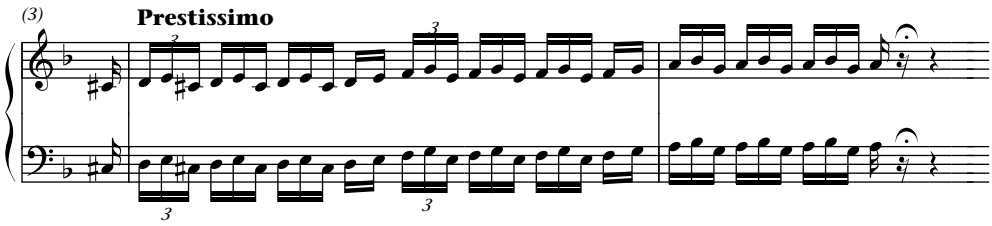
thinking. The Toccata in D minor for organ contains a famous example of this kind of practice:



Ex. 23: J. S. Bach: Toccata in D minor BWV 565, bars 4–5

Once triplets have entered, any pairs of semiquavers which link them might naturally be assimilated to the triplet rhythm. The effect of a literal performance (particularly if played with rhythmic conviction) is to give numerous hesitations within the flow of what was probably intended as a continuous extended flourish. Many scholars consider this piece as derived from an original for solo violin, and possibly one not by Bach himself, but by another, perhaps an Italian composer. The single-line writing (since it is essentially that at this point) might have been altered to use dotted pairs between the triplets, but Bach did not feel the need to do so. Indeed, the dotted pair might here have given a message of greater hesitation to a Baroque organist than an equal pair. If one accepts something like a continuity of rhythm as appropriate at this point, this would indicate that synchronisation of equal pairs within a triplet context was already within Bach's notational language. The alternative is that Bach, rather anachronistically, had a more literal view of these pairs of notes than most of his contemporaries would have had, and that many would have probably misunderstood his intentions.

A teasing ambiguity is caused by the use of triplets as the dominant motif in another of the fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Here the note values are double those of example (20). The four equal semiquavers within the fugue's lengthy subject are generally played literally, which delivers a rather uncomfortable, and certainly anachronistic, rhythmic complexity. (One can compare Mozart's deliberate use of exactly this juxtaposition between groups of three and of four, in Variation II of the finale of Piano Sonata K284. Although the rhythmic independence of diverse elements had become, by his time, a useful stylistic tool, even Mozart felt the need to write slurs over every group of