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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MATERIALS AND METHODS USED IN THE TEACHING OF SOLFEGE IN ENGLAND FRANCE AND AMERICA

by

Aagot Marion Katharine Borge

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Introduction

That branch of music education variously designated as Sight-singing, Solfeggio, and Solfège, has for long years been subjected to much criticism and has called forth much heated argument, considerable experimentation, and a vast number of books of "methods", each purporting to teach the subject in the best possible way. The general controversy as to the correct way to teach Sight-singing is divided into such questions as: What should be the aim in teaching sight-singing? What is the nature of the learning process involved? At what age should the subject be introduced? Who should study it: everyone, or the gifted few? Are the methods employed justified by the results obtained? Should our goal be the acquisition of "absolute" pitch or of "relative" pitch? Which is the better, the "fixed" DO or the "movable" DO? Should the staff notation be used from the very beginning or is it better to teach pitch (or tune), and time first by some other device, such as the Tonic Sol-fa System? Why use definite nomenclature?

Which is the best system of nomenclature and why? What are the relative merits of the "Song" approach and the technical or "Scale" approach?, etc.

A person interested in improving the methods and materials of the teaching of sight-singing will find his search for answers to the above questions hampered by the lack of adequate and reliable information. Much has been spoken or written on the subject, from one angle or another, but not all is authoritative; that is, one finds two exponents of the same system differing widely as to some procedure or some principle. Some arguments prove futile because the opponents have failed to define terms and are arguing from different premises. To illustrate: one frequently hears someone trained abroad, usually an instrumentalist, condemn and deride the methods used in American schools, and advocate that the "fixed DO" system of France be adopted forthwith. His arbitrary decision has not been affected in the least by such facts as the important differences in the school systems of the two countries, nor by the frankly divergent aims in teaching Solfège in America and on the continent.

What such a searcher for truth needs is a careful study of the texts and other literature representative of the opposing views, a study which shall analyze the aims, the organization of material, and the underlying

pedagogical principles of each system or method. In the light of such analyses a teacher may more intelligently defend his own procedure, or justify his choice of this method in preference to that, on the basis of its suitability to the needs of his pupils, and its harmony with the prevailing educational theory. Few examples of such analysis are available. The literature on the subject consists largely of apologia for one's own system, or of more or less specific instructions for carrying out its procedure. Occasionally one finds an attack on some supposed weakness in a rival system, with attendant exposition of the corresponding strength in the writer's own pet method. While this constitutes one form of critical comparison, it is too fragmentary and too biased to serve as a just basis for judgment.

The purpose of this thesis is to eliminate some of the haziness and lack of understanding, by an analysis of the methods and materials in general use today, as well as of some of the newer departures in experimentation. Though the methods or systems are many, they may be roughly classified under three headings: (1) those based on "key relationships" or "tonality", involving a movable "tonic" or key-tone, usually DO; (2) those stressing absolute pitch as a requisite for musicianship, advocating a "fixed DO", and minimizing or even ignoring "key relationship";

(3) those built on interval sense only. There are also numerous adaptations of these three, and combinations of aspects taken from several sources, these latter being found especially in the United States. I have limited my study to the methods used in England, France, and America because the three groups are thus most clearly typified. I shall deal with each system separately first, and then in the last chapter seek to evaluate them in the light of their avowed or implied purpose, and their apparent suitability to such purpose.

The terms Sight-singing, Solfeggio, Solfège and Solmisation are frequently used to designate the same process, although they are not synonymous, and therefore need to be defined.

"Sight-singing" means what the name says: singing at sight. "At sight", however, is interpreted in various quarters to mean anything from "first sight" to a chance to look the music over, and prepare the more difficult places mentally or audibly.

"Solfeggio, properly speaking, consists of singing whilst naming the notes and beating the time."[1] "Solfeggio is a musical exercise for the voice upon the syllables forming the Guidonian Hexachord, plus SI."[2]

"The study of the elementary rules of music and

1. Lavignac, A. Musical Education, p. 25
2. Groves Dictionary of Music, Vol. IV., p 497

their application through the voice by Solmisation constitute what is called Solfège."[3]

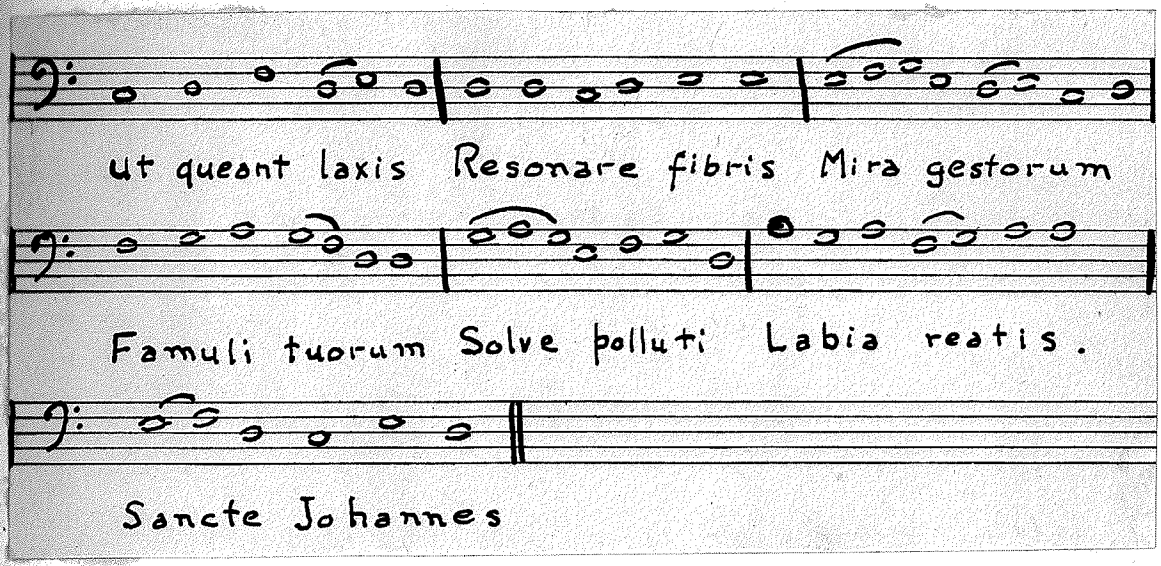
"Solmisation is the art of illustrating the construction of the musical scale by means of syllables, so associated with the sounds of which it is composed as to exemplify both their relative proportions and the functions they discharge as individual members of a system based upon fixed mathematical principles."[4]

I shall use the term Solfège throughout this thesis as being the term to which each of the systems to be discussed can most readily subscribe.

3. Trotin, Christine. Key to Musicianship
4. Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. IV,p.499

CHAPTER I

Historical Sketch



Thus did the choristers of 770 A.D. entreat St. John the Baptist to preserve their voices from hoarseness.[1] This hymn, written by Paulus Diaconus, has by curious coincidence come to be considered the origin of our syllables used in solmisation or Solfège. This connection with music theory was made some two hundred years later by a monk, Guido d'Aregzo.

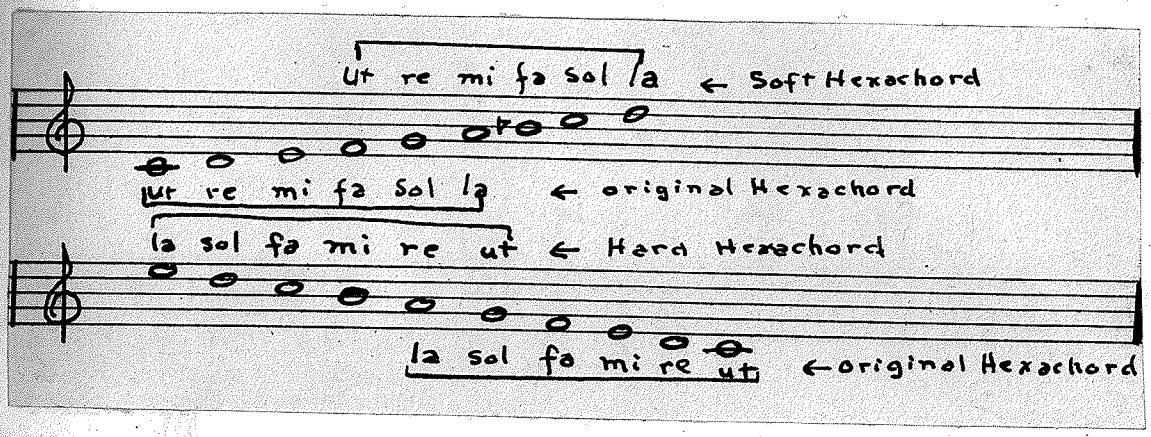
Guido had evolved a new theory as a basis for music,

1. Naumann, E. History of Music, Vol. I, p. 210

the chief element of which was called the Hexachord, in contradisinction to the Greek Tetrachord. This system, which had so long been the basis for all musical theorizing, was built up on a pattern of four tones, having a hemitone between 1 and 2, and whole tones between 2 and 3, 3 and 4. This proportion was preserved when changing from one tetrachord to another by the process known as mutation. The four tones were known by certain syllabic names which I am able to find only in Greek letters. But it is quite evident that solmization was used by the Greeks for the same purpose as it is used today - to show the mutual relationship between tones. Guido substituted for the four tones of the Tetrachord a new set of six tones, or the Hexachord, and he placed the semitone between 3 and 4 instead of between 1 and 2. By mutation (modulation) he extended the range beyond the original Hexachord, until he had a scale of 20 tones, divided into 7 Hexachords.[2] Through all mutations, however, the pattern must be kept intact, there must be a semitone (which differs only slightly from the Greek hemitone) between 3 and 4 of any Hexachord. The Hexachord which began on the fourth of the original hexachord was called the "soft" Hexachord, and that beginning on the fifth was called the "hard". The "soft" one needed a B^b to keep a semitone in the proper

2. Naumann, E. History of Music, Vol. I, p. 210

place, while the "hard" one did not. RE was the most convenient syllable for ascending mutation and LA for the descending (returning to the original.)



At (a) the mutation was most easily made at SOL-RE and at (b) it is best from LA - called RE-LA. Grove's Dictionary gives a table of seventeen possible mutations.[3]

Tonality, that is tonic or key relationship, then was the basic principle in the system used by the Greeks and in Guido's new system. Guido apparently discovered the coincidence that each half-line of the Hymn to St. John began on the successive degrees of his Hexachord. He realized that this fact could be utilized in teaching his new theory to others. Accordingly he formed a series of syllable names to name the six degrees, using the first syllable of each line,"as an artificial aid to pupils of slow comprehension in learning to read music."[4] The syllables were not at first used as possessing any special

3. Grove. Dictionary of Music, Vol. IV, p. 501
4. Ibid. p. 497

virtue in the matter of voice culture. (See introduction) The advantage of this "movable UT" was that it "assists the learner materially by the recognition of a governing syllable, which, changing with the key, regulates the position of every other syllable in the series, calls attention to the relative proportions existing between the root of the scale and its attendant sounds; and, in pointing out the peculiar characteristics of each subordinate member of the system, lays emphatic stress upon its connection with its fellow degrees."[5]

The origin of the seventh syllable, SI, or as we call it, TI, came later (1599?), and the derivation of the name is a matter of dispute. It is however certain that Guido could not have included it as that would have ruined his entire scheme.

The Arabs have been given the credit for the origin of Solfege. H. G. Farmer, who has done extensive research in Arabian music finds little to support such a theory. He says: "In comparing the names of the Arabic notation with that of the European Solfeggio, one cannot help being struck with the phonetic likeness. At the same time . . . (I have) not seen any other example of the Arabic alphabet used in this sequence for musical notation."[6] He gives

Arabian :	Minn	Fa	Sad	Lam	Sin	Dol	Re
Guidonian:	Mi	Fa	Sol	La	(Si)	Do) Ut)	Re

5. Groves. p. 501
6. Bitterman. H. R. Organ in the early Middle Ages: Speculum IV, p. 397-8, '29

Miss Bitterman feels that it would be more logical to assume that Guido knew of the solmistic use of the Arabian letters, and merely used the hymn as a memory device and in so doing changed the DO to UT. "Why otherwise should Guido have selected this particular hymn and these particular syllables?" She also quotes as another mnemonic device the distich mentioned by Gerard Vossius as having been written shortly after Guido's death, to impress the syllables upon the learner's mind:

> Cur adhibes tristi numeros cantumque labori?
> Ut Relevet Miserum Fatum Solitosque Labores." [7]

Miss Bitterman seems, however, to ignore the fact that these syllables were chosen because they were found on the six successive steps of the Hexachord.

One other hymn must be quoted here, one written by Arrigo Boito, and set to music by Mancinelli for the unveiling of the monument to Guido, in Rome: [8]

> Util di Guido Regola superna
> Misuratrice facile de' suoni
> Solenne or tu laude a te stessa intuoni,
> Sillaba eterna.

As has been stated, SI, the seventh tone, was eventually added to the original Hexachord and the octave of UT came to be used as the eighth tone to round out the series and give a feeling of completion. Many other adaptations and substitutions have in the course of time been tried, but only a few have survived. UT was changed to DO in

7. Grove's Dictionary of Music, Vol. IV, p. 500
8. Ibid. p. 497

many instances, probably because it is so much easier to sing with good vocal effect. France, however, still retains UT. In Naples DO came to be used as the tonic only in major keys. Minor keys began on RE, and FA was used as an accidental flat, MI as a sharp. In England for long years only MI, FA, SOL, LA were used for vocalizing all sorts of songs.

These systems appear to us very confusing, not sufficiently clear to a learner, and Durante of Naples evidently shared the views of some of us moderns: When certain of his pupils puzzled over a difficult mutation, he cried, "Only sing the syllables in tune and you may name them after the devils if you like."[9]

Other syllabic schemes, intended as vocalises rather than for any definite feeling of tonal relationships, have been tried from time to time. In the Netherlands, Walraent (1517-1635) introduced "Bocedisation": Bo, ce, di, ga, lo, ma, ni. These were later called "Voces Belgicae". In Stuttgart Daniel Hetzler (1576-1635) taught"Bebisation": La, be, ce, de, me, fe, ge. Graunn (1701-1759) devised a series still used in certain volumes of vocal exercises: Do, me, ni, po, tu, la, be. Today the Sol-fa syllables are not thought of nearly as much in their role of vocalises, as they are in a more or less successful method of sight singing.

9. Grove's Dictionary. Vol. IV, p. 502

In Paris, during the first half of last century, the Galin - Paris - Chevé Method came into being. The men for whom it is named were not professional musicians. Pierre Galin (1786-1871), the first to develop the plan practically, was a teacher of mathematics at Bordeaux. Aimé Paris (1798-1886) was trained for law, but devoted his life to the music work he loved. He was the originator of the manual signs and the nomenclature for time values which are used in the Tonic Sol-Fa system, and later, in a much simplified way, in the McDonough-Chevé System in America. Emile Chevé (1806-64) was a doctor, a brother-in-law of M. Paris. His "Methode Élémentaire de la Musique Vocale" is a complete exposition of the system. These men also used the principle of tonic relationship. The learner is taught to refer every sound to the tonic of the key. A dot below a number indicates a lower octave, and a dot above the octave higher; 0 = rest; a thick dot is a continuation of the previous sound; varying lengths of tone are shown by a bar or bars over the figures. This is a visual system to which the sol-fa syllables are sung; the numbers serve only to keep the relative placement in mind. After a time the real staff notation is introduced, the above scheme being intended merely as an introductory and temporary process. This method was in use in the Communal Schools of Paris before the late war. Whether it still

is practical I am not able to ascertain. The system of using numerals to show tonal relationships was advocated by Jean Jacques Rausseau the previous century. Below is a sample of the Galin-Paris-Chevé notation as applied to "America", in two part arrangement:

1 1 2	$\overline{7.}$ 1 2	3 3 4	$\overline{3.}$ 2 1	2 1 7	1. 0
5 5 5	5. 5 5	1 1 2	1. 5 3	5 3 5	3. 0

Another name of importance in the progress of music reading in France is that of Guillaume Louis Bocquillon Wilhem (1781-1842). No exact description of his method is available but it appears to have been an application of the "Mutual Instruction" idea (then in vogue in France as a means of economizing on teaching staff) to the teaching of sight-singing and choral work. M. Wilhem, sometimes referred to as Wilhelm, became Director General of Music in the municipal schools of Paris in 1819. Due to his contagious enthusiasm his influence was far reaching, for, in addition to the school classes, he conducted extramural classes where literally thousands of the working classes learned to read music and to participate in choral singing. The Orpheon, a widespread organization of singing societies, is a result of M. Wilhem's work. In England the same sort of movement was directed by John Pyle Hullah (1812-84), to whom is credited the expression, "seeing with the ear and hearing with the eye."

The "fixed DO" system in general use in France, and found in practically the same form in Italy and Belgium, appears to have no special originator but is a product of gradual development. The syllables used are, to be sure, the Guidonian, but Guido's principle of mutation, always calling the semitone "MI-FA" at whatever pitch it be found, is not made use of. DO or UT, is always at C - or C# or C^b as the case may be. LA is A, A^b, or A#, etc. A fuller discussion of this system will be given in Chapter II.

About 1850 a system that has been transplanted to all parts of the globe, came into public notice in England. John Curwen (1816-1880), a nonconformist minister, felt impelled to devise practical means to improve the singing in schools and congregations. He made use of a scheme already begun by Miss Elizabeth Glover of Norwich, a scheme which she had proved very useful in teaching little children. The main feature was a "Modulator", or printed picture of a scale, from which tunes were "sol-faed". Mr. Curwen elaborated this rather limited idea into a complete system of teaching, the central principle of which, as the name "Tonic Sol-fa" implies, was key relationship, using the Guidonian syllables as visible as well as oral symbols. In order to perpetuate the system and to insure adequate teaching of it, Mr. Curwen in 1863 founded the Tonic Sol-Fa College, which is a combination of examining body and

teachers' training institution. The instruction, carried on by lectures and by extension, in regular as well as summer sessions, includes not only Solfège but all forms of Theory, Conducting, etc. The system will be dealt with further in Chapter III.

