

A
MUSICAL DICTIONARY;

BEING A
COLLECTION

OF

TERMS and CHARACTERS,

As well ANCIENT as MODERN ;

INCLUDING THE

Historical, Theoretical, and Practical Parts

OF

MUSIC :

As also, an Explanation of some Parts of the
Doctrines of the *Antients* ;

INTERSPERSED WITH

Remarks on their Method and Practice, and curious
Observations on the *Phænomena* of

SOUND

Mathematically considered,

As it's Relations and Proportions constitute Intervals,

And those again

CONCORDS and DISCORDS.

The whole carefully abstracted from the best Authors
in the *Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English* Languages.

By JAMES GRASSINEAU, Gent.

Ultra vires opus !

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BASS, that part of a concert which is most heard, which consists of the gravest and deepest sounds, and which is played on the largest pipes or strings of a common instrument, as of an Organ, Lute, or on instruments larger than ordinary for that purpose, as Bass Viols, Bassoons, Bass-hautboys, &c. See each under it's proper Article.

Musicians hold the *Bass* to be the principal part of the concert, and the foundation of composition; though some will have the *Treble* the chief part, which others only make an ornament.

Counter Bass, is a second or double *Bass*, where there are several in the same concert.

Thorough Bass, is the harmony made by the Bass Viols or *Theorbo*s continuing to play both while the voices sing, and the other instruments perform their parts, and also filling up the intervals when any of the other parts stop.

M. *Brossard* observes the *Thorough Bass* to be part of the modern music, first invented in the year 1600, by an *Italian* named *Ludovicus Viadana*. 'Tis played by cyphers marked over the notes on the Organ, Spinnet, Harpsichord, *Theorbo*, Harp, &c. and frequently simply, and without cyphers on the Bass Viol, Bassoon, &c.

BASSETTO, a *Bass Viol* or *Violin* of the smallest size, so called in distinction of Bass Viols or Violins of a larger size. See **BASS** and **VIOL**.

BASIS. See **TRIAS HARMONICA**.

BASISTA, the person who plays or sings that part of a piece of music called the Bass or Counter Bass. See **BASSO**.

BASSO, for the most part signifies the *Bass*, but sometimes in pieces of music for several voices, the singing *Bass* is more particularly so called.

Basso Concertante, the *Bass* of the little chorus, or that which sings and plays throughout the piece.

Basso Continuo, the *thorough* or *continual Bass*, which is commonly distinguished from the others by figures over the notes in music books, which figures are only proper for the Organ, Harpsichord, Spinnet, *Theorbo*, Lute, Harp, &c. this is often signified by the letters, B C.

Basso Recitante. See **CONCERTANTE**.

Basso Ripieno, the *Bass* of the grand chorus that sings or plays now and then in some particular places, generally only during the chorus.

Basso Viola, a *Bass Viol*. See **BASS VIOLIN**:

Basso Violino, a small *Bass Viol* or *Violin*.

BASSOON, a musical instrument of the wind kind, serving as a bass in concerts of wind music, as of *Flutes*, *Haut boys*,

Hautboys, &c. To make it portable it is divided into two parts. Its diameter at bottom was formerly nine inches, at present 'tis but four at most, and it's holes are stopped with keys, &c. like large *Flutes*. It serves as *Bass* to the *Hautboy*.

BASS Violin, a musical instrument of the same form with the *Violin*, except that 'tis much larger. 'Tis struck like that with a *Bow*, has four strings and eight stops, divided into half notes, or semitones. The sound it yields is much more grave, sweet and agreeable than that of the *Violin*, and of much better effect in a concert. See *VIOLIN*.

BATTUTA, the motion of beating with the hand or foot, in directing the time. See *TIME*.

The *Italians* use the phrase *A Tempo Giusto*, after a recitative, to show that the measure is to be beat true and just, which during that recitative was conducted irregularly to favour some action, or to express some passion, &c.

BELL, a machine ranked by Musicians in the number of instruments of percussion.

The Bell hath three parts, the body or barrel, the clapper within side, and the ear or canon, whereby 'tis hung to a large beam of wood. It is made of a compound metal of twenty pounds of pewter to an hundred of copper, called *Bell-metal*. The thickness of it's edges is usually $\frac{1}{3}$ of the diameter, and it's height twelve times it's thickness. The *Bell-founders* have a *Diapason* or *Bell-scale*, wherewith they measure the size, thickness, weight and tone of their Bells. The use of Bells is summed up in these two lines,

Laudo Deum vorum, plebem voco, congreo clerum
Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro.

