

# **EXERCISES IN MELODY-WRITING**

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Exercises in Melody-Writing by Percy Goetschius

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**PERCY GOETSCHUIS**

**EXERCISES IN  
MELODY-WRITING**



EXERCISES  
IN  
MELODY - WRITING

A SYSTEMATIC COURSE OF MELODIC COMPOSITION, DESIGNED  
FOR THE USE OF YOUNG MUSIC STUDENTS,  
CHIEFLY AS A COURSE OF EXERCISE COLLATERAL WITH  
THE STUDY OF HARMONY

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"THE MATERIAL USED IN MUSICAL COMPOSITION"  
"THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TONE-RELATIONS"  
"THE HOMOPHONIC FORMS OF MUSICAL COMPOSITION"  
"MODELS OF THE PRINCIPAL MUSICAL FORMS," ETC.

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## PREFACE

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### I.

The object of this course of musical discipline is, to assist the young student (whether or not he expects to become a composer) to form and to cultivate habits of correct melodic thought.

It is simply a carefully graded course of exercise in *melody-invention*,—not conception. The agencies which conduce to the transition from the former into the latter are touched upon in paragraphs 125 to 129, which may be briefly scanned, here, without harm.

The reasons for urging such a course of technical practice upon students of music (general, as well as special students) are two-fold:

1st, because *the prime object of all theoretical study in music is, or should be, melody*. A thorough apprehension of the conditions of correct melody, and command of its natural laws, pave the way to the full and easy reception of all other phases of discipline in music; they are the only natural preparation for successful studies in sight-reading, harmony, counterpoint, form, instrumentation and interpretation.

2nd, because all musical practice, productive or reproductive, in common with all other operations of mind and body, is *the result of habit*, and is therefore qualified exactly according to the quality and energy of the habits which have been contracted, by accident or intention, in early life. The effort to control the formation of these habits, and guide them as early as possible into proper channels, is therefore obviously the most valuable that a wise educational purpose can induce.

Whether there *are* laws governing melodic conduct, or not, is a question to which an answer will be found in the book itself.

## II.

It is to be inferred from the above, that the best results will be gained by beginning this course of exercise early in life. Not, however, as a rule, before the twelfth or thirteenth year.

It may be pursued before Harmony is taken up, or entirely independent of the latter. But it will probably prove most efficient as collateral study, *interlined between the exercises of any standard text-book on Harmony*; either from the beginning, or in the later course of harmonic study; in regular alternation with chapters of the latter, or interlined strictly according to subjects.

The degree of benefit to be derived, is manifestly proportionate to the degree of thoroughness with which each lesson is exercised,—precisely as proficiency in scales or any other item of pianoforte technique depends upon the number of times each movement is thoughtfully repeated. It is a system of drill, which must be persisted in until its aim,—*the fixing of habits*,—is achieved. For this reason, the course should cover a full year.

The musical illustrations have been made unusually copious, because this particular phase of musical education is likely to be absorbed by the pupil quite as readily through sensuous contact with melodic sounds, as by mental induction. Therefore, they are to be studied as faithfully as the text, *both at, and away from*, the key-board.

PERCY GOETSCHUIS, Mus. Doc

*Boston, Mass.*

*September, 1899.*

# EXERCISES IN MELODY-WRITING.

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## DIVISION ONE. ESSENTIAL TONES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### MAJOR. THE SCALE-LINE, REGULAR.

1. Any series of single tones is a Melody. The quality of the melody depends upon the choice and duration of each successive tone. The general conditions of good melody are:

Coherency, throughout each chain of three or four successive tones;

Unity, in the design and effect of the complete melodic sentence; and

Interesting movements, exhibiting sufficient variety to banish every trace of monotony.

2. The choice of successive tones (aside from the question of durations) is subject, fundamentally, to two Primary Rules of melodic movement.

#### FIRST PRIMARY RULE.

3. *A melody may follow the line of the*

#### *MAJOR SCALE,*

*upward or downward, with almost unlimited freedom.*

This yields the smooth species of movement called diatonic, conjunct, or step-wise progression.



4. Step-wise progressions are regular, and consequently invariably permissible, when they confirm the *natural or inherent melodic inclination of the so-called Active scale-steps* (par. 6).