CHAPTER II

Solfege as taught in France

While there is an abundance of evidence as to what is taught as Solfège in France, authentic and concrete evidence as to how it is taught has been difficult to obtain. Longy-Miquelle says, "The study of notation; the training of ear and memory; the laws of time; of tonality; the general principles of musical interpretation, - all pertain to the study of Solfeggio (or Solfège)".[1] Trotin says, "In France, any child out of Grammar School knows thoroughly all the elementary rules of music and sings at sight quite fluently."[2]

None of the texts examined, except Gédalge's L'Enseignement de la Musique, give information as to just how things are to be done. The authors or compilers appear to take for granted that, given good material, such as they offer, the method will be self evident. To any one brought up in the "fixed DO" tradition, that would very likely be true, but anyone else would be forced, in absence of more

1. Longy-Miquelle, R. Principles of Musical Theory, p. 1
2. Trotin, Christine. Key to Musicianship

definite data, to infer methods and procedures from a study of the nature and sequences of the exercises themselves. Attempts to verify such conclusions and inferences by questioning musicians trained in France have not proven very helpful, as the persons approached, in addition to being distinctly biassed, had not sufficient knowledge of other systems to enable them to make just comparisons.

The Official Courses of Study for French Elementary Schools have been of great assistance, not alone in giving authoritative information concerning music study, but in furnishing such description of the purpose and procedure in the elementary schools, and of the educational philosophy underlying the whole organization, as to explain to a large extent why music continues to be taught as it is in France, and why that method has not gained much ground in England and America.

When the lower classes were given the suffrage and land ownership, in 1791, the need arose of preparing the citizens for their new privileges and responsibilities. Since this was felt to be best accomplished through developing the proper knowledge of, and attitudes toward, the political institutions, a new system of education was necessary that should be dependent in its purposes and administration upon the civil State.[3] Not until 1833

3. Reisner, E. H. Nationalism and Education since 1789 p. 54

did the many attempts result in a lasting system. The organization that then went into effect consisted of Elementary Primary, the minimum for all; Higher Primary, which was optional, and included no science or classics; Secondary, which covered the work done in the two others, was intended for the élite, and considered "so dangerous" for the poor. Today the Elementary Primary is divided as follows: preparatory section - age 6-7; lower course, ages 7-9; middle course, ages 9-11; upper course, ages 11-13. These ages are of course average, but in any case attendance is not compulsory after the age of 16 or after completion of the middle course, if the child is needed elsewhere for economic reasons. The great majority of the people get their education in this Elementary School, the theory being that full time education beyond this level should be for the élite or selected minority. Scholarships aid in opening the field of advanced study to the gifted poor child. The élite receive what corresponds to our elementary and secondary education in the Secondary Schools. As to the place of music in the curriculum of such schools I find: "Singing is indulged in from the tenth to the seventh class,"[4] that is for the first three years in school. Farrington[5] also states that music is required one hour per

4. Brereton, C. Studies in Foreign Education, p. 89
5. Farrington, F. E. French Secondary Schools

week, only for the first three years, and that there is an optional one hour per week for the fourth and fifth years. For boys' schools no provision is made above the seventh form (fourth grade), but for girls there is more opportunity. The French system is today the best existing example of the principle of centralization, due in part to the Napoleonic tradition, in part to the widely accepted idea that the administration of government is best conducted by experts rather than by lay representatives of the people. Discipline is accepted as a matter of course, and a love of orderly organization appears to the French mind as a natural consequence of logical thinking. The aim of the system is to promote uniformity of quality in education throughout the country, and national solidarity. This solidarity is in their opinion best served by centralization, and attacks from within and without are thus best met.

Since all detail of organization, from the hiring of the teacher to the selection of subject matter and scheduling of hours, is done by the state or its delegated representatives, public opinion has had practically no influence. Whether or not the pupils are interested does not, or at least did not up to very recently, greatly concern either the teacher of the Ministry of Public Education.

The whole system is based on a child psychology not accepted in England or the United States. The Decree of

1887 "showed excessive confidence in the so-called "concentric" method, by which, in the various courses, at successive divisions of a given course, the same topics reappear with the simple requirement that they be treated with increasing amplitude."[6] This was open to misunderstanding, and, it developed, was badly administered. Accordingly one finds in the 1923 revision a rather timid attempt to replace the "concentric" with the "progressive" idea. Since 1919 a group called "Les Campagnons de L'Universite Nouvelle" have been agitating for reforms, and have succeeded in effecting some changes in the New Regulations of 1923. The courses have been simplified and shortened, leaving the teacher more chance for freedom in method, in organization and adoption of subject matter to local needs.

So much for the organization and general nature of the French educational system. The next question is what provision has been made for music instruction within this organization and what is its nature.

Up to 1791 music seems to have been taught either from the point of view of the needs of the church, or as a social asset, this latter type taking mainly an instrumental direction. These two trends are to be expected when one considers that education was wholly in the hands of

6. Gay, P. H. and Mortreux, O. French Elementary Schools, Official Courses of Study, p. 48

the church, and that the pupils were from the privileged classes. But neither of them fitted in with the obvious purpose of the new elementary schools; citizenship for the lower classes. In 1851 an official order reorganizing the curriculum of the Normal Schools listed among the subjects to be taught "religious Music" - whatever that meant. No further detail is available and music was not included in a short list of optional additional subjects. The Law of 1882 provided for instruction in the "elements of Music", as did the Decree of 1887, which remained in effect until the New Regulations were adopted in February, 1923. These Regulations assign an hour per week to music and singing. A distinct change in procedure from that used earlier seems to have been inaugurated, to judge by the comments and instructions throughout the sections devoted to music. Much more attention is paid to good singing, to building up a repertoire of song material for enjoyment as well as to serve as a basis for later technical study. In 1922 M. Chevais, then inspector of the teaching of singing in the schools of Paris, said in part: "Pupils learn too soon where notes are placed on the staff; they read too early; they forget ear and voice. Training of the eye precedes training of the ear. This method turns its back on common sense, logic, and music. . . . These same teachers, to complete the first singing

lessons in which nobody sings, gives the child some notions of musical grammar. ...When he leaves school his head will be full of notions which will quickly fly away. But his ear will not be trained, and he will take away with him the idea that music is difficult, complicated, obscure."[7] Evidently the situation as described by Christine Trotin and quoted in the first part of this chapter does not satisfy M. Chevais as it seems to satisfy her. In the new system which he advocates, by contrast, much singing comes first, and the technical material, still decidedly technical, is introduced by small degrees. The aim is that the pupil shall have some skill in reading and Solfège, and a few elementary rules of musical grammar. "They will leave school with a small equipment of notions, but so pleasant to carry, and so precious that they will never part with it." The more complicated things as taught to the prospective artist should be omitted. "For you (elementary teachers) there are few relative values, only fixed ones. For you, and for the school, there is only one clef, the usual G clef, which need never give way to any other. Notes will always have the same sound in the same places" (until the bass clef is introduced in the upper course). "For a long time (preparatory and elementary courses) there will be only one key, that of C major, with

7. Gay, P. H. & Mortreux, O. French Elementary Schools Official Courses of Study, p. 110

its aspect of a minor. Later you will come to other tonalities which you will take up with no difficulty at all."[8]

I shall show the "distribution of lessons" for the first term of the Elementary Course, and also of the Middle Course, intended for ages 7 and 9:

ELEMENTARY COURSE:

Intonation: Study of the notes DO RE MI FA SOL. Second intervals, and the chords DO SOL, DO MI SOL, SOL DO. (The five notes and their names are placed on a staff with large lines and wide spaces between.)

Oral dictation and vocalizing: The pupils repeat some short phrases of three or four sounds sung by the teacher, recognize whether voice rises or falls, then sing the notes.

MIDDLE COURSE:

Intonation: Study of the notes SI DO RE MI FA SOL LA SI DO RE MI (that is from b to e^2); second intervals; chords DO SOL, SOL DO, DO MI, Mi SOL, and the perfect chord. (The notes are written on the staff without their names).

Oral dictation and vocalization: the teacher vocalizes short phrases of four or five sounds, the

8. Gay, P.H. & Mortreux, O. French Elementary Schools Official Courses of Study, p. 113

pupils repeat, then sing the notes.

Signs of duration: half and quarter notes and corresponding rests.

Measure in 2 time.

Reading at Sight: Study on the blackboard of some measures not presenting difficulties other than those studied in the exercises of intonation: first, reading of notes on staff; second, reading and beating time; third, singing.

For each term throughout all the courses a short list of suitable songs is added as a guide,[9] these being predominatingly French folk-songs, a few French art songs, and one Schubert song.

As stated in Chapter I, the system used for naming the sounds in the "fixed DO". Here the Guidonian syllables are used, not to indicate or characterize members of a key relationship (see definition of Solmisation) but as names of the pitches that in other countries are usually known as C D E F G A B. DO, being much more singable, is used in place of UT when sol-faing.[10] Trotin claims that UT is used to designate the key of C or the C clef, but Gedalge and others use DO in all places where we would use the letter C. In the texts examined the terms "dieze" for sharp, "bemol" for flat, and "becarre" for natural,

9. Gay & Mortreux. pp. 247, 248.
10. Trotin, Christine. Key to Musicianship, p. 6

are used, although in at least one instance B and B^b are both called SI,[11] not SI and SI be-mol, as is the general rule and in another case FA refers to F and F#. If that scheme were carried out it would mean that LA, for example, would be used to name A, A^b, and A#, putting the burden of deciding which of the three was wanted, on the shoulders of the reader. I am told on fairly good authority that such is the practise in reading rapid passages, after the pitches have been thoroughly well learned through the study of slower moving music. It would undoubtedly make for greater accuracy in time values, it being obviously impossible to give a note sung to "RE bemol" for example, its correct time value in relation to other time values. I cannot verify the above, nor can I find proof that this statement is true: that in place of the awkward DO, DO dieze, etc. syllables like our chromatic series are being used. That is DO DI, RE RI, etc. This plan too would eliminate the difficulty in regard to time values, but some arrangement different from ours would be needed, for we use no MI sharp, DO flat, TI sharp or FA flat. Also, since they use SI as the seventh tone, SOL sharp would need another name.

One of the chief aims of Solfège study in France, as it is with certain groups in this country and elsewhere, is the acquisition of absolute pitch, for which acquisition

11. Gedalge, A. L'Enseignement de la Musique, p. 79

the "fixed DO" is particularly suited. The emphasis on absolute pitch is probably due to the fact that France is not a choral nation in the sense that England or Germany are, but her musical development has been for many generations decidedly instrumental. (Music History shows no special growth vocally in France during the long period in which vocal counterpoint flourished in the Netherlands, Germany, England and Italy. But it shows great advancement in the instrumental and operatic fields. Whether this fact is to be counted as a cause or effect in considering the difference between the English and French points of view on Solfege, I cannot make up my mind. That it is a significant factor, I am certain.) To insure absolute and immediate recognition of pitches the key of C major is used for a long time - according to the Official Courses of Study it alone is used to the end of the Elementary Course. Only a few tones are taught at a time, beginning at middle C.

Another important aim for a well trained musician is knowledge of all the clefs, and the courses for children differ as to how much they should be expected to master of this particular phase of music study. The Official Courses of Study limits it to the G clef, as I quoted above, while Gedalge very definitely trains for it very early in his course.

The analysis of three texts follows. They were all included in a list of material recommended to me by Mme. Nadia Boulanger of the faculty of L'École Normale in Paris, and also at Fontainebleau. They represent different views, yet are founded on the same principles, differing mainly because intended for different groups of students.

I shall first consider Solfège des Solfèges, Volume 1a, the first of a series of thirty-four. These exercises were first collected and edited by Danhauser and Lemoine, and later re-edited and added to by Lavignac. They include exercises by men who have written much for this particular purpose over a period of almost two hundred years, such as Carulli, Panseron, and Hasse. The book is intended for beginners, as the opening paragraphs show, though not for use in the Elementary Schools. There are some pages of preparatory exercises for intonation, which are to be "practised exclusively whilst the first chapters of Rudiments are being studied. When the pupil can pitch the notes easily he should be exercised in beating measures of 2, 3, or 4 pulses, counting these beats instead of naming or sol-faing the notes" (a metronome is required for this.) "This first task accomplished with care will ensure great facility for all that follows; it is besides, for teachers or mothers of families who commence young children in this essential part of the art, to direct them

according to their youthful intelligence."[12]

After the intervals have been taken up in systematic order, time values are begun, using whole and half-notes and corresponding rests; then follow the quarter note and quarter rest in every conceivable arrangement, always in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter; likewise the eighth note and eighth rest, and combinations of all these. After fourteen pages of this the $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$ meters are introduced in rapid succession. On pages 22 and 23 the sixteenth note and the dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth are taken up. Pages 24 and 25 introduce $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$, and the real triplet follows immediately, in various forms. From page 28 on there is constant recurrence of syncopations, not, however, in any very difficult manner. Pages 30 to 37 develop the use of chromatics, including C#, D#, F#, G#, A#, and B^b, E^b, A^b, D^b. Pages 37 to 41 deal with the scale of a minor, and the known rhythmic patterns are now used in this new tonality. The keys of G major, F major, D major, B^b major, and their relative minors take us to page 59, each pair of scales covering five or six pages, and the exercises becoming progressively more difficult in rhythmic and melodic patterns. The exercises have up to this point all been in the G clef. Now the F clef is studied to the end of the book, 15 pages.

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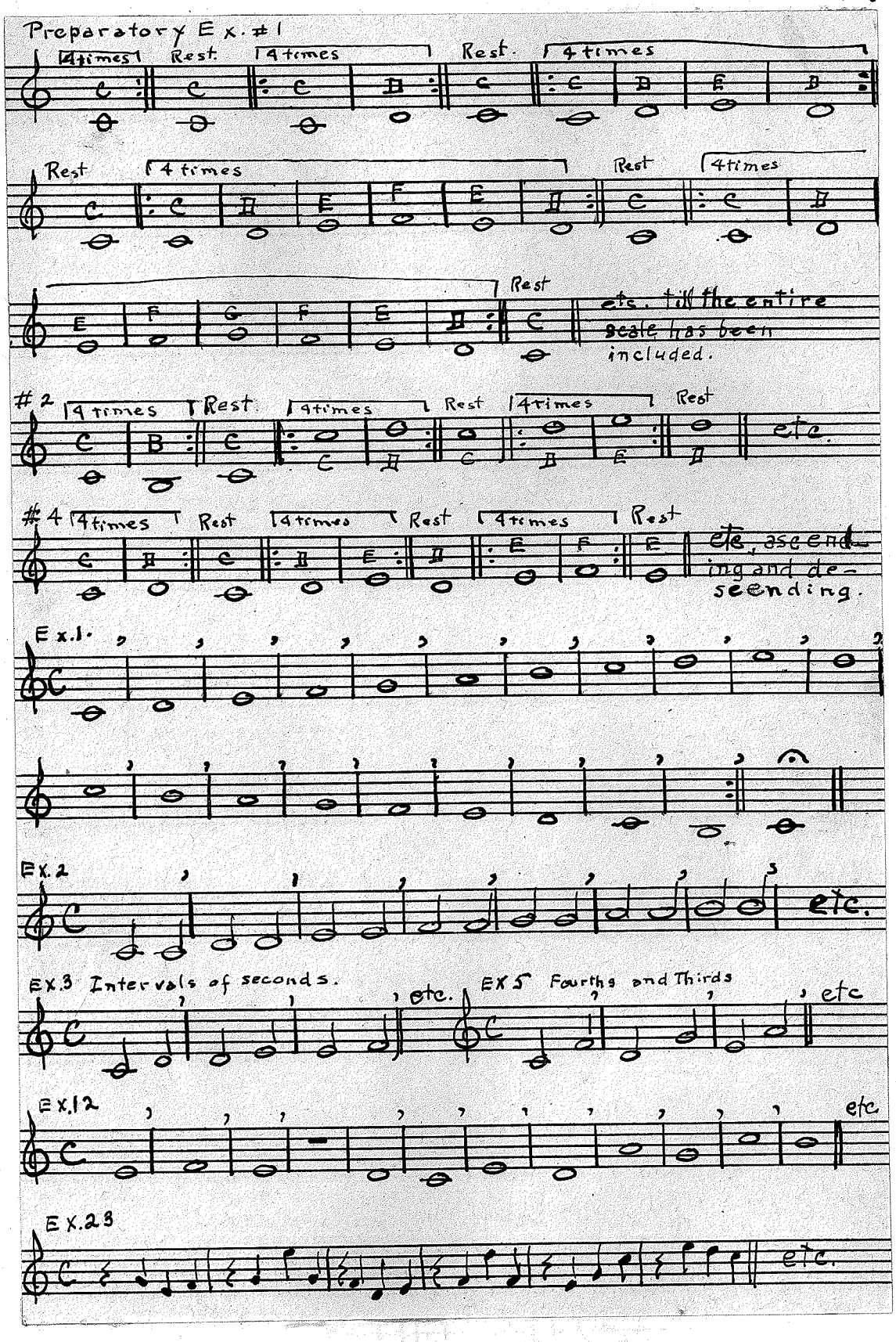
12. Danhauser, A. and Lemoine, L. Solfège des Solfèges, Vol. 1 a, I

The first few exercises are of a simple nature but after that they become long and rather complex, involving changes of key and every possible combination of the rhythmic patterns studied thus far. The exercises on the following pages (30 and 31) are typical. The first number is that given them in the book, but since that numbering is misleading due to a curious combination of two series which is used, I have, by the number in parentheses, indicated the rank of each exercise in the total number of 195.

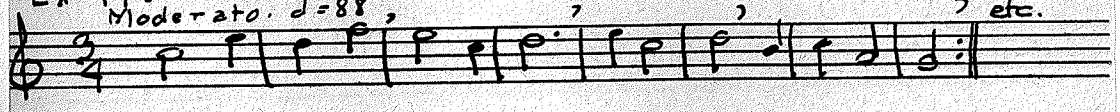
The second text analyzed is Andre Gedalge's L'Enseignement de la Musique. As inspector of music instruction under the Ministry of Public Instruction on the one hand, and professor at the National Conservatory on the other, M. Gedalge had ample opportunity to see that the methods or approach that were used with marked success with older, specially gifted students, were not at all suited for young children. He felt, however, that if music were properly taught to classes of smaller children, not specially selected, as for example in the Elementary or lower course, the great majority could succeed. The approach must be through their own experiences, and they must be led to formulate for themselves as many of the rules, and discover as many of the principles as possible.

His agitation for change in the curriculum came

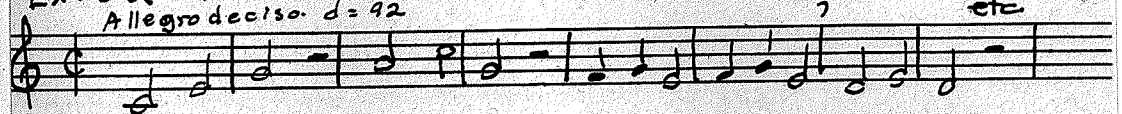

Preparatory Ex. #1
4 times
Rest.
4 times
Rest.
4 times
Rest
4 times
Rest
4 times
Rest
etc. till the entire scale has been included.
#2
4 times
Rest
4 times
Rest
4 times
Rest
etc.
#4
4 times
Rest
4 times
Rest
4 times
Rest
etc. ascending and descending.
Ex. 1.
Ex. 2
etc.
Ex. 3 Intervals of seconds.
etc.
Ex. 5 Fourths and Thirds
etc
Ex. 12
etc.
Ex. 23
etc.

