

## A Response to John Wion

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### **Article:**

In response to John Wion's letter in the January issue, my article on Density 21.5 cited the views of Thomas Nyfenger on possible errors in measure 23. Despite the implication of *Flute Talk*'s title, I was not trying to correct Varese, but rather validating as a musician a claim which even Wion has heard.

Besides the arguments in the article, others could be cited, including the fact that the phrase in measures 18-23 begins on B, as do two following phrases. If measure 23 is corrected, the B is an octave shift from the Bs that precede it as a conclusion of the B phrases and also the A section.

Another consideration is the many precautionary accidentals (measures 3, 13, 17, 19, 21, 22, 30, 31, 32, 38, 41, 45, 53, and 61) in the score. In the last four bars of the final phrase of the work the third-octave B has a precautionary accidental, which seems unnecessary because it refers back to three measures in which a B<sup>b</sup> appears two registers lower. If Nyfenger's claim is correct, why is there no precautionary accidental in this measure? I believe a fair conclusion is that the B<sup>#</sup> in measure 23 is part of the grace note activity and the sharp sign is not supposed to carry over to the Bs that follow.

Comparing measures 23 and 31, the note in measure 31 following the E 0 carries a precautionary accidental. Since in this case it is the grace note that needs to be clarified, a sharp appears to ensure E<sup>#</sup> is performed. In measure 23 the contrary occurs, since it is the grace note that carries first the accidental, the main-note triplet Bs would not need a precautionary accidental unless they were to be played as B<sup>#</sup>s. That the revised edition of 1946 does not contain this change in measure 23 probably has more to do with the notation practices of the time regarding grace notes than with the composer's intention.

I believe there is enough analytical evidence to validate Nyfenger's claim and allow performers to make an educated choice.