

## A NEW SYSTEM OF NOTATION FOR VIOLIN MUSIC.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE violin is unequivocally the best instrument for a musical education, because unlike the piano it educates the ear. The violinist not only tunes his own instrument but he makes his own tone, and purity of tone is a rare accomplishment which is highly appreciated wherever it is acquired.

In spite of the importance of violin playing the musical notation for the violin has remained undeveloped. The violinist (as well as the players of other instruments) must use a notation which is specially adapted for the piano. This is a bad thing because it creates a confusion in the mind of beginners and there can be no doubt that much of the impurity of tone, not only in beginners but sometimes also in advanced artists, is frequently due to a misconception of exact fingering.

On the piano the key of C has been made the basis, and the distance between the successive notes of the scale appears to be equal. Hence any one who would study music from musical notations alone might think that the interval from B to C, or from E to F is the same as from A to B or D to E or any other whole tone. The violinist has to translate the notation of piano music into his sense of intervals on the violin strings, and that this is not easy appears from the fact that beginners are limited for some time to the G scale.

Although the piano is the dominant power in our music and any one who studies music must be familiar with the piano and its instrumentation, I claim that the violin should not be neglected. Indeed, the violin is important enough to have its own notation, descriptive of its own mechanism. Such a distinct notation is not to be advised for the purpose of separating violin music from piano music, which represents music in general, but simply for the sake

of allowing the beginner to form a clear conception of the scale on the violin, and of the position of the notes in the different scales. I would not advocate discarding the piano method of notation which is now in common use for the violin, but I do suggest that a special notation which exactly represents the violin mechanism would be helpful to the violinist: it would tend to facilitate finding the right position for his fingers and be conducive to purity of tone.

My suggestion is simple enough and I only wonder that it has not been proposed before. I trust that after a brief explanation violinists will be able to play easily at sight any tune in any key, written in this new system of violin notation.

It is proposed to use a staff of four lines representing severally from below upwards the four strings of the violin. They are called the G line, the D line, the A line and the E line. The notation of time remains the same as in the piano system, but a note on each line means the open note on its corresponding string. A full interval is marked by a vertical line (called a "stroke") crossing the horizontal line at the left of the note. Thus a note on the G line with one preceding stroke means A; with two, B; with three, C sharp. The intermediate half tones are denoted by a half stroke (called a "semi-stroke" or simply a "semi") written in the same place but remaining above the line, not crossing it.

Attention is called to the fact that figures consisting of one, two, and three strokes, also of the one stroke and a semi and two strokes and a semi, are easily taken in at a glance, and every violin player will know at once the position of the so determined note on the string. The semi should ordinarily be placed according to the nature of the scale, either at the beginning, or in the middle or at the end; e. g., on the E string for a notation of A it would fall in the C scale at the beginning, in the G scale in the middle, and in the A scale at the end, i. e., in the third place.

In playing music from this system of violin notation the player will be able to transfer the sense-impression of the written note to the exact place on the violin with less intermediate thought than when playing from the notes now in current use.

A most important place on the violin is the seventh half interval on each string which will be the same note as the next following open string. On the G string it is D; on the D string, A; on the A string, E; and on the E string it is B. Notes on the seventh half-interval above these points are less frequently used but they are sometimes preferred and in exceptional cases even needed, especially when two notes are to be played at once. In the present



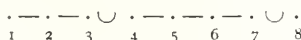
scheme of notation it is proposed to mark the seventh half-interval by a stroke passing through the middle of the note, and tones that are to be played on higher intervals, say, on the eighth, ninth, tenth etc. half-intervals are denoted by strokes placed *after* the note, so that a stroke after a note on the G line would indicate E to be played on the G string, etc. These lines are as easily seen as the lines placed before the note and the difference of the position is a sufficient differentiation to determine at a glance the place of the note on the string. With these possibilities our system of musical notation not only gives the note to be played but indicates also the string to be used. If, for instance, a composer has the intention of strengthening the D by having it played on both strings at once, he would indicate it by two notes, one on the G line crossed by a stroke and another on the D line without any mark.

Violin players often have occasion to play higher notes on the lower strings, and in order to express this in our notation we place such notes in the interval above their respective lines, which then marks the note of the second higher string, so that a bare note in the space between G and D lines would mean A to be played on the G string, equal to the A of the open A string. Strokes and semis preceding or following this note in the first space will have the same meaning as on the line itself, and if the note in the space is crossed by a stroke it is accordingly seven half-tones higher. Between the G and D lines it would be the same as E on the open E string.

