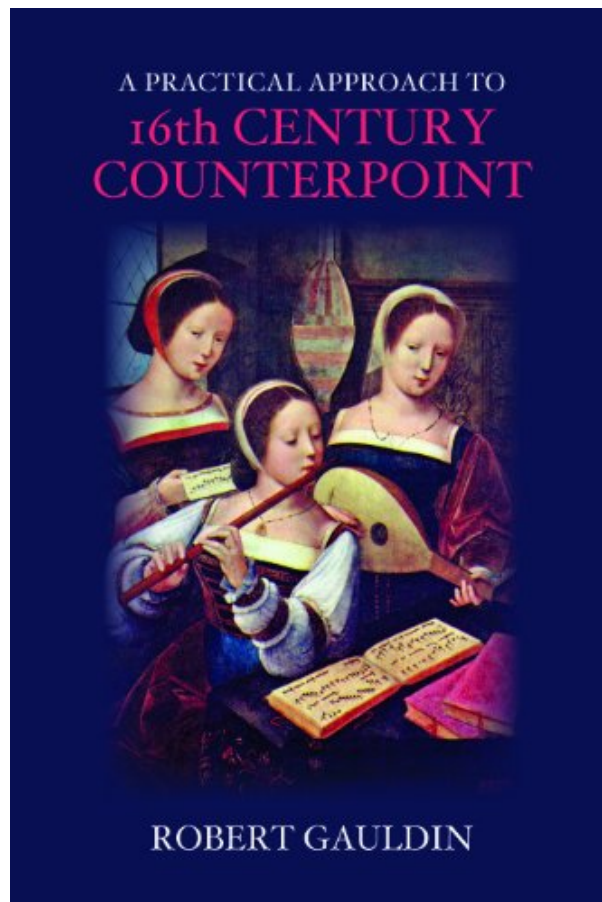


A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO 16TH-CENTURY COUNTERPOINT, REVISED EDITION BY ROBERT GAULDIN



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"This new edition makes a classic text even better. Gauldin's text is exceptional in the way that it immediately gets students writing. I am amazed at how quickly and naturally students with no prior compositional experience get past the fear of composing. Gauldin makes sixteenth-century counterpoint approachable and, most importantly, musical." --Richard Pellegrin, University of Missouri

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Practical work in writing counterpoint! Gauldin emphasizes the acquisition of writing skills in the contrapuntal discipline and the simulation of sixteenth-century sacred polyphonic idioms in this volume. The author follows a didactic method of a “non-species or direct” approach. While no previous contrapuntal training is necessary to absorb this material, some acquaintance with Baroque polyphonic terminology proves helpful. Key features include: musical examples illustrating specific devices are taken from musical literature or composed by the author; demonstrates the possibility of employing a single given pitch series within the contexts of different compositional techniques; includes a collection of complete or excerpted movements drawn from musical literature at the conclusion of each major textual division; emphasizes Palestrina and the Counter-Reformation sacred style; discusses various compositional procedures of the late Renaissance, including paraphrase, cantus firmus, familiar style, parody, polychoral technique, and chromaticism.

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3 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Wonderful approach to learning counterpoint

By Ioannes M.

If you want to learn 16th Century Counterpoint, THIS is the book to use. I've gone through the Fux exercises several times, and while they're solid and fun, this book is a much more approachable way to the practice. Broken down so you're writing things that sound musical almost from the outset instead of going species by species is exactly the way to keep students engaged, whether they're learning on their own or studying in a classroom setting.

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Nice and clear examples

Worth to have and to use as a reference as well as study material

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Vague wordings, disregarding exceptions, yet thorough detail.

By Jaydoggy

We studied this book for a class on early counterpoint. Although the book is thorough, the Gauldin constantly uses phrases like "Almost always," "rarely," and "commonly" or "uncommonly" when trying to create a set of rules for early composition, and mostly uses Palestrina as a model for the rules. The shortcoming here is that all "rules" were empirical and were not actually written until Rameau came about, and by then the rules had changed. As a result, there are plenty of pieces which break these unwritten "rules."

So in doing this, he uses the vague terms like "very rarely" to acknowledge that there are exceptions to these rules, but it leaves the reader wondering where these exceptions occurred, and for that matter when in history they occurred (Composers he quotes range from the 1400s-1600s). There are a great deal of complex Medieval and Renaissance works which musicians today would look at and say, "I don't get it," and that's what I find more interesting than just acknowledging exceptions. There are plenty of pieces from the Medieval and Renaissance that have unexplained dissonances that seem to make no sense according to our conventional rules of harmony.

Despite these faults though, the book is very detailed, and does definitely explain the set-in-stone rules to the era, explaining different forms and the way counterpoint is composed. Further: it gives excellent historical background on types of pieces and their function. I would recommend this book, just remember that there are exceptions to all these rules, and if you can get passed a sentence like "Although three-voice texture is by no means the norm of the period, numerous examples may be encountered."(76), you'll be okay.

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