Ex. 28

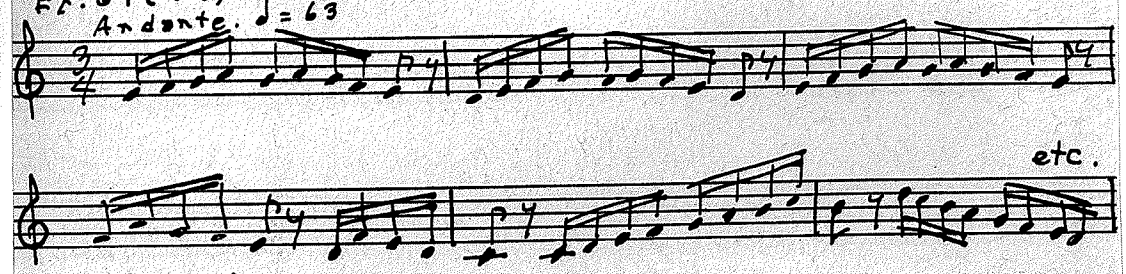
Ex 47 (52) Moderato. ♩ = 88



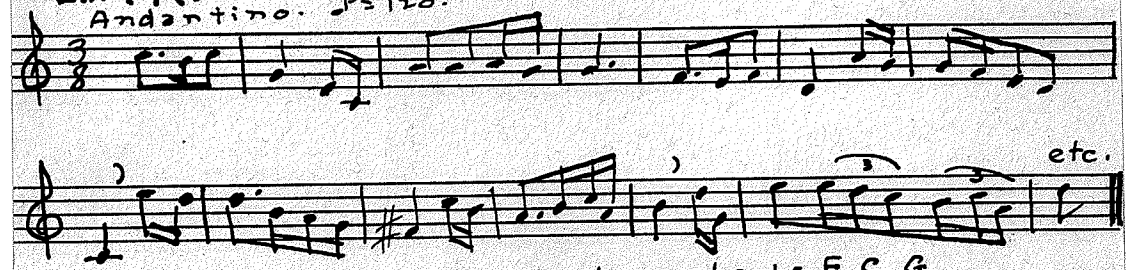
Ex. 53 (58) Allegro deciso. ♩ = 92



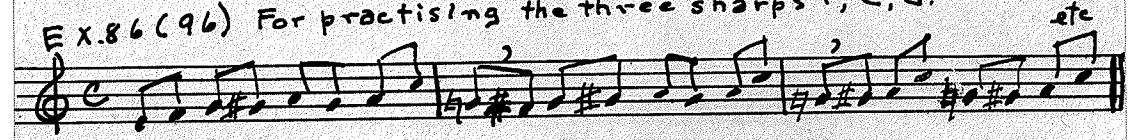
Ex. 67 (74) Andante. ♩ = 63



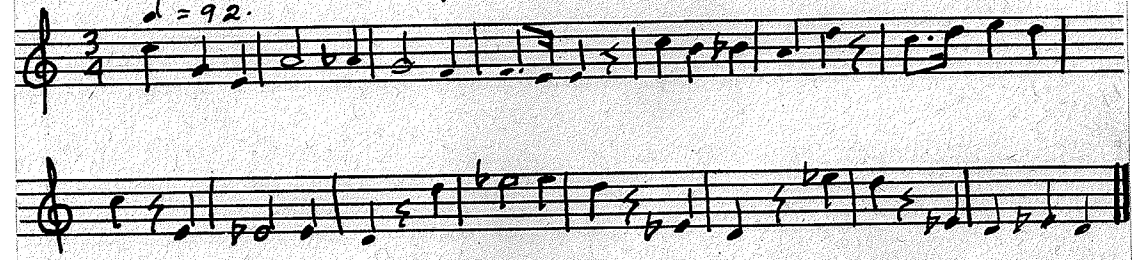
Ex. 77 (86) Andantino. ♩ = 120.



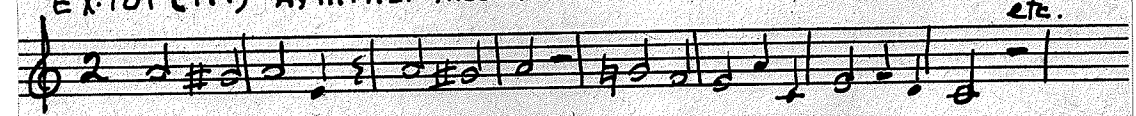
Ex. 86 (96) For practising the three sharps F, C, G.



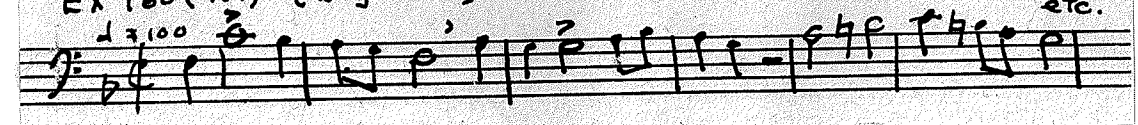
Ex. 98 (108) With use of first four accidental flats. ♩ = 92.



Ex. 101 (111) A; minor mode.



Ex 160 (181) (Beginning at 5th meas.)



about the same time as that of Les Campagnons, and the recommendations he made as member of the commission when the revision of the curriculum was in progress, were very similar to the changes finally adopted in 1923. This text, however, differs in many respects from the outlines given in the Official Courses of Study. The latter had to be formulated with the musical ability of the regular teacher ever in mind, while Gédalge's method can be taught well only by a well trained musician. It is the outgrowth of an experiment carried on from 1917 to 1921, using several groups of children from 6 to 8 years of age, one in a conservatory, the others in elementary schools. Only one of these groups was taught by himself, the others were taught by the teachers in charge under his guidance. In one of the Elementary Schools, Saint-Etienne, a systematic check was made during the second year to verify the report of the first year. Such satisfactory progress was obtained in every case that the method used was developed or extended to include all the material usually included in Solfège. As he says in the preface, his aim is not to give a new theory of music, nor a new system of notation, but to apply to the teaching of music the methods and procedures used successfully in the teaching of other subjects.[13] The work is divided into "Lessons"; each

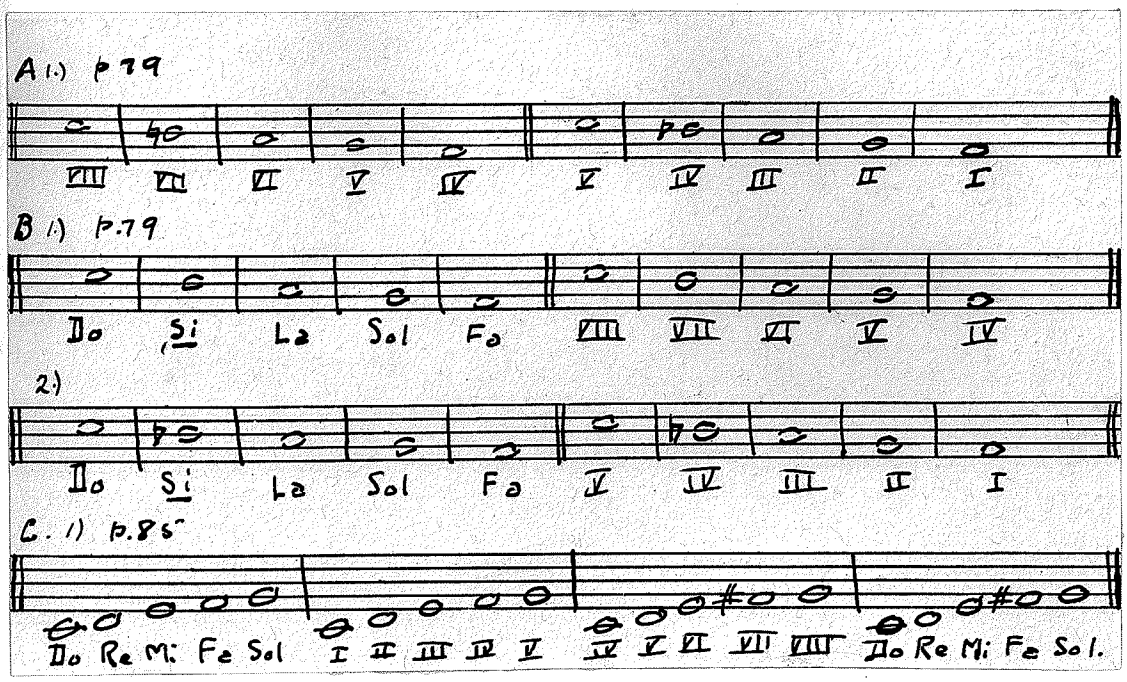
13. Gédalge, A. L'Enseignement de la Musique, xiv.

"Lesson" contains material grouped in one or several chapters, each chapter offering subject matter for one or several successive courses. The ideas contained within one chapter are not all intended to be explained (or developed) at the same point; certain ones should be reserved for the second or third years of study. The teacher can easily make the selection. One should group under the same rubric all the facts that are related, or of the same degree of difficulty, on order to avoid the confusion of too great diversity of material.[14] The author does not insist upon the lessons or ideas being taught in the order he has used with the exception of the study of intervals, where the given order should be rigorously observed. It is evident that he bases his book on the idea of "concentric" development. The teacher brought up in that tradition may be able to "easily make the selection", but to the onlooker this method of organization is obscure and confusing.

Although the "fixed DO" is the fundamental theory of the book, the early part is based on the number names of the scale, and I is placed anywhere on the staff. The names Tonic, Supertonic, etc. are introduced early, and a feeling for intervals, such as I, III, is well developed from the beginning. This interval sense, especially the

14. Gedalge, A. xv.

seconds, is later used as a guide when difficulties arise in reading. For example: $\frac{DO - SI}{VIII - VII}$ and $\frac{DO - SI^{b}}{V - IV}$



He avoids limiting himself to the key of C major, as other books usually are, by using no clef sign nor key signature for a long time after the staff has been introduced. He merely indicates by Roman numerals the relationship of the notes used.[15] This practice, he argues, accustoms the pupils to using the staff much more freely than they otherwise would, and also it prepares the way for the use of all the clefs that later must be studied.

Many devices which he suggests have long since been discarded by our schools as faulty pedagogy, such as

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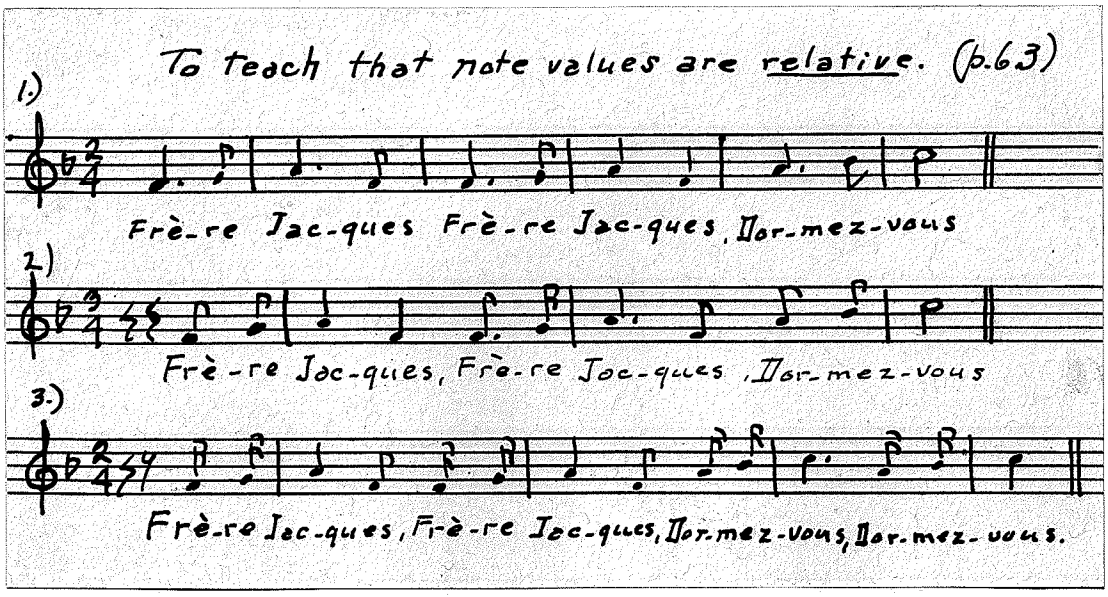
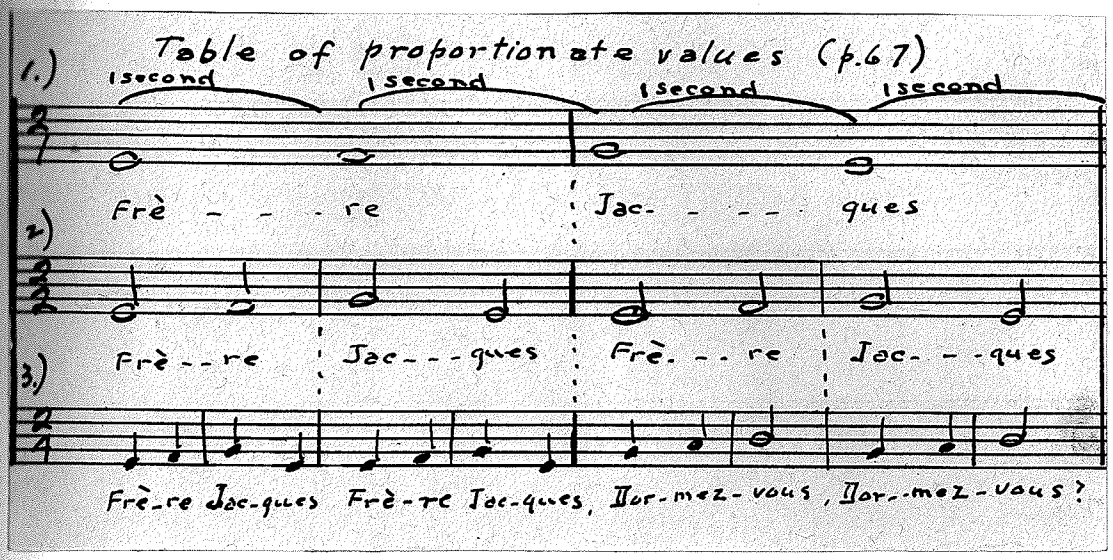
15. Gedalge, A. p. 40

counting on their fingers to impress on the pupils' minds the numerical order of the tones of the scale,[16] or making them memorize abstract rules by repeating them in unison several times, "in a well modulated voice, and very rhythmically."[17]

In spite of the fact that both in this text and in his recommendations quoted by Gay and Moutreux, he emphasizes the importance of singing as the basis for music study, the examples used are most meager. "Frere Jacques" and "J'ai du bon Tabac" are used to illustrate the most diverse phases of rhythm and interval, with only occasional relief from "J'ai descendu dans mon jardin" and a few other nursery and folk tunes, when the two first named just cannot be made to fit the particular problem.



16. Gedalge, p. 23
17. Ibid., p. 6

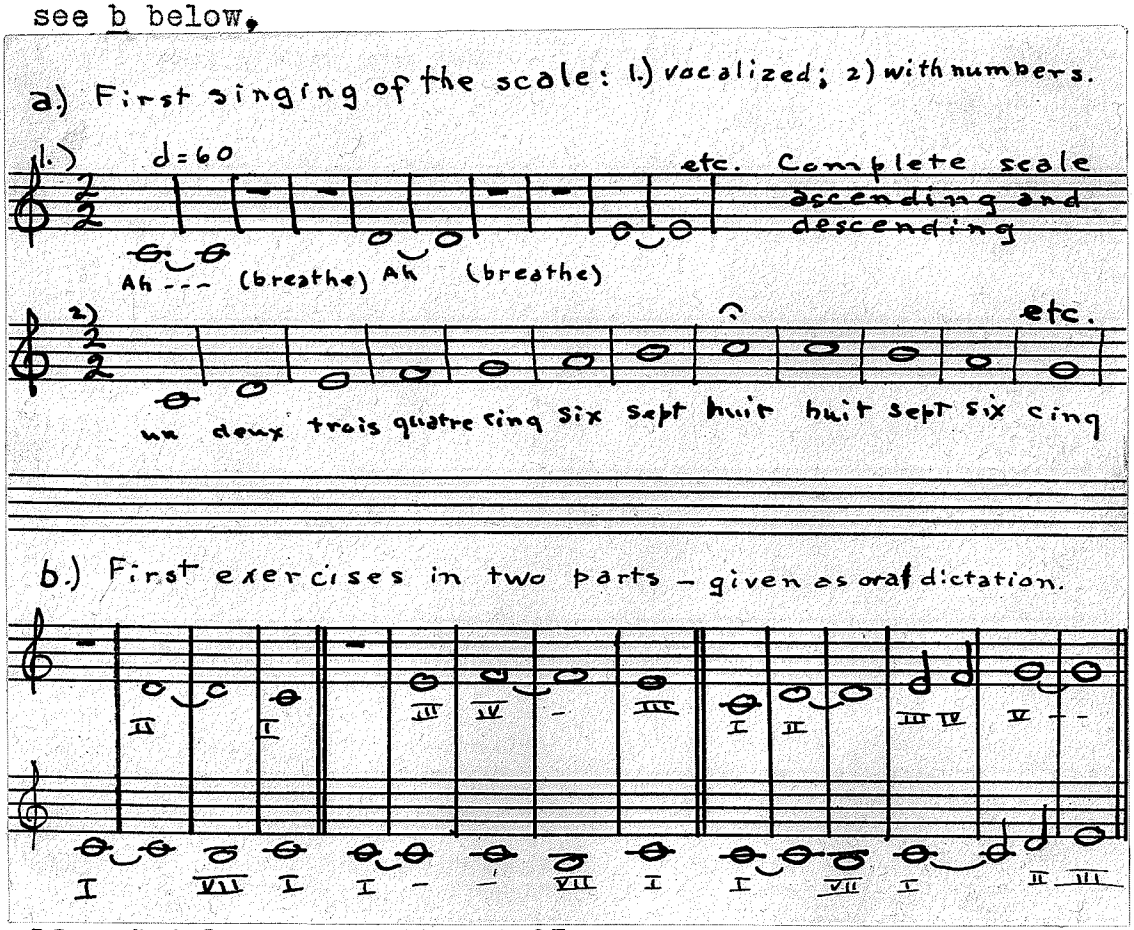


When intervals have been well learned the syllables are introduced by way of the numerals, and if mistakes in intonation occur during the sol-faing the pupils must sing the passage by number, as was indicated above. When the tone quality is not good the exercises are to be sung on "Ah". Most of the exercises to be sung are centered about middle C, a practise which appears general in the French solfèges, and must indeed be unavoidable because of the nature of their system, but which is entirely contrary to English and American ideas of what constitutes a suitable range for the child voice. There are many warnings to be careful of the quality, but the device just mentioned is the only one given.

