

SIMPLIFIED
MUSICAL NOTATION

BY
PRESTON EDWARDS.

THE ELEMENTS
OF
MUSICAL NOTATION
ON A
SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM

BY
PRESTON EDWARDS



Allahabad :
THE SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENT Co.
AGENTS.

Price Ten Annas.

PRINTED BY APURVA KRISHNA BOSE
AT THE INDIAN PRESS, ALLAHABAD.

ERRATA.

Page 2, 12th line, for *whie* read *white*.

„ 10, 5th „ from bottom, read (*p*, 13).

„ 11, 3rd „ „ top, for *b* read *by*.

FOREWORD.

It may seem almost absurd to place such a miniature volume as this on the market as a text-book of Musical Notation; but as a matter of fact its smallness is closely connected with whatever claim it may have to a favorable reception. A system by the use of which practically everything that needs to be known for the reading of musical notation can be placed before the learner in simple language in the space of a dozen small pages, is surely worthy of examination and careful consideration.

It is quite unreasonable that the beginner should be burdened with separate signs for Sharps and Flats, the real distinction between which belongs to a by-gone musical period, and is probably never really understood by one out of a hundred musicians. Nor is it necessary that he should struggle with various shapes of notes and rests to indicate time values, if a simpler method can be found which will at the same time be satisfactory in use. Such a method the author hopes he has set forth in this book; certainly there can be no doubt as to the simplicity.

Of those engaged in teaching beginners the author would ask that they carefully look into this method in the light of the above remarks, and that they give it a trial if possible, to test whether these claims will be borne out by experience.

To those interested in the theory and history of Music, the author presents this as an essay towards a simpler and more scientific system of notation, not burdened with obsolete signs of a scale system which modern composers are more and more disregarding, nor with unnecessary signatures, shapes, clefs etc. From all he would welcome helpful criticism and suggestions which might lead toward developing a system which would conserve such merits as the one here proposed may possess, while minimizing its defects.

As regards Indian music in its traditional forms, the above remarks as to the absence of discrimination between sharps and flats do not apply, for not only are both sharps and flats used, but several distinct forms of each. Whether the modern tendency towards the obliteration of these distinctions will be carried to completion as in western music, or whether some way will be found of preserving these while incorporating the advantages of modern developments, is difficult to say at the present time. But I believe it will be found that the staff here described can also be adapted to expressing these fine distinctions better than the old staff. It is beyond the scope of this little book to go into details in this matter, but the author hopes to take it up in its proper connection.

ALLAHABAD, INDIA :
October, 1919.

The Elements of Musical Notation.

1. All music depends on a certain property of musical tones called PITCH. This is commonly referred to in speaking of tones as high or low, or more fully, as tones of high or low pitch. A tone of a definite pitch is called a Note ; thus we have Low Notes and High Notes. All the notes of the Piano or Harmonium differ from one another in pitch, being lowest at the left-hand end of the keyboard, and rising by small degrees till the highest pitch is reached at the right-hand end.

2. The degree of difference of pitch between two notes is called the INTERVAL between these notes. The simplest and most important interval is the Octave, which is the interval between one white key on the keyboard and the 8th white key to the right or left, counting both keys in the eight ; Octave means Eighth. By striking two such notes you may notice that there is a marked similarity in the sounds, and when struck at the same time, they blend with each other to such an extent that the two seem almost to be one single note.

3. Musical notes are named by letters. On account of the close similarity between a note and its octave, (that is, a note separated from it by an interval of an octave), the same letter is used for these two,

so that only seven letters are required, namely, A B C D E F G, and these are repeated as many times as necessary to cover all the notes of the keyboard.

4. Let us now make a little study of the keyboard. It will be sufficient to take only one octave (or portion whose first and last notes are an octave apart), for examination will show that the whole keyboard is made up of a number of sections exactly similar to this, the last key of each section being the first of the following section. The illustration below shows such a section beginning with C and ending with C an octave higher; this section is taken because its *white* keys form the scale of "C Major," which is the most important scale.*

Fig. 1. Octave on Keyboard.



