

**MANUAL FOR TEACHERS:
MUSICAL DICTATION -
STUDY OF TONE AND
RHYTHM, BOOK ONE**

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Manual for Teachers: Musical Dictation - Study of Tone and Rhythm, Book One by Hollis Dann

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MANUAL FOR TEACHERS

MUSICAL DICTATION—STUDY OF TONE AND RHYTHM

BOOK ONE

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Musical Dictation
Manual for Teachers, Book One

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PREFACE

This Manual is for the use of teachers. While primarily intended for use in public schools, the course is equally useful for class or individual work of the private teacher of vocal or instrumental music.

The seven years' course is planned especially for the grades, although the work is entirely practical for normal and high school classes. In the grades, tone and rhythm is only one feature of the work in music. Special classes in normal, high or private schools may complete the course in one year if properly qualified to begin the subject. The activity prescribed in the following pages will give the pupil a "tonal vocabulary" without which he is helpless in the attempt to read. The aural recognition of the scale tones combined in simple phrases, together with the development of the sense of rhythm, must precede all attempts to read the tone language. Primary reading is chiefly the recognition of symbols. These symbols, whether they be those of music or of the mother tongue, represent a part of the vocabulary which the reader already has and can use orally. The attempt to teach a child to read music before he can recognize the simplest oral expression, is on a par with the attempt to read English before he can think or speak the language.

As soon as the pupil gains a reasonable facility in oral expression through rote singing, he has a basis for the acquirement of a definite working knowledge of tone and rhythm.

It is vitally important that the rote singing shall also establish the habit of using the light, flutelike head tone which is at once the charm

PREFACE

and the safeguard of children's singing. The most important qualification in teaching singing to children is the ability to get and maintain this musical tone quality.

A series of Music Writing Books to be used by the pupil, accompany the Manual, beginning with the third year.

Part I of the Manual contains the material for the first three grades.

Part II contains the material for the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh grades.

HOLLIS DANN

CORNELL UNIVERSITY,
ITHACA, NEW YORK, *February 1, 1912*

MUSICAL DICTATION

INTRODUCTION

The study of tone and rhythm, also called musical dictation, includes ear training and eye training. The subject matter of music, both tonal and rhythmic, is learned most readily and effectively through dictation. Therefore, this subject is of first importance.

Language study properly begins with oral expression. Children gain wonderful facility in oral expression of the mother tongue solely by imitation. With favorable opportunity, a child of six years has learned to use the speaking voice freely and easily and possesses a large vocabulary which he employs with intelligent discrimination.

Because of the mastery of oral expression, gained entirely by imitation, children learn to read in a marvelously short time, often reading several books during the first school year. The problem in primary reading is to learn to recognize the symbols representing words already known.

A large majority of the children who enter school at five or six years of age, have used the tone language very little, if at all.

Inasmuch as the subject matter of music is learned through the ear, imitative oral training is vitally essential in the study of music.

The first step, therefore, is to acquire facility in oral expression by means of rote singing.

Through the singing of rote songs, the pupil learns:

1. The use of the singing voice, selecting from the unnumbered, varying tones used in speech, a certain few definite and sustained tones known as the scale.

2. The exclusive use of these sustained tones combined with varying meters and rhythms, forming melodies.
3. The application of words to the melodies.
4. The practical use of this new material in songs, resulting in free oral expression of words and music.

All these things are possible through the singing of songs by imitation, just as it is entirely practical and not unusual for a child of six years to learn to speak the mother tongue, or a foreign language, correctly, even fluently, with no training aside from that which is received from constantly imitating those who speak the language correctly.

With children in the first grade, not less than two months should be devoted entirely to rote singing and to the elimination of monotones. **The Latin syllables should be introduced as an additional stanza to scale songs and carefully taught to each pupil.**

Supplementing this purely imitative training, the preparation for music reading involves the gaining of a definite conception of the scale tones, enabling the learner to think in the tone language. It is here that the work in dictation begins.

FIRST YEAR—NOVEMBER

The pitch of the exercises in this Manual is adapted to classes of children in the primary grades. **Every teacher should be provided with a chromatic pitch pipe which should be used whenever an exercise or song is to be sung.** The compass and pitch of the material throughout this Manual have been very carefully considered.

The teacher or supervisor who considers the compass too wide or the pitch too high, is urged to give the matter careful study and investigation before lowering the pitch. With young pupils the compass and pitch of the material is one of the most important factors in maintaining acceptable tone quality. Intolerable tonal conditions are sure to prevail where children are allowed to sing constantly with the lower voice. Irreparable injury is inflicted upon children's voices in many systems of schools, by supervisors and teachers who ignorantly cultivate the pernicious and almost incurable tone quality so common in the public schools.

Yet it is entirely possible and practicable for any good teacher of reading who is not tone deaf, to learn to teach singing successfully and to preserve the naturally beautiful quality of children's voices. Since the methods of training adult voices are not applicable to children's voices, the ordinary vocal teacher is not a safe guide in this matter. Only the successful and expert teacher of children is qualified to train teachers in this, the most important and most difficult side of public school music teaching.

Teachers are urged to **make every effort to learn how to acquire and preserve the beautiful, flutelike tone peculiar to children.** The approxi-