Rhythm is stressed but not from the side of feeling "how the music goes". The exposition is very mathematical and the fractional explanation is used before the pupils, in

my judgment, are sufficiently acquainted with this arithmetical process. The naming of the intervals is certainly taught in a thorough fashion, but also certainly not in the easiest way compatible with accuracy.[18] In fact, the language throughout the book is a curious combination of the academic and technical on the one hand and the almost childishly simple on the other.

The first intonation exercise is very like that in "Solfège des Solfèges"[19]; see a below. Two part exercises are intoned early, and are not particularly musical; see b below.[20]



18. Gedalge. pp. 49 and 95
19. Ibid. p. 11
20. Ibid. p. 42

From what one can learn in the Courses of Study, and from M. Gedalge's statements, as well as from what one can infer or read between the lines, the method here advocated and carefully developed, must be a great stride toward simpler, clearer, more musical teaching, than was formerly the case. But it is still so technical, so minute, so synthetic rather than analytic, and calls for such an amount of abstract drill, that it could not fit into any American school system with which I am familiar, or which I could even imagine. Such directions as "do this at least four times", and"have pupils repeat this until memorized", etc. have been discarded along with counting on ones fingers.

There are several American adaptations of the French system, some of them considerably modified. The one I have selected for my third illustration of the "fixed DO" principle seems to have been modified in terminology only. It is "Principles of Musical Theory" by Renée Longy-Miquelle, a woman of French conservatory training, who conducts a school at Concord, Massachusetts. Although the book was listed as a study of Solfège, it has much more the nature of a text on general theory, for there is no provision made for experience, but a most complete and technical exposition of musical fundamentals, from the simplest to the most complex, is given. The text is illustrated

profusely with instrumental examples of the points discussed, and with graphic charts and complicated diagrams that should be useful to the student of college or conservatory level, provided he has a sufficiently orderly and mathematical mind.

To quote the Preface, by Archibald T. Davison, of Harvard University, "...To yield its full value, the material here presented should be supplemented by work in solfeggio and music appreciation, for only if supported by these will the book prove really effective to a student who wishes to participate in music, or who wishes merely to be an intelligent listener. . . . The author of the book, a musician with long experience as a teacher, has devoted herself to reconciling the pedagogic vagaries of our public school systems with the very exact methods of the French teachers of musical fundamentals, and her observations and efforts have resulted in this work."[21]

Music study in France is evidently dominated by Conservatory methods. That is, even when planning a course for children of the Elementary schools, who will leave school at an age from 12 to 16, the approach is distinctly colored by the ideals and practises of Conservatory teachers of solfege. The pupils in Secondary schools may elect music if they are gifted, in which case the goal is most certainly the Conservatory. The system brings

21. Longy-Miquelle, R. Principles of Musical Theory, v.

excellent results from one point of view: "....a high class of natural talent, developed to the recognition of absolute pitch. The students who enter the Paris Conservatory are the most gifted persons the country can produce."[22] There is, however, another side to the picture; "France, with all her great musical tradition is not really a singing nation; though she possesses a far more efficient system of musical training than ours, she puts so much stress upon the technical side, through mechanical exercises in solfege that mere accurate musicianship too often takes the place of a "love of singing".[23] It seems pertinent to ask: Why learn to sing at sight except to enable one to participate in more and better singing of good music? I shall leave to the last chapter my conclusions as to how successfully our "pedagogic vagaries" could be exchanged for the French exact methods, in any but conservatory types of music study.

22. Cole, Samuel W. A Universal Sight Singing Method, M.T.N.A. 1910, p. 150

23. Davison, A. T. Music Education in America, p. 48

CHAPTER III

England's Tonic Sol-fa System

If information seemed difficult to obtain concerning methods and materials commonly used for teaching Solfège in France, the same cannot be said of England. In the first place, what literature there is is much more accessible, at libraries and music dealers, there being some demand for it in this country due to the community of language and of the "movable DOH." In the second place, and of greater importance, there seems to be much more written on the subject on the elementary school level, than there was in France, and, after all, it is at that level we must train them if we wish to give the rank and file an opportunity to learn music. The greater emphasis placed by the English on this phase of music study is due largely to the choral tradition that has existed in England since before the days of Elizabeth, when no gentleman cared to admit a faulty education by failure creditably to carry a part, reading at sight if need be, in the singing of madrigals around the table, which formed so important a part of the social life of that day. Music had at that time, not only this secular support, but sacred music flourished in the chapels throughout the land, under the

generous patronage of the nobility.

This widespread and long lived interest in ensemble singing, whether in the church service or as a social pastime, demanded great skill and independence in reading, as the musician of today discovers when attempting to read at sight some of the sixteenth and seventeenth century music which has been made available for our use in the last few years, through the labors of Dr. Terry, Canon Fellowes, and others. Curwen ascribes their skill to the use then in vogue of a system much like the Tonic Sol-fa.[1] The singing was done a capella, and even if a lute were used to fill out a part in the absence of a sufficient number of singers, as sometimes happened, it would not in the least serve to aid the others in keeping their parts, as the piano too often is made to do in our day. High ideals as to reading ability were consequently a part of the choral tradition. The Puritan reaction dealt a severe blow to all sacred music and probably even the secular suffered for a long time. However, interest in concerted singing has never wholly died out in Britain and is distinctly alive today, as the competitions of all types of choral organizations bear witness.

As in France and the rest of Europe music study was in the earlier times the privilege of the few. It was

1. Curwen, John. Teachers Manual, 2

taught by the church, for the glory of the church service or as a necessary social accomplishment. When the humanitarian movement began in the latter part of the eighteenth century, schools came to be no longer chiefly for the church, but more and more for the people. Reforms followed, and music study along with the other subjects received critical attention. Since music was favored as an element in educating for patriotism, its notation had to be simplified as a means of affording every pupil the rudiments of a musical education. In Germany, Nageli, a desciple of Pestalozzi, applied the theories of his master to the teaching of music, and to him came John Curwen from England and Lowell Mason from America to learn how it was done. John Curwen made use of what he learned in developing the Tonic Sol-fa system so thoroughly that it is still flourishing. Lowell Mason's adaptation of the Pestalozzian principles we shall hear of in the next chapter.

The English school system is much more like ours than is the French. In any case its organization and general procedure do not affect or control the methods and materials of instruction as we find the centralized system of France doing. Although the Tonic Sol-fa system is in general use throughout England there is much freedom as to how it is to be used, what material shall be taught, the extent of instruction, etc. "What shall be taught is now to a large

extent left to the discretion of the heads of the school departments, subject to the requirements of the musical advisers of the Councils or Boards under which they serve, and to the interest or want of it, shown by H.M. Inspectors."[2] Guidance is available to all who wish it, careful instruction may easily be had, and seems to be made use of very generally, but there is no strict compulsion. High ideals on the part of many teachers, with the choral tradition and a desire to participate on the part of the learner probably furnish considerable motivation.

For further explanation of the English schools and their music education, I quote Percy Scholes, English music critic and educator. "Like many other things British, the provision of music education is no organized system. Its separate parts have grown up independently; each has its own historical explanation, and no statesman or educationist has ever attempted to draw the scattered threads together."[3] He goes on to describe the Elementary School, where the children of the working classes attend until the age of fourteen. Here music has from the inception of the Elementary school system been recognized as valuable. Class singing is the type of study most used, but sight-singing is included. The work is done by the class teacher and supervisors were at that time rare. (1914).

2. Venable, L. C. The School Teacher's Music Guide, p.iii
3. Scholes, Percy, Musical Education in the British Isles M.T.N.A. 1914, p. 30

Pupils intending to go on to higher education may begin in the Elementary and later continue in the Secondary schools, or have all their work in the latter. The work here is much the same as in the Elementary school. In boys' schools mutation too often ends all instruction in music but in girls' schools there is more advanced work, especially since the realization is growing of the need of trained teachers. Excellent work is done in this connection at summer and Christmas holiday sessions.

The "Public Schools", mainly of secondary level, have for years given careful attention to the excellence of the service music in their chapels, and many other opportunities are given the boys for hearing and participating in the best music, vocal and instrumental, and to study privately. Class work, however, is comparatively weak, as the boys come mostly from private schools where the foundational ear and voice work has been neglected. The Universities have high ideals for the service music in their chapels, and an excellent atmosphere prevails for fostering the best musical taste and knowledge.

A brief sketch of the Tonic Sol-fa system was given in Chapter I, but more specific explanations of its nature are in order.

The most important idea in its organization is that of key-relationship. Curwen states it better than I can,

in his Teachers' Manual: "Directly we begin to study the development of Tune, we have two relationships standing before us and contending for mastery; first, the relationships of a Tone in absolute pitch, that is simply and barely as of a certain height or of a certain lowness in the indefinite scale of possible sounds, or as standing at a certain interval (as major or minor third, etc.) from that which preceded it; and secondly the relation of a Tone to a key-tone. A key tone is a sound which may be a different pitch in different tunes, but which, once given, picks out for itself from the undistinguishable mass of possible sounds around it, just those six others which will either best harmonize with itself, or, differing from it, will best harmonize with the others, and so creates and rules the time. I need only say that to this key-tone we give the name DOH, the tones that best harmonize with it we call, SOH, FAH, ME and LAH, and those which, dissonating with DOH, best harmonize with the rest, we call RAY and TE."[4] Of the "fixed DOH" he says among other things: "Indeed the fixing of UT or DOH to an absolute pitch is comparatively a very modern invention. It seemed to the French and Italian nations a plan so mechanically exact and beautiful - to make the names and signs of the notes correspond precisely with the fingerboard of the

4. Curwen. The Teachers' Manual, p. 2

harpsichord or piano - that they tried to fix the UT or DOH, and the more they played, and the less they sang at sight, the more they liked the fixed UT."[5] This would be well enough, he thought, if the piano key-board were perfect, but acoustically it was full of faults and dulls the ear to the fine shadings of key-relationships.

The item next in importance in the system is that of notation. Instead of using the regulation notation of notes of certain values on a staff of five lines, the first letter of each syllable is written in a horizontal line, and the time balues indicated by their spacing, and certain dots and dashes which will be illustrated later. In the Teachers' Manual just quoted is given some historical forerunners of this method of musical shorthand.

In Morley's Introduction to Practical Music (1597) he develops a Hexachordal system and measures all intervals from the key-note. In the Psalters of the old black letter Bibles of the early seventeenth century one finds the initials of the syllables beside each note of the regular notation, to aid the singer. Certain later mnemonic devices are also listed.[6]

This system is to the best of my knowledge still the only one used in the British Isles. There are of course some revisions and adaptations, but not sufficiently

5. Curwen. The Teachers Manual, p. 3
6. Ibid., p. 89

radical to be called new systems.

The book constantly referred to by other writers is John Curwen's Standard Course in the Tonic Sol-fa Method. Published originally in 1858 the author revised it completely in 1872, and in 1901 it was again revised, this time by a group of men who had worked or studied with John Curwen and were qualified to preserve the original idea while adapting it to their present needs. The aim of the book is to provide instruction for the solitary student, such as a class teacher wishing to prepare himself to teach music; but also it is intended to serve as a Teacher's Manual or Guide. It is divided into six sections: Tune and Time; Musical Form and Expression; Harmony; Staff Notation; Pronunciation; Musical terms. The first thirteen pages are given over to charts such as the Manual Signs for Tone in key and for Time; Time value charts; tables of intervals, etc. In the back of the book are listed the requirements for the various certificates offered by the Tonic Sol-fa College, and specimen examinations.

Only the sections dealing with Tune and Time, and Staff notation need occupy our attention in this study. In the first of these chapters the student is introduced to the notation and signs for the various melodic and rhythmic problems, from very simple to difficult. In the second chapter mentioned he is taught to transfer what he

has learned in the "new notation" to the "established" or staff notation.

Each chapter is divided into several "steps" of definite content but covering an indefinite length of time. The student should not go on till each section or "step" is mastered. There seems to be some overlapping, however, of the two chapters, for the student is advised not to start on "Staff Notation" until he has completed at least "Step III" in "Tune and Time".

The Guidonian syllables are used with phonetic spelling: DOH, RAY, ME, FAH, SOH, LAH, TE. The last named syllable is used instead of SE in order not to have two syllables, SOH and SE with the same initial.

Now as to the actual "new notation" and how it is taught. I shall describe the first "step" rather in detail as it serves more or less as a pattern for the others.

After defining Sounds, Signs, Pitch, Keytone ("governing tone of the tune"), Exercise I begins the tonal study by having some easily pitched tone (C, D or E) sung on "ah", and then the fifth above it. Explicit directions are given for locating this fifth and testing it on the piano. The interval is practiced "until the strong and bold effect of the leap" is thoroughly felt. The manual signs are then given: clenched fist for DOH, open hand, thumb up, for SOH. After the effect of the

interval is well established and the tones associated with the hand signs, the first "modulator" is given, as at Figure 1. (see page 51) ME is now introduced by individual effort of the pupil: "Sing DOH SOH with 'ah' and then another sound about half way between them (test your singing by striking the notes on the piano)".[7] The hand signs are given: hand open, palm down and attention called to the "mental effect" which is always emphasized in connection with each member of the scale: "It is much less bold than they (DOH and SOH) and usually felt to be calm and peaceful."[8] Then the name ME is given to this sound, but not until it has been experienced. This practice is followed throughout. Graphic exercises are given on the board such as Figure 4 (page 51) and ME is placed on the modulator in place of the center dot. (Figure 2, page 51). Attention is again called to the "mental effect",this time of the agreement between the three tones, followed by the introduction of the chord as such. This being the chord of the key-tone "they are the bold, strong, pillar tones of the scale on which the others lean", but they each have their own individual shade or degree of strength: DOH is strong and more restful, ME is calm, peaceful, SOH is bold and bright. From this point the

7. Curwen, J. Standard Course, p. 3
8. Ibid. p. 3

Fig. 1

Soh

:

:

:

Doh

Fig. 2

Soh

:

Me

:

Doh

Fig. 3

m'

:

d'

:

Soh

:

Me

:

Doh

:

:

s_1

:

m_1

:

d_1

Fig. 5

Time Chart
1. taa
2 _aa
3 taatai

Fig. 7

Time Chart
1 taa
2 _aa
3 taatai
4 _aatai
5 tafatefe
6 saa

Fig. 8

s	d'	f
f	t	m
m	l	r
r	s	d
d	f	t_1
t_1	m	l_1
l_1	r	s_1
s_1	d	f_1

Fig. 6

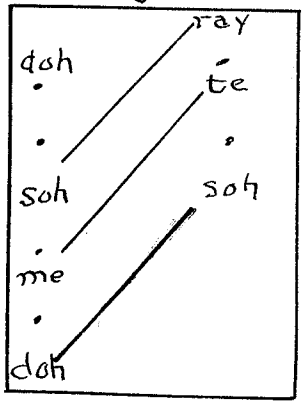
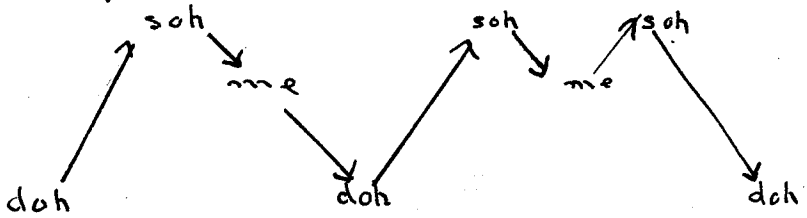
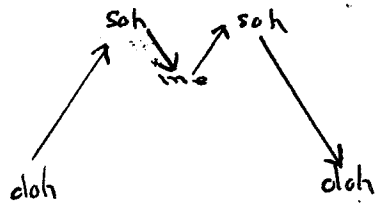


Fig 4

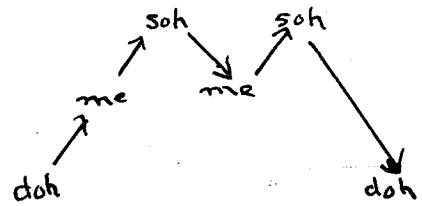
Key D.



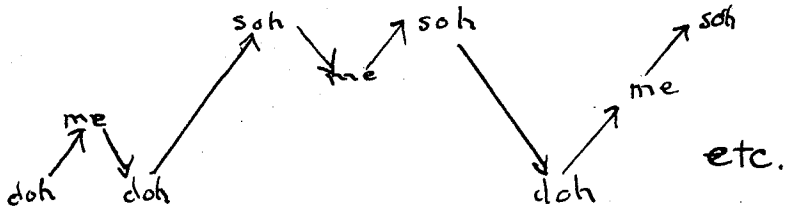
Key C



Key G



Key E



etc.

syllables are not spelled out in full but just the initial given, except as they occur for the first time, and in the case of chromatics; thus:

Key F - d s m d d m s d

The octave or replicate is developed from the acoustic basis. The octave above is indicated thus in the new notation: d' r' d', and the one below: s, l, t, d. The manual signs are the same only held higher or lower as the case may be. The modulator now looks like Figure 3 (page 51). To give more practice, exercises of this type are given (to be read forwards and backwards):

Key C - d m s d' s d' s m d

Key G - d s, d m d s m s d

Key D - m s d' d m d s m d'

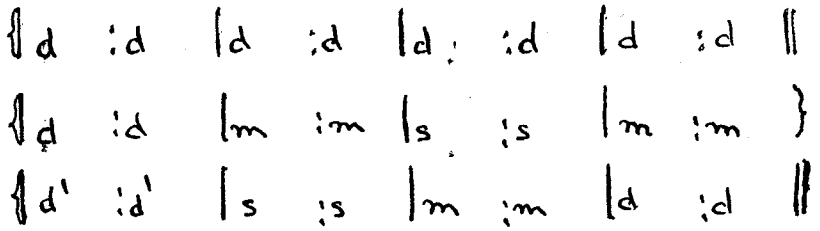
Of this early stress on chords I quote John Curwen himself: "Training the voice stepwise is training by dissonant seconds; teaching by chords is teaching by consonant thirds and fifths." And," The uncultivated ear best recognizes the interval, which, with something of agreement, has something of difference. So you find your pupils can often recognize the interval of a fifth before they can perceive that of the octave."[9]

Having established the tonic chord as the first step in Tune, Time is taken up. First the ideas of Pulse,

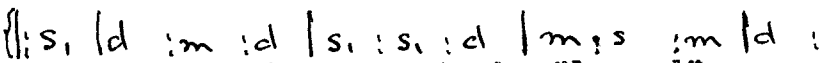
9. Curwen, J. Teachers Manual, p. 21

Accent, Pace, 2 and 3 part measure in primary and secondary forms, are developed through similar effects in poetry, and a notation to show rhythm is given. We now read:

Key C - primary two-pulse measure

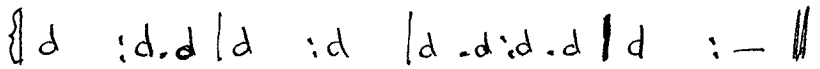


Key G - secondary three-pulse measure

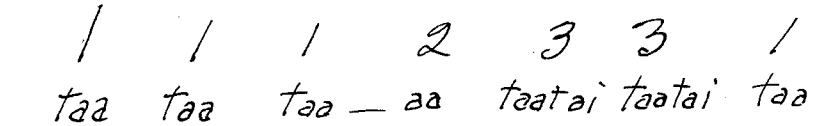


These exercises are to be "loo-ed" or sung with the syllable "loo" as soon as the tune is accurately done with the sol-fa syllables. This procedure continues from here on.

