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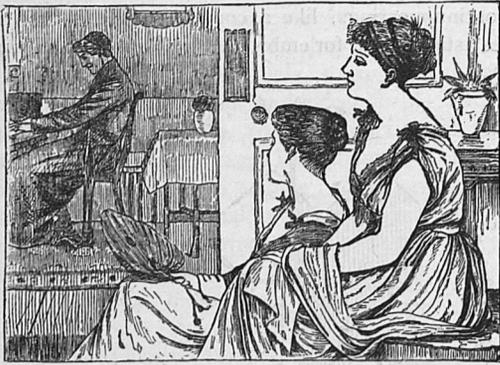
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The MUSICAL



AMATEUR



HINTS TO AMATEUR VIOLINISTS.

LET me say at the outset that, in addressing myself to those amateurs who love and study the violin, I am well aware that I appeal to a smaller circle of auditors than I did when I spoke of the piano and the voice; but I am also aware that, in this smaller circle, the percentage of honest and earnest students is much larger. The violin is too difficult and exacting an instrument (even to play badly) to be lightly attacked and pursued. Anybody can learn to pound something out of a piano, and, though he may strike wrong notes, he cannot play out of tune (except when the instrument is false); and almost anybody can "squawk," somehow. But out of a large number of anybodies there will be but few somebodies who can successfully essay the violin.

The intending violinist must have an acute ear (or he cannot even tune his instrument, much less play it), a wrist as flexible and strong as a steel spring, fingers not too large at the ends (or he will have great difficulty in playing in tune in the high positions), and endless patience. The teacher also needs a share of this last qualification. Women are beginning to comprehend that the violin is an instrument well fitted for their use, and the number of female students of this instrument is yearly increasing. The more delicate (by which I mean only more sensitive, not weaker) organization of women makes the violin a more appropriate instrument for her than for the ordinary man. Great physical strength is not required. The kind of power needed in the right wrist is that which comes, not from big muscles, but from fine nerve power. I have heard the violin played with such a false expenditure of strength that the tone was fairly crushed into the instrument instead of being drawn out. The small ends of most women's fingers greatly facilitate playing in tune, when the left hand approaches the bridge, where the notes lie close together, while small hands can hardly be considered a serious obstacle, since Pablo Sarasate, now called the greatest violinist in Europe, has hands as small as those of the average woman generally are.

The study of the violin should be begun early in life. As maturity approaches the wrist loses some of its flexibility, unless it has been kept at exercises which increase it; and that once gone, good playing is quite out of the question. So well do all good teachers understand the vital importance of a good "bow arm" that the right arm receives a long and severe training before the left hand is asked to do much more than hold the violin in its proper position.

I have no intention of making this article a manual of violin playing; I simply propose to throw out a few hints to students, as I did in the articles on piano playing and on singing—hints which may supplement the lessons of your teacher, and, in some cases, assist you in determining whether that teacher is an honestly good one or not. If your teacher is in a hurry to bring your left hand into play, and give you "little tunes" while your bow is still wobbling about the instrument and aiming at all points of the compass as you draw it up and down, send him "to the right about" instantly.

He will do you in one quarter an amount of damage that a year's hard study may not undo.

The first thing is to get a steady, even motion with the bow, the elbow in the right position, the wrist curving as the bow rises just enough to keep the tip of the bow pointing always in the same direction. So long as the tip of your bow describes wild circles and erratic figures in the air, you may make up your mind that something is radically wrong in your management of your wrist; and the best thing you can do is to set to work, find out what it is, and get rid of it.

When you have attained a steady, even motion of your bow on all four open strings, and have your bow arm sufficiently trained not to require all your brains to keep it in the way it should go, you may begin a little work with the left hand by attacking a scale. The scale of D (two sharps) is a good one to begin with; because if you start it on the open D string and run it up one octave, you will have the same position of fingers on the D and A strings, and so increase your very slender chances of getting one or two notes in tune. You will also gain the additional advantage of being kept on the two middle strings, whereby you avoid the excessively elevated or depressed position of the hand necessary for the G or E strings. At first you should take but one note to each drawing of the bow, and let that drawing be as slow and as careful as when your left hand was not brought into play. You can keep your eyes pretty much for your bow arm; your ears will keep you quite well enough informed about what your left hand is doing.

