDRICH WILHELM MARPURG said with welcome pragmatism - even though not very helpfully for us: „The ordinary value [of the ‚large‘ C] must be learned by practice since neither pulse, nor a person’s stride are impeccable rules.“[!]⁵⁶

For Leopold Mozart and the Salzburg composers before him this baroque C-metre in the church style was still standard (even if they took from time to time the more brilliant Vivaldi-*Allegro* as a basis for arias (p. 087, Ex. 103). Joseph Haydn used it in many of his masses; even in the late oratorios *Die Schöpfung* („The Creation“) and *Die Jahreszeiten* („The Seasons“), the great choral fugues „Des Herren Ruhm, er bleibt in Ewigkeit“ („The Lord is great, His praise shall last for aye“), „Ehre, Lob und Preis sei dir“ („Glory, praise and laud to Thee“) and „Uns leite deine Hand“ („Direct us on Thy ways, O God!“) are written in the „stately“ and „seriously striding“⁵⁷ ‚large‘ C metre - very much in the sense of Handel.⁵⁸ They show very clearly its four nearly equally heavy beats with the metrical structure | = – – – |.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart used the ‚large‘ C-metre - with a few specific exceptions - only in his church music (see p. 036). The essentially different *classical* 4/4 time will be examined in the context of his own tempo-system (see p. 089).

c) Uneven metres

In the 18th century, differently from today, it was a matter of course that the *mouvement* of uneven (triple) metres was faster than that of even (common) times with the same tempo word:

ALEXANDER MALCOLM 1721: „The Movements of the same Name, as *adagio* or *allegro*, &c. are swifter in triple than in common Time.“⁵⁹

JOHN HOLDEN 1770: „Common time is naturally more grave and solemn; triple time, more cheerful and airy. And for this reason, it is generally agreed that every mood of triple time ought to be performed something quicker than the correspondent mood of common time.“⁶⁰

These authors give just as little reason for the tempo difference between even and uneven metres as Mattheson, Quantz, C.Ph.E. Bach, Marpurg, Riepel, Jean and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Leopold Mozart, Scheibe, Kirnberger, Türk and Koch, who all obviously assumed it as a matter of course. Only Schulz in 1774 gave a hint:

„Because of the *triplet-like progress* of its main beats, the uneven metre brings a generally greater vivacity to every expression, and is therefore more suitable for the depiction of lively emotions than the even metre.“⁶¹

„Triplet-like progress‘ - the wording could lead us down the right track: the *triplet-like* nature of the uneven (‚triple‘) metres. The vividly accentuated music of the minstrels and trouvères could have helped not

⁵⁵ Joh. Abr. Peter Schulz in: Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (‘General Theory of the Fine Arts’), IV, 1794, p. 496f, art. „Metre“ [app. p. 290].

⁵⁶ Fr.W. Marpurg: *Anleitung zur Musik* (‘Guide to Music in General’), 1763, 2nd part, chapter IV, § 10, p. 74 [app. p. 335].

⁵⁷ J.A. Scheibe, *Über die musikalische Composition* (‘About Musical Composition’). p. 205, § 90, „Vom Takte und dessen verschiedenen Arten (‘About Metre and its Various Kinds’), 1773, [app. p. 340].

⁵⁸ J. Joachim Quantz in his footnote refers above all to the ‚large‘ C metre: „What was formerly intended to be taken very fast was played almost twice as slowly as today. Where *Allegro assai*, *Presto*, *Furioso*, and the like were intended it was indeed written so, and would be played barely faster than *Allegretto* is written and performed today. The many quick notes in the instrumental pieces of earlier German composers appeared much more difficult and risky than they sounded. The French of today have in the main preserved the moderate speed in lively pieces.“ *Versuch einer Anweisung (‘On Playing the Flute’)*, 1752, p. 263 [see footnote 803, app. p. 327].

⁵⁹ Alexander Malcolm, *A Treatise of Musick*, 1721, p. 402. ✧ Similarly James Grassineau, *A Musical Dictionary*, 1784, both authors similarly after ✧ Brossard, *Dictionnaire de Musique*, 1703.

⁶⁰ John Holden: *An Essay towards a Rational System of Music*, 1770, p. 35.

⁶¹ Joh. Abr. Peter Schulz, article *Metre*, in: Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (‘General Theory of the Fine Arts’), vol. IV, p. 497-98 [app. p. 291].

only the *alla breve* but also the uneven metre to free itself from the intellectual proportional systems of the past. Via the fashionable court dances it immigrated to the more ambitious compositions; *Chaconnes*, *Passacailles*, *Gaillardes*, *Courantes* etc. were composed in uneven metres; solemn duple metre dances changed in their second half into the more animated triple metre.

Finally, the astonishingly quick *minuet* (p. 229 ff) conquered the courts; it became the model for the 3/4 metre. Many authors commented on the multiplicity of tempos of the uneven metres, among them:

GIACOMO CARISSIMI: „There are not a few who use without distinction one and the same beat and bar for all triples, pretending that the manifold variations of the figures were invented by composers only to vex the musicians. How wrong they are! [...] One should regard and hear the great difference of the triples in courantes, sarabandes, minuets, gigue, and the like; more examples will then not be necessary.“⁶²

Dances determined the *mouvement* of their 3/2-, 3/4- and 3/8-metres by the step sequence and their different „changes of disposition“, their character. The ‚*Tripel-Verhalt*‘, the triplet nature of the uneven metre, survived as an inner whole-bar accentuation, but the new reference to physical action relieved it from mathematical restraint.

GEORG MUFFAT: „In 3/2 the beat wants to be very held back, but in 3/4 more cheerful, in all ‚sara-bandes‘, ‚airs‘, however, somewhat slower; in ‚minuets‘, ‚courantes‘ and many others it is given very briskly.“⁶³

All these authors see an unquantifiable increase of tempo from 3/1 through 3/2 and 3/4 up to 3/8-time.⁶⁴ The idea of „a quick motion connected to small notes“⁶⁵ could have been a reason for this. In his conservative retrospect in 1809 GOTTFRIED WILHELM FINK explained the phenomenon as follows:

„We play eighth-notes twice as swiftly as quarter-notes and these more swiftly than half notes, etc.. This relationship is of course strongly imprinted on us and an *Allegro* in 3/8 metre has just by that a more fleeting nature than one in 3/4, and absolutely more than one in 3/2 etc. The longer the notes are, that are the basis of a metre, the more we will feel something that forces us to retard, even if *presto* is indicated above the piece. According to this view, the entire necessity of the inconsistency of the names of the notes – *quarter*, *eighth*, etc. – in relation to the actual bar⁶⁶ proves itself worthwhile.“⁶⁷