Continued notes are indicated by a dash and divided or half-pulse by a single dot.

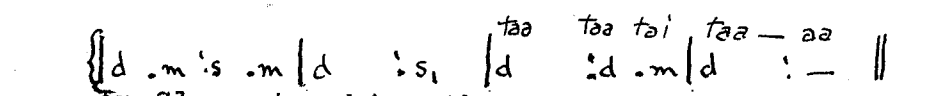


The time names mentioned in Chapter I, originated by M. Paris are introduced in English spelling. A note occupying a single pulse is taa; two half-pulses are taatai; continuations are indicated by dropping the consonant, so a two pulse note would be taa-aa. Drill is given on a time chart (Figure 5, p. 51) by pointing to each line thus:



In notation we now read this type of exercise, first to time names, or taatai-ing, then sol-faing, then loo-ing:

Key D



In Class teaching the hand signs are introduced for additional practice, as soon as the pupils recognize the effects of time division, before the names taa, etc., are given. The hand signs for time are too difficult to reproduce or describe adequately so I refer the reader to Curwen's Standard Course, page v of the Preface.

Typical of the devices and directions given with minute care for the student's self-help is the following process for studying a new tune:

1. Find out the kind of measure, and whether it is in primary or secondary form.
2. Taatai on one tone.
3. Monotone the time to loo.
4. Sol-fa (refer to modulator if difficulty is experienced).
5. When sure of time and tune, vocalize (on ah or loo).
6. Sing words, if any.

In the second "step" are added TE and RAY. In each case the student is told how to find the approximate tone: "Key C, Sing d, m, s. Repeat the SOH and sing a tone as much above SOH as ME is above DOH: d m s s x (test

by striking B on the piano)," or "Key C; Sing d m s s t and add a sound as far above TE as SOH is above ME (test by striking D')". The hand signs are given, TE being shown by forefinger pointing up, RAY by upturned open hand, palm to the front. The "effects" of the two are described as: TE-sharp, piercing; RAY - rousing. The SOH chord is developed and combined with the DOH chord on a modulator (Figure 6, page 51). Drills are given on it and we read exercises like this:

Key G

$$\| m : r : d . t_1 \mid d \quad : s_1 \mid d \; . t_1 : d . r \mid m \quad : - \; \|$$

In the matter of Time the following values are added: the medium accent, which we call $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, the pulse rest, saa, which is to be whispered; the half pulse continuations, - aatai; quarter pulses, tafatefe. The time chart is now like Figure 7 (page 51) and we read this:

Key C $\| d' : \; | s \; : \; | s \; : m . d | s \; : \; | s \; : \; | s \; : \; | d' \; : m . d | s \; : \; \|$

Taa saa taa saa Taa saa

Key E $\| s \quad : s , f . m , s | m \; . \quad : - \; . \;] \; | s , f . m , r : d \; . t_1 | d \quad : - \; \|$

tafa tefe taa — aa tai

In "Step III" FAH is introduced as being "one degree higher than ME". It is the "serious" note and is represented by the forefinger pointing downward. LAH is the sound "as much above FAH as ME is above DOH. It has a sorrowful effect and the hand represents it by hanging loosely from the wrist." The FAH chord is added to the other two, and all the scale members having been introduced, the

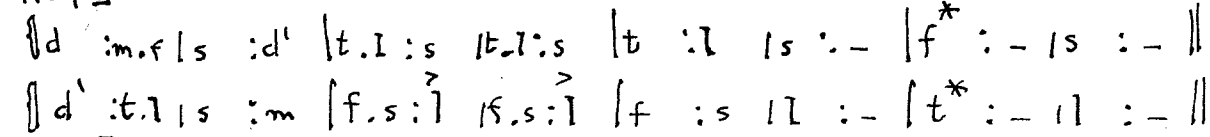
scale as such is developed. Much attention is given to the "mental effect" of each tone which is best observed in slow, sustained singing. Illustrations are given from Handel's works to exemplify these effects in actual music.[10]

The idea of absolute pitch is now just hinted at, by encouraging the pupil to train himself to sing c' at any time. Curwen believed in developing a sense of absolute pitch, but not directly, with much drill, rather as incidental learning.[11]

Silent half-pulses (saa-tai and taasai) are added to the known time values; also three-quarter and quarter pulse (taa-fe); a half-pulse and two quarters (taatefe) and the reverse (tafatai); the quarter and three quarter pulses, known as "Scotch snap" (tafay).

In the fourth "Step" the construction of the scale by half and whole steps is studied, and transition to other keys. This is introduced in such a way that the pupils are led to feel the need of another pitch for FAH and TE, as at * in the following exercises:

Key D



In both cases the musical ear of the pupils is depended on to object to the effect of the "tritone" sufficiently to demand a half step at *. This would mean a modulation,

10. Curwen, J. Standard Course, p. 31
11. Curwen, J. Teacher's Manual, p. 221.

or as the English call it, transition. For this process a modulator is needed that shall show both the scales involved. Figure 8 (page 51) shows a modulator on which may be practiced transition to one sharp more or one flat less, and return to the original key.

Care is taken that the pupil shall clearly sense and understand the change of "mental effect" that occurs with transition. These changes are listed in this fashion:

piercing	t becomes calm	m
sorrowful	l becomes rousing	r
grand	s becomes strong	d
desolate	f is changed for piercing t, etc.[12]	

In notation the change to another key is indicated by giving to some ambiguous tone closely preceding the distinguishing tone, a double name. One pronounces the old name slightly and the new one emphatically: S' DOH, M' LAH. These are called bridge tones. The hand signs for these two are given one with each hand, the hands touching, and the hand showing the old key then withdrawn until, at another bridge tone, the return is made to the original key.

The signature of the new key is placed over every transition. If it is to a sharp key (right on the modulator, Figure 8) the new tone is named to the right of the key

12. Curwen, J. Standard Course, p. 48

name: G^t; if to a flat key (left on the modulator) it is placed to the left of the key name: ^fC.

Key C G^t ^fC

{d :r |m :s |'d :t_1 |d :- |'s :m |f :r |d :t_1 |d :- ||

Chromatic tones are introduced as "missed transitions" - where a transition is hinted at but is averted by re-assertion of the old tonality. This necessitates a new set of syllables, FE for FAH sharped, TA for TE flatted. These syllables are always spelled in full.

Key F (Jupiter Symphony - Mozart)

{s :- :fe |f :m :r |d. :t_1. :d. |m :- :r }

{l :- :s |fe :f :m |r. :d. :r. |f :- :m ||

Key A (Paradise and the Peri - Schumann)

{l_1 :l_1 .l_1 |f_1 :- .,l_1 |t_1 :- .,t_1 |s_1 :t_1 }

{r .d :t_1 .te_1 |l_1 :t_1. d |d :- ||

The tune problem of Step IV is the pulse divided into thirds, that is quick $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, beating two to the measure. The first line of "Oh dear, what can the matter be" would look and be sung thus:

Key F

{s :- :- |s :- :- |s :m :d' |s :m :d ||

taa tee taa tai -tee taa tai tee

Key F (Pastoral Symphony - Beethoven)

{m :- :- |d :- :s |m :- :- |d :- :s }

{d :- :m |s :- :m |f :- :- |- :- :- }

{f :- :- |r :- :s |m :- :- |d :- :m }

{r :- :l_1 |t_1 :- :s_1 |s_1 :d :- |- :- :- ||

In "Step V" the chief Tune problem is the minor mode - led up to through a study of the RAY mode. The minor is treated as a relative of the major, using LAH as tonic. SE is now used as the raised seventh, but for a reason that scarcely seems to me to justify the usage, FE is not used as the raised sixth, in the melodic form, but a totally new syllable BA (pronounced "bay"). This usage constitutes in my opinion one of the few inconsistencies found in the entire method. In other books I learn that my suspiciaon is well founded, that pupils become confused since here is a vowel sound to indicate a sharp that has heretofore been used for a flat, TA. Venables, in his School Teachers' Music Guide, to be discussed later, defends it on this basis: while we strike the same piano key for FE as for BA, they are not acoustically the same, the BA being slightly lower than FE. Also, he claims, their context is different, FE being a leading tone to the key of the dominant, and always to be associated with SOH, while BA is only an occasional note, and should never be associated with SOH, but always with SE. This is certainly based on the science of sound but seems a distinction without much difference. I doubt that the results obtained by such discrimination will repay the work involved in clearing the pupil's mind of confusion.

The other inconsistency mentioned is also in connection

with the minor mode, namely the practice of naming minor keys in terms of the major, thus: Key C - A is LAH. This is being changed to this method: A minor - C = DOH. Some of the English teachers have realized the clumsiness and, in fact, incorrectness of such nomenclature, and are doing their best to alter it.[13]

The time problem of "Step V" is syncopation and equally and unequally divided pulse in compound meters.

The sixth "step" develops the Extended Modulator on which one may go to any key whatsoever. Transitions up to "five removes" are studied. To make this possible all the chromatic tones are necessary and the chromatic scale is accordingly taught. The matter of exact intonation, such as is requisite to string quartet playing, and to the finest a capella singing, is gone into most thoroughly.[14] All items of rare occurrence, such as unusual time divisions, changes of meter, embellishments, etc. are also taken up in this "Step".

The chapter on Staff Notation deals with the same points covered in "Tune and Time, but other musical examples and study material is offered, and, since the elements of time and tune have already been learned, and the characteristic effects recognized, it is possible to use exercises for each step of a more advanced nature.

13. Whittaker, W. G. Class-Singing, p. 136
14. Curwen, J. Standard Course, p. 111

When a student has satisfactorily covered these two chapters he has gained not only a real reading ability but a repertory of excerpts from the best music, that should serve as a basis for a true appreciation and love of music.

I have not for lack of space been able to give more than a very small idea of the numerous devices given to help impress certain points on the learner's mind, and to make the requisite practice more varied and interesting.

Another book by John Curwen, The Teacher's Manual has already been quoted. It is a veritable mine of information on methods, school room procedure, development of specific theoretical or practical problems, organization and administration of classes and choirs. Its object is to make more Sol-fa teachers and to improve the quality of Sol-fa teaching. Published in 1875, it is still of distinctly practical, as well as historical, value. Duncan McKenzie says of it: "The most wonderful book written for teachers; you could spend a life time reading and digesting this book."

Besides considerable original material by Mr. Curwen, it contains a great many excerpts from periodicals, proceedings from teachers' meetings, articles or addresses by leaders in the field, model lessons on a variety of topics, letters. One learns here not merely methods and abstract rules of procedure; one learns, for example,

the Tonic Sol-fa. The discussion of the value of loo-ing could, if taken to heart by the average American teacher, be of real help in reaching the aim of reading fluently with words.[17] Some of the devices and procedures are of course out of date, but a surprising lot are most usable with certain adaptations to present day usage and standards. The appearance of the book, its print, and general arrangement is old fashioned and rather forbidding at first sight, which unfortunate fact will cause it to remain a closed book to many who would otherwise find it useful. To be wholly intelligible it must be read in conjunction with the Standard Course.

J. Spencer Curwen, son of John, in a small book, How to Read Music and Understand It, attempted to make the whole subject more easily grasped by leaving out all but the most essential points in each "step", and rather "popularizing" it by imaginative descriptions of qualities and "mental effects". Where John Curwen spoke of DOH as strong, J. Spencer Curwen described it as a strong square standing on one of its sides, and ascribed to it the color blue; whereas SOH was the same square standing on one corner, this time colored red.

He gives type words for the various meters, a device much in use with us today. "Four pulse meter, primary form is mo-men-ta-ry, or pla-ne-ta-ry. Six-pulse meter is

17Curwen. Teachers Manual, p. 92

by quotations from men on both sides of the question, that Hullah was distinctly "piano minded." This fact, with all it would imply to a man as keenly conscious of shades of differences in intonation of intervals, as was Mr. Curwen, would be quite reason enough for opposing Mr. Hullah's appointment by the Education Department to the position of Inspector of Musical Instruction in the Training Colleges.[15] From such quotations one learns also far more about what various leaders taught than can be found in encyclopedias or other sources. For example: "An illustration of the breach of this rule, which requires us never to make our pupils learn what they will afterwards have to unlearn, may be found in the Wilhem method. The pupil is there taught to associate strongly the syllables MI FA, and SI DO with the little steps of the scale, and is afterwards compelled to break up this helpful association when he has to learn a different key than that of C. Thus for thirty lessons he is taught to do what for another thirty lessons he has to undo. In a very much less degree the same fault may be found in the American systems of Dr. Lowell Mason and others, which keep the student exclusively to the key of C for a long time, although they afterwards move the DOH."[16]

The book has value for teachers of other methods than

15. Curwen, John. Teachers Manual, p. 94
16. Ibid, p. 19

spir'i-tu-al'-i-ty, and im'-mu-ta-bil'-i-ty. The tick of an eight day clock is recommended as a metronome for the taatai exercises. Devices for self-help are numerous: "It cannot be a pure tone, if, holding your hand before your mouth you feel a rush of air."[18]

Even more responsibility is placed on the student in some respects than in the other books. Since the piano gives LAH too sharp, he asks the student to think a tone "higher than SOH, lower than TE which is sad and mournful in effect."[19] He emphasizes the fact, often overlooked in discussing or experimenting with the "mental effects" of tones, that the Curwen's ascribe these qualities or effects only when the tones are sung slowly. I might mention in this connection that there is by no means unanimity of opinion as to what these "effects" are. Taylor, for example, says "LA, sixth degree, breathes defiance and challenge."[20]

In Step I are taught the DOH chord, single pulse, continued pulse, half-pulses, two and three part meter, two-part singing.

In Step II, the SOH chord, four and six pulse meter , silences.

In Step III the FAH chord, the scale, letter names (not much used by John Curwen), three-

18. Curwen, J. S. How to Read Music and Understand it. p.12
19. Ibid. p. 15
20. Taylor, D. C. Melodic Method in School Music, p. 100

quarter and quarter pulses.

Step IV, semitones and whole tones, transition, extended modulator; the difference between transition and chromatics.

Step V - Minor, introduced through the RAY mode.

Step VI is omitted.

Several useful devices are given for reading on the staff: if DOH is on a space, ME and SOL are on spaces, etc; Octaves are dissimilarly placed; alternate tones, fifths and sevenths are similarly placed, etc. Gedalge employs very similar devices, including that of not using a clef sign on the staff in order to avoid explaining signatures too soon, yet being free to place DOH on any staff degree. Some of the mnemonic devices are no longer useful, or useful only where the English nomenclature is used, such as: the crotchet rest faces the same direction as its initial, C, and the quaver rest faces the same direction as Q.

The latest book of the Curwen series that I have had access to is The School Teacher's Music Guide.by L. C. Venables, which contains the 1920 syllabus for Examinations for School Teachers' Music Certificates.

This book is intended to provide a text that shall meet present day needs and conditions. For this reason the staff is brought in very much sooner than in the earlier texts. The examples illustrating melodic or rhythmic patterns are

more suited to grade school age than are the others. In teaching "mental effects" the illustrations used are from lullabies and other school songs, not from Handel's oratorios. Sentences or stories such as the following are employed: "The mental effect of RAY may be illustrated by suggesting girls playing at touch, and one girl calling to another - { d m s s r' / Here she comes, look out!

or to the boys the following might be pictured:

Scene: a cricket match.

Incident: an opportunity for "stumping".

Question: Wicket-keeper, excitedly -

{ s r' / How's that?

Answer: Umpire, calmly

{ m' d' " 21 / Not out!

The staff is used as a modulator, as soon as it has been presented, and exercises are "pointed" on it as well as on the regulation modulator.

Since there is such latitude as to what shall be taught and when in the schools of the land, there is no definite chronological order in which things must be done, but there are general outlines, typical lessons, useful devices. In the Preface, Mr. Venables says: "What shall be taught is now to a large extent left to the discretion

21. Venables, L. D. The School Teachers Music Guide, p. 90

of the heads of the school departments, subject to the requirements of the musical advisers of the Councils or Boards under which they serve, and to the interest or want of it, shown by H. M. Inspectors."[22] Under such circumstances it does seem most practical to supply teachers with guides such as this rather than fixed courses or outlines that would in all probability not be followed. In fact each of the four books dealt with so far is a rather curious combination of guides to the solitary student, manual for the teacher in service, and text book for classes of prospective teachers, hence the constant references to the requirements of the Tonic Sol-fa College examinations.

There remains another and newer type of discussion, in which the needs and interests of the child are considered rather than those of the teacher. I have two such in this study.

The Teaching of Music by Robert T. White is the earlier of the two, published in 1920. Almost immediately an American edition came out with Preface and Appendix by Dr. Will Earhart. It is not a manual but rather a collection of observations and reflections that Mr. White has made over a period of years in connection with various aspects of music education.

His main thesis is that music teaching should be

22. Venables, The School Teachers Music Guide, p. iii

organized with the proclivities of the individual pupils in mind, and he draws up a tentative scheme for work to be done on that basis. In common with several American music educators of the past two decades, he considers music study from the angle of the industrial worker who must leave school early and who needs education for his life outside working hours, education for leisure, if there is to be any mitigation of his lot. Music being a fruitful source of wholesome pleasure, the study of it should give to the pupil in school sufficient skill and appreciation to carry over into adult life. He argues that the envied musical amateur is a result of sound early training rather than of abnormal musical ability, and feels that it reflects on the efficiency of music education that so many people "love music" but "know little about it". The schoolmaster and music teacher need to consider these questions: to whom should music be taught; to what extent can the school provide music instruction; what form should the instruction take; How much time should be devoted to it?

