

Theory of Music

Richard T. Dasher



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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	v
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Part 1: Reproducible Pages

WORKSHEET #1	3
WORKSHEET #2	4
WORKSHEET #3	6
WORKSHEET #4	8
WORKSHEET #5	10
WORKSHEET #6	11
WORKSHEET #7	16
WORKSHEET #8	19
WORKSHEET #9	20
WORKSHEET #10	22
WORKSHEET #11	24
WORKSHEET #12	26
WORKSHEET #13	29
WORKSHEET #14	31
WORKSHEET #15	33
WORKSHEET #16	37
WORKSHEET #17	41

Part 2: Answers

WORKSHEET #1	47
WORKSHEET #2	48
WORKSHEET #3	50
WORKSHEET #4	52
WORKSHEET #5	54
WORKSHEET #6	55

WORKSHEET #7	60
WORKSHEET #8	63
WORKSHEET #9	64
WORKSHEET #10	66
WORKSHEET #11	67
WORKSHEET #12	69
WORKSHEET #13	72
WORKSHEET #14	74
WORKSHEET #15	76
WORKSHEET #16	79
WORKSHEET #17	82

Introduction

This activity text/teacher guide combination is a compilation and revision of two earlier J. Weston Walch publications, *Musical Theory* and *Applying Musical Theory*. For this new work, each chapter of those books has been reviewed, and many substantial modifications and additions have been made. The result is a better, clearer, and, I hope, more useful text.

Students who have a solid grounding in the fundamentals of notation are ready to begin the activity text. Chapter One is intended to be a quick review, not a full exposition of notation, and may be used by teacher and student for quick reference. Chapter Two reviews manuscript-writing techniques and, again, may be referred to as needed. The rest of the text takes the student from scale construction through some early twentieth-century compositional techniques such as parallel chords and polytonal writing. Along the way, students will learn about chord construction and inversion, altered chords, modulation, and nonharmonic tones. Examples taken from standard literature illustrate the points made. In keeping with the creative approach used throughout, concepts such as song forms and polyphonic composition are featured. Appendixes guide the student through the basics of writing and arranging for vocal groups, bands, orchestras, jazz ensembles, or rock bands.

Throughout the activity text, rather than provide a list of abstract rules to follow, I have encouraged students to focus on the *sound* of music. I hope that students will thus feel free to experiment within the guidelines of certain chordal and voice-leading principles, instead of creating lifeless exercises. For this reason, certain examples used in the book may be beyond the total comprehension of the students at the time they are introduced. These examples are inserted to give students a “sound picture” of where they are going, even if they lack the tools for complete analysis at the moment.

This is a practical text; it gets the student involved in the actual writing of music to be performed. He or she is encouraged to use plenty of manuscript paper in the exercises. Students should copy parts, hear their work performed, and perform or conduct performances of their exercises. The teacher may also want students to copy and analyze excerpts from scores or piano pieces as a weekly exercise. One learns to write and arrange music only by writing and arranging music, critically studying the result, and then *re-writing* and *re-arranging*.

The activity text is self-contained; in it can be found the student text as well as all the worksheets. For the teacher’s convenience, the first half of this guide contains those same worksheets in reproducible form. The second half of this guide is made up of those worksheets reprinted with the appropriate answers included.

Every writer of a theory text ultimately creates another system for analysis. As you read through this activity text, you may find the terminology or system of using chord symbols slightly different from that used in your undergraduate days. I have attempted to use a terminology and an analysis system that is logical and not at great variance from other systems. In broad outline, the Piston approach is used here. Major chords are symbolized by uppercase Roman numerals (I, IV, V); lowercase is used for minor chords (ii, iii, vi). Other types of chords are explained in the text. I have avoided the notion of harmonic “rules,” since much of twentieth-century music transcends or ignores these rules.

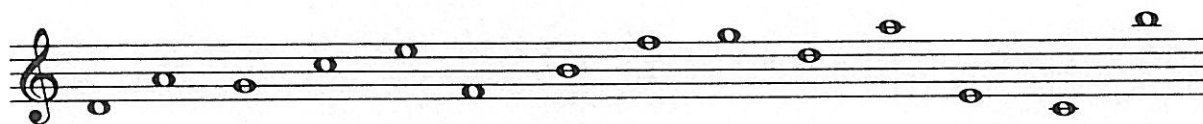
Manuscript paper and pencils are the basic tools students will need when working with this text. Also useful are pianos, electronic keyboards, metronomes, dictionaries, and access to a good collection of recordings. But the most important thing you can provide students may well be encouragement. Music theory is a challenging subject, and getting it right is more challenging still. Students will need your help as they seek to develop not just the musical skills but the patience required for creative compositional fulfillment. I hope you will discover that such support is easy to provide as you share with your students both the process of using this book and the resulting expressions of their musical growth.