Do not be discouraged. It is true that your tone is a mixture of cat-squall and verjuice, and your notes only approximations to the pitch; but Sarasate, Joachim, Wilhelmj, and Remenyi did no better when they began. By and by you may take two notes of your scale to each bow, and lovely notes they will be at first, and marvellously will your bow wriggle about as you try to remember that your left hand makes now two movements against the one of your right. But, again I say, do not be discouraged.

There is no study so discouraging in its early stages as that of stringed instruments (by which I mean the violin family). A piano pupil has the note plainly before him, and if he takes time enough can certainly hit it. A singer, with any sort of ear, can get the right note, be the way in which it is taken right or wrong. The pupil on a wind instrument, let him but get the right valve, will get, if not the note he wants (which is by no means certain), at least one in the same scale. But to the violin pupil's possibilities there are no such limits. He has at command all the recognized scales, besides several which he will unintentionally originate for himself, and all those infinitesimal subdivisions of the semitone which are more felt than heard; and he must, at the outset, make up his mind that he is likely to exhaust all these possibilities before he begins to do any thing which may truthfully be called "playing." Of course this takes time, and plenty of it; but the student who attacks and conquers these chances at the outset will get into clear water much sooner than the pupil who bends his energies to the picking and scratching out of tunes and who only grapples with his accidental originalities between times. To say nothing of the fact that while the former is on the road to being a really good player, the latter, no matter how long he works on his plan, will never be any thing but a scraper, and a very bad one too.

If you wish to study the possible variations of pitch, try to tune your violin yourself; when you think you have it quite right hand it to your teacher and notice the difference in effect when he hands it back to you, properly tuned. Some people learn to tune an instrument much more quickly than others. You must make it one of your earliest studies on the instrument. I have found that the untrained ear, even when naturally perfect, is apt to love fifths a shade too sharp; I do not at all know the reason for this, but I know it to be a fact.

Bear in mind always that your bow arm is going to be your greatest enemy. When the fingers of the left hand have once passed the Rubicon of the different "positions," it is astonishing with what rapidity they will proceed toward perfection. But the bow is continually presenting new difficulties. Probably no violinist ever lived who had all bowings equally at command. Some have, as had Wieniawski, a marvellous command of staccato; some, like Remenyi, a wonderful and steady pianissimo; others, like Vieuxtemps, a broad and flowing legato; one man will play you a rapid tremolo for almost any time without apparent fatigue (that man must play it from his wrist), while his neighbor shall, after a few minutes of the same work, become tired and irregular (this man probably plays with his arm). I say to the young violinist, as I said to the young pianist, practise all your rapid passages very slowly, increasing the time gradually at successive repetitions; and the moment that you find your bow and your left-hand fingers are not going exactly together, slacken up, and work slowly again.

As to the music for you to use, a good teacher can pick out for you just what you need far better than any suggestions of mine will enable you to do it for yourself; and if your teacher is a good one, do not quarrel with his selections though they may not exactly please you.

When, in the course of time, you have advanced far enough to play second violin in an orchestra, get a chance to do so; you will acquire a certain steadiness by this work, a quality you can hardly attain in any other way. Later on, if you have any means of doing so, play in string quartettes. In this way you will learn to "give and take," to become prominent when you have for a few measures the principal theme, and to combine with the others when some other instrument has it in its turn. This will perfect the mental side of your musical education, and will make you acquainted with some of the finest works of both the ancient and the modern schools; for the greatest masters of all ages have loved to crystallize their best and most rare thoughts in the shape of the string quartette.

Hear good players whenever you can, and study them as they play. Notice their faults, but only to avoid them yourself. Do not be carried away by virtuosity (great execution). Every great violinist must have great execution at his command; but the greatest make it only a means to an end, not the end itself.

When, in the course of years, you have advanced far enough to attack successfully the frightfully difficult concert fantasias on various themes which are now so plentiful, do it—as practice; but remember that, as musical works, they are of little or no value, and employ your time mainly in the study of works of the broad and classic school—such as sonatas, suites, concertos, and so forth. Never forget that the violin, in spite of its great capacity for rendering difficult passages of execution, is, after all, a melodic and emotional instrument, and that that is the side of its character which is most to be valued and insisted upon. It is all very well, and in fact necessary for the proper interpretation of good music, that you should be able to go shrieking up on the bridge and to scream out almost impossible passages in almost impossible positions; but give to your auditors only the results of this kind of work, in a perfect playing of perfect music. A really musical listener will no more care to hear your musical tight-rope-dancing exercises than you would care to hear a Patti sing in public the solfeggi and exercises by which she attained her present skill; and a musical listener is the only one for you to consider if you are really in earnest.