It was only during the further course of the 19th century that the metres - previously so different in character and tempo - became *groups of equal beats* that had no influence on tempo and manner of execution. Beginning with Berlioz and Wagner *l'istesso tempo* (beat=beat) became the norm when changing the metre.⁶⁸

⁶² Giacomo Carissimi, *Ars Cantandi*, translation in the Appendix of: *Vermehrter Wegweiser*, Augsburg 1689. ↗ George Houle, *Metre in Music 1600-1800*, p. 26; ↗ also in: Walther, *Musikalisches Lexikon*, 1732, Lemma „Triple de 12 pour 16“ [sic], p. 617; ↗ Schünemann, *Geschichte des Dirigierens*, 1913, p. 108; ↗ Herrmann-Bengen, *Tempobezeichnungen*, 1959, p. 49; ↗ Dahlhaus, „Zur Entstehung des modernen Taktsystems im 17. Jh.“ (*Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 18, p. 233 f).

⁶³ Georg Muffat, *Florilegium Primum*, 1695, preface.

⁶⁴ Only Saint-Lambert claimed naively (and, without realising it, anticipating the system of today) that there was a quadruplication of the tempo from 3/2 through 3/4 to 3/8 metre, according to his octuplication of the tempo from C metre to 4/8 (*Les Principes du Clavecin*, 1702, p. 18 and 19).

⁶⁵ Carl Dahlhaus, *Zur Entstehung des modernen Taktsystems im 17. Jahrhundert*, AfMw XVIII, 1961, p. 230.

⁶⁶ Beautifully explained by Samuel Petri, *Anleitung zur praktischen Musik*, 1782, chap 5, „Von den Taktarten“, § 2, p. 143 [see * p. 015].

⁶⁷ Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, *Ueber Takt, Taktarten, und ihr Charakteristisches* II, Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, XI, no. 14, 04.01.1809, p. 214. [app. p. 345].

⁶⁸ HECTOR BERLIOZ supplied in 1838 a brilliant example in Fieramosca's Air in *Benvenuto Cellini*, „Ah! Qui pourrait me résister?“ from *Allegretto, un peu loud*: |:3/4|4/4:| |:3/4|3/4:| |:3/4|2/4:| |:3/4|2/4:| | (MM ♩=160) (full score Ed. Choudens, Paris; Version Royal Opera House Covent Garden, 1976) ↗ The numerous changes of time in David's explanation of ‚Meistergesang‘ in *Die Meistersinger* by RICHARD WAGNER always (apart from tempo modifications) take beat=beat for granted as well, if nothing else is indicated (6/8 and 9/8 there are tripled 2/4 and 3/4 metres.) ↗ In *Salome* (1905) RICHARD STRAUSS, on the one hand, in the case of time changes in quick succession, indicated for safety mostly ♩=♩; on the other hand, for instance at the *first entrance* of Salome (from figure 21 „Ich will nicht bleiben. Ich kann nicht bleiben“ [„I won't stay. I can't stay“] - (with which she already anticipates her end) he placed in a polymetrically complicated setting the most varied metres in the most varied relations, i.e. *unequal* quarter-notes, one on top of the other. At the climax of one scene, 4 bars before Fig. 50, the psychotic excitement of which would probably have made Du Fay and Ockeghem shudder, he set, not unlike their technique, bars in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and c metre plus triplets and quintuplets simultaneously over the basis of a constant whole-bar beat, *cum grano salis* the *tactus*. In this procedure the metres kept the metrical shape handed down from the classical period, their inner hierarchy of accents, though not their character as part of a tempo-indicating *tempo giusto*, their ‚natural‘ tempo. It no longer functioned as such in either *l'istesso tempo* ♩=♩ or the polymetres of Strauss. The metres no longer dictated the style of playing.

In 1802 Heinrich Christoph Koch had still seen that as an exception, which had to be indicated explicitly:

„*L'istesso tempo*, the same tempo. This expression is used sometimes, though not quite correctly, where one metre alternates with another, e.g. *four-four* with *two-four* or *three-four* metre, whereupon *exceptionally* the quarter notes follow each other as swiftly as in the preceding tempo.“⁶⁹

3) The smallest relevant note-values

Further differentiations in the metrical movement resulted from the *smallest relevant note-values*.⁷⁰

C.PH.E. BACH 1759: „The degree of movement can be judged both by the contents of the piece in general, which one indicates by certain well-known *Italian technical terms*, and in particular by the fastest notes and figures therein. From this examination one will be in a position neither to hurry in *allegro* nor be sleepy in *adagio*.“⁷¹

JOH. PHIL. KIRNBERGER/J.A.P. SCHULZ 1776: „Regarding note values, dance pieces⁷² involving sixteenth and thirty-second notes have a slower tempo than those that tolerate only eighth and at most sixteenth notes as the fastest note values in the same metre. Thus the tempo giusto is determined by the metre and the longer and shorter note values of a composition.“

„In addition, longer note values are always performed with more weight and emphasis than shorter ones; consequently, a composition that is to be performed with weight and emphasis can only be notated with long note values, and another that is to be performed in a light and playful manner can only be notated with short note values.“⁷³

The indication of ‚tempo‘ in the Baroque worked exactly like that: Johann Sebastian Bach seldom needed to specify further. And this natural system continued to be valid:

DANIEL GOTTLÖB TÜRK 1789: „For example, an Allegro with *thirty-second* notes mixed in should not be played as quickly as one whose most rapid passages consist only of *eighth* notes.“⁷⁴

CARL CZERNY still in 1839: „If therefore *16th note triplets* occur in a piece of music which is marked *Allegro* one must take the Allegro-tempo a little more moderately, in order not to rush these notes. If, however, only *simple 16th notes* are the swiftest kind of notes, one may take the Allegro more vivaciously, provided that these *16th notes* contain no complex or polyphonic passages, which must be performed somewhat more moderately for a better understanding and easier execution. But if no faster notes than *eighth note triplets* occur in the Allegro-tempo it is usually taken again a little faster. If *only normal eighth notes* occur as the fastest notes in a piece, the Allegro should be taken still faster. It goes without saying that all this allows many exceptions if the character of the piece of music makes them necessary, or if the composer has expressly indicated the opposite by special additional words.“⁷⁵

For musicians grown up with classical music this is a matter of course even today, though it contradicts the modern system of notation where the tempo does not depend on metre and note values but is indicated separately according to metronome or duration.