All who may benefit by it should study music, is his first answer, but since it is practically impossible to tell at the outset who these may be, he advocates instruction for all for the first two years. Then the unmusical are to be excused, and the distinctly gifted are given

more than the middle group or those only fairly well endowed. Of the answer to the question concerning extent we need only note this: he ought to have received sufficient training in sight-reading to enable him to read at sight a simple song or hymn tune (the superior group, of course, would have done much more.) The Tonic Sol-fa is the method employed, but the whole problem is discussed in terms more current in our day than is the formal style of Curwen, or of Venables, who was a contemporary of John Curwen's later years. Even so, he is not inclined to give the little child's powers of discrimination sufficient credit for, as Dr. Earhart points out, all Tonic Sol-fa teaching is synthetic - music is dismembered into Tune and Time, and both of them are for a long time separated from the staff, then they are built up into wholes, into real music. Within Tune the study is on detached sounds, whereas a child's ability to imitate whole phrases clearly proves that he can deal with melodies exactly as well as with detached sounds.

The book represents a great stride toward freeing school music teaching from the formalism that is perhaps acceptable when dealing with adults who wish to learn, but which is formidable to little children who are there to learn, willy-nilly. He has not carried it quite far enough, however, and his leaning toward the American "Song-Study" method is still hampered by a "Scale-

Method" technique.[23]

Of much the same type, at least intended to serve the same purpose, is Dr. Whittaker's Class-Singing, published in 1924. He refers the reader to standard texts for specific methods and routine detail, and endeavors to survey the school music field in light of his own experiences, and observation of that of others, in teaching both children and adults, in various types of schools.

His statement of minimum essentials as to voice work, appreciation, repertory, etc. includes "ability to read at sight (which includes ear training). The importance of sight-reading is far too often underrated. It is not only important in itself (every member of the community should surely be able to read simple music at sight), but it is the finest foundation for musical knowledge and appreciation in the adult."[24]

While the Tonic Sol-fa system is used, as a matter of course, he makes certain criticisms and suggestions for improved techniques. The material usually offered to drill on chromatics is not considered adequate to train for our modern chromatic music so supplementary exercises are given. These are carefully graduated in order not to frighten the pupils by an over-dose. This practice is reminiscent of the organization of material in Music

23. White, R. T. The Teaching of Music, p. 113
24. Whittaker, W. G. Class-Singing, p. 10

Education Series to be discussed in Chapter IV. The chromatics are approached and quitted in all manner of different progressions. Warming is given to test constantly for true intonation, since upward chromatic intervals are usually made too small and those downward too large, causing flatting in either case.

Like Gedalge he expects the teacher to be able to sort out the things that will suit beginners and leave more difficult things to be taught at the proper stage of development. Staff reading is advocated "as soon as the DOH chord can be sung from the blackboard." Every step is taught first by Sol-fa and immediately applied to the staff. Evidently his experience with "loo" singers has been sad for he considers the practice an encouragement to loose thinking and inaccurate memory.

Theory and other facts are taught only as needed and used. Read first, then study notation, is his advice. Also, he advocates leaving clefs and names of lines and spaces to as late as thirteen or fourteen years of age, because they are not needed for further progress until that time. He believes in the "all keys at once" plan, as opposed to the "Key C only" plan, and does not attempt to establish absolute pitch to begin with. When the entire scale has been presented, he feels that the pupils should stay on that "plateau" until they can readily attach Sol-fa

names to staff notation. Only so are later fluency and confidence sure. His statement that "To teach sight-singing by means of intervals is futile"[25] is, of course, rank heresy to men raised in the "fixed DO" tradition, or to the disciples of Lewis and Cole, of whom more in Chapter IV. He does use some interval exercises, such as alternate thirds, but he values them for their sequential aspect rather than the purely intervallic. Classes are trained to sing a major third above any note sounded by the instructor - a wonderful aid to true intonation for class teacher or choir director.

Another bit of helpful advice is that of showing the pupils that there are only a few stock errors that they can make in reading pitches; and the pupils, being forewarned, can escape many stupid blunders, and in so doing escape much dullness in the lesson. They must, of course, be led to criticize themselves and point out their own errors. This book is of all those examined, decidedly the one most abreast of the times in general pedagogy. The method is not new but the application shows many new angles. There can be small doubt that the Tonic Sol-fa system works, on the whole, for Britain. Whether it could be made to work for France or for us is quite another question. America has much in common with Britain, in music study as in other things, but even so, I agree with Dr. Earhart's conclusions

25. Whittaker, Class Singing, p. 30

in The Teaching of Music, that certain practices that suit their situation would not fit in with our view of education.

A rather interesting argument took place in the columns of the Music Supervisors' Journal in 1929-30. Miss Glenn, then president of the Music Supervisors National Conference, visited English and German schools in the summer of 1929, and wrote of her impressions.[26] Among other things she says she found excellent preparation for sight-reading (such as ear training) but saw none except by a superior group of choir boys at Westminster Abbey, which had, of course, no connection with the common school work. Her impression was that every child in the schools was trained to sing C' at any time, and felt that with such fine ear training there should be also excellent part work, of which she heard little. Dr. Whittaker, author of the last book discussed above, replied (what surely one would expect to be the case) that Miss Glenn had been unfortunate in not happening to see any sight-singing being done. For, whatever else might be said of English School Music, sight reading is taught there more thoroughly and systematically, and in a larger proportion of schools than in any other country. "Many competitive festivals include a compulsory sight singing test for every school class entering.... indeed some festivals make sight reading compulsory for

26. Glenn, Mabelle. Visiting Music Classes in Elementary Schools of England and Germany. Music Supervisors Journal 15: 1, October 1929, p. 33

every section of instrumental or vocal work."[27] Part singing, he claims, is widely practiced but not at the expense of much fine unison singing. Moreover, the climatic and racial conditions are different from ours, and their children, except the Jewish, mature on the whole more slowly, and voices change later than with us, which limits the possibilities of part singing in the schools.

Both countries have some fine work, but ours cannot pretend to be nearly so fine as theirs on the vocal side, except in a few places such as Flint, Cleveland, and Kansas City. But as we become better acquainted with the work of each other, both sides profit by improvement of method and materials used.

CHAPTER IV

Sight-Singing in the United States

Grave charges are frequently made against Music Education in America. The accusation that probably heads the list for frequency and vehemence, is that no results commensurate with the time, effort and money expended. The American people as a whole remain unmusical in spite of the large numbers of people employed in teaching music, to say nothing of other professional musicians, and in spite of the truly enormous sum of money paid out each year for instruction.

This lack of advancement in skill and appreciation is due, according to A. T. Davison, of Harvard, chiefly to the "absence of a logical and continuous plan of music education based on the highest standards."[1] There obtains in the other subjects, such as reading or arithmetic, from the first grade on, a continuity which insures progress. Only music has no such plan. We have seen that the English or French music student has a definite procedure to follow, and a clearly defined goal is set for

1. Davison, A. T. Music Education in America, p. vii

him if he seriously wishes to make a special study of music as a prospective teacher or performer.

Why has America no such definite program, no progressive plan? Many factors enter in. Our early history with its Puritan background, was not of a sort to encourage general musical development. A young nation, in any case, could not be expected to spare sufficient time and interest from political and economic considerations to give serious thought to this problem. However, although as a nation we should now be sufficiently grown-up to discard this excuse, there are others. We have for one thing, no choral tradition, such as England's to motivate teaching from a definite point of view; nor have we a centralized, powerful Education Department, such as France's Ministry, which lack allows music to be taught in whatever way the training and ideals of the local supervisor demands, if indeed it is taught at all.

Another factor to be considered is the admixture of races, as yet only indifferently well assimilated. The widely divergent musical ideals and traditions thus represented can surely not be collected and brought into a unified plan except by one of two means - either a slow, patient development under wise, careful, planning, or, more rapidly by arbitrary enforcement of definite plans by a powerful central agency. Since we have not the latter

must depend on the former and lend our energies and interest to that end.

One of the first points of attack for better, more unified work would undoubtedly be sight-singing, and an understanding should be arrived at as to standards, ultimate aims, methods. While there is much excellent teaching of piano and other instruments, and to some extent of voice, the fact remains that too often is the teaching of singing done by teachers who cannot read, and who are woefully lacking in accuracy, musicianship, logical planning and professional cooperation. This is true in public school and private teaching, of children and adults, and conservatories not to be excepted. The deficiency has been keenly felt in many quarters and great concern manifested, as a result we have a host of systems, series, courses of study, all aimed at improving the general situation or some special phase of it.

I shall attempt to analyze several "series" and texts that are representative of the various points of view that exist in America today. But first we need to review a few brief historical facts that have bearing on the present situation.

It may be said that the movable DO and reading with the Guidonian syllables are the prevalent practice in America, and for that we have to thank Lowell Mason. He exerted a great deal of influence on American music through

the duration of a long life (1792-1872). As a young man he became choral conductor, and what choral tradition we have is due largely to his activities. But he felt that his object was not so much the cultivation of high class music as the introduction of music as an essential element of education in the common schools. Accordingly he gave up the position of director of music for the churches of Boston and established the Boston Academy of Music, in 1830. The story of this famous institution, and the long struggle Mason and his co-workers had to go through to accomplish their aim of having music installed by the Boards of Education, is interestingly told by E. B. Birge in his History of Public School Music in the United States. Lowell Mason's convictions were strengthened by the report brought back from European study by William Stockbridge in 1830. After several years of thought and experimentation Mr. Mason included in his Manual of Instruction an adaptation of the Pestalozzian principles, "the first formulation of modern principles of teaching music in the United States (1834)."

1. To teach sounds before signs - to make the child sing before he learns the written notes or their names.
2. To lead him to observe, by hearing and imitating sounds, their resemblances

and differences, their agreeable and disagreeable effects, instead of explaining this to him - in short - to make him active instead of passive in learning.

3. To teach but one thing at a time - rhythm, melody, expression, being taught and practiced separately, before the child is called on to the difficult task of attending to all at once.
4. To make them practice each step of each of these divisions until they are master of it, before passing on to the next.
5. To give the principles and theory after practice, and as an induction from it.
6. To analyze and practice the elements of articulate sound in order to apply them to music.
7. To have the names of the notes correspond to those used in instrumental music. [2]

Not content to be a follower of Pestalozzi and Nageli, he went to Germany and Switzerland in 1837. He continued to develop and adapt his ideas to fit the best pedagogic ideas of that day, and sought to train teachers to carry out his ideas. In England he was considered an excellent teacher and is frequently quoted in the Teachers Manual.

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2. Birge, E. B. The History of Public School Music in the United States, p. 38

The similarity between his Pestalozzian principles and those of the Tonic Sol-fa leaders is quite obvious. He was a strong advocate of the movable DO, although he considered it necessary to keep the beginner in the key of C so long that there was usually trouble when a new key was learned.(see page 62).Much of the procedure of the Tonic Sol-faers he adopted, including the hand signs for tune. Those for time, and the new notation were not used, at least to any extent, and have never been successfully introduced into American schools.

Compared to the methods then in vogue the principles and methods preached by Mason must have been rather revolutionary. Certainly fine results were obtained under his guidance and enthusiasm spread. But, as is so often the case, the followers were not all equally able to carry on. It was not so easy for little children to learn the necessary theory; inspiration was needed to keep up interest through the long period of drill, the monotony of the key of C, and certainly the songs were not very inspiring or interesting. To get results, teachers - none too sure of themselves - resorted to more and more formal methods. The inevitable reaction came, paralleling or slightly post dating a similar reaction against the general educational outlook. Soon reading was taught, not by the old laborious synthetic method, but words were

learned as wholes, even groups of words, sentences. Later they were analyzed into parts and these parts rebuilt into other words.

So in music. No longer did we teach the scale of C as the starting point for all further study, reading in it for a long time, then with a violent wrench leaving it and reading in the same way in G, etc. We learned, and loved to sing, many pretty songs. Later we scrutinized them, picked them apart, and eventually by a process of analysis and resynthesis we learned to read music.

Some leaders insisted upon retaining certain of the old more formal ideas, revising them to meet modern needs, and we had as a result the long controversy between the adherents of the "Scale method" and of the "Song-basis". Leaders on each side built up series of books to provide material suited to teach music by their method, in the elementary grades. In each case the aim was largely one of developing good sight-reading, although the defenders would insist, more or less honestly, that the sight reading was merely a means to the larger end: greater power to enjoy good music by active participation or in listening. This suggests that there exists a difference of opinion as to the place of sight-reading in the general scheme of music education. To judge by what one hears, sees, and reads, it ranges all the way from chief place at the top, to no place at all, depending on what opinion the author

or teacher has of the function and purpose of all music study. Analysis of several books and series in use in America today, intended, some for Grade work, others for advanced study, will reveal some interesting facts about this diversity of opinion.

I shall first discuss the two series that best exemplify the "Song-Basis", the Progressive Music Series, by Parker, McConathy, Birge and Miessner, and Music Hour by McConathy, Miessner, Birge and Bray. The first includes four books covering grades I-III, IV-V, VI-VII, VIII-IX respectively and a Teachers Manual in three volumes. Music Hour includes five books, not as definitely assigned to certain grades, but covering practically the same ground as the former series. Manuals accompany also the Music Hour.

The Progressive Series was published in 1915. It reflects the then prevailing educational psychology that the "subject matter and the pedagogical scheme must be adapted to the children, instead of adapting the children to an adult's comprehension of subject matter, or to a logical and empirical pedagogy."[3]

The series is organized on the basis of the psychological division of childhood into the Sensory Period, the Associative Period, and the Adolescent Period, and there is a close analogy to the process of learning to read

3. Parker, H. et al. The Progressive Music Series, Teachers Manual I, p. 3

language. "It is obvious that the child's sense experience with music, which he gains through the sense activity of the ear must be based upon real music, real songs; for these and not the scale or technical exercises, represent the concrete in music, in which the child is naturally interested.... The first studies must be analytical in nature, beginning with familiar song-wholes, and working toward the smaller constituent elements. Later these elements are synthetically recombined by the child. . .. Still later, in reading new songs, the child will be called upon to make use of these familiar elements in grasping the musical ideas embodied in the new wholes."[4] A definite vocabulary of tonal and rhythmic patterns is thus established for use in later intelligent analysis and reading of new songs.

These tonal and rhythmic problems are classified and organized into chapters. Wherever a new tonal problem is introduced, the rhythms are well known and vice versa. Rote songs are continued well into the Associative Period in order to give the pupils a musical experience beyond their own ability to read, and to furnish actual experience of new musical effects, gained unconsciously through imitation, later to be consciously studied and mastered.

The first approach to melody is through the tonic chord, then the members of this chord with their active

4. Parker, et. al. p. 4

neighboring tones (DO-RE-DO, MI-FAMI, etc.) scale passages (DO RE MI SO LA TI DO' etc.) simple intervals and combinations of all the above, taken singly and in sequences.

No exercise material appears in the pupils' books, but is to be found in the Manuals. It is derived from the song material itself and is to be used orally and on the black board.[5]

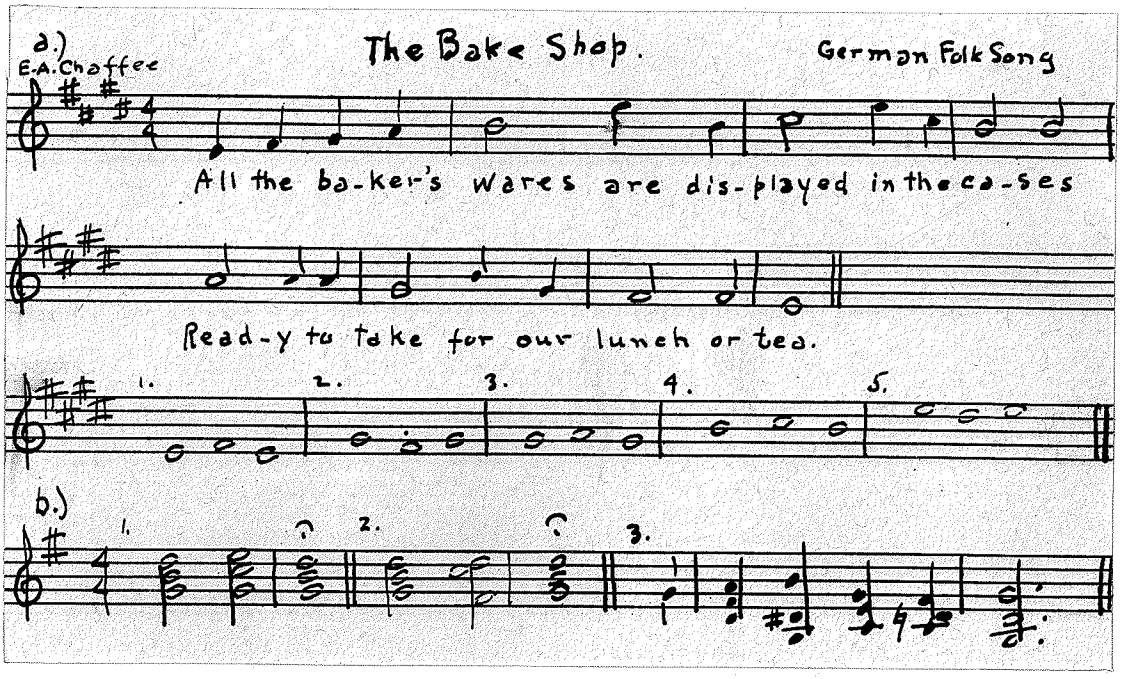
The process known as "Rote-to-Note" is outlined thus:

1. Teaching rote and observation songs for musical experience and oral expression.
2. Concentrating attention upon the purely musical aspects of the songs by singing with "loo". . . .. with observation of phrase repetition as a fundamental principle.
3. Application of the SO-FA syllables by rote, to a known song.
4. Observation by ear of motive and figures; building a vocabulary of ideas.
5. Presentation of familiar songs in staff notation; knowing by sight what is known by ear.
6. Beginning of the synthetic process; reading new songs in light of the old. [6]

5. Parker, et. al. pp 5-7
6. Ibid. p. 11

The last three steps are constantly made use of in studying any new problem. Some song always furnishes the necessary knowledge for solving the problem.