In conclusion, *study music*. A man who knows nothing of music save the instrument he plays is too one-sided and too incompletely taught even to do his best work on that instrument.

LESSONS IN HARMONY.

NO. IV.

THE student might now, as a test of memory, make a table of the intervals, giving the number of diatonic and chromatic semitones contained in each, in this way :

	Diatonic Semitones.	Chromatic Semitones.
Tone (or Second).....	2	2
Minor Third.....	3	3

and so on. Intervals are ranged under two heads—consonant and dissonant. The only exception to the absolute invariability of this rule is the interval of the Fourth. Some writers class this with the consonant, others with the dissonant, intervals. Mr. Horsley sensibly recommends that it be supposed to belong to either class, according to circumstances; that it be called consonant when placed among the other intervals, and dissonant when it is used as a "suspension." (This term will be explained and exemplified farther on in our studies.) Mr. Horsley's suggestion seems to be the only adequate one, and gives, at least, some solid foundation of rule for a case which has always been hotly debated. The intervals are thus divided :

CONSONANT.	
Thirds, Major and Minor.	Sixths, Major and Minor.
Fourth (sometimes).	Octaves.
Fifths.	
DISSONANT.	
Tones (or Seconds).	Flat Fifths.
Fourth (sometimes).	Sevenths, Major and Minor.
Sharp Fourth (Tritones).	

The next step is the "inversion" of the intervals. Intervals are inverted by putting the lowest sound for the highest, and "vice versa." Of course, from this time onward, we no longer write out the semitones of which an interval is composed; we simply write the interval itself. If the student have carefully studied the intervals and written them out in various keys, as I suggested, he will have no difficulty in recognizing at a glance, or in writing in a moment, any given interval from any note.

Now make a table of the results of inverting such intervals as we have, first, in figures :

1	inverted becomes	8
2	"	7
3	"	6
4	"	5
5	"	4
6	"	3
7	"	2
8	"	1

Then write them in notes, thus :

The pupil should finish the list for himself. One peculiar and important result of this inversion of intervals is that all major intervals become, when inverted, minor, and all minor intervals major. For example, a tone becomes a flat (or minor) seventh; a third, a minor sixth. You would better write out the complete list.

When introducing the sharp fourth (or tritone), I mentioned a class of intervals called "extreme," to which this properly belonged. We will now consider this class.

Extreme (also called "sharp") intervals are formed by raising each natural (or diatonic) interval one chromatic semitone. Thus :

We now come to a class of intervals the usefulness of which cannot be overrated; they are called *enharmonic intervals*, and are formed by the (imaginary) use

* It is true that the Unison cannot justly be termed an interval; but it is necessary to introduce it here, on account of its becoming an octave when inverted.

† Already introduced among the diatonic intervals, but properly belonging here.

‡ Here is my reason for not permitting the major seventh to be called a sharp seventh (see last lesson); it is necessarily confusing to use the same term for two different intervals.

of the *Diesis*, or quarter-tone. I say "imaginary," because on keyed instruments like the piano and organ such an interval cannot be made. On most orchestral instruments F sharp and G flat are quite different matters, and in orchestral writing a beautiful effect of a complete change in tone-color can be obtained by writing

although on a piano or organ the effect of these two chords would be just the same, except the difference between "forte" and "piano." But in harmony, in clearing up awkward places in musical notation (which come very frequently in the modern chromatic school of writing), these enharmonic intervals are of boundless assistance.

Enharmonics may be said to repicture an interval already written by the use of different means. That assertion sounds rather vague as it stands, but a few examples will clear it up. Take, for instance, the diatonic intervals we have already used, starting, we will say, on E flat :

Now if for any purpose I wished to write these intervals *enharmonically*—that is, supposing that I desired from some harmonic necessity to use again the same passage in (to the ear) the same key, and was prevented (by theoretical reasons, which will become easily apparent farther on) from writing it in E flat, but must seek some other form of notation—here is the somewhat astonishing form in which it would have to appear :

and this would be an "enharmonic" writing of the preceding example.

Now practise thoroughly in all these new intervals; and especially work at the enharmonics until you have learned at a glance to recognize an F natural under the disguise of a G double flat, or a D natural masquerading in the costume of a C double sharp; until, in short, you recognize and appreciate at once all intervals, no matter how extremely expressed.

That being done, we will, in our next lesson, pass to the formation of scales, major and minor.