⁶⁹ Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (‘*Musical Dictionary*’), 1802, col. 916 [app. p. 314].

⁷⁰ discounting grace notes, tremolos, tirate etc.

⁷¹ C.Ph.E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen* (‘*Essay on the True Art of Playing the Clavier*’) 1759, part I, chapter 3 „Vom Vortrage“, § 10) [app. p. 329].

⁷² and - as follows from innumerable textbooks - all other pieces too.

⁷³ Kirnberger / Schulz), *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*. (‘*The Art of Strict Musical Composition*’), II, 1776, p. 107 and 116; [app. p. 277].

⁷⁴ D.G. Türk, *Klavierschule* (‘*School of Clavier Playing*’), 1789, chap. 1, § 72, p. 111 [app. p. 300].

⁷⁵ Carl Czerny, *Vollständige theoretisch-practische Pianoforte-Schule*, op. 500, 1839, part 3, chap. 8 „Über das richtige, für jedes Tonstück geeignete Tempo“, p. 51, § 4 „Über das Allegro“.

4) Tempo words

As long as counterpoint and elaborate embellishments prevailed on the one hand and traditional dances on the other, the music's meaning did not much depend on the tempo. But the more it simplified its harmony and counterpoint in the Italian opera and the „galant“ style the more easily it became a victim of inadequate tempos. The *tempo giusto* (being defined by metre and class of note values) had to be specified with the help of additional „tempo words.“⁷⁶

KIRNBERGER/SCHULZ: „Thus the *tempo giusto* is determined by the *metre* and by the longer and shorter *note values* of a composition. Once the young composer has a feeling for this, he will soon understand to what degree the adjectives *largo*, *adagio*, *andante*, *allegro*, *presto*, and their modifications *larghetto*, *andantino*, *allegretto*, *prestissimo*, add or take away from the fast or slow motion of the natural tempo.“⁷⁷

So, contrary to our habit, the tempo word alone was no „tempo indication“ in the late 18th century.⁷⁸ A module consisting of *metre*+*note values*+*tempo word* determined the hierarchy of accents, the speed, the character and the manner of playing - the ‚*mouvement*‘ in its widest sense. Therefore I use the restrictive term „tempo word“ for the adjectives heading a piece instead of the too comprehensive „tempo indication“.

Problematic were - and are - their vague meanings. How do we understand „slow“ (*Adagio*), „walking“ (*Andante*) or „cheerful“ (*Allegro*)? Does „*Andante*“ ask for a solemn striding or a lively pace?

CALDARA wrote *andante mà non tanto allegro*, VIVALDI *andante molto e quasi allegro*, HANDEL, D. SCARLATTI and LEOPOLD MOZART *andante allegro*, GLUCK *andante non presto*. J.J. ROUSSEAU equates *andante* with „*gracieusement*“, and CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH DANIEL SCHUBART formulates delightfully: „*andante*, a walking movement of the beat which kisses the adjacent border of *allegro*.“⁷⁹ LEOPOLD MOZART: „*Allegretto* has much in common with *Andante*. This word tells us that the piece must be allowed its own natural pace; especially if *ma un poco Allegretto* is added.“⁸⁰

„*Andante*“ in the 18th century does not mean the stride or walking pace of a human being but the incorporeal pace of the music, a „walking motion“ in the sense of a regular progression of time.

In 1786 FRIEDRICH NICOLAI reports on the significant differences in the performance practice of *Andante* between Berlin, Dresden and Vienna.⁸¹ In general, however, the 18th century regarded *Andante* as „the tempo which keeps the mean between swift and slow“. ⁸² It was only in the 19th century that *Andante* received the meaning of „slow“, which influenced Mozart interpretation disastrously from then on. The increasing terms *più Andante* and *molto Andante* thus gained the meaning of „slower“ and „very slow“, although on the contrary an *increase of speed* was meant. Mozart indicated *Andante con moto* ten times and in K 338: *Andante di molto più tosto allegretto*.

Accordingly there were most contradictory semantic speculations about the diminutive *Andantino*⁸³: either it was understood as „somewhat walking“ in the sense of slower than *Andante*; or as a „small

⁷⁶ Marpurg [abridged]: „Although the tempo of the metre is naturally defined by the size of the notes, and, for example, 2/2 must be played more slowly than 2/4, yet at every moment the opposite happens. One reason, among others, is whether more or fewer notes of different size are used; the piece that uses only two kinds of notes can and must be played faster than the one where the relations are far more manifold. This repeal of the relation between the kind of note figures and the tempo has forced musicians to adopt certain Italian technical terms for indicating the degrees of slowness or swiftness.“ - *Anleitung zur Musik überhaupt* (‘Guide to Music in general’), 1763, part 2, chap. 4, p. 70, § 8 [app. p. 334]

⁷⁷ Kirnberger / Schulz), *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* (‘The Art of Strict Musical Composition’), II., p. 107. [app. p. 275].

⁷⁸ See: Helmut Perl, *Rhythmische Phrasierung in der Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts*, 1998, chap. 3 and 4, p. 78-97.

⁷⁹ J. J. Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, I, 1767, p. 73.

✧ Chr. Friedr. Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, 1806, p. 360.

⁸⁰ Leopold Mozart, *Violinschule* (‘School of Violin Playing’), 1756, p. 48 f; [app. p. 272 „Allegretto“ and „Andante“].

⁸¹ Friedrich Nicolai, *Beschreibung einer Reise durch Deutschland und in die Schweiz im Jahre 1781*, p. 541 ff.

⁸² Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (‘Musical Dictionary’) [app. p. 312 „Andante“]; ✧ Kirnberger in Sulzer’s *Allgemeine Theorie General Theory*, 1773 [app. p. 284]; ✧ G.F. Wolf, *Kurzgefaßtes Musikalisches Lexikon*, 1792; ✧ Schilling, *Encyclopädie ... oder Universallexikon der Tonkunst*, 1835.

⁸³ D.G. TÜRK wrote in his *Klavierschule* (‘School of Clavier Playing’) 1789 that *Andantino* is „a little walking, i.e. walking gently, consequently not walking briskly, that is, somewhat slower than *andante*“, but added the footnote: „In most instruction manuals, *andantino* is translated as somewhat faster than *andante*. If one considers, however, that a greater degree of speed is required for *molto Andante* (a brisk walking tempo), than for *Andante*, then one may perhaps find my translation of *Andantino* - indicating only a lesser degree of walking speed or tempo - suitable in this context“. [app. p. 300, footnote 765].

