

MANUAL OF SIMPLE AND DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT

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Manual of Simple and Double Counterpoint by Ernst Friedrich Richter

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ERNST FRIEDRICH RICHTER

**MANUAL OF SIMPLE
AND DOUBLE
COUNTERPOINT**

AUTHOR'S EDITION.

MANUAL
OF
SIMPLE AND DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT

BY

(Edward)

ERNST FRIEDRICH RICHTER,

LATE MUSICAL DIRECTOR OF THE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AT LEIPZIG.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATEST GERMAN EDITION

BY

JOHN P. MORGAN.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN publishing this Manual of Counterpoint I fulfil a promise long since given, and, at the same time, add a link hitherto wanting in my Manuals of the Theory of Music.

The tardy fulfilment of my promise, considering the numerous enquiries after the expected book, finds a partial excuse, or, at least explanation, in the following.

When, at the suggestion of the immortal Mendelssohn, I received the commission to prepare a Manual for the Leipsic Conservatory of Music, the task to be executed was: to place in the hands of the pupils a brief, condensed book of assistance (*Hilfsbuch*) containing a *repetition* of the principles and rules, laid down in the lessons, for the working out of the practical exercises.

Although at that time not inexperienced in theoretical teaching, the commission was to me a surprise, since I had never had the idea of preparing any thing of the kind in a written form. It was also a source of anxiety to me when I thought of my own powers, and of the numberless manuals on music already extant.

A considerable time elapsed before I believed myself warranted in bringing before the public my experience and method of instruction; accordingly, the first edition of the Manual of Harmony did not appear until 1853. — During the progress of the work, however, I felt the necessity of going somewhat farther than the doctrine of Harmony, strictly speaking, demanded, the

more so as there was at that time no thought of a second and third manual. Hence the Manual of Harmony contains a digression into the domain of actual Counterpoint.

With the extension of my experience in the instruction of many pupils in the higher exercises, this could not satisfy me, and a special treatment of these objects of instruction became more and more desirable. — I was the more justified in attempting this task since the Manual of Harmony had met an unexpectedly friendly reception. Thus I entered first upon the preparation of the Manual of the Fugue and of the Canon, a part of the subject which to me (having given written as well as oral instruction in it), more quickly assumed form than the rest. The first edition of the Manual of the Fugue appeared in 1858, while the Manual of Counterpoint was delayed for a time. Whether I have now succeeded in making the book useful in wider circles than those for which it was originally intended, I must leave to be decided by time and a friendly criticism.

I hope that the method of instruction may prove itself clear as regards the presentation of the subject. — I refer, however, to the last chapter of the book, which, by its special character, renders farther detail here unnecessary. I only mention, in brief, that what has proved itself good in earlier manuals is retained in this, but that by means of various other exercises and forms not previously used I have attempted to progress from the abstract of the earlier exercises to the attainment of the *concrete* (or musical presentation exhibiting itself through various forms), in order to bring the exercises constantly nearer to the practical necessities of the composer.

May this book also meet with that friendly reception which afforded me, in the case of the other manuals, the satisfaction of having produced a useful work.

ERNST F. RICHTER.

LEIPZIG, Februar 1872.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1

PART I. SIMPLE COUNTERPOINT.

FIRST SECTION.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTERPOINT FROM THE HARMONIC BASIS. FIRST TECHNICAL EXERCISES.

CHAPTER	
I.—THE RELATION OF THE HARMONIC MOVEMENT TO COUNTERPOINT	13
II.—PLAIN COUNTERPOINT	17
III.—FIGURATED COUNTERPOINT.	23
IV.—COUNTERPOINT IN QUARTER-NOTES.	32
V.—THE THREE-VOICED MOVEMENT, AS A CONTRAPUNTAL EXERCISE	42
VI.—TWO-VOICED COUNTERPOINT.	49

SECOND SECTION.

CONTRAPUNTAL EXERCISES APPLIED TO HIGHER PROBLEMS. TREATMENTS OF CHORALS.

VII.—TREATMENT IN PLAIN COUNTERPOINT, SIMPLE HARMONY TO THE CHORAL	52
VIII.—TREATMENT OF THE CHORAL IN FIGURATED COUNTERPOINT. .	65
IX.—THE FIVE-VOICED AND MORE THAN FIVE-VOICED CONTRAPUNTAL MOVEMENT	76
X.—THE CANTUS FIRMUS IN A METRICALLY-VARIED FORM. FREE FORMATIONS	80

PART II.

DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT.

FIRST SECTION.

DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT IN THE OCTAVE.

CHAPTER	PAGE
XI.—DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT IN THE OCTAVE, IN TWO-VOICED MOVEMENT.	98
XII.—THE APPLICATION OF TWO-VOICED DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT IN POLYPHONIC MOVEMENTS	107
XIII.—TRIPLE AND QUADRUPE COUNTERPOINT.	118

SECOND SECTION.

DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT IN THE DECIME AND IN THE DUODECIME.

XIV.—DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT IN THE DECIME	132
XV.—DOUBLE COUNTERPOINT IN THE DUODECIME	146

CLOSING CHAPTER.

SOME REMARKS CONCERNING THE USE OF THIS MANUAL AND CONCERNING THE PRACTICAL EXERCISES.	165
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INTRODUCTION.

OF THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD COUNTERPOINT.

THERE is probably no word of musical terminology of which the given significations are more various and manifold than those of the word "*Counterpoint*". In the course of time, and the development of music, this word has acquired a signification remote from its original meaning; rendering it to many, and certainly to every beginner, something mysterious, even enigmatical, in so far as much keenness of perception is presupposed for its comprehension and practical application.

Very generally, however (although entirely falsely), the value of Counterpoint is merely placed upon a level with that of the solution of more profound arithmetical problems, the observance and application of which, being a hindrance to the fancy in its higher flights, in fact, having a formally realistic tendency, must appear of little use.

The older and the oldest manner of Counterpoint, in its simple grandeur, was, probably, rarely to be heard in complete performance, even in earlier times. It differs materially from the later manner, as for example, that of the time of SEBASTIAN BACH: for, *after* BACH's time, Counterpoint deteriorated, in part, into a mere formula. Still, considering the direction which the development of music took, particularly in respect to Harmony, it is not surprising that the interest in Counterpoint constantly diminished, until the more favorable current of later times again placed it in a brighter light.

The opinion that Counterpoint is something pedantic and old-fashioned disappears more and more, and the fact that the best of our composers have always used it in their most important works may serve as an encouragement to beginners to enter upon the work before them with confidence, in order by this means to exercise and develop their powers.

That which we understand by Counterpoint at the present day, may