5. An inspection of this section of the keyboard shows that if we leave out the upper C, which is really the beginning of a second similar section, there are seven white and five black keys, or twelve in all. The interval between any two adjacent notes is exactly the same as between any other such pair, and is named a Semitone. Twelve Semitones make an Octave.

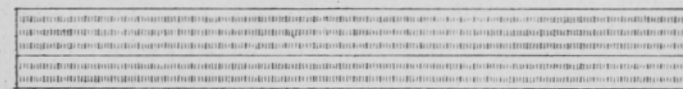
* A more rational system of naming would be to change the name of 'C' to 'A,' &c., so that the "natural" scale would be A Major. The black keys could be designated 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

6. The black keys are named either from the white one just lower (to the left) with the word Sharp, or from that next higher with the word Flat; *e.g.*, the black key between C and D is called either C Sharp or D Flat, and so on.

7. A Musical scale is a progression of notes leading from one note to that one an octave higher or lower; *e.g.*, the notes C D E F G A B (C) form the scale of "C Major," which is, as has been said above, the most important scale, but there are many other scales, having different notes, and in some cases a different number of notes, than the above.*

8. For writing music, a special set of lines is used, called a Musical Staff. A portion of a staff is shown below. It is seen to consist of twelve spaces, seven of them white and five shaded. These spaces represent the twelve keys of the piano or organ, the white spaces indicating the white keys, the shaded spaces the black keys. The notes to be played are shown by black bars written or printed in the proper spaces—these bars are also called Notes.

Fig. 2. Musical Staff.



9. Another element which enters into all music is TIME. Every note in music has not only a definite

* Among these may be mentioned, (1) The Minor Scale, which like the Major Scale has 7 notes; (2) The Modern "Whole-Tone" or "Tonal" Scale of 6 notes; (3) The Chromatic (or modern "Duode-cuple") Scale of 12 notes, that is, all the notes of the keyboard.

Pitch but a definite Time of Duration. This time of duration is indicated by the *Length* of the printed or written note, just as the pitch is indicated by the space of the staff on which the note is located. Thus a note extending over six of the small divisions of the shaded spaces of the staff is held twice as long as one extending over three, and so on.

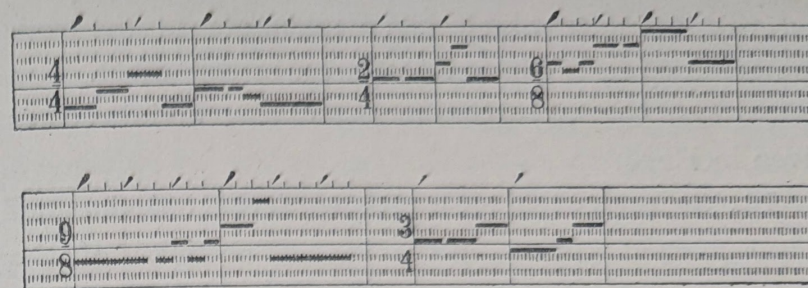
N.B.—The small divisions referred to above are called “Cells.” The notes are usually made slightly shorter than the required number of cells in order to avoid confusion.

10. A “Bar” or “Measure” is a portion of the staff formed by lines drawn right across the staff. A measure contains a fixed number of small equal divisions of time, called “Beats,” or “Counts.”

11. According to the number of beats contained in a measure there are several Varieties of Time, *e.g.*, $\frac{4}{4}$ or Common Time, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{3}{2}$, $\frac{12}{8}$ etc. In each case the upper figure shows the number of Beats or Counts in a measure, while the lower figure shows what fraction each beat is of the time of what in the older notation is called a Whole Note. Any convenient number of cells is used to correspond to a beat; this number is indicated in each of the examples given below (Ex. 1) by short vertical lines at the top of the staff, dividing the measure into beats. The numbers indicating the variety of time are printed on the Staff.

