MUSIC FOR SIGHT SINGING

Ninth Edition

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PEARSON
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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 1,400 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

*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 ninth edition include the following:

- Triplets in simple meters and duplets in compound meters are introduced much earlier, before chromaticism. Although the chapter that focuses specifically on these topics is shorter than it was in recent editions, triplets and duplets are used throughout the later chapters. The overall number of exercises containing triplets and duplets has not been reduced.
- Syncopation is also introduced earlier, before chromaticism. Again, readers familiar with previous editions will observe that the focal chapter is shorter, but the overall number of syncopated exercises remains the same.
- Chromaticism is introduced more gradually, starting with chromatic embellishing tones in the context of stepwise motion. The strong focus on tonicizing V before proceeding to a wide variety of other tonicizations remains.
- Modulation is also introduced more gradually, with a new section addressing modulation from a minor key to its relative major. The section focusing on modulation to the dominant now includes both major and minor keys.
- The number of melodies in minor keys has significantly increased.
- Many more melodies have been notated in bass clef.

The ninth edition of *Music for Sight Singing* will be well supported by MySearchLab, a collection of practical online materials and resources. MySearchLab improves teaching by enabling instructors to spend less class time checking homework and more class time addressing true sight
singing, group activities, and listening skills. Through MySearchLab, students can conveniently submit their sight-singing performances online and receive detailed individual comments, but without sacrificing valuable class time; furthermore, they can review their own performances as well as the corresponding feedback at any time. Instructors can quickly and easily post assignments and additional material, and they can use online sight singing in the manner they prefer: for graded homework assignments that don’t reduce productive class time, as a way to monitor student progress and/or practice time, or simply for providing extra assistance to students whose schedules preclude regular office hour visits. Practical features such as the online grade book and customizable grading rubrics help to keep class records accurate and organized.

Perhaps the most exciting component of MySearchLab is the Rhythm Generator, software developed primarily by William Wieland to create 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. Rhythm Generator exercises are not only ideal for in-class sight reading and for individual practice, but they may also be assigned for homework or peer review. The Rhythm Generator could even be used as an inexhaustible source for rhythm-reading exams. Instructors and students alike will find the rhythms well targeted, musically satisfying, and fun to perform.

As always, more melodies have been added than deleted in this edition, but (with the exception of copyrighted material from the last chapter) all of the deleted melodies remain available on MySearchLab. This edition maintains the significantly enlarged rhythm chapters and 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 50 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
Music for Sight Singing

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 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.

Robert William Ottman
May 3, 1914–June 30, 2005
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Nancy Rogers