✧ NEAL ZASLAW agreed: „If *Andante* was not a slow tempo, then it is logical that its diminutive stood for a speed slower than it.“ (Mozart’s *Tempo Conventions*, in: International Musicological Society Report of the Eleventh Congress 1972.) ✧ MAX RUDOLF (The

walking“, which was therefore „a little slowly“, or faster than *Andante*.⁸⁴ There was also the opinion that *Andantino* meant nothing but simply a short piece in *Andante*.

JOHANN ADAM HILLER 1792: „The diminutive *Andantino* should certainly be taken a little more leisurely than *Andante*; but most musicians regard it as identical with *allegretto*. It is bad that no national assembly has decided a standing rule about this and many other matters.“⁸⁵

It is well-known that BEETHOVEN, too, doubted the possibility of a common understanding of this indication:

„If in the future among the airs you will be able to send me to be composed would be some *Andantinos* I would ask you to indicate if that *Andantino* is conceived to be slower or faster than *Andante*, since this expression like many others in music has such a vague meaning that sometimes *Andantino* approaches *Allegro* and another time is played nearly like *Adagio*.“⁸⁶

Joseph Haydn, Cimarosa and Martín y Soler wrote *Andantino grazioso*, *Andantino vivace*, *Andantino con moto*, *Andantino mosso* and *Andantino più tosto Allegretto*,⁸⁷ Mozart wrote *Andantino con moto* and *Andantino grazioso* - contradictions in themselves if *Andantino* was regarded by them as slower than *Andante*.

Things did not look much better for *Allegro* and *Adagio*:

JOSEPH RIEPEL 1752: „*Allegro* is played differently in each country, each town, nearly by everybody, consequently: sometimes swifter, sometimes slower. If I might, I would assert that concerning two Italian masters, the elder fixes his *Allegro* nearly one half slower than him who is 20 years younger.⁸⁸ And the same applies to *Andante*, *Adagio* and the rest, so that many a person does not know what to think.“⁸⁹

C.PH.E. BACH wrote, that in Berlin „the *Adagios* are performed far more slowly, and the *Allegros* far more quickly than is customary elsewhere. In certain foreign parts this error is particularly prevalent, to play *adagios* too fast and *allegros* too slow.“⁹⁰

QUANTZ asked to see whether the instrumentalist „is able to play each piece in its proper tempo, or whether he plays everything marked *Allegro* at one and the same speed.“⁹¹

KIRNBERGER distinguished: „There is a noticeable difference between the various kinds of *Allegro* not only concerning the speed but also the expression; since a piece can be executed merrily, perkily, magnificently or coaxingly - at the same speed.“⁹²

There was also no agreement about the meaning of *larghetto* - was it slower or swifter than *Adagio*? - and *Allegro assai*: was it faster or slower than *Allegro molto*?

For JOSEPH HAYDN, RIEPEL, MARPURG, TÜRK, KOCH and CZERNY „*assai*“ had without doubt the meaning of „very“. They used it in this way in all combinations,⁹³ and it is insignificant if they were taken in by a se-

Grammar of Conducting, 1980, p. 341) and ✧ FREDERICK NEUMANN (*Performance Practices of the 17th and 18th Centuries*, 1993, p. 67) also stumbled into the semantic trap of a merely theoretical interpretation of the term without referring to its application by specific composers. ✧

H.CHR. KOCH on the other hand in his *Musikalisches Lexikon* ('Musical Dictionary') 1802: „*Andantino* as the diminutive of *Andante* (if it is taken as such) designates a tempo a little faster than *Andante*. But one often finds it also used in pieces which require a considerably faster tempo than the normal *Andante*.“ [app. p. 312]

⁸⁴ NEAL ZASLAW (*Mozart's Symphonies*, 1989, p. 494) took as proof for *Andantino* being slower than *Andante*: „Of twelve theorists who distinguished between *Andante* and *Andantino*, seven thought the latter slower than the former and five the opposite.“ (*Mozart's Symphonies*, 1989, p. 494); [Democracy in academia ...!]; ✧ SIEGBERT RAMPE (*Mozart's Claviermusik*, 1995, p. 153) and ✧ DAVID FALLOWS (in *The New Grove*, 2nd edition, 2001, art. *Andantino*, quoted there as „convincing evidence“) follows him in regarding this fictitious statistic of authors copying each others as relevant for Mozart.

⁸⁵ J.A. Hiller, *Anweisung zum Violinspielen* ('Instruction for playing the Violin'), 1792, „Anhang eines Lexicons“, p. 58) [app. p. 331].

⁸⁶ Beethoven's letter to the publisher George Thompson, GE no. 623, from 19.02.1813 (originally in French [app. p. 348]).

⁸⁷ Joseph Haydn, Hob III:13 „*Andantino grazioso*“, Hob XV:16 „*Andantino più tosto Allegretto*“; Cimarosa, *Il Matrimonio segreto* no. 6 and 14 „*Andantino con moto*“, no. 12 „*Andantino mosso*“, no. 18 „*Andantino vivace*“, and Martín y Soler *Una cosa rara* „*Andantino con moto*“ (1/7 Cavatina Lubino). - Searching for more examples would be worthwhile.

⁸⁸ Very probably the elder wrote in „large“ 4/4 (see above), but the younger (by 20 years) in classical 4/4 metre.

⁸⁹ Riepel, *Anfangsgründe* ('Basic Principles'), Chap. 1, *De Rhythmopoeia, oder von der Tactordnung*, 1752, p. 78 [app. p. 321].

⁹⁰ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* ('Essay on the True Art of Playing the Clavier') 1753, part 2, chap. 36, § 71, and part 1, 3rd chapter, § 1 [app. p. 328/329].

⁹¹ Quantz, *Versuch* ('On Playing the Flute'), 1752, chap. XVIII, § 15, p. 286 [app. p. 328].

⁹² Kirnberger in the article „*Allegro*“ in Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* ('General Theory of the Fine Arts') vol. I, 1773, p. 112 [app. p. 284].

⁹³ In the aria of Fileño, no. 9 in *La fedeltà premiata*, Haydn even writes „*staccato assai assai*“!

mantic error. SEBASTIEN DE BROSSARD, however, had written in 1703 in his „*Dictionnaire de musique*“ that some indeed translated „*assai*“ by „very“, but others (like himself in his motets) meant that with the indication *assai* „the tempos should *not* be exaggerated but stay in a prudent moderateness of slowness and swiftness“. ⁹⁴ BEETHOVEN seems to be the only one, who adopted Brossard's version *assai*=*moderate*, ⁹⁵ and his conception still has an effect today. In contrast, 53 years after Brossard, LEOPOLD MOZART wrote explicitly: „*Presto* means fast and *Allegro assai* is only little different. *Molto Allegro* is somewhat less than *Allegro assai*“. ⁹⁶ (!)

