

**A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGY.
INTENDED AS A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF
THE HISTORY OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.
REPRINTED FROM "EARLY RECORDS OF
THE PRECURSORS OF THE VIOLIN FAMILY"**

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KATHLEEN SCHLESINGER

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PREFACE.*

THIS work, obviously characterised by numerous departures from conventional methods, is intended as a simple practical handbook for students and others who wish to be able to identify the instruments in the orchestra, when seeing and hearing them, without studying instrumentation.

Part I deals with the instruments of the modern orchestra on a uniform plan, the necessary information being systematically arranged for each member of it, without unnecessary technicalities, under the headings of *Construction, Production of sound, Compass, Quality of tone, Possibilities, Origin*, and accompanied in each case by at least one illustration. As the nomenclature of the degrees of pitch in the successive octaves is often a puzzle, a table has been given showing the various methods in use at the present time, including the system suggested by M. Victor Mahillon at the International Musical Congress held in Paris in 1900 and duly adopted.

Part II is an excursion into the domain of archaeology in quest of the remote origin of the violin family. It will be noticed that the conclusions at which I have arrived after many years of research differ entirely from those of such authorities as E. J. Payne in Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" (first edition); Edward Heron Allen in "Violin Making as it Was and Is"; Antoine Vidal in "Les

* (Reprinted from the work in two volumes entitled "The Instruments of the Modern Orchestra and Early Records of the Precursors of the Violin Family," by K. Schlesinger, London, 1910.)

Instruments à Archet"; Laurent Grillet in "Les Ancêtres du Violon et du Violoncelle"; Fétis in "Antoine Stradivari"; Dr. Julius Rühlmann in "Die Geschichte der Bogeninstrumente," and others, who derive the violin from the Moorish rebab, for the reason that, as far as is known at present,^o the bow was first used with that instrument in Europe. An equally illogical claim has been made on behalf of the Welsh crwth on the ground that it was mentioned by Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth century, the unwarrantable assumption being that as the Welsh crwth was played with the bow in the eighteenth century, and even in the fourteenth, it must have been a bowed instrument in the sixth century also, which proves to be as great a fallacy as in the case of the rebab (see Appendix, p. 490). As, however, I have discovered in ancient and in mediæval Persia (eighth cent. B.C. to eighth cent. A.D.) the two principal forms of the rebab, afterwards popularised in mediæval Europe under the name of rebec, *both played without the bow* by twanging the strings as in the lute, with which the pear-shaped form was practically identical at that stage, it is manifestly impossible on that score alone to accept the rebab as progenitor of the violin. But there are other and more cogent reasons for seeking elsewhere the origin of the important family of instruments which forms the basis of our modern orchestra. The characteristic in which the violin excelled all other bowed instruments was its tone; the bow, which did not attain perfection at the hands of Tourte until a century and a half after the Cremona masters turned out the first perfect violins, was common to other bowed instru-

* The very earliest instance of the use of the bow with a stringed instrument, which I discovered after the bulk of the letterpress had been printed, occurs on a mural painting representing *Orpheus* in the Necropolis of Baouit, (See Bibliography, p. 367 under CLEDAT, pl. xvii.). Unfortunately the reproduction is not clear enough to allow the outline of the instrument to be determined with absolute certainty; the body appears to be pear-shaped.

ments such as rebecs, guitar-fiddles, vielles and viols. The tone was, in the main, the result of certain structural features of the sound-chest, i.e., a back and soundboard flat or delicately arched, joined by sides or ribs of equal width, and soundholes placed on each side of the strings; as opposed to the vaulted back to which was glued, without the intermediary of ribs, a flat soundboard, forming the pear- or boat-shaped sound-chest common to instruments of the rebec or lute tribe. These two types of sound-chest were already present respectively in the ancient Greek kithara and in the lyre of Hermes (chelys or testudo) and it is the Greek kithara which, according to my opinion, is the ancestor of the violin. In support of this theory I rely on the authority of a unique MS., the "Utrecht Psalter," in which each psalm is illustrated by a clever drawing in pen and bistre ink. In this MS. the evolution of the instruments of the violin type from the kithara by the addition of a neck is unmistakably shown in the illustrations to certain psalms in which the cithara is mentioned; these instruments have not yet been traced in any European illuminated MSS. There would, therefore, be a gap between the rotta (or cithara in transition) and the guitar, were it not for the drawings of the Utrecht Psalter. A consensus of expert opinions summarised in Chapter VIII agrees that the originals from which the artist drew his inspiration came from Syria or the Christian East, this particular MS. being executed at Rheims. These opinions are strengthened by my contribution from the domain of musical archæology. I have shown (p. 362 *sqq.*) that the drawings were designed originally to illustrate a Greek or Syriac version of the Psalms, whereas the Gallic version of St. Jerome was used in the Utrecht Psalter.

The guitar-fiddle or bowed guitar, which, in its perfected form, was known in Italy as the *lyra*, was the immediate precursor of the violin. Philological evidence provides the last link and shows that the words *violin* and *guitar* are derived from

synonymous names for the same instrument, the *cithara* having been also known among the Romans as *fidicula*. The word *guitar* is derived from *githara* or *guitra*, Moorish equivalents for *kithara*, and *fidicula* was softened in Spanish to *vihuela*, while in French it became *vielle*, in Italian *viol*, and in German and English *fedel* or *fiddle*. The *vihuela* was the Spanish name for the Latin guitar derived from the classical *kithara*, in contradistinction to the Moorish guitar, a pear-shaped instrument with vaulted back akin to *rebab* and *lute*. There were three kinds of *vihuela* in use in Spain during the Middle Ages: the *vihuela de mano*, with gut strings plucked by hand, which we call the Spanish guitar; the *vihuela de penna*, or *gittern* with wire strings plucked by means of a quill, and the *vihuela de arco* or bowed guitar, the guitar-fiddle of the troubadours and minstrels. Thus the instrument itself, by its name no less than by its structural features, affords definite evidence of its origin. When, in addition, each step in the evolution can be graphically traced, the evidence becomes conclusive, and the derivation of the violin family from the Greek *kithara* is firmly established, while at the same time I feel justified in rejecting the *rebab* and *crwth* from the line of ancestors.

In order to afford students the fullest opportunity of forming their own conclusions,* all the fresh evidence which came to light while the work was in the press, has been introduced, if only in the Index.

The result of the magnificent work done by the various archaeological societies in exploring and excavating the centres of the more ancient Oriental civilisations, and in rapidly publishing the reports of their finds, renders it necessary to recon-

* This present work is based on some articles which appeared respectively in "Music" (London, 1896-8), and in the "London Musical Courier" (1897-8).