

FIRST THEORY BOOK

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First Theory Book by Angela Diller

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ANGELA DILLER

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THEORY BOOK**



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By

ANGELA DILLER



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PREFACE

Object

The object of this Theory Book is to provide the student with such a background of musical experience, through his *sense of hearing*, as well as through his intelligence, as shall enable him to study to some purpose Form, Harmony, and the other branches of Musical Theory.

The work covered in this book is, therefore, distinctly preparatory, and is intended to precede, not to replace, more formal study.

Method of Study

The subject-matter of all theory books is approximately the same. The differences between them are largely in the order and manner of presentation of the various topics. In this book, the explanations and directions for practising the Exercises may seem unnecessarily detailed; but, at the risk of being tedious, the author has endeavored to write out the consecutive steps that most students must take in mastering the different subjects.

In the opinion of the author, phrasing should be introduced in music-study at the earliest possible moment; hence its place at the beginning of the book. The experienced teacher will, of course, teach two topics, such as Phrasing and Scales, or Note-Values and Scales, at the same lesson, if it seems advisable to do so.

Ear-Training

The most vital part of the whole subject of Theory teaching is Ear-training. It is impossible to overstate the importance which the training of the ear should occupy in the minds of both teacher and pupil.

It is much more necessary that a pupil shall recognize scale-degrees, intervals, chords, etc., by hearing, than that he shall know them merely by name, or when he sees them on paper.

As far as possible, everything that the pupil learns as an intellectual fact, should first have been registered through his sense of hearing.

Dictation, oral and written, is the surest way for a teacher to discover just how much a pupil hears. It is almost impossible to spend too much time on dictation exercises.

The pupil can train his own ear to a large extent by singing. Therefore, many of the exercises are to be sung.

It is so very possible for a pupil to write a correct exercise without having the vaguest idea of what it sounds like, that the author suggests that the pupil shall sing aloud the pitch of every note *while he writes it*. All writing should, of course, be done away from the piano.

Necessity of Correlated Study

The author is convinced that the first approach to the theoretical study of music should be through the sympathetic analysis of music itself. It is better for a pupil to discover the fundamental laws of harmonic progression, by analyzing simple melodies simply harmonized, than it is for him to be told about chords that are easy to explain theoretically, but which he will seldom meet in the music he is playing.

Many a student of Harmony who can recognize an intricate series of chords on paper, is quite unable to recognize even the most elementary harmonies when he hears them, or when they are used in connection with a simple melody; to say nothing of being able to harmonize a simple melody on the piano.

Nothing is more deadening than a collection of "inert facts."

The author has endeavored to put into practical and convenient shape some of the material used and developed during many years' teaching. After going through the exercises, the average student should have acquired a fairly good ear, and a general knowledge of the most familiar chords. He should be able to study a book on Harmony with comparative ease and intelligence.

ANGELA DILLER.

New York, Jan., 1920.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

	PAGE
Object—Method of Study—Ear-training	iii
Necessity of Correlated Study	iv

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1. Rhythmic Design	1
CHAPTER 2. Phrasing	4
CHAPTER 3. Major Scales and Signatures	17
CHAPTER 4. Time-values in $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ Meter	27
CHAPTER 5. Phrasing More Difficult Melodies	31
CHAPTER 6. Review	36

PART TWO

CHAPTER 7. Time-values in $\frac{3}{2}$, $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{4}{8}$ Meter and in $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{12}{8}$, $\frac{6}{4}$ Meter	41
CHAPTER 8. Intervals in the Major Scale	53
CHAPTER 9. Overtones and Sympathetic Vibration	64
CHAPTER 10. Melodic Idioms	72
CHAPTER 11. Review	79

PART THREE

CHAPTER 12. Triads in the Major Scale	82
CHAPTER 13. Tonic and Dominant Triads Treated Melodically and Harmonically	84
CHAPTER 14. Dominant Seventh-Chord	94
CHAPTER 15. Review	103

PART FOUR

CHAPTER 16. Non-Harmonic Notes and the Harmonic Background of Melodies	106
CHAPTER 17. Analysis of Small Pieces Harmonized with the Tonic and Dominant Triads and the Dominant Seventh-Chord	109
CHAPTER 18. Subdominant Triad	115
CHAPTER 19. Analysis of Small Pieces Introducing the Subdominant Triad	123
CHAPTER 20. Review	125

PART FIVE

	PAGE
CHAPTER 21. Minor Scales and Chromatic Scales	127
CHAPTER 22. Intervals in the Minor Scale	137
CHAPTER 23. Chords and Melodies in Minor	139
CHAPTER 24. The Tonic Six-Four Chord. Pieces Introducing this Chord	143
CHAPTER 25. Supertonic Triad and its First Inversion. Pieces Introducing this Chord	148
CHAPTER 26. Review	161

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Rhythmic Design

Rhythm is the motion of music.

Meter expresses the way in which this motion is measured.

The simplest meter consists of two beats or pulses, a heavy beat and a light beat. Either of these beats may come first. In each case the meter is the same, because two beats are involved; but the rhythmic feeling of the two is entirely different. Any word of two syllables illustrates this rhythmic grouping. The word "donkey" is an example of the heavy beat coming first. The word "giraffe" is an example of the light beat coming first.

The bar in music is placed before the stressed beat of each measure. This beat is counted "One." If the meter of the words "donkey" and "giraffe" were expressed in note-values, and each syllable were a quarter-note, the bars would be placed before the stressed syllables as follows:

| Donkey: | ♩ ♪
Gi| raffe: ♪ ♩

The meter of both words is $\frac{2}{4}$ ("two-four"), but the rhythmic feeling of the words is different. This rhythmic feeling, or *Rhythmic Design*, may be expressed in numbers showing which syllable is stressed. The rhythmic design of Donkey is "One-Two," and of Giraffe, "Two-One."

The tune beginning



is a musical example of the rhythmic design "One-Two."

The tune



is an example of the rhythmic design Two-One.

EXERCISE 1. Write a list of ten words illustrating the rhythmic design One-Two.

EXERCISE 2. Write a list of ten words illustrating the rhythmic design Two-One.

EXERCISE 3. Look over the melodies on pages 12 and 13, and find examples in $\frac{2}{4}$ meter of each of the above rhythmic designs.

The same possibilities of rhythmic design occur in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, where we have one heavy beat and two light ones.

In $\frac{3}{4}$ ("three-four") meter there is the rhythmic design One-Two-Three, illustrated by the word "elephant":

$\frac{3}{4}$ | ♩ ♪ ♪