The notes marked with an accent (') receive greater stress in playing or singing than the others.

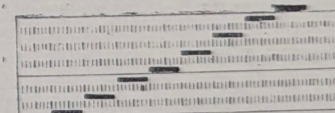
Ex. 1, VARIETIES OF TIME.



12. Where part of a measure is left without any note in it, there is silence; this is called a Rest, and its duration is indicated, just as that of a note, by the number of cells over which it extends.

13. We should now study the Scales. First we may take the Scale of C Major, which is given by the White keys, as in Ex. 2, thus:—

Ex. 2. SCALE OF C. MAJOR.



An inspection of this scale shows that the interval between the first two notes, C and D, is two Semitones or one Tone. We may give this and all the other intervals in tabular form as below, the words in the lower line giving the intervals between the notes of the scale as named in the upper line.

1(C) 2(D) 3(E) 4(F) 5(G) 6(A) 7(B) 8(C).

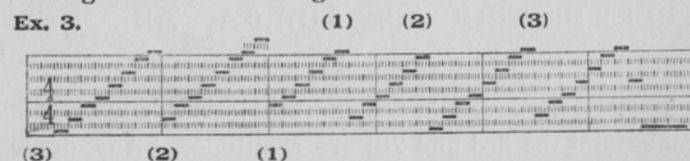
Tone tone s'tone tone tone tone s'tone.

The 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th intervals are whole tones, and the 3rd and 7th are semitones. Any other

Major Scale is built up in exactly the same way, starting with the note which gives its name to the scale and going up by the intervals shown in this table. This can be seen by inspection of any of the major scales given in Ex. 4.

14. So far as has been hitherto indicated, the staff may represent any one of the several sections of the keyboard, containing the notes C to B. It is, therefore, necessary to add some sign to show which one of these sections is intended to be used in any particular case. For this purpose, we must first name one particular note; the one generally used is "Middle C." Middle C is that C which is nearest the middle of the ordinary piano keyboard.

A figure 1, 2, etc. placed opposite the upper part of the staff, or just above the staff, shows that the first, second, etc., octave upwards from middle C is represented. Such figures placed opposite the lower part, or just below, indicate the corresponding octaves below middle C. The staff may be changed at any point by placing a different number in the proper position, and the effect of any number holds until it is changed by the occurrence of another number. In this way the example given below (Ex. 3) shows a series of notes (a scale) running from the lowest C on the keyboard of a Cottage Piano to the highest C. This covers a range



greater than the ordinary range of a Harmonium keyboard.

15. Often instead of changing the number indicating which octave the staff represents, it is more convenient to add a small portion of another staff above or below the original staff, to take notes which are higher or lower than the range of this staff. These added sections are called Ledger Lines. An example of this is shown in the second measure of Ex. 3, also in Ex. 4, Nos. 2, 4 &c.

16. We now give the complete set of the common "Major" Scales, and one of the "Minor" Scales, namely, A Minor. When a piece of music is marked "Key of C," "Key of E Flat" &c., it means that ordinarily the notes of the scales of C, E Flat &c. are used in that piece; if other notes not belonging to that scale are used, they are called "Accidentals."

It may be seen from the examples that the Minor scale of A in descending uses the notes of the scale of C Major, that is, the white keys only, while in ascending, its 6th and 7th notes are the same as the 6th and 7th of the scale of A Major, namely F Sharp and G Sharp. So every minor scale in its descending part uses the notes belonging to its "related" major scale, that is, the major scale of the note just three semitones (3 spaces in the staff) higher, while in its ascending part the 6th and 7th notes are each one semitone higher than those of its related major scale (not the 6th and 7th notes of the major scale, but

the 6th and 7th counting from the first note of the minor scale).