C. F.



AST month saw the close of the opera season, and the song-birds taking their flight back to Europe. Mapleson has concluded a most advantageous lease of the Academy for five years, and promises great things. I have no doubt that both he and Arditi have in the bottom of their hearts a little feeling of contempt for the public for which they have catered. The season began with a company capable of a good, artistically satisfactory performance. The chorus was good; so (after the usual controversy with the Musical Union) was the orchestra; so were the principals, though the only great artist among them was Campanini. Middle. Valleria proved herself a steady and trustworthy prima donna, not startlingly great in any thing, but good in every thing. Miss Cary, Signori Galassi and Del Puente, and Mme. Lablache were all most capable and honest-working members of the company.

* * *

NEVERTHELESS the season opened badly. The complaint was that there was "no star"—no star, forsooth, with the king of tenors in the company and singing almost every night! But they wanted a female star; so Marimon was brought over. She drew for a brief season, and then lost her hold on the public. But she did more: she wasted the time of the company and the public upon operas which never were any thing but vehicles for vocal execution, and which even the general

musical taste, low as it is, is rapidly learning to treat with the scorn they deserve. In fact, Colonel Mapleson might almost say that he wanted to give good opera and the people would not let him. He did, however, manage to bring out "La Forza del Destino," one of Verdi's later period operas, and to revive "Aida" and "Carmen;" for which he deserves thanks.

* * *

CAMPANINI received some of the recognition due to him at his benefit performance. This magnificent tenor has sung one hundred and one times this season, not counting innumerable rehearsals, at which he frequently gets excited and sings in full voice. Nothing but a throat in absolute health and a perfect vocal method would have enabled him to do even half the work. Let no one conclude that good vocalism is not worth the time it takes to acquire; here is a proof to the contrary.

* * *

THOMAS is going on the see-saw principle in his programmes for the Cincinnati festival. One programme is moderately light, the next heavy, the next again nearly as light as the first, and the last overwhelming. When I speak of "light" and "heavy" programmes, I speak by comparison. A programme consisting of the "Ein feste Burg" cantata of Bach, C major (Jupiter) symphony of Mozart, and the Jubilate of Handel cannot be called "light" until you compare it with that for the next night, which consists solely of Beethoven's gigantic Mass in D and the D minor symphony of Schumann. The third night brings out the "Water Carrier" overture of Cherubini, the Fifth (C minor) symphony of Beethoven, an "Aria" (name and composer not given), and parts of Rubinstein's "Tower of Babel." But this third is, like the first, lighter than what is to come; for the fourth concert brings us face to face first with the prize composition, "Scenes from Longfellow's Golden Legend." Then come the "King Lear" overture of Berlioz and the third act of Wagner's "Götterdämmerung;" and if people after that have any capacity left to hear and appreciate Handel's Coronation Anthem, "Zadok, the Priest," which concludes the programme, they will do well.

* * *

GLEE CLUBS appear to be springing up in various places, and some are doing good work. I attended a concert on Staten Island given by a club composed entirely of amateurs, and they did some most creditable singing. They did not confine themselves to easy things either. Schumann's "Gypsy Life," Macfarren's "Sands o' Dee," and Morley's "Now is the Month of Maying," are not the simplest of music to render well; and they were extremely well sung. Mr. Aiken, of English Glee Club fame, is their conductor, and he has certainly drilled them to excellent result.

* * *

As the spring approaches the magnolia trees and the benefit concerts burst into bloom at about the same time. As I write, I have on my desk the programmes of six of these quasi-charitable affairs, at all of which the artists are expected to furnish their best services gratis. When it is for the assistance of another artist, this is all right; but what authority have the lady managers of various unheard-of charities to corner and badger professionals into giving their services for absolutely no return. Even thanks are scarce. The husbands of many of these estimable ladies are in business. If I were to go to one of them and demand (the favor is usually "demanded," not "requested," at least in the manner of asking for it) that he should for a charitable purpose give me from fifty to two hundred dollars' worth of the commodity in which he deals, and should make that demand, not once, but from twenty to thirty times during a single season, is it not probable that I should get more kicks than half-pence? These pushing people cannot understand that a pianist's fingers and a singer's voice are as much their stock-in-trade as the goods in a merchant's store are his, and that they are frequently forcing (by the social power they bring to bear upon him) some really needy artist to volunteer his services at a time when the ten or twenty dollars which he might ask for them would be of more worth to him, and a greater real charity than all the hundreds of dollars they may through his assistance bestow upon some unnecessary institution can possibly be to it.

CARYL FLORIO.