The first Bells are said to have been made at *Nola* in *Campania*, whereof *St Paulinus* was Bishop; it is assured at least that they were first brought into the church by him; and hence 'tis added they had their *Latin* names *Nolæ* and *Campanæ*; but others say they take these names, not because invented in *Campania*, but because the manner of hanging and balancing them as used at present, was first practiced there; or at least they were hung on the model of a sort of balance invented in *Campania*. For in the *Latin* writers we find *Campana statera* for a steelyard, and the *Greek* χαμπαζεις for *ponderare* — to weigh.

The invention of church Bells is by *Polydore Virgil* ascribed to Pope *Sabinian*, *St Gregory's* successor, but by mistake, for there is mention made of Bells by *St Jerome* contemporary with *Paulinus*. In effect Pope *Sabinian* did not invent Bells, but was the first who appointed the cononical hours should be distinguished by them.

powers whereby they are equally bent and inflected. See STRING

VIETATI *Intervalli*. See INTERVAL.

VIETATO, *forbidden*, that must not be done, either because not according to rule, or as not having an effect proper to the end of music, that is, such a one as does not affect the ear with pleasure. There are *Passaggi vietati* and *Intervalli vietati*. See PASSAGE.

VIGESSIMO, *the twentieth*, one of the intervals in music, which is the sixth tripled. See SIXTH and INTERVAL.

VIGOROSO, or VIGOROSAMENTE, signify to sing or play with vigor, strength and firmness.

VILLANELLA, *rustick, peasant-like*, a sort of dance, or rather air, to which country people or peasants dance; there are some of this kind that are very agreeable, having in them something very gay and enlivening proper to the design thereof; the first couplet is usually played plain and simple, afterwards come an infinity of variations, diminutions, &c. they answer in some respects to our country dances.

VIOLA, a musical instrument of the same form with the Violin, and struck like that with a bow; 'tis by the *Italians* denominated a tenor violin. See VIOLIN.

Of this instrument there are several sorts and sizes; they are usually strung with four strings.

VIOLA di Gamba, *Leg-Viol*, tho' we call it simply Viol, the *Italians* add *di Gamba*, because 'tis held between the legs to be played on.

Of this kind there were formerly whole chests which contained sets of them, such as trebles, tenors, counter-tenors, basses and double basses; each of which was mounted with six strings, having eight stops or frets divided by semi-tones.

Their sound is very soft and agreeable. The tablature or music for this instrument is laid down on six lines or rules.

There are yet remaining pieces, being a sort of fancies designed for these instruments only.

What the *Italians* call *Alto Viola*, is the counter-tenor of this; and their *Viola Tenore*, the tenor. They sometimes call it simply *Viola*. Some authors will have it the *Lyra*, others the *Cythara*, others the *Chelis*, and others the *Tessudo* of the ancients. See LYRA, CYTHARA, &c.

VIOLA Tenore, a tenor Viol,

VIOLA Basso, a bass Viol.

VIOLA d' Amour, or *Love Viol*, is a kind of triple viol or violin, having six brads or steel strings, like those of the Harpsichord, ordinarily played with a bow.

It yields a kind of silver sound, and has something in it very agreeable and soft, whence it's name.

The bastard viol of the *Italians* (not used among us) Mr *Brossard* takes to be a kind of bass viol mounted with six or seven strings, tuned as the common one.

What the *Italians* call *Viola di Brachia*, — *Arm-Viol*, or simply *Brachia*, — *Arm*, is an instrument answering to our counter-tenor.

Their *Viola prima*, or *first Viol*, is really our counter-tenor Violin; at least they commonly use the cleff of *C sol ut*, on the first line to denote the piece intended for this instrument.

Their *Viola secunda* is much the same with our *tenor Violin*, having the key *C sol ut*, on the second line.

Their *Viola terza*, is nearly our *counter tenor Violin*; the key *C sol ut*, on the third line.

Their *Viola quarto*, or *fourth Viol*, is not known in *England* or *France*, tho' we frequently find it in *Italian* compositions; the key on the fourth line from the top.

VIOLETTA, or **LITTLE VIOL**, is in reality, our *triple Viol*. This term is frequently confounded by strangers, with what has been said of *Viola prima*, *secunda*, *terza*, &c.

VIOLIN or **FIDDLE**, is a musical instrument mounted with four strings or guts, and struck with a bow.

The *Violin*, like most other instruments, consists of three parts; the neck, the table, and the sound-board; at the sides are two apertures, and sometimes a third is added towards the top, shaped like a heart.

It's bridge which is below the apertures, bears up the strings which are fastened to the two extrems of the instrument, at one end of them to a screw, which stretches or loosens them at pleasure.

