

**THE THOUGHT IN MUSIC; AN  
ENQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES  
OF MUSICAL RHYTHM,  
PHRASING AND EXPRESSION**

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The thought in music; an enquiry into the principles of musical rhythm, phrasing and expression  
by John B. McEwen

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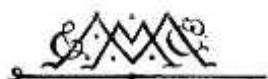
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# THE THOUGHT IN MUSIC

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPLES OF MUSICAL  
RHYTHM, PHRASING AND EXPRESSION

BY

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' For the essence of all artistic beauty is Expression, which cannot be where there is really nothing to be expressed : the line, the colour, the word' (the sound) " following obediently and with minute scruple, the conscious motions of a convinced intelligible soul.'

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1912

## PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to formulate a definite basis on which the musical facts underlying the principles of shape in musical structure may be correlated and codified.

That these facts are the result of the operation of psychological and physiological processes, and therefore amenable and subject to the laws which regulate these two contrasted sides of human activity, is a conception which—so far as the musician is concerned—requires no absolute proof, even if it is incapable of such.

We, who practise this sensitive and beautiful art, realise in proportion to our experience of its ways and affections, that the necessity which accompanies its manifestations is due, not to caprice or accident, but to some deeply underlying principle inherent in the very nature of the human mind. In all its manifestations, in all the varying conditions of place and time, the musical sound in a greater or in a less degree expresses something which is in agreement with the fundamental constitution of the human mind, and expresses this in a way sympathetic to, and conditioned by, the nature of consciousness itself.

That we are only at the very "threshold" of the

art,<sup>1</sup> is an opinion which the course of evolution, as we can trace it, corroborates; but although future necessary developments may enlarge the scope of music a thousand-fold, we feel that even now it expresses states and movements of consciousness which are too subtle and delicate, while at the same time too highly charged with emotional force, to be adequately rendered by any other medium.

The first three chapters of the book form a general survey, and, in a sense, a statement in abstract of the principles and theory on which the whole is based. The remainder of the work is concerned with the restatement of this theory from the point of view of the practical musician, and its development and illustration by actual musical process.

Such an arrangement necessarily entails a considerable amount of repetition, but it has the advantage of allowing a general statement of plan and purpose to preface the particular application of the main thesis to the facts of musical experience.

I have to acknowledge, with much gratitude, kind help received from Professor Gray of Glasgow, and from Professor C. S. Myers of Cambridge, and to express my indebtedness to my friend Mr. William Wallace for valuable criticism and suggestion. My warmest thanks are also due to Mr. T. B. Knott for kind assistance in the revision of proofs.

J. B. MCE.

LONDON, *June*, 1912.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Threshold of Music*, by William Wallace.



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