

The Art of Reading Musick.¹

THE art of reading musick, consists in being able to pronounce the notes according to measure, either with the voice or on an instrument, giving them their true intonation towards the sharp or grave sounds and observing the equality of the movements indicated by the words *Allegro*, *Andante*, *Adagio*, &c. which indicate a greater or less, but always determined quickness which can neither be accelerated or retarded in the same piece.

There are two ways of doing this, either mechanically or by principles.

The ear alone directs the first, as by it we are enable to pronounce musick, and even to read it with the eyes; but as the understanding which divides, distinguishes, compares, and sees what does not fall directly under the senses, has nothing to do in this operation; after fifteen or twenty years spent in this manner, the student can neither note an air he sings himself, nor those sung to him by another: many think that being able to note down a little air from memory, is a part of composition and want to learn it, whereas a supplement of principles for reading musick would them suffice to be able to note every air as well from inspiration as from memory.

¹ after *Compendium of a New Method of Music*, by M. Bemetzrieder (London, 1783).