Concerning *Vivace* all authors contradict unanimously the present-day interpretation as „fast“:

- LEOPOLD MOZART: „*Vivace* means *animated*, and forms a midpoint between fast and slow.“
- JOSEPH RIEPEL: „*Vivace*, *lively*, but just not too swift.“
- DE MEUDE-MONPAS: „*Vif*, *vivace*: animated *mouvement*, hearty execution full of fire. It is *not* a matter of speeding up the beat, but giving it warmth.“
- F. (probably G.W. FINK): „A speech can have a high degree of liveliness without the words needing to be pronounced particularly fast: that's how it is in music too.“

Even for the virtuosos HUMMEL and CZERNY it meant exactly this. ⁹⁷ Carl Maria von Weber's *Molto vivace* for his „Chorus of the Peasants“ in no. 1 of „Der Freischütz“ seems to me to be meant like this as well: *hearty, full of fire*, - but not: *fast*. ⁹⁸

In view of all these contradictions JOHANN JOACHIM QUANTZ gave „young people who are dedicating themselves to the art of music“ ⁹⁹ (thus beginners!) with the human pulse a rough standard for determining the tempos. ¹⁰⁰ He wrote nowhere that *professional musicians* ever played like that; the tempo table in his book was not to be more than a *rule of thumb* for students to prevent them „from departing too far from the true tempo of each piece“. For „there are so many tempos in music that it would not be possible to fix every one.“ ¹⁰¹ In spite of Marpur's warning, that „neither the pulse, nor the pace of a person's stride are impeccable rules“, ¹⁰² Quantz's table was misunderstood a thousandfold in our time as a dogma; even Mozart, *two generations* younger, is supposed to be played according to this beginner's schema. ¹⁰³

KIRNBERGER/SCHULZ explain the whole system in brief:

„Thus *tempo*, *metre*, and *rhythm* [periodicity] give melody its life and power. **Tempo** defines the rate of speed, which by itself is already important since it designates a livelier or quieter character. **Metre** determines the accents in addition to the length and brevity of the notes and the lighter or more emphatic delivery; and it shapes the notes into words, so to speak. But **rhythm** establishes for the ear the individual *phrases* formed by the words and the *periods* composed of several phrases. Melody becomes a *comprehensible and stimulating speech* by the proper combination of these three things.

None of these elements is sufficient by itself to define any character of the melody exactly; the true expression of the melody is determined only by their synthesis and their interaction. Two compositions may have the same degree of *allegro* or *largo*, yet still have an entirely different effect; according to the type of *metre*, the motion is - at the same speed - more hurried or em-

⁹⁴ „ASSAI; Selon quelques uns il veut dire BEAUCOUP ; & selon d'autres que la mesure & les mouvemens ne doivent avoir rien d'outré, mais demeurer dans une sage médiocrité de lenteur, & de vitesse“ (Brossard, *Dictionnaire de Musique*, 1703, p. 6).

⁹⁵ Stewart Deas, *Beethoven's 'Allegro Assai'*, 1950 (with convincing examples).

⁹⁶ Leopold Mozart, *Violinschule* ('School of Violin Playing'), p. 48 „Presto“ [app. p. 272].

⁹⁷ Leopold Mozart, *Violinschule* ('School of Violin Playing'), p. 48 „vivace“; [app. p. 272]. ✧ Joseph Riepel, *De Rhythmopoeia*, 1752, p. 78 [app. p. 320]. ✧ J. J. O. de Meude-Monpas: „*Vif*, *vivace*: *Mouvement animé*, *exécution hardie et pleine de feu*. Il ne s'agit pas de hâter la mesure, mais de lui donner de la chaleur.“ (*Dictionnaire de Musique*, 1787, p. 210) ✧ „F.“, (presumably G. W. Fink) „*Ueber das Lebhaftige in der Musik*“ in: *AmZ*, vol. 13, no. 51, 18.12.1811, col. 852. ✧ Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische ANWEISUNG ZUM PIANO-FORTE-SPIEL*, 1828, p. 67. ✧ Carl Czerny, *Pianoforte-Schule*, 1839, part I, Lection 15, § 4.

⁹⁸ In contrast to the otherwise great interpretation on record by Carlos Kleiber.

⁹⁹ Quantz, *Versuch* ('On Playing the Flute'), 1752, Introduction, p. 2 [app. p. 322].

¹⁰⁰ „one should take the pulse-rate of a merry and jovial, yet also somewhat hot-headed and superficial person [...] with a choleric-sanguine temperament, as it is from after the midday meal until evening. [...] This will prevent them from departing too far from the true tempo of each piece.“ (Quantz, *Versuch* ('On Playing the Flute'), chap. XVII, sect. VII, § 55, p. 267 [app. p. 327])

¹⁰¹ Quantz, *Versuch* ('On Playing the Flute'), chap. XVII, sect. VII, p. 262, § 49 [app. p. 326].

¹⁰² Marpur, *Anleitung zur Musik überhaupt* ('Guide to Music in general'), 1763, vol. II, chap. 4, § 10 [app. p. 335].

¹⁰³ „A systematic attempt to apply Quantz's fixed tempos to Mozart's music proved more a procrustian bed than a source of interpretative inspiration. Quantz's system, if it ever worked as an applied rather than a theoretical or pedagogical system, belonged to the music of his own circle in Berlin in the 1740s and 1750s, not to Mozart's music of a different time, place, and style.“ (Neal Zaslau, *Mozart's Symphonies*, 1989, chap. 12 „Performance Practice“, p. 492).

phatic, lighter or heavier. From this it is clear that tempo and metre must combine forces. It is the same with rhythm [i.e. periods]: the same parameters of which the song consists can, depending on metre and tempo, assume a quite different expression.

He who wants to set a melody must necessarily at the same time pay attention to the united effect of *tempo*, *metre* and *rhythm* [see above] and not regard them without respect to the other two.¹⁰⁴

In order to achieve the intended tempo Mozart had therefore to add „*Molto Allegro*“ to the *intrinsically slow* ‚large‘ metre ♩ of the first movement of the G minor Symphony K 550 (Ex. 087). He added „*Larghetto*“ to the *intrinsically light-footed* 2/4 (resp. 4/8) metre of Tamino’s „portrait“ aria (Ex. 203, Ex. 204, Ex. 205), and „*Adagio*“ to the 3/4-metre-without-16th notes of Sarastro’s aria „O Isis und Osiris“ (Ex. 276). Logically, he moderated the *Prestissimo* ♩ of the sketch for the 4th movement of the „Hunt“-quartet, K 458, into *Allegro assai* when he wrote the final version in 2/4 metre which was „by nature“ faster. We shall see why he chose the respective metres.