All other modes of notation, especially the marking of fingers to be used and also the harmonics, remain the same as in the old system.

The simplicity of the scheme becomes apparent in the accompanying diagrams and notation of a few scales.

This is all I need to say on this system of notation for violin music but I wish to add a few comments concerning the different scales. In the development of our scale (speaking now of the major) two half-intervals have been inserted, one after the third note and the other after the seventh at the end of the scale just before it returns to the higher dominant. They are represented in the following scheme by long and short signs, thus:

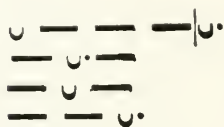


The violinist must bear this scheme more carefully in mind than the pianist for he has to be exact with his fingering. There would be no difficulty at all in remembering it if the whole gamut of the

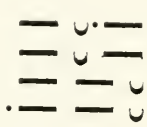
violin were contained on one string. The complexity comes in when the notes pass from one string to another.

In order to enable a beginner to have a clear conception of each different scale and the intervals on which the several notes fall, we would advise teachers to use the following diagrams for representing the relation of the intervals on the four strings. The diagrams consist of the metrical symbols of long signs to denote whole intervals corresponding to strokes, and short signs corresponding to semis to denote half-intervals. The place of the dominant shall be marked by a period so as to show at a glance the beginning and end of the scales.

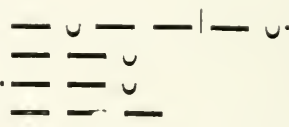
It will be noticed that all scales present a certain regularity of their own; a few of them appear rather freakish especially when they skip some of the open strings entirely. In order to denote that the open string does not fall within the range of the scale we indicate its omission by a little zero sign which we call a "skip."



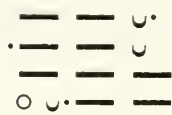
SCALE OF C.



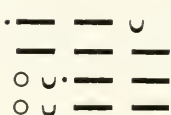
SCALE OF G.



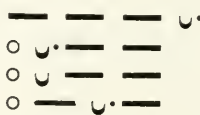
SCALE OF D.



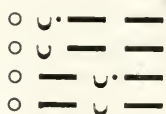
SCALE OF A.



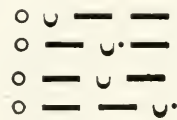
SCALE OF E.



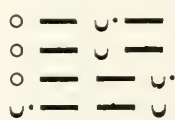
SCALE OF B.



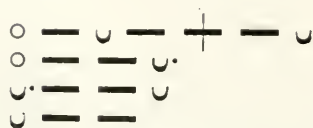
SCALE OF G FLAT.



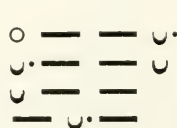
SCALE OF D FLAT.



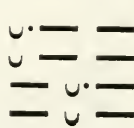
SCALE OF A FLAT.



SCALE OF E FLAT.



SCALE OF B FLAT.



SCALE OF F.

The skip is always equivalent to one half-interval and accordingly is to be denoted in our system of violin notation by a semi. Where the skip is followed by a half-interval, the two may be represented in the notation as two separate semis, but it would not be wrong (and in order to avoid complicated figures it might be preferable) to have the two semis contracted into one whole stroke. This happens in E Major and in A Major on the G line; in B Major on the D and A lines, and in G flat Major on the A and E lines.

The same contraction would be allowable when the skip and the semi are separated by a whole interval, in which case we can write two strokes instead of one stroke preceded and followed by semis.

"MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE."



Among the examples of musical selections written in the new notation we offer one set for two voices, in order to show that even more difficult pieces can be played with greater ease, and would demand less study of the details of fingering.

There is no intention to revolutionize the present notation of violin music; the capital invested in it is too great to tolerate any sudden change. But for all that there is room for an innovation that promises to be useful to the violin instructor even if it would never replace the old method of notation, for we hope that our suggestion will at a certain stage, and indeed at the very start, facilitate a better comprehension of violin music and be helpful in increasing the interest taken in a systematic musical education.



## CRADLE SONG.

Miska Hauser.

The musical score for "Cradle Song" is written for piano in 2/4 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The notation includes various fingerings (e.g., 10, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1) and dynamics such as *p* (piano) and *rall.* (rallentando). The score features a variety of note values, including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and slurs. The piece concludes with a first ending (1. 2) and a second ending (2.) marked with repeat signs.

SONG.

Mozart.