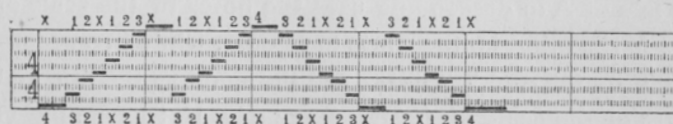
Note that the G Major scale uses 1 black key, the D Major scale 2, and so on. This accounts for the order in which the scales are given.

The small figures opposite the notes indicate the fingers with which they are to be played on the Piano or Harmonium. x indicates the thumb, 1 the first finger, 2 the middle finger, 3 the next, 4 the little finger. The figures above the staff give the fingering for the right hand, those below, for the left hand. The scales may be played first with the right hand alone, then with the left hand alone, an octave lower than written, then with both hands together. They should be practised till they can be played easily and rapidly.

Ex. 4. THE SCALES.

No. 1. C. MAJOR.

(1) (2) (1)



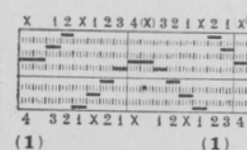
No. 2. A MINOR.

(1) (2) (1)



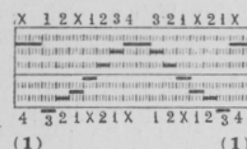
No. 3. G. MAJOR.

(1)



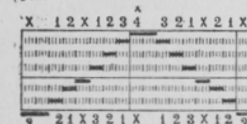
No. 5. A. MAJOR.

(1)



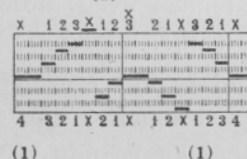
No. 7. B. MAJOR.

(1)



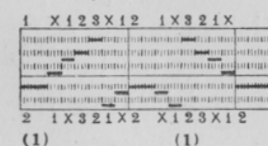
No. 9. F. MAJOR.

(1)



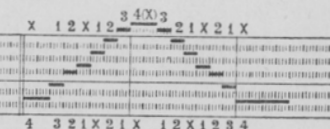
No. 11. E. FLAT MAJOR.

(1)



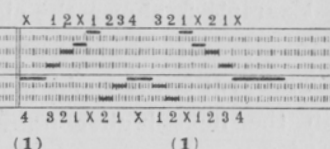
No. 4. D. MAJOR.

(1)



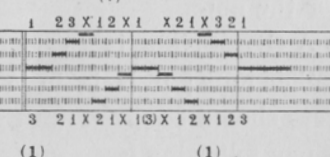
No. 6. E. MAJOR.

(1)



No. 8. F. SHARP (OR G. FLAT) MAJOR.

(1)



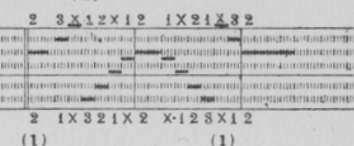
No. 10. B. FLAT MAJOR.

(1)



No. 12. A. FLAT MAJOR.

(1)



Ex. 5. THE TURN.

No. 13. D. FLAT MAJOR.

(1)

		Written	played	written	played.
1	2 X 1 2 3 X 1 X 3 2 1 X 2 1				
2	1 X 3 2 1 X 2 X 1 2 3 X 1 2				

17. Musical Terms.

Example 5 shows the sign of the Turn and its meaning.

The Trill is the rapid playing of a note alternately with the next higher note of the scale, extending through the number of beats indicated by the length of the note; it is indicated by the sign *tr...*, placed over the note.

A Grace Note is a very short note placed before another note; if it is in a position of accent, the stress should be given not to the grace note, but to the one following it.

The Pause () means that the note or rest over which it is written should be extended over more than (usually about double) its face value.

The term *Legato* means *Smoothly*, and signifies that note should be joined to one another, without a break; this may also be indicated by writing the first note so as to fill out the space allotted to it; *e.g.*, in the 11th measure of "God Save the King (p.)" the second and third notes are so joined (being sung to one syllable, "to"), and so also the fourth and fifth ("reign"), but the first is not so joined to the second, nor the third to the fourth.