5) „Church“-, „Theatre“-, „Chamber“-Style

Next to all that, the height of style of the performance had to be respected:

J. J. QUANTZ: „to be suitable for the church the rendition as well as the tempo must be taken **some-what more moderately** than in operatic style. [...] If a *Serenade* or *Cantata* is written expressly for the *chamber*, then care is taken to distinguish this **Chamber style** from both the Church and Theatre styles. The difference consists in this, that the *Chamber style* requires more liveliness and freedom of thought than the *Church style*; and, because there is no action taking place, more elaboration and artifice are permitted than in the *Theatre style*. [...]“¹⁰⁵

CHARLES AVISON: „An *Allegro* for the *Church*, cannot, with Propriety, be adapted to *theatrical* Purposes; nor can the *Adagio* of this latter Kind, strictly speaking, be introduced into the former. For, the same Pieces which may justly enough be thought very solemn in the Theatre, to an experienced Ear will be found too light and trivial when they are performed in the Church. The Words *Andante*, *Presto*, *Allegro*, &c. are differently apply’d in the different Kinds of Music above-mentioned: for the same Terms which denote *Lively* and *Gay* in the Opera, or Concert Style, may be understood in the Practice of Church-Music as less lively and gay: wherefore, the *Allegro*, &c. in this Kind of Composition, should always be performed somewhat slower than is usual in Concertos or Operas.

By this Observation we may learn, that these Words do not always convey what they import in their strict Sense, but are to be considered as relative Terms; and if they cannot fully answer the Composer’s Intention of communicating, to every Performer, the Nature of each particular Style; yet are they more proper than any other for that Purpose.“¹⁰⁶

RESUMÉ: The tempo words, still regarded today as „tempo indications“ in spite of their indefiniteness and contradictory application, can in no way serve „as an adequate starting point for research into tempo after 1600“¹⁰⁷ without relation to metre, note values and style (as well as to the notational practice of the respective composer); the assertion of Nikolaus Harnoncourt, that „a certain tempo word designates always the same tempo“, is incorrect - especially for Mozart, to whom he was referring.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Kirnberger / Schulz), *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes* ('The Art of Strict Musical Composition'), II, 1774, p. 105/106 [app. p. 275].

¹⁰⁵ Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung* ('On Playing the Flute'), 1752, p. 266, § 53, p. 327, § 27 p. 328 [app. p. 328].

¹⁰⁶ Charles Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression*, London 1752, p. 89/90 [app. p. 321].

¹⁰⁷ in the view of Irmgard Herrmann-Bengen (*Tempobezeichnungen*, 1959, S. 30).

¹⁰⁸ „Ein bestimmtes Tempowort bezeichnet immer dasselbe Tempo“ - Nikolaus Harnoncourt in: „Wenn die Komödie stillsteht ...“, in: *Programme book of the Salzburger Festspiele 2006* „Le Nozze di Figaro“, p. 28. – Quantz, on the contrary, demanded that a musician „should not play everything marked Allegro at one and the same speed.“! (*Versuch einer Anweisung* ('On Playing the Flute', p. 286, § 15 [app. p. 328].

6) The manners of playing

In the literature for historical performance-practice, the sources have indeed been consulted regarding practically every individual single topic. However, I do not see that in the discussion of tempo - aside from the purely physical speed of the performance - the mutual penetration of all parameters of the execution has been sufficiently considered, though it has decisive influence both on the realisation of the tempo by the performer, and on the listener's perception of it.

The prerequisite of the *„mouvement“* in the subliminally always dance-like music of the 18th century was a steady tempo:

- QUANTZ: „The understanding of *Tempo* with special perfection, and the practice of it with the greatest strictness, is a duty laid on all those whose profession is music.“¹⁰⁹
- MARPURG: „The tempo may not be disturbed by embellishments.“¹¹⁰
- J.A.P. SCHULZ: „*Keeping in time* also belongs to clarity in execution. Nothing is as disruptive to the listener as an irregular metrical pulse.“¹¹¹
- MATTHESON: „Harmony does not apply only to the sound but also to its soul, the metre.“¹¹²

(About playing *rubato* above a strictly steady basic pace, see W.A. Mozart's letter no. 355, Leopold Mozart's *School for Violin*, p. 297, § 20, and Koch, *Musical Dictionary*, article *Tempo rubato*.¹¹³)

In the 18th century the term *„mouvement“* did not refer primarily to „speed“, but rather to *„Tactbewegung“* (motion within the metre), i.e. the density of the hierarchically organized accentuations within the metre, the rhythmical structure, the dynamics and even the *manner of playing*. JOHANN FRIEDRICH REICHARDT, Kapellmeister at the court of Frederick the Great, QUANTZ, LEOPOLD MOZART, SCHULZ, TÜRK and KOCH gave very valuable hints regarding this, which up to now have been little considered:

REICHARDT (abridged): „The different characters of pieces also require different bowstrokes. Thus the bowstroke in *Adagio* is very different from that in *Allegro*, and contrasts mainly in that the former remains more on the string than in *Allegro*. Nothing but a rest must bring the bow entirely off the string in *Adagio*. Even on the notes marked with a stroke for staccato (I), even in an *„Abzug“* [i.e. *lifting the bow*], it must not entirely leave the string, but remain on it with at least an eighth of the hair. - In *Andante* the bow must have the lightness of the *Allegro* bow, but without its sharpness and without its rapidity in leaving the string at an *„Abzug“*. - It is the same in *Allegretto*, only now the bow acquires somewhat more liveliness and from time to time some sharpness. - Finally in *Allegro*, however, the sharpness of the bow in detached notes and its rapidity at an *„Abzug“* is highly necessary. - The more extreme terms, such as, for example, *Allegro di molto*, *Allegro assai*, *Presto*, *Prestissimo*, merely affect the tempo and alter nothing in the character of the bowstroke. For this an expression must be added which specifies the character of the piece. *Allegro e con brio*, *Allegro e con spirito*, *con fuoco*, *resoluto*, etc. - In the same way the terms which diminish the speed of the *Allegro*, such as, for example, *Allegro mà non troppo*, *moderato*, etc., make no difference to the character of the bowing, but merely affect the tempo. If, however, *cantabile*, *dolce*, or another expression which more narrowly determines the character of the piece occurs, then that has a bearing on the bow, which must be drawn more gently and smoothly. - Similarly, in slow movements the terms *maestoso*, *affettuoso*, *mesto*, *grave*, indicate that the longer bowstrokes should receive a longer, more expressive accent, and in these cases the notes before rests, rather than being taken off short, should only come away gradually.

