TENTH EDITION

Music for Sight Singing

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Contents

(R) indicates Rhythmic Reading exercises

Preface x
In Memoriam xiii
Acknowledgments xv

Part I
Melody: Diatonic Intervals
Rhythm: Division of the Beat

1. Rhythm: Simple Meters; The Beat and Its Division into Two Parts 1

Rhythmic Reading
Section 1 (R). The quarter note as the beat unit. Beat-note values and larger only 3
Section 2 (R). The quarter note as the beat unit and its division. Dotted notes and tied notes 4
Section 3 (R). Two-part drills 6
Section 4 (R). Note values other than the quarter note as beat values 7
Section 5 (R). Two-part drills 10

2. Melody: Stepwise Melodies, Major Keys
Rhythm: Simple Meters; The Beat and Its Division into Two Parts 13

Sight Singing
Section 1. Major keys, treble clef, the quarter note as the beat unit. Key signatures with no more than three sharps or three flats 14
Section 2. Bass clef 17
Section 3. Other meter signatures 20
Section 4. Duets 22
Section 5. Structured improvisation 24
3. Melody: Leaps within the Tonic Triad, Major Keys

Rhythm: Simple Meters

Section 1. Major keys, treble clef, leaps of a third, fourth, fifth, and octave within the tonic triad. The quarter note as the beat unit

Section 2. Bass clef

Section 3. Leaps of a sixth within the tonic triad

Section 4. The half note and the eighth note as beat units

Section 5. Duets

Section 6. Key signatures with five, six, and seven sharps or flats

Section 7. Structured improvisation

4. Melody: Leaps within the Tonic Triad, Major Keys

Rhythm: Compound Meters; The Beat and Its Division into Three Parts

Section 1 (R). Rhythmic reading: The dotted quarter note as the beat unit. Single lines and two-part drills

Section 2. Sight singing: Major keys, treble clef; the dotted quarter note as the beat unit

Section 3. Sight singing: Bass clef

Section 4 (R). Rhythmic reading: The dotted half note and the dotted eighth note as beat units, including two-part drills

Section 5. Sight singing: The dotted half note and dotted eighth note as beat units

Section 6. Duets

Section 7. Structured improvisation

5. Melody: Minor Keys; Leaps within the Tonic Triad

Rhythm: Simple and Compound Meters

Section 1. Melodies not including 6 and 7

Section 2. Melodies including descending 6 and ascending 7

Section 3. Melodies including ascending 6 and descending 7

Section 4. Melodies including less common uses of 6 and 7

Section 5. Duets

Section 6. Structured improvisation
6. Melody: Leaps within the Dominant Triad (V); Major and Minor Keys
   Rhythm: Simple and Compound Meters
   Section 1. Leaps of a third within the V triad; major keys; simple meters
   Section 2. Leaps of a third within the V triad; minor keys; simple meters
   Section 3. Leaps of a fourth and fifth within the V triad; major and minor keys; simple meters
   Section 4. Leaps of a sixth within the V triad; simple meters
   Section 5. Compound meters; various leaps within the V triad
   Section 6. Numerator of 3, compound meters
   Section 7. Duets
   Section 8. Structured improvisation

7. The C clefs Alto and Tenor Clefs
   Section 1. The alto clef
   Section 2. The tenor clef
   Section 3. Duets
   Section 4. Additional practice in the C clefs
   Section 5. Structured improvisation

8. Melody: Further Use of Diatonic Leaps
   Rhythm: Simple and Compound Meters
   Section 1. Melodies outlining the IV or ii triad
   Section 2. Leaps to specific scale degrees
   Section 3. Other leaps of a third
   Section 4. Larger leaps involving 2, 4, and 6
   Section 5. Additional practice with consonant diatonic leaps
   Section 6. Bass lines
   Section 7. Duets
   Section 8. Structured improvisation

9. Melody: Leaps within the Dominant Seventh Chord (V7); Other Diatonic Seventh Leaps
   Rhythm: Simple and Compound Meters
   Section 1. The complete dominant seventh chord
   Section 2. The leap of a minor seventh within the V7 chord
Part II

Melody: Diatonic Intervals
Rhythm: Subdivision of the Beat

10. Rhythm
   The Subdivision of the Beat: The Simple Beat into Four Parts, The Compound Beat into Six Parts

Rhythmic Reading, Simple Meters
Section 1 (R). Preliminary exercises, simple meters
Section 2 (R). Rhythmic reading exercises in simple meters
Section 3 (R). Two-part drills, simple meters

