

## ARTICULATION OR ORNAMENTATION?

Many players use glottal and diaphragm techniques in place of tonguing. From here forward, for simplicity's sake, I will group these techniques together under the term *throating*. I discuss this in depth in Chapter 20.

Tonguing and throating are usually grouped under the moniker of *articulation*. For our purposes I identify an articulation as *that extremely brief sound component of a note that defines its beginning or attack*.

So far, I have been freely using the term *articulation* as if it were a part of a vocabulary that is commonly accepted for describing Irish music. But in fact, this is not so. This is something that I hope will change.

Cuts and strikes, the fingered articulations referred to above, are commonly referred to by Irish musicians as ornaments. Since it is such a long-established custom to call them ornaments, I feel I must do so as well. But it is truly more accurate to define them as articulations. They are very brief sounds that define the attacks of notes. Since cuts and strikes are so central to flute and whistle ornamentation, the ramifications of defining them as articulations are quite far-reaching.

Cuts and strikes are special articulations that have their own pitch element, so I refer to them as *pitched articulations*. They sound ornamental to our ear because of their pitch element. Other articulations that do not have a pitch element, such as tonguing and throating, do not sound as ornamental to our ears (rapid multiple tonguing/throating being another matter).

## ORNAMENT CATEGORIES

Most of the ornaments are **fingered ornaments**. I divide these into two groups: *single-note ornaments* and *multi-note ornaments*.

The single-note ornaments are the pitched articulations (the *cut* and the *strike*) and a class of pitch inflections called *slides*.

Multi-note ornaments include *rolls*, *cranns*, *trills*, *finger vibrato*, and a few others. There are many varieties of rolls and cranns.

After examining this, we'll look at the **non-fingered ornaments**: multiple tonguing/throating and breath vibrato. And finally, in Chapter 19, we'll examine ornamentation through the use of small melodic variations.

I strongly recommend that you progress through the chapters in this section in order, for the information in later chapters is built upon that of the earlier ones.

## IT'S FINE TO BE SELECTIVE

In this book I will introduce you to a great many expressive techniques, especially in the area of ornamentation. But remember, there is no need to incorporate all of these techniques into your personal style. At a well-stocked salad bar you don't necessarily include every possible ingredient in your salad. There are some techniques in this book that I very rarely use, and some that I never use. The transcriptions of the playing of great flute and whistle players given in Section 8 show this selectivity very clearly.

The development of a personal voice requires years of experience. Over time, and with dedication, you will find an ever clearer view of yourself through your music.

<sup>i</sup> Valery Lloyd and Carole L. Bigler, *Ornamentation, A Question & Answer Manual*, (Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co., 1995), p. 8.