- *Forte* in *adagio* is very different from *forte* in *allegro*. Because of the frequent detaching and the sharp *„Abzüge“* [lifting of the bow], the latter acquires a completely different look: for in *adagio* nothing must be sharply cut short. Even the stroke of the bow must be less fast in *adagio*; consequently in *adagio* only the pressure of the bow remains for strength.“ So even the dynamics were determined by the tempo word.

„One can divide the *„Abzüge“* [i.e. *lifting of the bow*] into *virtual* and *actual*. The *virtual „Abzug“* consists in the bow continuing more weakly, or even remaining stationary on the string; it is appropriate for every

¹⁰⁹ Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung* ('On Playing the Flute'), p. 254, § 31 [app. p. 326].

¹¹⁰ Marpurg, *Anleitung zur Musik überhaupt* ('Guide to Music in general'), 1763, part 1, chap. 1, § 11, p. 7 [app. p. 334]].

✧ Türk: „In general, the pulse must be maintained in the strictest manner, even for the most wide-ranging ornamentation. If some individual notes are played a little too early or too late for the sake of the affect, the tempo must not be changed in the slightest degree as a result.“ *Klavierschule* ('School of Clavier Playing'), 1789, p. 325, § 24, 6 [app. p. 302]].

¹¹¹ J.A.P. Schulz in Sulzer, *General History* (*Allgemeine Theorie*), vol. IV, 1774, p. 706, 5 [app. p. 292]].

¹¹² Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* ('The Perfect Capellmeister'), 1739, p. 172, § 17 [app. p. 336].

¹¹³ W.A. Mozart letters, no. 355 [app. p. 260]; Leopold Mozart, *Violinschule* ('School for Violin'), p. 224, § 20 [app. p. 273/274]; Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* ('Musical Dictionary') [app. p. 317 and footnote 792].

note with an *appoggiatura*. The *actual Abzug* consists in the bow being entirely lifted off the string as soon as the note has been even softly heard; it is appropriate for every note with an *appoggiatura* which is followed by a rest.

The lifting of the bow is appropriate principally for every note followed by a rest - only with this difference: that this note *without appoggiatura* takes its full prescribed duration before the bow is lifted off; whereas the note *with appoggiatura* - like the last syllable in speech - is heard even though quite short and soft as it is followed by a rest. Since it is the last one and consequently not obscured by one following it is always heard strongly enough. Anyway, the listener's expectation of the following note becomes so lively through the *appoggiatura* that the smallest touch of the note is enough to satisfy him.¹¹⁴

QUANTZ (abridged): „The *Allegro*, *Allegro assai*, *Allegro di molto*, *Presto*, *Vivace*, call for a lively, really light, detached and very short bowstroke, since these kinds of pieces must be played more playfully than seriously: yet taking care to play with a certain moderation of tone. [...] An *Allegretto* or an *Allegro non troppo*, *moderato*, &c. must be rendered somewhat more seriously, and with a bowstroke that is indeed somewhat heavier though lively and rather powerful. The 16ths in *Allegretto*, like the 8ths in *Allegro*, call especially for very short bow-stroke. [...] The quick passages, however, must be played with a light bow. A *Cantabile* is rendered calmly, and with a light bowstroke. A *Maestoso* asks to be played seriously and with a somewhat heavy and sharp bowstroke. An *Adagio assai* requires the greatest moderation of tone, and the longest, calmest, and heaviest bowstroke. The *Sostenuto* that consists of a series of serious harmonious melodies, must be played very sustained and seriously with a long and heavy bowstroke.“¹¹⁵

LEOPOLD MOZART (abridged): „*Prestissimo*. This very rapid tempo requires a light and somewhat shorter stroke. *Allegro* indicates a merry, though not too hasty tempo, especially when moderated by *Allegro*, *ma non tanto*, or *non troppo*, or *moderato*: For this a lighter and livelier bow-stroke is called for, yet certainly more serious and never as short as in the fastest tempo. *Allegretto*, usually having something pleasant, charming and playful, and much in common with *Andante*. It must therefore be performed in a charming, trifling and playful manner. *Andante*: the word itself tells us that the piece must be allowed its own natural pace; especially when *ma un poco Allegretto* is added. *Sostenuto*: the bowing must be serious, long and sustained, linking [the notes of] the melody together.“

SCHULZ (abridged): „The degree of heaviness or lightness depends chiefly on the *metre* of the piece. The longer the note values of the metre, the heavier the manner of playing must be; the shorter the note values, the lighter the manner must be.

We note here that one must also refer to the *tempo* and the *note values* of the piece when giving its performance the proper degree of heaviness or lightness. 3/8 time for example is rendered lightly; if a movement in this metre is marked *Adagio* and filled with thirty-second notes, however, then it is played more heavily than it otherwise would be, but still not as heavily as if the same piece were set in 3/4 time.“¹¹⁶

TÜRK, in the comprehensive and most instructive chapter VI of his *School of Clavier Playing*, „About the execution“ (abridged):

§ 43 „Whether the execution is to be heavy or light may be determined (1) from the character and purpose of a piece; (2) from the indicated tempo; (3) from its metre; (4) from its note-values; and (5) from the way it proceeds, etc.

§ 46 A *Presto* must be played with a lighter touch than an *Allegro*; this more lightly than an *Andante*, etc. Generally speaking, then, slow pieces demand the heaviest execution.

§ 47 *Metre* also has, or should have, a marked effect on whether a heavy or light style of execution is apt. **The greater the main beats of the bar, the heavier should be the performance style.** Thus, for example, a piece in 3/2 is to be played far more heavily than if it were written in 3/4 or particularly if in 3/8.

§ 48 Different *values of notes* demand a more or less heavy execution. For example, if a piece consists mainly of longer notes, namely whole- and half- or quarter-notes, the execution must on the whole be heavier than if eighths and sixteenths are included. In particular, *dotted notes*, both as regards the division of the bar as well as heavy or light execution, need - according to the circumstances - **very varied treatment.**“¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Ueber die Pflichten des Ripien-Violinisten* ('On the Duties of the Tutti violinist'), 1776, p. 25-27, 69 [app. p. 297].

