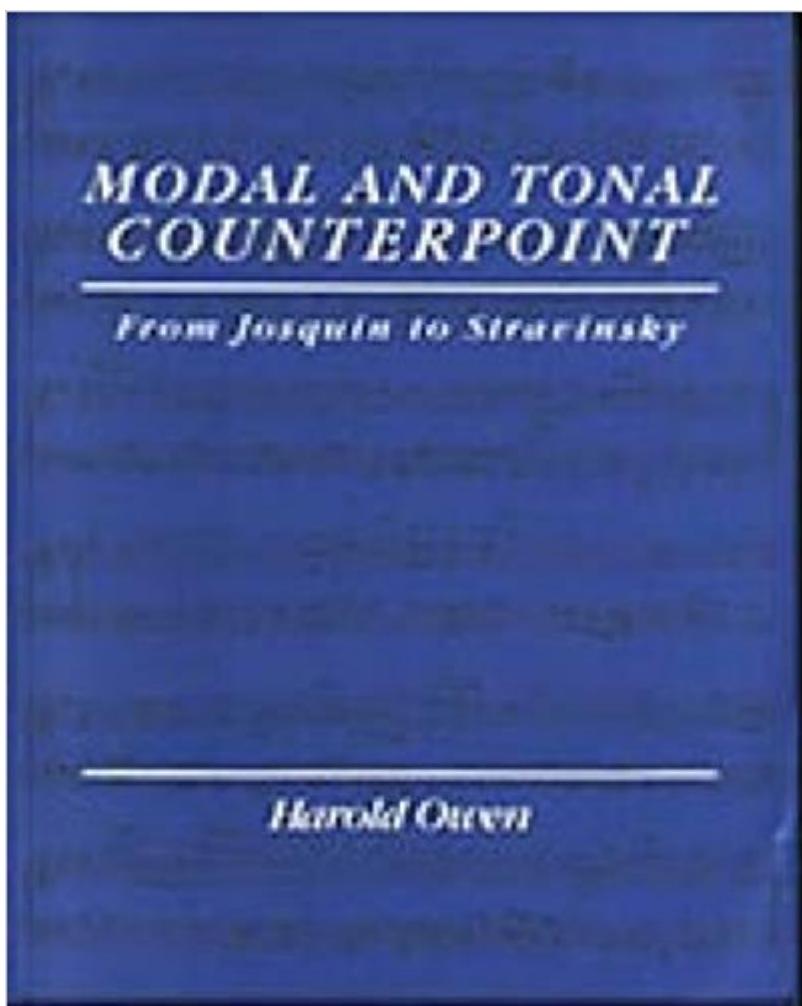


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Modal And Tonal Counterpoint: From Josquin To Stravinsky



Synopsis

Modal and Tonal Counterpoint : From Josquin to Stravinsky 1/E by Harold Owen

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Customer Reviews

Preface. PART ONE: INTRODUCTORY CONCEPTS. 1. The Nature of Polyphonic Music: Terms and General Concepts. 2. Polyphony and Style: A Comparison of Examples From the Fourteenth to the Twentieth Centuries. PART TWO: COUNTERPOINT IN THE LATE RENAISSANCE (1500-1600). 3. Two-Part Counterpoint: Basic Principles of Sixteenth-Century Style. 4. Two-Part Counterpoint: First and Second Species Counterpoint. 5. Two-Part Counterpoint: Third, Fourth, and Fifth Species. 6. Two-Part Motets: Setting of Text; Formal Considerations. 7. Two-Part Secular Music: Instrumental Duo; Canzonet. 8. Three-Part Counterpoint: Motet; Canzonet; Fantasia. 9. Four-Part Counterpoint: Dance Variations; Motet; Madrigal. 10. Polyphony in More Than Four Parts. PART THREE: COUNTERPOINT IN THE EARLY BAROQUE (1600-1700). 11. Stylistic Innovations: The Basso Continuo; the Emergence of Tonality; New Uses of Dissonance; Chromaticism. 12. Continuous Variations: Ground Bass; Chaconne; and Passacaglia. 13. Trio Texture: Two Trebles With Continuo. 14. Predecessors of the Fugue: Canzona; Ricercar; Fantasia; and Choral Fugato. PART FOUR: COUNTERPOINT IN THE LATE BAROQUE (1700-1750). 15. Review of Basic Concepts and Introduction to Eighteenth-Century Counterpoint. 16. Polyphonic Style in 1700: Melodic, Harmonic, and Temporal Considerations; Polyphonic Textures. 17. Cantus Firmus Compositions: The Chorals Prelude. 18. Invention: Bach's Two-Part Inventions. 19. Three-Part

Counterpoint: Bach's Sinfonia's. 20. Canon: Two-Part Canon; Accompanied Canon; Canonic Chorale. 21. Fugue I: Overview; Subject and Response; Countersubject. 22. Fugue II: The Exposition in Three and Four Parts. 23. Fugue III: Development; Episodes; Contrapuntal Techniques and Devices; Stretto; Concluding Techniques. 24. Genres Using Fugal Technique: Gigue; Fugal Sonata Movement; Fugal Chorus. PART FIVE: POLYPHONY IN THE CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC ERAS (1750-1900). 25. Polyphony in the Classical Era: Counterpoint in Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. 26. Polyphony in the Romantic Era: Counterpoint in Mendelssohn, Brahms, Franck, and Others. PART SIX: POLYPHONY IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. 27. Serial and Atonal Counterpoint. 28. Counterpoint in Hindemith, Bartok, and Stravinsky. Appendix A: Identification of Examples in Chapter 1. Appendix B: The Ecclesiastical Modes and the Hexacord System. Appendix C: A Guide to the Interpretation of Figured Bass Symbols. Glossary. Discography. Selected Bibliography. List of Musical Examples for Discussion. Index.

