

# Articulation in the Flute Duets of Friedrich Kuhlau (1786-1832)

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## Introduction

German-born Danish composer Friedrich Kuhlau (1786–1832) published numerous volumes of flute duet music (Opp. 10, 13b, 39, 80, 81, 87, 102, and 110), which were popular in their time and are still staples in the library of the modern flutist. The examination of articulation within these duets serves as a catalyst to trace the practices and aesthetics of articulation in the early nineteenth century.

## Methods

This research aims to establish historically-informed performance options by examining the influences upon Kuhlau's musical style, including:

- His teachers and musical acquaintances
- His knowledge of the flute technique
- His travels
- His experience in other compositional genres

Knowing the dedicatees of his works, flutists he heard and knew, and the expected audience of these works also serves to inform the interpretation of this music.

Primary sources such as original manuscripts, early editions, and eighteenth and nineteenth-century flute treatises offer insight into the various articulation traditions and practices that influenced the performers of Kuhlau's time.



Slurs, vertical lines, and unmarked notes in mm. 1-10 of the first flute part, Friedrich Kuhlau, *Trois Duos pour 2 flûtes*, Op. 81, No. 1, Manuscript, n.d., from the Austrian National Museum, <https://www.onb.ac.at>.



Slurs, vertical lines, round dots, and unmarked notes in mm. 1-15 of the first flute part, Friedrich Kuhlau, *Duos pour deux flûtes*, Op. 81 (Bonn: Simrock, n.d.).



Substitution of vertical lines with round dots in mm. 1-13 in the first flute part of Op. 81, No. 1 in the Carl Fischer edition of Friedrich Kuhlau, *Duos for Two Flutes*, Op. 81 (New York: Carl Fischer, 1922).



Friedrich Kuhlau (after Christian Horneman [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons)



By Antoine Plamondon (1804-1895) (Musée des beaux-arts du Canada) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

## Findings

In the original manuscript of Op. 81, Kuhlau uses three distinctive articulation markings: slur, round dot, and vertical line. There are also notes without markings.

To form pedagogical models for flute articulation, flutists have historically compared its physical motions and sound aesthetics to the bow of the violin, to speech, and to declamation in singing. In this way, articulation represents the language of the music.

Romantic-era flutists had a wide variety of tonguing syllables available for this musical expression.

Quantz (1752): *ti* and *di* or *tiri*; *did'll*  
 Tromlitz (1791): *ta*, *da*, *ra*; *tad'llad'll*  
 Gunn (c. 1793): *t* or *d*; *teddy* or *tiddy*  
 Devienne (1794): *tu*  
 Drouet (1830): *teu*, *deu reu*  
 Tulou (1835): *tu*, *du*; *tu que*  
 Boehm (1871): *de*

## Conclusions

Available evidence leads the performer to viable solutions for the interpretation of Kuhlau's works. The performer can find a range of solutions for unmarked notes, possibly articulating them with various Romantic-era tonguing patterns to create historically characteristic shading in these passages. Most importantly, the scholar-performer will discover the wide range of musical tastes and styles among the flutists of Kuhlau's acquaintance. The modern performer can then take a flexible, creative approach to these pieces while maintaining a sense of historical accuracy.