Rhythmic Reading, Compound Meters
Section 4 (R). Preliminary exercises, compound meters
Section 5 (R). Rhythmic reading exercises in compound meters
Section 6 (R). Two-part drills, compound meters

11. Melody: Leaps within the Tonic and Dominant Triads
   Rhythm: Subdivision in Simple and Compound Meters

   Section 1. Single-line melodies and duets
   Section 2. Structured improvisation

12. Melody: Further Use of Diatonic Leaps
   Rhythm: Subdivision in Simple and Compound Meters

   Section 1. Melodies outlining the IV or ii triad
   Section 2. Leaps to 4 and 6
   Section 3. Leaps of a seventh or tritone within the V7 chord
   Section 4. Other melodic dissonances
   Section 5. Additional practice with consonant diatonic leaps
   Section 6. Structured improvisation
## Part III

**Melody:** Chromaticism  
**Rhythm:** Further Rhythmic Practices

### 13. Rhythm and Syncopation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melody:</th>
<th>Syncopation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1 (R).</td>
<td>Syncopation in simple meters at the beat or beat division level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2 (R).</td>
<td>Syncopation in compound meters at the beat or beat division level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3 (R).</td>
<td>Two-part drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4 (R).</td>
<td>Syncopation at the beat subdivision level in simple meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5 (R).</td>
<td>Syncopation at the beat subdivision level in compound meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6 (R).</td>
<td>Two-part drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Singing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 7.</td>
<td>Syncopation in simple meters at the beat or beat division level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8.</td>
<td>Syncopation in compound meters at the beat or beat division level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 9.</td>
<td>Syncopation at the beat subdivision level in simple and compound meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 10.</td>
<td>Duets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 11.</td>
<td>Structured improvisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 14. Rhythm and Triplet Division of Undotted Note Values; Duplet Division of Dotted Note Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melody:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1 (R).</td>
<td>Triplet division of undotted note values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2 (R).</td>
<td>Duplet division of dotted note values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3 (R).</td>
<td>Two-part drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Singing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4.</td>
<td>Triplet division of undotted note values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5.</td>
<td>Duplet division of dotted note values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 6.</td>
<td>Duets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 7.</td>
<td>Structured improvisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Melody: Chromaticism (I): Chromatic Embellishing Tones; Tonicizing the Dominant; Modulation to the Key of the Dominant or the Relative Major 246
   Section 1. Chromatic notes in the context of stepwise motion 246
   Section 2. Chromatic notes approached or left by leap 250
   Section 3. Tonicization of V in major keys 254
   Section 4. Tonicization of III and modulation to the relative major from minor keys 261
   Section 5. Modulation to the dominant from major keys 267
   Section 6. Modulation to the dominant from minor keys 275
   Section 7. Duets 277
   Section 8. Structured improvisation 279

16. Melody: Chromaticism (II): Tonicization of Any Diatonic Triad; Modulation to Any Closely Related Key 281
   Section 1. Brief tonicizations of any diatonic triad with no modulation 281
   Section 2. Extended tonicizations 284
   Section 3. Tonicization with modulation only to the dominant or relative major key 288
   Section 4. Modulation to any closely related key 292
   Section 5. Successive modulations among closely related keys 296
   Section 6. Additional practice with tonicization and modulation 299
   Section 7. Duets 307
   Section 8. Structured improvisation 311

17. Rhythm and Melody: Changing Meter Signatures; The Hemiola; Less Common Meter Signatures 313
   Rhythmic Reading
   Section 1 (R). Definitions and rhythmic reading exercises 313
   Sight Singing
   Section 2. Changing meter signatures 317
   Section 3. The hemiola 322
   Section 4. Meters of 5 and 7, and other meters 327
   Section 5. Structured improvisation 334
18. Rhythm and Melody: Further Subdivision of the Beat; Notation in Slow Tempi 335
   Section 1 (R). Rhythmic reading 336
   Section 2. Sight singing 338
   Section 3. Structured improvisation 346

19. Melody Chromaticism (III): Additional Uses of Chromatic Tones; Remote Modulation 348
   Section 1. Mode mixture 348
   Section 2. Augmented-sixth chords 350
   Section 3. The Neapolitan sixth 351
   Section 4. Chromatic tones in less common intervals 359
   Section 5. Remote modulation 367
   Section 6. Structured improvisation 375