This book claims to take a "discovery approach," which mainly involves posing numerous questions for the reader to consider while going through the musical examples. This approach, together with an inadequate index, make this book less usable than it could be. It can be difficult to find specific pieces of information, or to cross reference terms which are casually used in passing in one section of the book, but are only explained in other sections. This book shouldn't be considered a reference book; While teachers might find this useful as a lesson book, I suspect that students might find it to be of limited worth for their professional libraries after they've finished school. So in considering the price of over \$100, TEACHERS, please, if you are going to force students to spend a ridiculously large sum of money on a book, choose something else that will have lasting value for them. I also concur with Theta's review; The material covering the Classical and Romantic eras through the 20th century is desperately thin; Four chapters are dedicated to these eras, compared to 22 chapters for the Renaissance and Baroque periods. It's almost as if the author became bored with his topic by the time he reached these chapters. In this respect the title is quite a bit misleading. Perhaps the book should have started with the 20th century and worked backwards in time.

I am going to preface my remarks by saying I just received the book yesterday and have only spent a few hours with it thus far. I just wanted to address a couple of the negative points mentioned by others, as they had concerned me, and put in my two cents worth as someone who has been actively comparing the available textbooks for a course I am teaching this fall. The main concern I

had were the comments about the "discovery" approach (each chapter starts out with a series of "Questions for Discussion" designed to encourage the reader to discover concepts for himself). The implication made in a couple of reviews is that these questions are not adequately answered in the text, and that this makes the book only as useful as the instructor can make it through his own participation in those discussions. But this is not really the case. The discussion questions in the first section of each chapter are all fully addressed in the "Observations" sections that follow. There is really no "cop out" here; no danger of the student not learning the concept because he was unable to answer the questions for himself. In fact, you could completely skip the discussion questions and go straight to "Observations", and you'd pretty much have a traditional textbook. But I get the sense you really are better off giving the questions some thought, as they are good questions. And thinking about them - even if you can't come up with good answers on your own - should help you focus better on the "Observations" that follow. You have an idea before you start reading what conclusions the author is working toward, and there is a certain satisfaction when those conclusions are eventually reached. The other concern raised in other reviews is that the book focuses primarily on 16th and 18th century styles, with relatively little on 19th or 20th century styles. While this is certainly true, the four chapters on 19th and 20th music are four more chapters than pretty much any other book on counterpoint includes. I certainly wouldn't use this as a text on 20th century counterpoint, but if you find yourself trying to cover the entire history of counterpoint in a single course, then I think this material - cursory as it is - will still be welcome. Basically, as anyone who has found their way to this textbook and these reviews will presumably have figured out, there really aren't many books out there that even attempt to address both 16th and 18th century styles, much less also include any discussion of 17th, 19th or 20th century music. And I find Owen integrates the discussions of the different styles very well. Plus the overall writing style is very natural and readable - a huge improvement over virtually everything else I've been looking at. Unfortunately for me, it's now too late to adopt this text for this year, but I suspect I'll be using it in the future.

"Modal and Tonal Counterpoint" by Harold Owen is a book that all teachers of counterpoint, theory, and composition, should have at their disposal. The book is unique in covering counterpoint from the 16th to the 20th century. I teach at a four-year college, and I often pull the book out during composition lessons to demonstrate a variety of things: species counterpoint, 18th century counterpoint, serial technique and stylistic traits of Stravinsky, Bartók, and Hindemith. I particularly enjoy the way each chapter begins with (often complete) musical examples followed by a discussion of the examples and their relevancy to the chapter topic. I do have to admit a bias -- I studied

composition and counterpoint with Hal at the University of Oregon, so I have a personal connection to the material. Hal is a fantastic teacher, a consummate musician versed in many styles, and a very practical and down to earth person. This book reflects all of those traits, especially his practical approach to teaching counterpoint. I highly recommend this book!

I teach at a small liberal arts college, and I used this book for the first time last year. I had more success with it than with any other counterpoint text I've ever used. The basic plan, which is to show real music, discuss the salient features, and then to draw from them the issues one needs to proceed to writing, is an old and simple one, but sadly, seldom executed well. In this case, though, the examples are wonderful, the discussions clear and insightful, and the exercises well conceived, both for beginners and advanced students. A real plus is that it is the only book I have ever encountered or heard about that discusses counterpoint in the 16th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. I used it as a one-semester text, and was forced to leave some things out. I was pleased, though, for my students to have this material in their libraries for future reference. It would make a fabulous full-year text as well.

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