The Music Hour series is built on essentially the same ideas but progress is aided by the greater amount and variety of song material intended to teach each point. Exercise material is not included here either, except that the vocabulary to be derived from study and observation songs is frequently given. This "vocabulary" ranges all the way from tonic chord and scale patterns to tone blending exercises in Book V. In the examples that follow, (a) is from Book II, p. 21; (b) is from Book V, p. 32. It is derived from a three part arrangement of Auld Lang Syne.



The songs in both series are largely of folk song origin, some by well known composers, (considerably more of these in Music Hour) and many by contemporary composers. One criticism made of both series is that songs "written for this series" are not worthy. Another criticism, obviously from a different camp, is that good songs are ruined for future enjoyment by having to use them as drill material, in absence of exercises which would obviate such usage.

While "key-relationship" is not mentioned in connection with either series, the elements are there in such form that good teaching should, without extra material being introduced, develop a definite understanding of and feeling for the inter-relationship of the scale members. No one key is studied for long at a tine, so care must be exercised lest the pupil become confused by too rapid a pace, and by insufficient attention being paid to new aspects when a different key occurs.

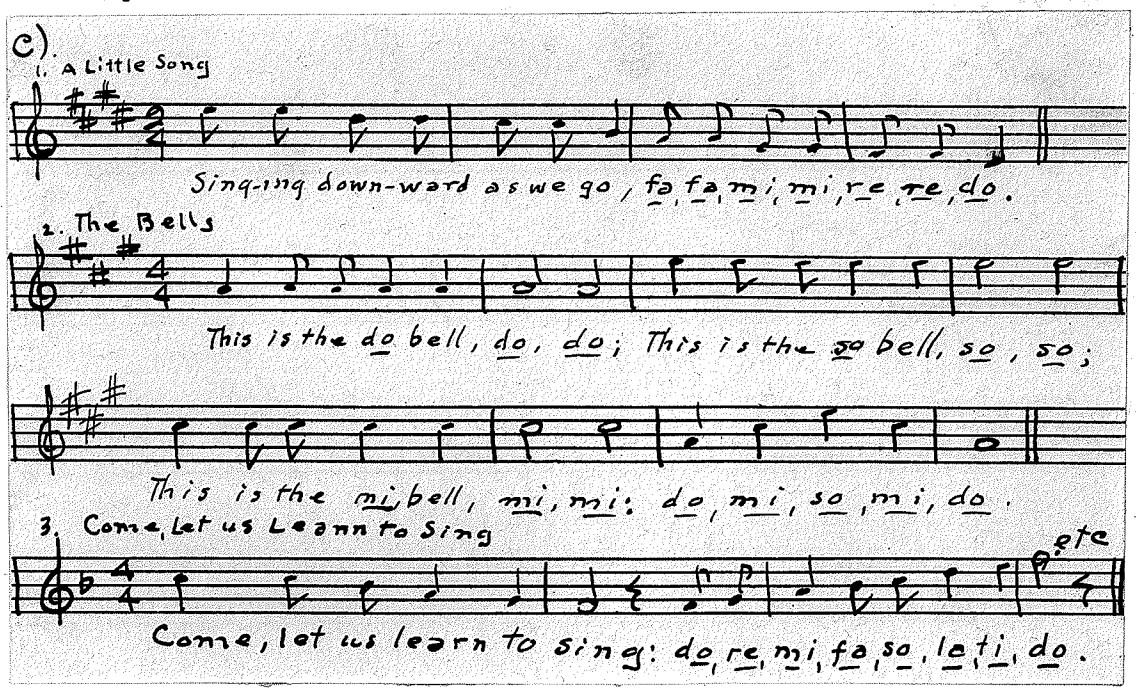
Where the method is outlined by these series has been wisely and honestly followed by well trained teachers, the results are good, as at Kansas City; but the general criticism made is that children learn lovely songs and enjoy them but are, on the whole, indifferent readers.

The avowed aim of both of these series is to have children love and use music, and the "Scale-basis"

exponents profess the same aim but travel a different road to get to it. The best example of the "scale" type, and one widely used, is the Hollis Dann Music Course, consisting of six books, one to a grade, a Junior Music for Grades VII-IX and a Teachers' Manual.

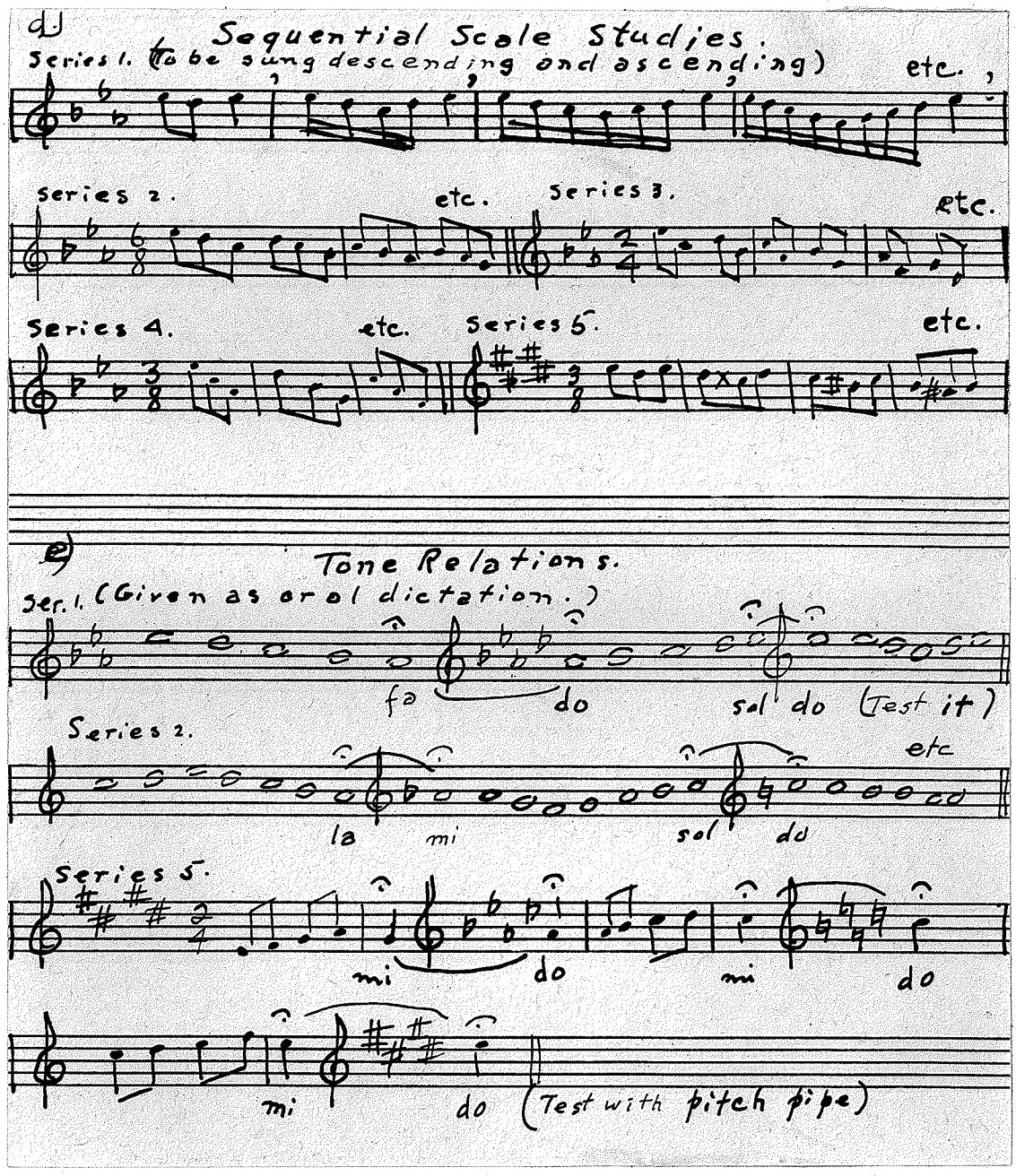
The initial approach is not much different from that described above. Much song material of suitable difficulty and content is used until well into the Second Grade, in order to provide a musical background comparable to that which the pupil has in language. Nevertheless, one receives a distinct impression upon reading the Introduction to the new Manual for Teachers[7] that the satisfaction that follows skill and power in reading is of first importance and the music itself takes second place.

Syllables are introduced in such songs as are shown at c.



7. Dann, H. New Manual for Teachers, p. 2

Along with this are taught the first of a long series of "sequentials" sung with syllables. These are intended to serve the same purpose as the patterns of the "song-basis" namely, as idiomatic vocabulary.



When reading is begun, it is wholly of the exercise type, and continues to be so for at least two years, although words are occasionally set to the reading material, Scale patterns of all sorts from the basis for study until in Grade Three when the tonic chord line and other intervals of a third are used.

The work is very carefully graded, and is reenforced at every point by oral, and, later on, by written, dictations, which are given in detail in the Teachers' Manual. The sequentials are subject to misuse and are too often drilled on so extensively for their own sake that the effect is deadening to enthusiasm and to musical progress. This is quite contrary to Dr. Dann's intention, and in his New Manual (1929) he states, "Mastery of this study will greatly aid in gaining automatic use of the syllable names. The usefulness of these sequential studies is ended when the child can sing them freely and rapidly. It is worse than a waste of time to continue singing them after the objective has been attained."[8]

The exercises for modulation to other keys shown at (e) indicates that there is considerable attention paid to key-relationship. What we knew as "mental effects" in the Tonic Sol-fa system, Dr. Dann calls the "relational effects of the scale tones" and he insists that the teacher feel these, that acceptance of such descriptions as "calm, bold,

8. Dann, H. New Manual for Teachers, p. 26

rousing", on any one's authority is not sufficient.[9] The criticism usually made of the method, aside from the one suggested about sequentials, is that there is not enough real music in proportion to other material. The energy and time spent should have gained for the pupil a wider range of acquaintance with the world's great music. A fairly large proportion of the rote songs included is by contemporary composers, songs tuneful and attractive enough, yet of rather ephemeral value. The slight connection that exists between them and the exercises does not at all conform to the rather prevalent idea among music educators today that the "song is the thing" - the song must be fine enough, and contain the right elements, to spur on to further effort. Songs of such quality are not usually made for a special purpose or to order.

A series that combines desirable elements of both the "scale" and "song" methods, as well as several of its own, is the Music Education Series, by Giddings, Earhart, Baldwin, and Newton. It consists of eight books for the pupils plus a Teachers Book and several books of accompaniment. The course is flexible, being so organized that minimum essentials may be covered by the use of either four or five of the books, but the eight book course provides more material to develop each point. The compilers

9. Dann. H. New Manual for Teachers, p. 52

identify their aims with those of music education in general:

1. Music reading, a means to an end which permits a wide experience in
2. Song singing, which is an incentive to musical growth, and results in
3. Music Appreciation - the open door to greater opportunities in the world of music.[10]

On pages 20 to 23 of the Teachers' Book is found perhaps as sound and clear an exposition of the psychological processes involved in music reading, as any I have found. The views there expressed led the editors to base the organization of the Series on the plateau plan of gradation. "The outstanding thought . . . was that it (the series) should be of such a nature that the children would not find themselves temporarily deprived of musical enjoyment or hindered in their musical education by their experiences with the material presented to them."[11] The music must be beautiful and in such quantities that the child could grow through it, by almost imperceptible degrees, rather than find himself confronted "by frequent mountainous problems" such as discourage teacher and pupil alike.

Each problem is presented through a rote song, and

10. Giddings, T.P. et. al. Teachers' Book, p. 75
11. Ibid., p. 23

in the reading that follows the attention is left free to cope with the new thing because all other factors have been reduced to their simplest terms. The songs become progressively more difficult until the next step-up to a new plateau. Each key is dwelt on long enough to become familiar, but not so long as to establish fixity of ideas.

To serve such a method the material must necessarily be very well organized and carefully graduated. Songs could not always be found that would make the progression sufficiently smooth, hence we find many songs written to fill a special need. The same criticism as was made of the Dann series, that the proportion of good songs is not sufficiently large, holds good here also.

Again we find that the approach to reading is not much different from that of the other series studied. Certain songs in the first two books serve as patterns for the scale and tonic chord, and syllables are learned as second stanzas to these songs. A new element enters in, however, which the other series have not mentioned; the number and letter names of the scale are presented early in the grades and used interchangeably with the syllables in reading and dictation. The aim in all three types of study is to establish the relation of each scale member to the key tone.

The pupils would be quite certain to attain to fluency

of reading through the wise use of this series, but their appreciation would not be especially developed or their knowledge of the classics much increased if limited to the material sung. In fact, none of the series thus far mentioned can be said to have had such appreciation or knowledge as a primary aim.

The Books of Songs compiled by Robert Foresman are based chiefly on the need for developing appreciation, with sight reading as a secondary aim. The series is attracting much attention because it is without doubt, an unusually fine collection of folk and art music. Words and music are authentic, suited to a child's interests, varied in style and content, and not at all hackneyed. But when it comes to evaluating the method described in the manuals which set forth Mr. Foresman's ideas, it is hard to know what to say. There are many excellent phases, such as the constant form analysis, the emphasis placed upon the meaning of the words, etc. But some of the procedures that appear to be fundamental in his method seem to me almost mystic. There is much talk of the "feeling reaction", the "suggestive" use of notation, "associational use" of syllables, without the reader feeling sure just what is meant by these terms. If they were restated in more usual phraseology I suspect that the vague impression induced by so much stress on "feelings" would disappear, and we

should discover not much that was totally new. The pupil learns many lovely songs, sings them expressively, applies sol-fa syllables to them, but does not read by syllable independently until fifth grade or later. Before that time he reads by "associative" use of the syllables, which brings in the new element. The theory is that most of the songs in this series may be read from the "suggestion" of the notation if the teacher first teaches the "germ-theme" or first phrase. That is, the first phrase has in it all the rhythmic and interval problems of the song as a whole - if this phrase is learned, the pupils can complete the song by watching what the notation suggests in the light of what they remember of the first phrase. This sounds like a scheme to make them good guessers. If a child has considerable musical imagination, it seems he could balance a given phrase in several ways - certainly that is what happens in creative melody work, - and if the "feeling" of how the tune is to go is to be the criterion, then his version is just as right as the one in the book, because that is the way he "feels" it. As a matter of fact, the manual provides drill material that would indicate that procedure is really not as free as the exposition of the method first leads one to think. I have yet to hear of a school which is successfully using these books and adhering to the methods outlined. They are, however, used

in many places as supplementary material, and I shall have more to say of them in connection with the Rochester experiment later in the chapter.

The demands of the Foresman method would eliminate much material otherwise desirable. The American systems studied have all been founded on some method of teaching, and the music has been made or selected to facilitate the smooth operation of that method. The man who said America's lack of musical education was due to lack of planning, (Archibald T. Davison) was not content with talking about it. In the Concord Series we have what Davison, Surette and Zanzig feel is the music that children and young people should know. Disregarding to a large extent the problems involved, selecting the songs only for their musical value, and the suitability of their word content, the compilers of these books did not work out any "method" until later, and when it did evolve it was based largely on rhythmic development, and appreciation.

Syllables are not used, but the letters are employed merely to give more accuracy to the pupils' feeling for up-and-down-ness. They evidently learn the interrelationship of the letters as these represent the various scales. This is felt to correlate better with the piano. The numbers are also used since there is felt to be a definite relationship between the pupil's spatial sense and his

number sense. 1-3 is smaller than 1-5 naturally, while there is nothing in the syllables themselves to tell whether DO ME or DO SO is the larger, nor F-A as compared to F-C. Reading is done, however, by neutral syllable, and these other devices are merely means for establishing interval sense, Drills are given such as: This is one (sings it) - sing six." Or: "This is one (writes it on staff) - write six."

More stress seems to be laid on rhythmic patterns than on tonal patterns. The pupils learn to "step" the values: a "step" represents a pulse, a continuation (dotted quarter, half-note, etc.) is represented by one or more "dips" of the knees, and shorter notes are "run". The names quarter, half, etc. are not learned till the other is well established. The last phrase of "America" would be read rhythmically in this manner: "step run run runrun ste-ep run step runrun step step ste-e-ep." This is, of course, derived from the Eurhythmics of Dalcroze.

In a sense this method is of the song-basis type - no exercise material is provided; the means for reading new songs is the experience gained in the study of known songs.

It is rather difficult to tell whether the method produces sight readers, or whether the pupils remain rather dependent on the teacher to find the old song to be

studied in order to read a new one. The method is not in general use, although the books, because of their wonderful contents, are well known, and the few teachers I know who do use the method, say so much of the expressive and appreciative power gained and so little of the reading skill, that I suspect the reading is not at all fluent or independent.

I have given so much space to the methods for grade school teaching because it is these schools that must bear the brunt of the criticisms of music teaching in America. If the children are not well taught the orchestra leaders, choir directors, etc. that later try to use them in organizations gain more grounds for their critical attitude.

Let us now consider the methods and materials for college or conservatory study. Some of those better known are combinations of Ear training, Sight Singing, and Keyboard harmony. Such a collection is Heacox's Harmony for Ear, Eye and Keyboard. Sight singing is done by syllable but the material is not included in the text, reference being made to several sources such as those dealt with in this study (Solfège des Solfège, the Dann Series, Lewis and Cole's books, etc.) No new ideas or methods occur. Supplementary Sight Reading Exercises by Damrosch, Gartlan and Gehrkens is intended to supplement the Universal Series, by giving much material, from the easiest to the difficult, that will afford opportunity for extra drill on any problem

as the need arises. The exercises are organized as to problem and difficulty and may be used to advantage from the middle grades to college. Much entirely new material is included from folk music of all countries. No method is indicated, making the book acceptable to practically all groups.

Ear Training and Sight Singing by G. A. Wedge, is intended for adult use in connection with the study of theory. It is very well organized and provides for much self-activity by the student. The singing is entirely by numerals or neutral syllable, but the organization is such that syllables can perfectly well be used. The one exception to this is where, for a short period, the minor is studied on the "tonic" rather than the "relative" basis. This book and its sequel Advanced Ear Training and Sight Singing are thorough and musicianly. Their mastery by high school or college students would mean real sight-reading power.

The McDonough-Cheve Method of Sight Singing, by Anne McDonough is intended for use in adult classes, choirs, clubs, and by the vocal student lacking in fundamental training. It is largely an adaptation and condensation of the Galin-Paris-Cheve Method mentioned in Chapter I. For this reason, as well as because it contains in new guise many devices and features of other methods discussed in this study, I have included it. How widely used it is,

I cannot say. Like its forerunner, it is based on key-relationship. It uses numerals, as is shown on page 13 but this is only for drill purposes. The Sol-Fa syllables are used at least as much as the merals in sight singing, and the staff is used from the very start. This chromatic scale will show the forms used: DO DI RE RI MI FA FI (FE) SOL TI (SE) LA LI SI DO; DO SI SE LA LE SOL SAY FA MI ME (MAY) RE RAH DO: The spelling, as this shows, is inconsistent throughout the book.