WORKSHEET #1

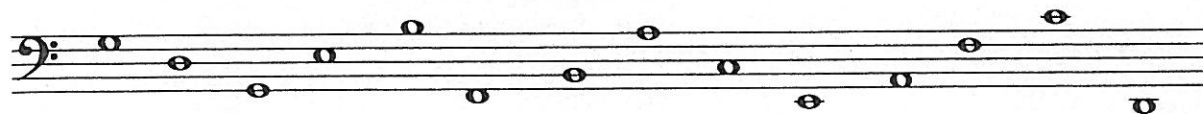
1. How many lines are there on a *grand staff*? _____
2. What symbol tells you that the *top* five lines are being used? _____
3. How many lines are there in a *treble staff*? _____
4. What symbol indicates that the *bottom* five lines are being used? _____
5. Define a ledger line: _____

6. The distance from any note to the next higher or lower note with the same letter name is called an _____.
7. What are the seven letter names used in music? _____

8. Give the letter names of these notes:



9. Give the letter names of these notes:



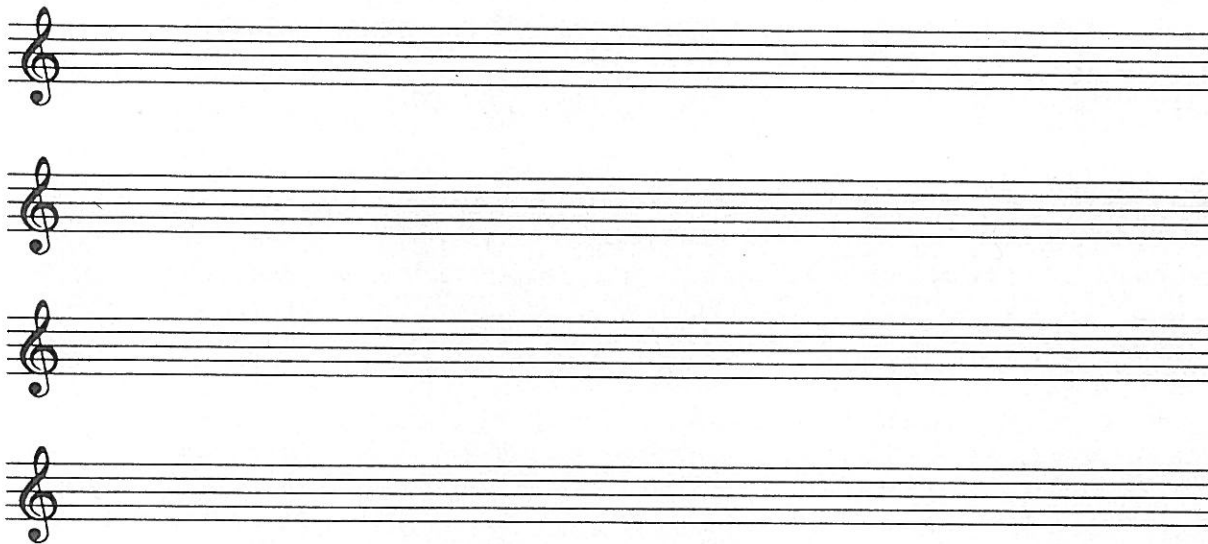
Give yourself one point for each correct answer. Have your teacher go over your worksheet to clarify any problems you have. Stay with this level until you understand the material perfectly.