Part IV
The Diatonic Modes and Recent Music

20. Melody The Diatonic Modes 377
   Section 1. Folk music 378
   Section 2. Composed music 386
   Section 3. Structured improvisation 394

21. Rhythm and Melody: The Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries 395
   Section 1 (R). Meter and rhythm. Rhythmic reading 395
   Section 2. Extensions of the traditional tonal system 398
   Section 3. Symmetrical collections; the whole-tone and octatonic scales 409
   Section 4. Freely post-tonal melodies; twelve-tone melodies 417
   Section 5. Duets 422
   Section 6. Structured improvisation 427

Appendix A: Rhythm Solmization 429
Appendix B: Pitch Solmization 432
Appendix C: Musical Terms 435
Preface

Developing the “mind’s ear”—the ability to imagine how music sounds without first playing it on an instrument—is essential to any musician, and sight singing (in conjunction with ear training and other studies in musicianship) is invaluable in reaching this fundamental goal. The principal objective of sight singing is acquiring the ability to sing a given melody accurately at first sight. Although repeating a melody and correcting any errors is beneficial, we can truly sight sing a melody only once, which is why Music for Sight Singing provides a generous number of exercises (more than 1,500 in this volume) for practice.

Generations of musicians have valued Music for Sight Singing for its abundance of meticulously organized melodies drawn from the literature of composed music and a wide range of the world’s folk music. Not only is “real music” more enjoyable and interesting to sing than dry exercises, but genuine repertoire naturally introduces a host of important musical considerations beyond pitch and rhythm (including dynamics, accents, articulations, slurs, repeat signs, and tempo markings). The book’s systematic arrangement of exercises according to specific melodic and rhythmic features lays an effective foundation for success. Each chapter methodically introduces elements one at a time, steadily increasing in difficulty while providing a musically meaningful framework around which students can hone their skills. Through this method, the book creates a sense of challenge rather than frustration: a conscientious student should always be prepared to tackle the next melody.

The text as a whole is divided into four parts:

1. Chapters 1–9, diatonic melodies with rhythmic patterns limited to whole beats and their most basic divisions (two notes per beat in simple meters, three notes per beat in compound meters)
2. Chapters 10–12, diatonic melodies with rhythmic patterns that include subdivisions of the beat (four notes per beat in simple meters, six notes per beat in compound meters)
3. Chapters 13–19, chromaticism, tonicization, modulation, and more advanced rhythmic patterns and metrical concepts
4. Chapters 20–21, modal and post-tonal music

Readers who prefer to progress to subdivided rhythms more rapidly may skip directly from chapter 7 to chapters 10 and 11. However, subsequently returning to chapters 8 and 9 will help introduce new leaps in a simpler rhythmic context before proceeding to chapter 12.

Music for Sight Singing contains exercises appropriate for students of all skill levels, including beginners, but a basic working knowledge of fundamental
music theory and notation is prerequisite to sight singing. The following abilities are particularly important:

- Recognize, write, and sing all major and minor scales
- Recognize and write all major and minor key signatures
- Recognize and write all common note values and their corresponding rests
- Recognize and interpret standard meter signatures

Each of the above will be reviewed as topics are introduced throughout the text. However, a practical command of these basic elements from the outset will ensure satisfactory progress.

A new edition of *Music for Sight Singing* offers the opportunity to build on the book’s strengths, address any weaknesses, and introduce some new ideas. As always, exercises have been selected from a wide musical repertoire, and melodies written especially for pedagogical purposes are kept to a minimum.

Important revisions in the tenth edition include the following:

- The minor mode is introduced more gradually and systematically, starting with melodies that exclude ♭6 and ♩7, then melodies including the comparatively familiar ascending ♯7 and descending ♩♭6, then melodies with the somewhat less familiar ascending ♯6 and descending ♩♭7, and finally less common uses of 6♭ and 7♯.

- Leaps outside of the tonic and dominant harmonies are presented more systematically. Three different approaches are supported by clearly identified sections: leaps outlining IV or ii, leaps to ♩4 and 6♯ (which are the most difficult diatonic notes for many students), and leaps of particular interval sizes.

- There are further improvements to the introduction of modulation. Most significantly, the three most common modulations (to the dominant from a major key, to the minor dominant from a minor key, and to the relative major from a minor key) now appear in separate sections.

- Tonicizations beyond the dominant and relative major have been further organized for a more gradual increase in difficulty. The initial section includes only very brief tonicizations, the next section includes more extended tonicizations (where some people may prefer to change syllables temporarily), and a third section combines tonicization with the familiar modulations introduced in the previous chapter (to the dominant or relative major key).

