**A Musical Dictionary**

James Grassineau (1715–1769)
Published: London, 1740
ML100 .G848 1740

**The source:** James Grassineau wrote his musical dictionary in 1740, while working for the composer J.C. Pepusch in London. Upon completion, the volume received the approval of Mr. Pepusch, as well as fellow composers Maurice Greene and Johann Ernst Galliard. Contrary to widely accepted belief, this work is not a translation of the well known *Dictionnaire de Musique* (Sebastian de Brossard, 1703), though Grassineau borrowed heavily from Brossard among other authors. The topics in the dictionary cover musical terms in several languages, instruments, and mathematical concepts related to music. Grassineau uses images, graphs, and diagrams to explain ideas, including a few that are so large they are printed on fold-out pages.

**Significance:** *A Musical Dictionary* is still important today, as it contains many terms and definitions still in use. Some entries are no longer commonly used in music, but may be of interest to those while preparing a period performance. These obsolete entries would also be useful for a researcher tracing the history of a given term or symbol. The more scientific entries, such as the ratios needed to build a monochord, show how music theory and acoustics have changed over time.

**Physical Description:** Colorado State University’s copy of *A Musical Dictionary* contains some interesting marks. Under the entry for “Follia”, someone corrected a misspelled name in ink with very neat, old handwriting. Besides this correction, and a single “t”, written in fancy script on the very first page, all other handwritten markings throughout the book were made with more modern utensils and penmanship. There are also several minor damages throughout the book. There are some tears in pages near the binding, which might be from use over the years. Other tears can be found near the top and outer edge of various pages. Finally, a fold-out diagram appears to have been cut out and removed between pages 172 and 173.

**Modern Editions:** There are no modern editions of Grassineau. The volume was reprinted in facsimile in 1966 by Broude Brothers (New York) and in 2003 by Thoemmes Press (Bristol, UK).

**Quote:** “The reader will here find the terms of this extensive art, and their definitions drawn into as narrow a compass as conveniently might be; whereby he will be sav’d the trouble of reading a great number of volumes, which he must otherwise have unavoidably done, before he could arrive at a tolerable knowledge either of the theory or practice of music.” (Grassineau, *A Musical Dictionary*, ix)

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Methods of Music Research
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## Aristoxenian System

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<th>Dystonic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enharm.</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-true</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
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<tr>
<td>True</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Five Tetracords</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hypaton</td>
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<td>Mele</td>
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<td>Synemonen</td>
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<td>Diezeugmenon</td>
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<td>Hyperboleon</td>
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Notes on the page:
- The text is discussing Aristoxenian music theory, focusing on the classification of musical scales.
- The diagram illustrates the relationships between different musical intervals and scales.
- The text explains the properties of each type of scale, such as the chromatic and dystonic scales, and their corresponding intervals.
- The five tetracords (Hypaton, Mele, Synemonen, Diezeugmenon, Hyperboleon) are shown with their respective intervals.
- The page is part of a larger work on music theory, likely a textbook or treatise on the subject.

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P. 86
LEGATURA, a tying or binding together of the Legature of many notes, but there is another sort of Legature for breves, when there are many on different lines, which are to be sung to one syllable. See Syncope.

It must here be observed, the breves alone are capable of this species of Legature, by reason their figure only will admit of being placed so close together, as to form one character only, tho' placed on different degrees thus unless there be occasion to place a semi-circle either above or below them to show that they are tyed.

This Legature regards common time only.

These breves must again be considered as simple, a having a tail, and as being of different colours.

First, if they be simple and ascend, they contain their natural quantity, i.e. each two semi-breves, A. If descending, they contain four, if only two follow one another, B. If there are three or four following ones, the first and last contains each four semi-breves, and the middle ones but two, C.

Secondly, if they have tails, and the tail be turned upwards, the breves contain only one measure, as well ascending as descending. But if it be marked downward, the breve then contains its natural quantity.

This species of Legature was invented only by reason the minim being round, could not be used therein, and the semi-
In the Italian music, frequently signifies piano, which is what we called so, i.e. where the force of the voice or instrument is to be diminished, so as to make a kind of echo, whence the word echo is often used for Piano.

Piano.

PÆAN, a hymn in honour of Apollo or some other god, chiefly used on occasion of victory and triumph of the gods, See HYMN.

PAGINA, a Page, the same as carta. See CA.

P P, signifies piu piano,—more soft, or a second or more remote than was performed for piano alone.

PPP, signify pianissimo,—softest of all, or a third time the voice or sound being here as if it were quite lost in.

Pianissimo.

PANDORON, a musical instrument of this kind, used among the ancients, resembling a Lute.

It had the same number of strings, but they were thick and consequently gave a stronger sound. It's frets are of copper, like those of the Guitar, but flatter like that of a Guitar, and the ribs of it's ribs, cut into semi-circles.

Du Cange observes, that Varro, Isidore, and other ancients, mention it as only having three strings.

The word, according to some, is formed of pand, i.e. all gifts, or all sorts of gifts. It's name from it's Inventor Pandorus. Others, whom they attribute it's invention, as well as that of the Flute. See Flute.

PAPA, propus, near; this word is added to several chords of the ancient system. See Sy.