¹¹⁵ Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung* ('On Playing the Flute'), 1752, p. 199, § 26 [app. p. 325].

¹¹⁶ Joh. Abraham Peter Schulz in: Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie* ('General Theory'), vol. IV, 1774, p. 708/709 [app p. 294].

¹¹⁷ Türk, *Klavierschule* ('School of Clavier Playing'), 1789, p. 359-61, chap. 6, section 3 „About heavy or light execution“, § 35, 43-48) [app. p. 305, 306].

KOCH (abridged): „*Allegretto*, a little swiftly or lively. Composers usually add this heading to pieces which are to be rendered noticeably slower and with a less fiery expression than an *Allegro*, since they usually have the character of *pleasant cheerfulness*; they must therefore *not be executed with sharply detached tones* but more *legato*. (See p. 065-068, *allegretto* 2/2) „*Andante*: here the tones are rendered neither as slowly and meltingly into each other as in *Adagio*, nor as sharply accentuated and detached as in *Allegro*. Everything here is moderated; even the *strength of tone* demands moderation unless the composer expressly prescribes a higher degree of strength.“¹¹⁸

7) The execution

„Les mouvemens differens sont le *pur esprit* de la Musique, quand on y sait bien entrer.“
(„The different *mouvements* are the *pure spirit* of music, if one knows how to penetrate them.“)
(Jean Rousseau ¹¹⁹)

The aim of all late 18th century efforts was not to indicate an objectively measurable *speed* but the „(logically) correct“ execution.¹²⁰ Execution in the most comprehensive sense - since the combined modules of *metre+note value+tempo word* did not only define the metrical structure, speed and character but also the *light* or *heavy* manner of playing¹²¹, the treatment of the (over)dotting and the overall level of the *dynamics*: an extremely finely graduated compositional means, which attributed to each metre, each class of notes, and each tempo word, a different manner of execution.

JOHANN ABRAHAM PETER SCHULZ'S explanation of this whole system is unsurpassed:

„So, putting metres of all kinds together side by side, it would be sufficient to have one even metre of two beats and another of four, and a third of three beats for uneven time; a precise indication at the beginning of the piece would determine the rapidity or slowness at which it should be performed: nothing more would seem to be necessary for a piece as regards metre and movement.“
(*This opinion, described here as mistaken, corresponds precisely with the romantic, as well as the modern, understanding!*)

„But, overlooking the fact that the movement is capable of infinite degrees of rapidity and slowness which cannot be defined by words or other signs, you would still need as many signs or words to describe how the piece should be executed; i.e. should it be played *heavily* and *forte*, or *more lightly* and *mezzo forte*, or *very lightly* and, as it were, *playfully*? For this is what the whole character of the piece depends on. There is a world of difference if a piece, irrespective of its tempo, is played on the violin with the full weight of the bow, or lightly and with only the tip. What we are talking about is not some artificial rendering, but one based on the character of each individual piece, without which the music would be a rigid and tedious monotone; and this character must be understood if it is to be captured in order to find the right manner of playing.

Now it has become the habit of every experienced musician to play long notes heavily and strongly, and short notes more lightly and less strongly. He will therefore execute a piece heavily in which he sees at most but a few eighth notes as the fastest, and another more lightly in which quarters are the longest notes, whether the pieces are in even or uneven metre and even though they may have the same playing speed. Corresponding to the very long or very short notes prevailing in the piece he will play it very heavily or very lightly. Likewise he has acquired by experience a certain concept of the natural length or brevity of the different classes of notes. He will therefore play a piece which has no indication of the tempo at all, or which is indicated by *tempo giusto* (which is the same) in a slower or swifter though right tempo according to the longer or shorter note values it consists of. At the same time he will give it the right gravity or lightness of execution and know how much slowness or swiftness he must add to, or take away from the natural length and brevity of the notes, if the piece is marked with *adagio*, *andante*, or *allegro* etc. The advantages of subdividing the even and uneven metres into different kinds, with longer or shorter notes on the main beats [2/2-4/4-4/8 resp. 3/2-3/4-3/8], become in this

¹¹⁸ Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* ('Musical Dictionary'), col. 130 and 142 [app. p. 311].

¹¹⁹ Jean Rousseau, *Méthode claire*, 1678/91, p. 86; - quoted also by Mattheson in „The Perfect Capellmeister“ (*Der vollkommene Capellmeister*), 1739, p. 172, § 18 [app. p. 337, footnote 811].

¹²⁰ Türk, *Klavierschule* ('School of Clavier Playing'), chap. 6, section 2, p. 340, § 19 [app. p. 303].

¹²¹ About that see Türk, *Klavierschule* ('School of Clavier Playing'), chap. 6. sect. 3, § 43, p. 359; [app. p. 305].

way understandable, for in this way each metre gets its own particular tempo, its own weight in the execution and consequently its own character.

If a piece is to be played *lightly* but at the same time in a *slow tempo*, the composer will choose, depending on the degree of lightness required in the execution, a metre of short or shorter beats [for example 2/4 or 3/8], and use the words *andante* or *largo* or *adagio* etc., according to how far the slowness of the piece should exceed the natural movement of the metre. And conversely: if the piece is to be played in a *heavy* manner but at the same time at a *fast* speed, he will choose a *heavy metre* [for example 6] and add the words *vivace*, *allegro* or *presto*, depending on the sort of execution he wants. An experienced musician seeing the species of note values in such a piece will be in a position to capture the manner of playing and the tempo which correspond exactly with the composer's ideas; at least as exactly as could be expressed by no other signs or words, however precise they might be.

It was necessary to mention in advance [before the description of the metres] the essential influence of the various subspecies of even and uneven metres on both execution and tempo. Only few composers know the reason for their choice of this rather than that even or uneven metre for a piece, although they immediately feel that the one they have chosen is the only right one; others, who with Rousseau consider the multiplicity of metres to be arbitrary inventions [...], have either no feeling for the particular execution of each metre, or deny it, and therefore run the risk of composing pieces which - as they are not set in the metre appropriate for their character - are performed quite differently from how they were conceived. How is it that every experienced musician, listening to a piece, regardless of whether its metre is even or uneven, knows at any moment exactly in which metre it is notated, if each metre did not have something characteristically its own?¹²²

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¹²² Joh. Abraham Peter Schulz, art. 'Metre' in: J. G. Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie* ('General Theory') vol IV, 1774, p. 493-95

[app. p. 289].

