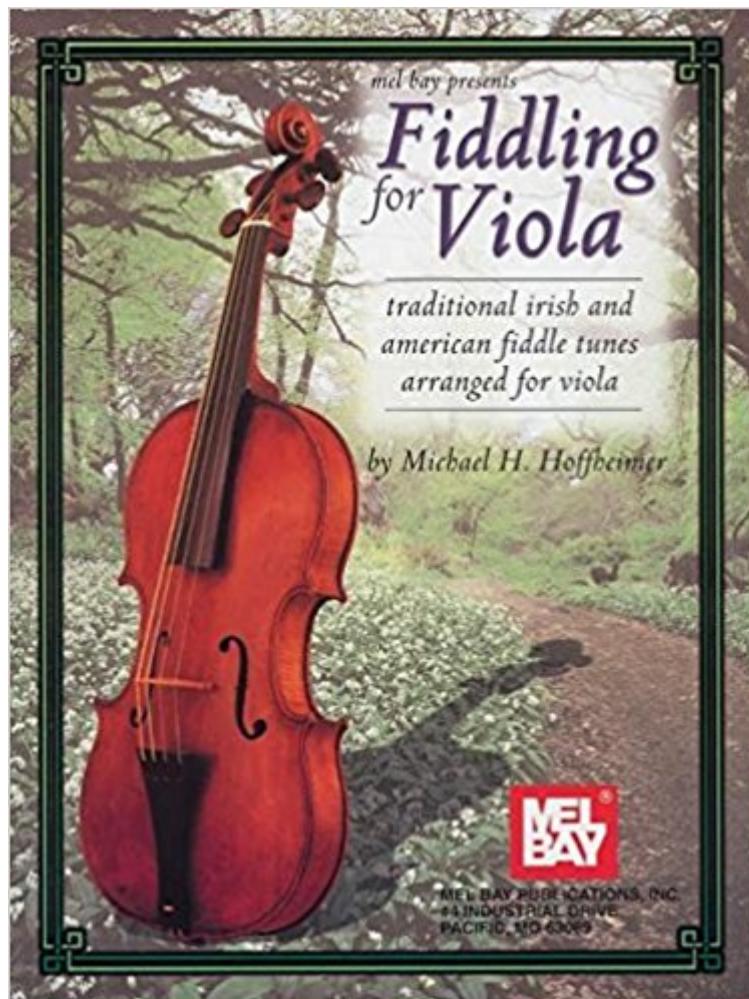


The book was found

Mel Bay Fiddling For Viola



Synopsis

Quite possibly the largest collection of fiddle music for viola ever published! Contains a wealth of material for fiddlers seeking a transition to the viola and/or violists in search of a collection of traditional fiddle music. Designed to meet the rising popularity of the viola's role in folk music, the tunes in this book are grouped into C, G, D, F, B-flat, and E-flat major fingering. The music in this book is printed on parallel staves. The top is traditional viola notation in the alto clef while the bottom is the same music in transposing violin notation, allowing fiddlers who read the G or treble clef to play the viola by fingering it as if it were a fiddle.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michael Hoffheimer lives in Oxford, Mississippi and is Professor of Law at the University of Mississippi. Before teaching, he practiced law. He has a strong interest in traditional music and fiddling, has published articles on fiddlers and violinists, and plays fiddle with his children.

I've played fiddle (violin) in square- and contra-dance bands a fair bit, and am a classical violist now, so I'm familiar with both instruments and with many or most of the tunes in this fine book, one that will enable violists to enjoy playing a portion of the vast repertoire of popular fiddle tunes. However, having read some of the other reviews, I think there are some misunderstandings about the purpose and nature of the book, which is quite understandable. Most things having to do with the viola are confusing! One reviewer points out that if you want to play fiddle tunes regularly, you will need to

have a violin, not a viola. Another points out that the tunes are generally transposed down a fifth from "original" fiddle tune. These things are basically true; the viola itself is tuned a fifth lower than a violin and it would be nigh impossible to play many fiddle tunes up to speed on a viola, way up in the 3rd or higher positions necessary to do this. It's a question of using the "right tool for the job." But as another reviewer comments, if all you have is a viola, your guitar or other accompanist ought to be able to switch keys and help you out. It will all sound a bit low, but the aim here is to give violists a crack at playing these tunes! It's important to understand how the author has set up the tunes (see photo). Each one looks like a duet, but it isn't a duet! The top line is the viola's staff, in the Alto Clef that violists are familiar with. All violists will want to use that top line of the staff and ignore the second line. The second line, with the Treble Clef, is not what it appears to be at first glance. This line is intended solely for violinists who find themselves deprived of their violin but have access to a viola. If they "pretend" that the viola is a violin, and play the tune as written, they will achieve the same result as a violist will, playing on the Alto Clef line. So, imagine that you're a violinist visiting your viola-playing friend, who happens to have two violas. You can play the tune together this way, and it will sound identical. It's important to realize that the Treble Clef line does not actually represent the true sound of the notes in this book. For example, the tune "Soldier's Joy Reel" (see attached photo), in the Key of G, begins on a "B" (i.e., the second finger on the next-to-lowest string). If you're a violinist, that fingering position would give you an F#. So the author has written the tune as if it were in the key of D, with the first note being an apparent F#. But if the violinist is actually playing a viola (pretending it to be a violin), he will find himself playing a "B" just like his viola buddy. Think about it, you'll figure it out. I'm just glad he didn't write a third line for cellos... How such a situation would ever arise -- a violinist needing to play a viola to imitate fiddle tunes written for the violin to begin with -- is beyond me. But having it available doesn't hurt... and makes the book an interesting conversation piece on top of everything else. 5 Stars, Mel. Way to go!

I like that this offers some fiddle tunes in alto clef (the official clef of beginning violists). However, the music has been transposed down a fifth so that the fingering on the viola is exactly the same as the violin. While this makes it very easy to match the bowing (a critical concern in fiddle music) used on the violin, it makes it completely to play with anyone else who isn't using a viola (because you will be off a fifth). I'm coming around to the understanding that if you want to play fiddle tunes (with other people), get a fiddle.

This is a wonderful book for people transitioning from violin to viola, who know some of these tunes

and need to learn alto clef. Playing scales gets the job done, but this is so much more fun. The familiar tunes help with learning viola fingering and intonation. I will say that the treble clef version is confusing for me and I ignore it.

My 6th grade son, who has been playing viola for the past 3 years in school. He wanted to try some new music - preferable where the viola gets the melody - and picked out a few. I bought this one for him as one of his birthday gifts and he LOVES it. Many of the tunes are faster than he's used to, but he loves the challenge and is getting quite good at playing them.

As a violinist, it was nice to see the transposition from treble clef to alto clef explained so clearly. Seeing the pieces in both clefs allows me to "see" the difference and to play the viola while reading the treble clef, if that's what I want to do. I think it's one of the best books I've seen for those who want to transition from violin to viola.

When I bought this, I was expecting a bit more information on the actual technique behind fiddling, specifically for violas. But this book seems more aimed at violinists who can already fiddle, and want to learn alto clef. Each song is written in both alto and treble clef. There is a lot of different songs in the book, but it would be nice to have more technique.

Good Instrumental book

Brought this over to my friend's house hoping she could play the accompaniment section. We both couldn't figure out why it was scored this way??? It did not sound right, perhaps I misinterpreted its use.

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