

**A TEXT-BOOK IN SIMPLE
STRICT COUNTERPOINT.
COUNTERPOINT
SIMPLIFIED**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649033409

A Text-Book in Simple Strict Counterpoint. Counterpoint Simplified by Francis L. York

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BY

FRANCIS L. YORK, M. A.



BOSTON
OLIVER DITSON COMPANY

NEW YORK
CHAS. H. DITSON & Co.

CHICAGO
LYON & HEALY

PHILADELPHIA
J. E. DITSON & Co.

TO
Mr. CALVIN BRAINERD CADY,
OF BOSTON, MASS.

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

PREFACE.

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THE author of the present little treatise does not lay claim to the discovery of any new principles in Counterpoint. In the nature of the case there can be none. All he hopes to have done is to have put the old well-known principles of Strict Counterpoint in as convenient and as concise a form as possible.

All reference to the C-clef has been intentionally omitted; while not denying the value of its use nor unduly exaggerating the difficulty of learning it, the author is convinced that more students will secure a general knowledge of Counterpoint and that those who commence its study will go farther without the use of the C-clef than with it. The present treatise is intended for the average student of music who feels that he ought to know in a practical way what is meant by Counterpoint, and be able to think music along the lines of voice progression rather than harmonic progression, and at least partially to understand the principles of composition that underlie the works of the great masters of polyphonic writing. For such students detail is worse than useless.

The author is well aware that many of the progressions forbidden in the chapters on Strict Counterpoint are allowable under certain circumstances. The line of demarkation between Strict Counterpoint and Free or Modern Counterpoint is not well defined. In speaking of Strict Counterpoint it has been thought best in case of doubt to lean rather toward the strictest usage than to allow so-called licenses to creep in. Such licenses, however good in themselves, belong rather to Composers' Counterpoint, and if mentioned in a school text-book, tend to confuse the mind of the student.

The examples are all taken from standard authorities and due credit given, except in the case of those that are unmarked. For the latter the author is responsible.

The author's best thanks are due to Prof. Frederic H. Pease of the Michigan State Normal College and to Mr. R. L. Dick of the Detroit Conservatory of Music for their valuable suggestions and criticisms. Among others the following works on Counterpoint have been used as references and due acknowledgment is hereby made.

"Counterpoint," by Fétis, Cherubini, MacFarren, Haupt, Richter, Prout, Bridge, Pearce. Saunders' Examples in Strict Counterpoint: Jadassohn, Ouseley, and Gladstone.

It is hoped that the two chapters on Free Counterpoint will give the student an idea of this connecting link between the old style and the new, and influence him to take up the study of composition in a more comprehensive way.

FRANCIS L. YORK.

DETROIT, July 20, 1907.

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COUNTERPOINT SIMPLIFIED.

INTRODUCTION.

Counterpoint is the art of so writing two or more melodies that they may be satisfactorily performed at the same time. All weaving together of melodies, from the simplest combination of two simple themes to the most complex polyphony of a Wagner score is Counterpoint. But the study of **Strict Counterpoint** (our present object) resolves itself into **building one or more melodies upon a given melody**. The added melody or melodies may be **above or below** the given melody.

Counterpoint was the earliest form of artistic musical composition. It was the outgrowth of the simplest attempts of two singers to sing together without producing discordant effects. In Counterpoint then, we are primarily concerned with **the movement of voices or parts**, and the student should endeavor from the beginning to accustom himself to follow each part in its movement, to think, so to say, **horizontally**, instead of thinking as in Harmony, **perpendicularly**. It is to be remembered too, that **Counterpoint is primarily a series of consonances**, dissonances being introduced only under careful restrictions.

There are three most important principles to be observed in all writing of Counterpoint.

First, **the Principle of Variety**, by which is meant that the constant aim of the writer of Counterpoint is to **avoid monotony**, no matter from what cause it may arise. Thus broken chords and arpeggios as suggesting rather a single harmony than several melodic tones; voices moving a third or a sixth apart, by which one voice is merely a copy of the other; repetitions of figures; sequences, and nearly stationary parts are all undesirable.