5. The seven steps of every scale are divided into two classes:

The 1st, 3rd and 5th scale-steps (those which constitute the Tonic Triad, or harmonic core of the key, see par. 18) are *Inactive*. They occupy the centre of harmonic repose, and are therefore inert, not moving except in obedience to some outward impulse.

The others,—the 7th, 6th, 4th and 2nd scale-steps, are *Active*, because they lie outside of this circle of harmonic repose, and are urged by their inherent impulse to regain the condition of rest. For illustration:

Ex. 1.  C major.

Inactive Scale-steps. (interior)      Active Scale-steps.      (exterior)

Detailed description: A musical staff in C major showing the scale from C to C. The notes are numbered 1 through 7. Notes 1, 3, and 5 are grouped under the label 'Inactive Scale-steps. (interior)'. Notes 2, 4, 6, and 7 are grouped under the label 'Active Scale-steps. (exterior)'. The staff ends with a double bar line.

6. The direction, and the degree of urgency, of the movement are dictated by the location of each Active scale-step, and its proximity to the nearest inactive or central scale-step,—as follows:

- (a) The tendency is most urgent in the 7th scale-step, and its direction is *upward*.
- (b) The tendency is somewhat less urgent in the 6th step, and its direction is *downward*.
- (c) Still less urgent in the 4th step,—tendency also *downward*.
- (d) The inclination of the 2nd scale-step is evenly balanced between the 1st and 3rd steps, from which it is (practically) equally distant. For that reason it need not be considered in this connection.

For illustration:

Ex. 2.  C major.

exterior interior

Detailed description: A musical staff in C major showing the resolution of active scale steps. The notes are numbered 7, 6, 4, 2. The 7th step is shown with an upward arrow, the 6th with a downward arrow, and the 4th with a downward arrow. The 2nd step is shown with a double-headed arrow. The staff ends with a double bar line.

7. The progression of an Active scale-step in the proper direction is called its Resolution.

General illustrations:

Ex. 3.  etc.

Detailed description: A musical staff in C major showing the resolution of active scale steps. The notes are numbered 1, 6, 7, 4, 2, 6, 4, 7. The staff ends with a double bar line.

65. *Allegretto.* (par. 9b.) BEETHOVEN.

6. *Andante.* BEETHOVEN.

7. *Allegro.* BRAHMS.

8. *Allegro.* MENDELSSOHN.

9. *Moderato.*

MENDELSSOHN.

See also, Ex. 5; Ex. 14, No. 3; Ex. 36, No. 13; Ex. 50.

### THE 4-MEASURE PHRASE.

8. The smallest complete melodic sentence, called the Phrase, generally embraces four ordinary measures.

(a) When regular, it begins with one of the (inactive) tones which constitute the Tonic Triad. These may be placed upon the first (accented) beat of the first measure; or one, perhaps more, beats *before* the first full measure. If the Phrase begins, thus, with one or more preliminary tones, their value is to be subtracted from the final measure.

(b) The Phrase closes with the Tonic (i. e., the key-note); upon an *accented* beat of the fourth measure (upon either accent, if a compound measure); and preceded by either of the three tones which constitute the Dominant Triad (see par. 19). This ending is called the Perfect Cadence.

Thus (in C-major):

1. Triple rhythm.

*Accented beginning.*

*Unaccented beginning.*

Ex. 4. 

2. Duple rhythm.



\* These chord-names are explained in Chap. III, par. 12, 13.

9. Besides the step-wise progressions, up or down the line of the major scale according to the first Primary Rule, it is everywhere permissible

(a) To repeat a tone, once or oftener. For example:

*Moderato.*

Ex. 5. 

See also Ex. 3, Nos. 5 and 6; Ex. 32, No. 3; Ex. 26, Nos. 1, 8, 9; Ex. 54.

(b) To progress upward or downward by the interval of a *third*, i. e., overleaping one diatonic scale-step. If this skip of a third is made from an Inactive tone, it involves no obligation whatever. If made from an Active scale-step (namely, from the 7th, 6th or 4th,—as stated in par. 6 a, the 2nd scale-step is not subject to any of the rules of active steps), the consequences depend upon the direction of the leap. No subsequent consideration is necessary if the melody makes the leap in the proper direction (from the 7th scale-step upward, from the 6th or 4th step downward, as is to be done in the present lesson). For illustration:

A. From Inactive tones.

Ex. 6. 