WORKSHEET #15

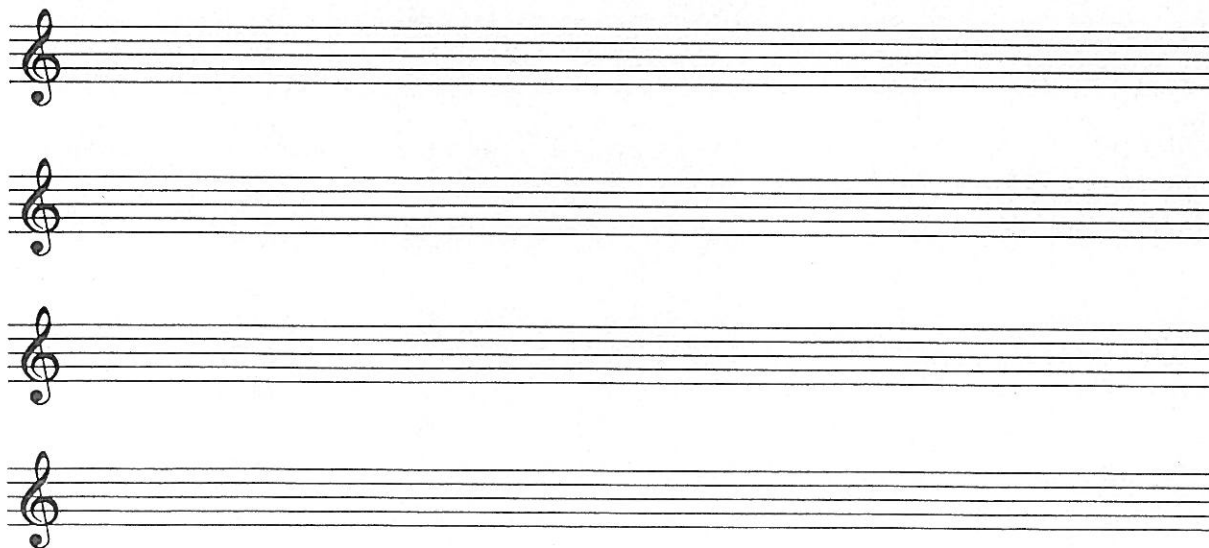
Exercise A

1. Write a strict canon in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, not less than four measures long. You may begin the second part on the second or third beat of the first measure, or at the beginning of the second measure.



Four blank musical staves, each with a treble clef, provided for writing a strict canon in 3/4 meter.

2. Write a free canon at the interval of a second, third, or fourth. Make it at least four measures long.



Four blank musical staves, each with a treble clef, provided for writing a free canon at the interval of a second, third, or fourth.

(continued)

WORKSHEET #15 (continued)

2. Here is a motif whose last note may be any length you choose. Write a sixteen-measure melody using this motif imitatively, both in its original form and in inversion.

The image shows four musical staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff contains a motif consisting of four notes: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), and B4 (half). The remaining three staves are blank, intended for the student to write a sixteen-measure melody using the motif imitatively, both in its original form and in inversion.

Name _____ Date _____

WORKSHEET #6 (continued)**Exercise C**

On the staves below, write out the melody to "America, the Beautiful" in the key of D.

**Exercise D**

Here is the melody to "God of Our Fathers," written in the key of C. Transpose it to the key of F, writing out the notes below the original.

*(continued)*

Name _____ Date _____

WORKSHEET #6 (continued)**Exercise E**

Here is the melody to "Ach, Du Lieber! Augustin." Transpose it for alto saxophone.

The musical notation for Exercise E consists of two staves. The first staff shows the original melody in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The second staff shows the transposed melody for alto saxophone in D major (two sharps) and 3/4 time.

Exercise F

Here is the melody to "The Navy Hymn." Transpose it for B-flat clarinet.

The musical notation for Exercise F consists of four staves. The first staff shows the original melody in C major (no sharps or flats) and common time. The second staff shows the transposed melody for B-flat clarinet in B-flat major (two flats) and common time. The third and fourth staves show further transpositions of the melody, likely for other instruments or as a variation.

(continued)

Name _____ Date _____

WORKSHEET #6 (continued)**Exercise G**

Arrange the following chorale for flute, clarinet, and alto saxophone, making the necessary transpositions for the parts. The first note of each part is given, as is the key signature of the transposed part. The flute part can be taken exactly from the model.

The image displays a musical score for Exercise G. It consists of four staves. The top two staves are a piano accompaniment in G minor, 4/4 time. The piano part features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Below the piano part are three woodwind parts: Flute, Clarinet, and Alto saxophone. The Flute part is in G minor and begins with a G4 note. The Clarinet part is in G minor and begins with a G4 note. The Alto saxophone part is in D minor and begins with a D4 note. The key signature for the woodwind parts is indicated by a single flat (Bb) for the Flute and Clarinet, and two flats (Bb, Eb) for the Alto saxophone. The time signature is common time (C).

(continued)

Name _____ Date _____

WORKSHEET #6 (continued)

Exercise H

Arrange the same chorale for trumpet, French horn, and baritone (bass clef in the key of F concert). Write the transposed key signatures for the various instruments.

Trumpet

French horn

Baritone, bass clef

ANSWER KEY