The style and sound of the *Violin* is the gayest, most lively, and sprightly of all instruments; and hence it is of all others the fittest for dancing. Yet there are ways of touching it which render it grave, soft, and languishing, and fit for church or chamber music.

It generally makes the treble or highest part in concerts.

It is tuned by fifths: it's play is composed of bass, counter-tenor, tenor and treble; to which may be added a fifth part: each part has four fifths, which rise to a greater seventeenth. See **FIFTH**.

In compositions of music, the *Violin* is denoted by *V.* and two *V V.* denote two *Violins*.

The word *Violin* stands for *treble Violin*; when the *Italians* prefix *alto*, *tenore*, or *basso*, it then expresses the counter-tenor, tenor, and bass *Violin*. See *TREBLE*, *TENOR*, and *BASS*.

In compositions, where there are two or more *Violins*, they make use of the words *prima*, *seconda*, *terza*, &c. of the characters. I, II', III^a; or of these figures, 1^v, 2^v, 3^v, &c. to denote the difference.

The *Violin* has only four strings, each whereof is of a different thickness; the smallest makes the *E si mi* of the highest octave of the organ; the second, a fifth below the first, makes the *A mi la*; the third, a fifth below the second, is *D la re*; lastly, the fourth, a fifth below the third, is *G re sol*.

The largest or fourth string has four notes belonging to it, *viz.* *G re sol ut*, or *G*, which is to be played open, *A la mi re*, or *A* must be stopped with the fore-finger, of the left hand, almost at the distance of an inch from the nut; *B fa be mi* or *B*, with the second finger about half an inch from the first, and *C sol fa ut*, with the third finger close to the second.

The third has also four notes, *D la sol re*, is struck open; *E la mi*, must be stopped with the fore finger about an inch from the nut; *F fa ut*, with the second finger close to the first; and *G re sol ut*, (on which note the cleff is commonly marked) with the third finger $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch from the second.

The second string has four notes, *A la mi re*, or *A* is the open string; *B fa be mi*, or *B*, is with the fore finger, about an inch from the nut; *C sol fa ut*, is the second finger close to the first; and *D la sol re*, or *D*, is the third finger about three quarters of an inch from the second.

The least or treble string, has usually six notes, *E la*, open; *F fa ut*, or *F*, the fore finger very near the nut; *G sol re ut*, or *G*, the second about three quarters of an inch from the first; *A la mi re*, or *A*, with the third finger at the same distance from the second; *B fa be mi*, with the little finger half an inch from the third; and lastly, *C fa ut*, you must stretch the little finger about a quarter of an inch farther than for *B fa be mi*. But here it must be observed, that all the notes on the treble string, except *E la*, or *E*, are termed in *alt* for distinction's sake. For flat, sharp, and gamut, see *FLAT*, *SHARP*, &c. For time, note, bar, and rest, see *TIME*, *NOTE*, *BAR*, and *REST*.

Most

Most nations ordinarily use the cleff *G re sol* on the second line from the bottom, to denote the music for this instrument; the *French* alone use the same cleff on the lowest line; the first method is best when the song goes very low; the second best when it goes very high.

VIOLINCELLO of the *Italians*, is properly what we call the Bass Violin with four strings, sometimes even five or six; but those are not common, the first being most used among us.

VIOLINISTA, a person that plays, or is a master of the Violin.

VIOLINO *concertante, concertini, or di concertino*, those Violins, whether first or second, that play throughout the piece, in distinction to *Violini ripieni*, Violins that play in particular places, as in grand chorus, to fill up or compleat the harmony.

VIOLONO, a large Bass Violin or double bass, every way as big again as the common one; and the strings, which are four, bigger and longer in proportion, consequently it's sound must be an octave deeper than that of the *Violincello*, or Bass Violin; it has a noble effect in great concerts. See CONCERT and VIOLINCELLO.

VIRGULA, a *Latin* term, for which the *Italians* say *Vergetta* or *Verghetta*, both which signify, that line drawn from the head of a note either upwards or downwards, which we commonly call the tail thereof. *Bontempi*, in his *Historia Musica*, distinguishes several kinds.


Vergetta ascendente, the tail turned upwards.

Vergetta descendente, or pendente, the contrary.

Each of these tails may be drawn on the right or left side of the head of a breve; if on the right, the *Italians* used the phrase *Vergetta ascendente, or pendente della parte destra*; if on the left, *della parte sinistra*.

These different situations make a great difference in the value of these notes, especially when they are tyed; for which see LEGATURE.

Vergetta dritta, a straight tail, as of a minim or crotchet 

Vergetta obliqua, one that has a little hook at the end, as that of a quaver ; this hook may be on either side.