

**RICHTER'S MANUAL OF
HARMONY. A PRACTICAL
GUIDE TO ITS STUDY**

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Richter's Manual of harmony. A practical guide to its study by Ernst Friedrich Richter & Oscar Coon

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ERNST FRIEDRICH RICHTER & OSCAR COON

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NEWLY REVISED EDITION OF

RICHTER'S
MANUAL OF HARMONY.

A

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ITS STUDY.

PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR THE CONSERVATORY
OF MUSIC AT LEIPSIK

BY

ERNST FRIEDRICH RICHTER.

REVISED AND EDITED FROM THE LATEST EDITION

BY

OSCAR COON,

WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES AND ADDITIONAL EXERCISES.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

That Richter's Manual of Harmony is one of the best text-books ever written on the subject, no one will now deny. In 1843, Richter became professor of harmony and counterpoint in the Conservatory of Leipsic, and this work is the result of his experience as a teacher in that institution. The *twelfth* edition was published as early as 1876, and the work has been translated into Dutch, Swedish, Italian, Russian, Polish and English. The enormous success of the work becomes apparent when we reflect that it has passed through its *twentieth* German edition.

In preparing this edition of the manual, the editor has endeavored to make the language, which in other editions is often somewhat obscure, more explicit and to the point. Pupils frequently complain that they cannot catch the meaning of many of the explanations. The reason is, that they are not sufficiently advanced in musical knowledge to enable them to comprehend the meaning of the prolix language used. Students, and *especially those who have not the advantage of a teacher*, require clear and concise directions. Having used this manual many years as a text-book in teaching harmony, the editor has learned by experience where the difficulties lie, and has done what he could to remedy them. Many additional exercises have been appended to the work and also some notes of explanation.

THE EDITOR.

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The reason for publishing this manual of harmony is given in the title. During the course of studies in the theory of music, it was desirable to furnish the pupils with some aid in explaining and illustrating the principles brought before them. The qualities of such a work the author believes to be these:

It must contain the essential fundamental principles of musical theory in the most concise and complete form possible; that these principles must be accompanied by practical directions for their application in order to qualify for future attempts in composition.

The book contains no scientific theoretical treatise on harmony, so to speak; but (as with any system of harmony it rests upon a firm basis) is devoted only to the *practical* object, which, with the scanty means now accessible, would be difficult to obtain in an abstractly scientific manner.

There has, indeed, always been a disposition to inquire after mathematical precision in musical rules, and especially among the young, opposed to authority, who wish to have everything so clear that doubt would be impossible, yet shrink from learning the beauties of this beautiful art by means of the anatomical knife; and, it is not to be denied that in this regard there is a want in musical literature which has not yet been fully supplied. All attempts of this kind have so far failed to produce a really tenable scientifically musical system, according to which all phenomena in the world of music can be shown as the necessary result of *one* fundamental principle. What philosophers, mathematicians and physicists have achieved in this regard is worthy of attention, but is on the one hand, too much divided to form a complete whole, and on the other, too abstract, serving music less than other purposes; and notwithstanding the knowledge of musical things shown, has but little reference to that which is really musical, which is of the most importance to the musician after all. What is laid down in musical text-books as a scientific basis has thus far not been justified, partly, because as the result of learned individual investigation, it was impossible to form a complete system with indisputable conclusions, and partly, because as a fanciful structure, it was entirely

without scientific support. ("The Nature of Harmony and Metre," by M. Hauptmann, might supply a palpable want.)

Still, properly considered, this deficiency is felt only by the riper and more cultivated musician who likes to busy himself with theory; not, however, so detrimental to the *advancing student* that his progress must suffer in consequence of it; and the above mentioned skepticism might be regarded in a certain way like the childish desire to learn the cause of everything by questions which can seldom be answered clearly enough for his stage of learning.

At first, the student of music has to devote his whole attention to his technical studies, as it will cost him time and trouble enough to reach the standpoint from which he may more easily advance to the position of an artist. Here the question is not *why*, but rather *how*, to learn from experience and the best models the necessity of certain principles, not to calculate it. Afterwards, should education, inclination and calling require, it will be time enough to reason out the *why*, and the knowledge derived from experience will be an aid not to be despised in discovering the natural laws of music. With this practical aim in view, the author has undertaken to give, in a clear and simple manner, the representation of harmony, and the results of observation and experience; and as the book was intended for *study*, to let the principles which it contained work through themselves, without wishing to attract a large circle of *readers* through a learned dress or a winning form. It contains the complete doctrine of harmony, with hints for a rational method of working exercises for fixing the same, and for the skilful use of all harmonic fundamental principles. These exercises extend to the beginning of contrapuntal studies. The doctrine of counterpoint itself will follow in a later volume on the same plan.

In conclusion, still a word to the student of art, an earnest one, but well meant. Our object is to reach a distant goal; it is to produce works of art. For this, vigorous, untiring industry is necessary to comprehend the fundamental principles of music and to form that which is won and understood into a living structure. They will be bitterly disappointed who think to pluck the blossoms without learning thoroughly to know and prove the technical requirements; who cling to the notion that the charm of beauty which overspreads a work of art would be lost through the analysis of the material, or that the primary forms of the latter could never be developed into that requisite beauty. Talent alone, without thorough knowledge, has never

yet reached that point where artistic efforts are really successful. Practice without knowledge is not artistic skill, but only the working of the instinct, which will make the want of proper education always apparent. The spiritual thought cannot dispense with the form, and this must be recognized and learned. Even if this comes with the thought itself, still, it is of more importance in music than anything else, to analyze the thought logically, to remodel it into new forms, and transform it in the most manifold way. The knowledge of these things and the skill in their use must be acquired by the talented also, and this can only be done by taking pains to recognize the musical laws, and by seeking to imitate and further develop what others have long since discovered. Earnest persevering work, and above all, a rational method of developing to maturity, and for the creation of, living works of art, will, in connection with musical ability, surely lead to the goal.

E. F. RICHTER.

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