- A new section specifically addressing mode mixture has been added, and this is followed by another new section that includes augmented-sixth chords.

- There is now a separate section of melodies that modulate successively among three or more closely related keys.

- The number of melodies in minor keys has further increased.

- More melodies have been notated in alto, tenor, and bass clefs.

- Chapter 21 includes more music by living composers.
This edition also refers and directs students to the Rhythm Generator software in some chapters. The Rhythm Generator (http://myweb.fsu.edu/nrogers/Rhythm_Generator/Rhythm_Generator.html) creates virtually unlimited rhythmic drills tailored to specific chapters of the book. These rhythmic drills are easily set to a variety of lengths as well as to beginning, intermediate, or advanced levels; they provide appropriate challenge to any student. Instructors and students alike will find the rhythms well targeted, musically satisfying, and fun to perform.

This edition maintains the structured improvisation exercises established in the seventh edition. Structured improvisation provides students with a framework around which to create their own melodies. These singing exercises are crafted to reinforce the lessons of their respective chapters, fundamentally emphasizing the book’s organization and approach through a new kind of activity. Structured improvisation training offers specific musical and pedagogical benefits, from helping beginning students master an unfamiliar solmization system (by concentrating specifically on scale degrees and their corresponding syllables without the additional mental burden of notation) to fostering a deep awareness of harmony in students at all levels. Finally, improvisational exercises will provide additional variety to class and individual practice, and (unlike traditional sight singing) they will extend the same benefits even after multiple repetitions.

I am strongly committed to maintaining the tradition of excellence that Robert Ottman established more than 60 years ago. The combination of his vast knowledge of the repertoire and his deep pedagogical instincts made *Music for Sight Singing* one of the most celebrated music textbooks of the twentieth century. It is humbling to walk in such giant footsteps, but of course it is also a tremendous privilege to continue Dr. Ottman’s work for the benefit of twenty-first-century musicians.

*Nancy Rogers*
In Memoriam

Musicians around the world have been touched by Robert Ottman. Hundreds of fortunate students studied with him during his long career at the University of North Texas, where he is fondly remembered as an exceptionally fine and dedicated teacher. He was an inspirational role model for those who later became educators and were able to pass along his words of wisdom, his teaching techniques, and his high standards to thousands of their own students. Countless other musicians have benefited from the insight and experience that he poured into *Music for Sight Singing* and 10 other textbooks.

Dr. Ottman earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Eastman School of Music (1938 and 1944), then enlisted in the U.S. Army as a chaplain’s assistant. During World War II, he played a portable organ during worship services and drove the chaplain’s Jeep (sometimes at night, without headlights) near enemy territory in order to draw fire and pinpoint troop locations. After the war ended, he studied at Trinity College of Music in London, then returned to the United States to head the music theory department at the University of North Texas (known at

Robert William Ottman
May 3, 1914–June 30, 2005
In Memoriam

the time as the North Texas State College). He received his doctorate from UNT in 1956—the same year that he published the first edition of *Music for Sight Singing*.

Serving both as a professor of music theory and as director of the Madrigal Singers, Robert Ottman was a valued member of the University of North Texas faculty throughout his 35 years there. Even after his retirement in 1981, he remained actively involved with the university and the larger Denton community. In 2004 he received the UNT President’s Citation for outstanding service.

Dr. Ottman was beloved by those who knew him and, remarkably, even by people acquainted solely with his books. If it is, indeed, possible to be immortalized through one’s work, then Robert Ottman will live forever in the hearts and minds of musicians all around the world.
Acknowledgments

The following publishers have granted permission to use melodies from their publications, for which the authors wish to express their appreciation. Additional acknowledgments will be found immediately below individual melodies.


Ascherberg, Hopwood, and Crew, Ltd.: melody 4.30 from *Folk Songs of the North-Countries* by Frank Kidson; melody 8.44 from *A Garland of English Folk Songs* by Frank Kidson.


Columbia University Press, New York, NY: melody 4.77 from *A Song Catcher in the Southern Mountains* by Dorothy Scarborough; melodies 3.32, 3.55, 3.69, 12.67, 14.47, 14.65, 17.56 and 17.85 from *Folk Music and Poetry of Spain and Portugal* by Kurt Schindler, courtesy of Hispanic Institute, Columbia University.

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