Modulation is done very much like in Tonic Sol-Fa, and the time names, differently spelled, are used. There is a "modulator" for drilling chords, similar to that in Figure 6, page 51, also a "meloplast" to teach transposition, but no specific instructions for its use. The student is required to speak the syllables before singing, and must usually beat time while naming them or singing.

The first four lessons place DO on the first line, in either treble or bass clef, so the keys used are E and E^b treble, G and G^b bass. If the student cannot sing in the ranges thus indicated, the instructions read: "Take the pitch of C as DO". Absolute pitch is not mentioned, but the student is required to use a pitch pipe or a C tuning fork. The next group of lessons places DO on the second line, then follow DO on Third line, fourth line, third space, etc. The minor is taught with LA as the tonic. Intervals are taught progressively, i.e. seconds, thirds,

etc. The music to be read includes unison to four parts, but nothing beyond the difficulty of Twice 55 Green.

The system may be useful in amateur groups of adults but is too cumbersome, too inconsistent, and does not sufficiently advance the student, to be recommended for secondary school or college use.

Quite different from other systems is the one originated by Samuel W. Cole, of the New England Conservatory, based wholly upon the study of intervals. In an address to the Music Teachers' National Association[12], he set forth his ideas as to why music students are weak in Sight reading, what constitutes an ideal sight singing method; and how his method measures up to that ideal. Students find that they can gain considerable vocal and instrumental facility without ear and eye training, and so neglect these. Many teachers aid and abet them in this by their conviction that a student gifted with natural ear for music need not study sight singing, and if a pupil does not possess such a gift, study will not avail him. They accept a correct expression of tone and rhythm on the part of a pupil as proof of intelligent musical thinking. He considers the chief cause for poor sight reading everywhere, to be the lack of a method adequate to all grades of musical composition, a universal method. Such a method should, besides being equal to all styles of music, of all grades of

12. Cole, S. W. A Universal Sight-singing Method. M.T.N.A. 1910, p. 150

difficulty, make guessing by the pupil impossible and force him to think; it must enable the teacher to follow the mental processes of the pupil; it must be within the reach of students of all grades of native musical ability.

Obviously the Sol-fa syllables would not suit the intervallic scheme and a set of thirteen syllables has been formulated to name the interval rather than the pitch. Whereas the older system develops a sense of pitch in the key, (Major mode predominating) the system Mr. Cole advocates takes no account of key as such, the pupil sings from note to note, having the pitch of the first note and knowing the interval to the next. Thus, he reasons one can read accurately music of such difficulty that the sol-fa syllables do not suffice.

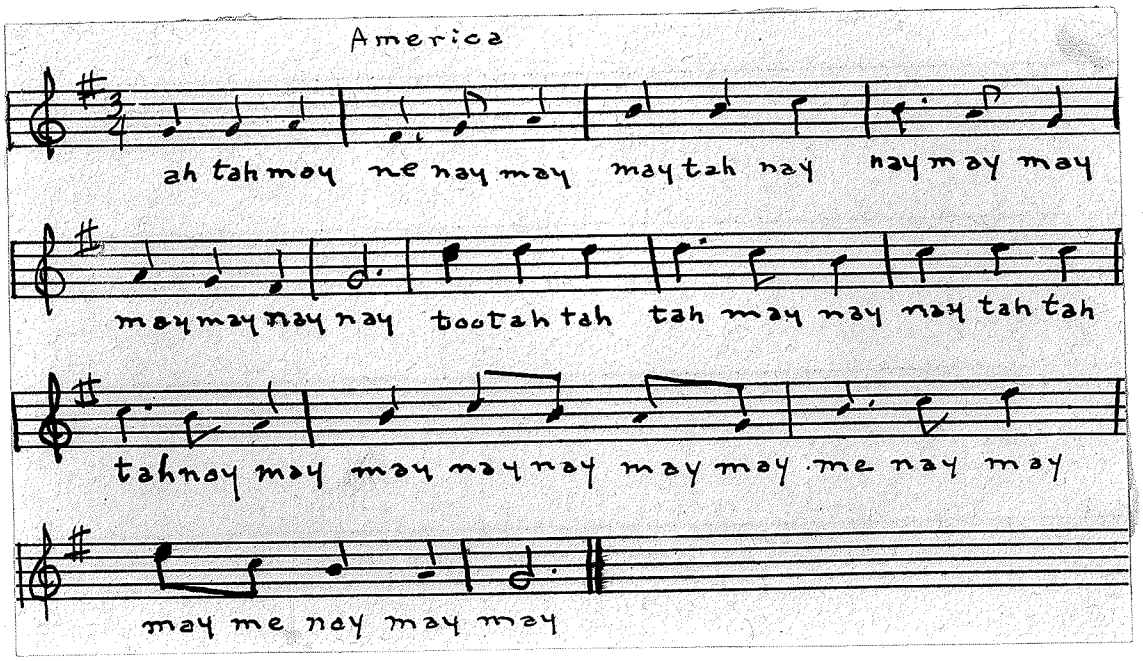
He does not advocate absolute pitch because this is probably not within the ability of the average pupil; but if one desires to develop it this system, in his opinion, is the best.

In these intervalsnames the initial consonant shows whether the interval is major, minor, perfect, augmented or diminished; the ending tells its size:

General names: -

ah -	prime	m -	major
a (ay)	second	n -	minor
e -	third	t -	perfect
o -	fourth	g -	augmented
oo -	fifth	d -	diminished
el -	sixth		
on -	seventh		
rah -	octave		

Initial tones are sung on "ah". America sung by these interval names would be as follows:



The first books published in 1903, Solfeggio, books I and II, were not intended for beginners, but for New England Conservatory classes, a certain amount of theoretical knowledge being requisite. Beginning with major and minor seconds, chromatic and diatonic, the exercises go through all the keys. Modulations are given in this fashion: A tune in key of C ends on c; the next one in A^b begins on c, and the pupil is expected to sing the new key with proper interval relationships.

The intervals are taken up in consecutive order; inversions are taught when the augmented fifth is reached. Much drill is given on problems of interval and simple

rhythms, but the more advanced rhythms are given comparatively small space in Book I. It does not appear that the interval names are used in this book, nor until in 1910, when Intervallia was published. In the meantime Melodia appeared with L. R. Lewis as co-author. This, too, is intended for conservatory classes and private study. It contains much more material than Solfeggio, of an infinitely more interesting nature. Whereas the latter contained nothing but technical exercises, Melodia has many excerpts from instrumental and vocal music of the highest quality.

The general organization is somewhat different, the intervals being taken up in another order. The first eighty pages, 15 staves to a page, are entirely devoted to seconds, including every sort of chromatic progression and complicated rhythm. Then octaves, sevenths, sixths, etc. are taken up in rapid succession. There is much two-part material in contrapuntal style. The last section contains excerpts from vocal works of the masters, where there are arbitrary changes of tonality, chromatics that "deny" the signature, etc. There are also ten pages of modal music.

In 1910 this system was adapted to elementary school use, in Intervallia. It is here the interval names are especially stressed. He took this means of providing material

for reforms he had advocated in periodicals and pamphlets. Rote material is included that belong in Intermediate grades. No indication is given as to what should precede this course, nor when it should be introduced.

Melodia is the only one of these books that has truly musical material. The rest makes one feel that, if we live through these drills, some day we are going to have some real music.

I know of no elementary school where it is in use at present. It was used in Brookline and elsewhere when Mr. Cole was supervising music, but it has been discontinued of course, upon Mr. Zanzig taking over the Brookline schools.

For adult music students it does what it sets out to do - it gives facility and accuracy in reading. Whether or not this is not to be attained as well by other methods is debatable. This method demands a definite sort of material, at least definite organization of material. It could not be introduced successfully with just any collection of exercises, but teachers of other methods can use Melodia to great advantage.

There are at least dozens of other books or series that might be mentioned, but those included are representative, they are either in general use at present, or have exerted marked influence on music education in the past, or they indicate an attempt to improve the quality of

sight singing in America.

Several experiments in method, using material already in existence, are of special significance. About thirteen years ago, Victor Rebmann of Yonkers, N.Y. began experimenting to see whether greater progress, accuracy and pleasure could be attained by using other methods in sight-reading than the movable DO. At the end of twelve years, he reported on the results.[13]

In High School groups, where the syllabic training in the grades had been excellent, he gradually substituted for the syllables a system of reading by chords and intervals. Tonality was stressed and modulatory progressions thought of in the new key. This weaning away from the syllables has gradually been put earlier till now the syllables are not used beyond Grade VI, except as a last resort in difficult passages, and the High school students are able to sing at sight, without accompaniment such numbers as Schubert's Omnipotence, which involves most unusual modulations.

Another phase of his experiment was in the grades. Three fourth grade groups were chosen, A, B, and C (high average and low) and the unadulterated fixed DO taught by excellently trained and keenly interested teachers. As long as they worked in the key of C, progress was, for Group A, excellent; Group B, good plus; Group C, fair.

13. Rebmann, V. Experiments in teaching Sight Reading with Systems other than the Movable DO. M.S.N.C. 1930. pp 279-81

When they went into other keys, Group C gave up at the end of the third month and returned to the regular course; Group B lasted four months; Group A lasted six months. At the end of that time this Group A had covered less than half that a bright third grade had done; they had no assurance or fluency in reading; there was no enjoyment - it was like doing Arithmetic to please the teacher; they liked to sing in the key of C but they positively detested the key of E. After a short time with the movable DO, they showed positive gain. As a further check the teacher of Group A continued to teach to the end of the year a few of the more talented pupils, who were also studying violin or piano. Progress was fair, only the very talented pupils could get it to a degree that justified the time and energy expended. Mr. Rebmann concluded that for our elementary schools, the movable DO is most effective; syllables may later be dropped for words; in High School the work can be best accomplished on a basis of harmonic reading.

In Rochester, N.Y. an experiment is in progress now that is attracting much attention. Using the Foresman Books of Songs as material, the pupils are taught to sing with neutral syllable. The "musical feeling" is developed through song singing in Grades I and II. Through this means their "subconscious mind is trained definitely in

the proper sequence of intervals in a major or minor melody."[14] The tonality of a song being fixed before reading, the claim is that mistakes are not made in singing a major interval for a minor, because of the operation of this "musical feeling". The problem then becomes one of training the pupils to notice the size of intervals. The plan is showing good results in Rochester, at least far better than the results gained by the old method. As yet the director in charge has not been willing to put the plan into print, so much depending on the way the various steps are applied. A study of the underlying psychology is felt to be a prerequisite to an understanding of the plan.

The idea of teaching without syllables is not new. Des Moines, Iowa, the Elementary School of the School of Education, University of Chicago, and other school systems have tried it. So far no outstandingly fine results have been reported. At State Teachers' College, Indiana, Pa. Miss Lola Beelar has been conducting a test of the effectiveness of non-syllabic teaching, checking the experimental group against a "control" group, the two groups being "paired" and all conditions conforming as nearly as possible to the requirements of a scientific set-up. The non-syllabic group have not even heard syllables used, except possibly

14. Miller, Chas. H. Teaching Sight Reading without Syllables. Music Supervisors' Journal 17:1, Oct. '31. p. 18

by other children outside of school. No authoritative reports are available at present,

In the final chapter I shall attempt to designate some criteria of a method of sight singing that can be successful in our American schools, and evaluate the foregoing methods in the light of these criteria.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

Dewey says that "method in any case is but an effective way of employing some material to some end." Our methods in music education are accused of being inadequate, the results are not considered satisfactory, due to a lack of clear planning to reach those aims.

Music education, to be truly effective, must have a double aim: to develop a love of and an "initiative for"[1] good music; and to provide the necessary skill that shall enable the pupil to satisfy his desire to participate in music. These two aims must be well balanced. The one can, and should, be made to further the other. One cannot conceive of a good school neglecting the teaching of reading in favor of developing a literary appreciation wholly through story telling. Yet the practice of emphasizing rote singing, of a very high quality to be sure, but at the expense of and in the place of music reading, is dangerously close to such procedure. Several "progressive schools" have adopted this policy, and the teachers do not seem to realize the injustice of it. For,

1. Farnsworth, C. H. Education Through Music, p. 7

the more the pupil has gained of appreciation and delight in participation, the more he will eventually need a power to read music, in order to continue and progress in an activity dear to him.

This over-emphasis on rote singing is, of course, by way of protest against too much stress on reading for its own sake. "Our reverence for skill and efficiency too often leads us to conceive of excellence in performance as the goal of music education, and we forget that, however tentative and unsuccessful active participation may be, it yet has great value as a means of self-expression, and serves as the best approach to appreciation and intelligent listening."[3] However, it is quite unnecessary to sacrifice either skill or appreciation. The poor work done in music, and the resulting unfavorable attitude, are due to several causes: poorly prepared teachers, whose dislike for and fear of this phase of their work, is transmitted to their pupils; uninspired material, selected or made to further the success of a "method" rather than for its musical value; lack of foresight, of the "far view" on the part of supervisors, which allows concentration on the immediate acquisition of skill, losing sight of the ultimate aim in which sight-singing is but a part. These, with the causes mentioned above, namely failure

2. Davison, A. T. Musical Education in America, p. 4

to formulate aims and carefully plan, are some of the chief obstacles in the way of developing a musical nation. We are not as alone in this as seems to be the general impression. In practically all the texts studied and the articles read, there has been voiced a dissatisfaction with the "status quo" and the methods are, in all but the case of Solfège des Solfèges, attempts at offering the best remedy.

I have listed below the more important factors that seem to have influenced the authors of methods, or compilers of material. There is no attempt at arrangement according to importance.

1. Sight singing must be well taught as it is a foundational skill, necessary to further musical development.
2. As in the teaching of all skills, ample opportunity must be provided for drill on every possible aspect.
3. There must be some means of accurately measuring pitch intervals, and the use of this "measure" must be reduced to an automatic basis. A definite nomenclature is absolutely indispensable in this connection.
4. Far from interfering with present pleasure in singing, sight singing should, in the

first place, be derived from song material, and should constantly be referred back to it, in the enlargement of repertory. That is, the process should be analytic and then synthetic: from a song - whole to its parts, and back to new song-wholes.

6. The only justification for technical drill in an art subject is the power gained for greater appreciations and powers.

7. The better the method, the more real music is learned, the larger opportunity is provided for truly musical activity.

8. Sufficient skill must be acquired in school, to carry over into adult life, either as a basis for wholesome recreation, or as a foundation for advanced music study.

9. The method that becomes a crutch is either bad, or is badly used. All devices should be discarded as soon as their object has been attained. (cf. Dr. Dann, p. 89)

10. A method designed to train only the particularly gifted does not fit with a democratic conception of education.

11. The music is more important than the method, and the needs and abilities of the child are more important than either. The music must

be selected for its value and its suitability to the child's present stage of development, and the method must be formulated to conform to the best child psychology, and to the nature of the music.

All of the systems studied meet some of these demands; perhaps the authors of some would claim to meet them all, in which case the problem becomes one, not of method, but of application of method.

As far as American Music education is concerned, the answer to our problem is not that of adopting the "fixed DO" of France. Our pupils are not resigned to endless drill as are the French children. They would have no previous or collateral training in "long patience" such as is needed to arrive at real music at the end of years of drill. Nor can I subscribe to the value set upon acquisition of absolute pitch. It may be of tremendous value in the more advanced stages of music study, (though even that is debatable) but for the average person it is not of nearly the value that a keen sense of relative pitch is. If this relative sense has been established, the other can be acquired by the talented person who desires it and can profit by it. The claim made by the French that the same name is always used for the same pitch, is not strictly speaking true. RE, for example, is used to designate pitches that differ by a whole step. D^b and D#.

A mental adjustment must be made by the reader, that cannot demand less judgment, or be less confusing, than the movable DO which they condemn.

Those that advocate the adoption of this system, and point to France as a much more musical people, forget that they are judging by what is seen at the Conservatory. What is the musical status of the average French pupil upon leaving Elementary School does not enter in. Our young people may not be as good readers, but I am sure many of them have other gains from their music study that they would not readily exchange for the greater skill.

Nor is the Tonic Sol-fa suited to American adoption. It might possibly have been a success in our schools, as in England, if Lowell Mason had introduced it as a whole instead of in part. Now it is becoming out of date even in England. That is, the manner in which the various elements are used is being greatly modified to conform to newer educational ideas.

Careful consideration of the elements of the Tonic Sol-fa leads one to conclude that the success it has had should be attributed, not nearly so much to the simplified notation, hand signs, etc., but to the two principles upon which it is built: the "mental effect" of scale members, and the intervallic relationships within a key. These two factors have been isolated from the rest and incorporated into other systems.

Since the two methods, most frequently pointed out as desirable models for our music eduators, are not suited to our needs or our educational ideals, it devolves upon American teachers to formulate plans and procedures that shall meet the needs that certainly exist.

The indications are that the next few years may bring forth the plan that shall be so excellent that all factions, all strong believers in this or that method, shall be willing to give up their old ways and follow the new. In themeantime, I contend that for the purposes of a good general music education that can function in any of several ways in later life, the present methods can perform wonders in the hands of a teacher who is well trained, has vision, and can maintain a balance between the theoretical and aesthetic.

If key relationship is well taught, and the aspects of melodic and rhythmic tendencies constantly called to the attention of the pupil, it does not greatly matter what you call the tones. That some naming of tones is essential, I still believe, the Rochester Plan notwithstanding.

However, the fact has been deplored for lo, these many years, that the use of syllables becomes a bad habit. In reply to this I submit, on the basis of work successfully done in the grades and in college classes, that a combination of syllables, number names, letter names, and neutral syllables, results in the pupils being able to

read fluently and accurately with "loo" or words. When an interval occurs wholly foreign to the context, they have gained sufficient power through these various means to work it out. The argument that these ways of naming tones does not suffice for modern music is answered by the fact that sufficient skill in the usual progressions should be attained by the time the pupil is ready for modern music, so that syllables of any sort may be abandoned and the reading be done by a sense of interval. It is perfectly possible to develop this intervallic sense with the regular syllables if chromatics and modulations are systematically studied, and if, above all, the various intervals are used sufficiently often, in every possible place on the staff, and in every usable melodic progression.

Until the present day, our music has been founded on certain scale relationships, involving certain intervals and melodic progressions. The new music is, to some extent, founded on other scales and chords. If much such music is written for voice, it means that a new mode of reading may have to be devised, or it may be that "Intervallia" will suffice.

Whatever the coming method of sight singing may turn out to be, it must use music as its foundation.

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