Staccato means *Detached*, the opposite of *Legato*; it may be indicated by leaving a brief space between successive notes, or by dots placed over the notes.

Many terms are used to indicate the expression with which music is to be played; it is preferable to use English words for those whose language is English, but some terms from foreign languages are in such common use that they must be given here, as follows:—

Piano, *p*, Soft; *Pianissimo*, *pp*, Very soft.

Forte, *f*, Loud; *Fortissimo*, *ff*, Very loud.

Mezzo-forte, *mf*, Moderately loud; *mp*, Moderately soft.

Crescendo, *cr*, Growing louder, increasing.

Diminuendo, *dim*, Diminishing, growing softer.

Rallentando, *rall*, Growing slower.

A tempo, In the original time.

18. Relation to Tonic Sol-Fa System.

The Simplified Staff may easily be used for what we might call a "Tonic Staff Notation," by having the lowest white space always represent "Do" (in Indian notation "Sa") when the seven white spaces reckoning from bottom to top of the staff will stand for *d, r, m, f, s, l, t* or for *sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni*, the white space above the staff being again 'd' or 'sa' and so on; thus the same space would be invariably connected with the same degree of the scale. The five shaded spaces of course will represent the corresponding "accidentals" or "Komals." The actual pitch of *d* or *sa* would be given by giving the name of the key as usual at the

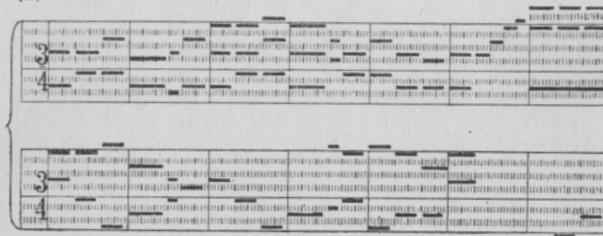
beginning of the selection, as, Key of G, Key of B Flat &c.

Suppose then that a person who had learned this staff as a "tonic" system as described above, wished to sing music direct from the piano or harmonium score, where a certain space represents a certain key of the keyboard, which may be any degree of the scale according to what scale is being used. Let him draw or cut out a small portion of a blank staff, such as we have in Fig. 2 of this book; it must however be of the same width as the staff he wishes to read from. Then let him apply this small section so that the lowest white section of it (the "do" space) is just opposite the space in the music to be read which represents (on the piano keyboard) the key in which the music is written. Then the position in the scale of any note in the music will be shown by the space of the small section of staff, which is opposite to that note. This follows from the fact that all the spaces are equal in width.

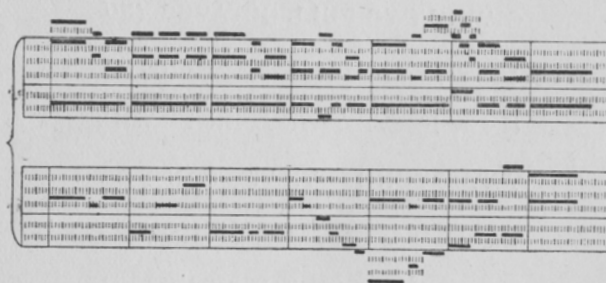
19. Examples 6 and 7 show a Western and an Indian tune respectively.

Ex. 6. Key of G. GOD SAVE THE KING.

(1)

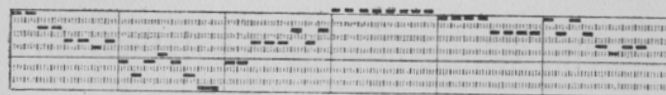
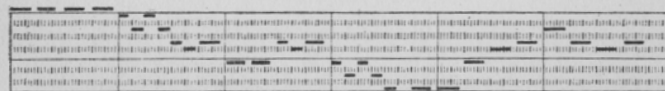


(1)



Ex. 7. "I'MAN"

(1)



(2)

(1)

