

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS HARRISON, OF SPRINGFIELD, OHIO.

## MODE OF WRITING MUSIC.

Specification of Letters Patent No. 1,383, dated October 26, 1839.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, THOMAS HARRISON, of Springfield, in the county of Clark and State of Ohio, have invented a new and Improved System of Music; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description.

The nature of my invention consists in placing the first seven numerals, between, and over, and under, two parallel lines, thereby instituting three successive octaves, and affixing periods, commas, and hyphens, to the said numerals in order to determine their relative length.

To enable others skilled in the science of music to use my invention, I will proceed to describe its nature and peculiarities.

I divide the science into three parts,—melody, time, and utterance.

Melody refers to the different altitudes, or heights, of the tones, and also to their accurate succession. As there are but seven primary tones, I place the first seven numerals between two parallel lines, with the first numeral repeated and placed over the lines, and call these eight successive tones the primary octave. As all the seven tones can be repeated both upward and downward, I place a higher octave above the lines, and a lower octave beneath them. When necessary I add two additional lines, and thereby create a second higher and a second lower octave. To distinguish between the grand and plaintive octaves, (or the major and minor keys,) I place the letter G, or P, at the commencement of a piece of vocal music, immediately over the parallel lines: G, (or grand octave) means the two semi-intervals, which are natural to the musical scale in all nations, must be preserved between the tones 3 and 4, and also 7 and 8: and P, (or plaintive octave) that the said two semi-intervals must be preserved between 2 and 3, and also between 5 and 6—the letter s, however is affixed to the tones 6 and 7 in ascending the plaintive octave, to show that they are each raised a semi-interval. In addition to the seven primary tones, there are five secondary tones, or semi-tones, (or flats and sharps) which occur only where the five whole intervals exist; and are, of course, omitted where the two semi-intervals exist: these I represent by placing the letter s, before or after the adjoining primary tone: when s, is placed before a pri-

mary tone it depresses it a semi-interval; and when placed after, it raises it a semi-interval. To the four different parts of harmony, I apply the letters A for air; B, for base; C, for counter, and D, for doublet, or second air. As music is sung on different altitudes, or pitches, I use seven different altitudes, each of which is a tone higher than the other (the first corresponding with low C on the treble clef in the old system of music.) The altitude of a piece of music is known by the figure prefixed to the G, or P, octave character: 1G, meaning the first altitude, grand octave: 2G, second altitude, &c. When the altitude is changed in the middle of a strain, I place the letter S, before or after the tones that are depressed or raised. In the additional parts which are sometimes appended to the above-named four, for instrumental music, instead of using different altitudes, I place at the beginning, the depressed or raised tones with the letter s, before or after them, in order to restore the two semi-intervals to their proper places. Hence, in vocal strains, tone 1 is always the governing or key note, but in instrumental strains, any tone may be the key note.

The second general division is time, which refers to the relative duration of tones, and the division of a number of tones into equal portions. I institute seven different lengths of tones, called common, long, longer, longest, short, shorter, and shortest. The common tone has no peculiar mark; the long has a priod before or under it, the longer two periods, and the longest three; the short has a comma after or under it, the shorter two commas, and the shortest three. The common tone is equal in length to a second of time, the long tone is twice its length, the longer four times, and the longest eight; the short is half the length of the common, the shorter one-fourth, and the shortest one-eighth. The duration of a tone is also affected by placing a hyphen after it, which makes it half as long again, or two hyphens which make it three-fourths as long. When a rest occurs I use the letter R, and apply to it the marks used to determine the length of the tones. In the division of a number of tones into equal portions, or measure, I only use a four: the double and triple, and the compound double and triple. A double measure, contains two common tones, and a triple three; a compound double

four, and a compound triple six. I call a measure even when the tones commence on an upward or downward beat, or on both; and uneven when they commence on an upward, and are continued on a downward beat. A beat or motion of the right hand or foot, I make in all cases equivalent to a common tone. To the beat I apply seven different movements—the common which is equal to a second of time; the slow, slower, and slowest beats, each of which is one third slower than the other; and the quick, quicker, and quickest beats, each of which is one third quicker. In order to show the measure and movement of a piece of music, I place certain signs at the beginning, under the two parallel lines, such as 2C, two beats, common movement; 3Q, three beats, quick movement.

20 The third general division is utterance, which teaches the various modes of intonation, and the proper application of words to tones. To the different tones I apply no foreign terms, or phrases, but simply call them soft and loud tones, organ and eolian tones, exclamatory and gliding tones. Over the organ tones is placed a horizontal line—

over the eolian, diverging and converging lines, over the exclamatory tone, and exclamatory note, and over the gliding tones a curve. When a tone is prolonged beyond its ordinary length, I place over it the letter P. When a strain is repeated I place at the end, Rep. When ornamental or grace notes occur, I use figures half the size of the common ones. When three tones are to be sung to the time of two, I place over them the figure 2. The single bars placed between measures, and the double bars placed at the end of a strain, do not extend above or below the parallel lines. When a vocal strain is interrupted by an instrumental, I use the terms, Inst. and Voice.

What I wish to claim as my invention is—

The placing of the first seven numerals between, and over, and under, two parallel lines; thereby instituting three successive octaves, and affixing periods, commas, and hyphens to the said numerals, in order to determine their relative length.

THOMAS HARRISON.

Witnesses:

ISAAC H. LANCEY,  
M. GALLAGHER.