



## COUNTERPOINT 1: TWO PART WRITING

Counterpoint is the art of combining two or more melodic lines in a musical satisfying way. The study of Counterpoint is an essential knowledge for student composers who want to strengthen their compositional skills, and it is a valuable part of their training. Even though the style of student's compositions may be far from earlier styles, the technical control gained in working with linear relationships is also essential for contemporary styles such as Rock, Pop, Songwriting, Film Music, Jazz and Commercial Music. The late Robert Russel Bennet, considered the top arranger for Broadway shows, once commented that Counterpoint is the indispensable element in arranging: if it's missing the audience's enjoyment of music will be lessened, even though they will not identify the missing feature.

Counterpoint 1 explores the mechanics of basic two voice contrapuntal technique, focusing on how melodies interact with one another. The course begins with a review of Tonal Harmony 1 concepts: voice leading, and chorale writing. Since Counterpoint concerns the combination of different melodic lines, the course first explores the qualities of a single good melodic line. Then you will learn about different ratios, combine two good melodies together, write short two-voice pieces, study motivic manipulations, different types of Canons, and imitative and invertible counterpoint. This course uses musical examples from the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th century periods

The goal of the course is to give you a broad overview of counterpoint and improve your compositional skills, regardless of stylistic preference.

At the end of each week, you will be asked to write a short piece of music and analyze scores.

### Requirements:

- **Notation Software:** MuseScore, Finale, Dorico or Sibelius.
- **Textbook:** *Counterpoint* by Kent Kennan



## **COURSE PROGRAM**

Lesson 1.- Introduction to Counterpoint and Review of Tonal Harmony Concepts

Lesson 2.- What is Counterpoint. The Single Melodic Line

Lesson 3.- Principles of Two Voice Counterpoint

Lesson 4.- Ratios, Phrases and Form

Lesson 5.- Non-Chord Tones

Lesson 6.- Motivic Manipulation. Middle Term Project

Lesson 7.- Writing Two Voice Pieces in Major and Minor

Lesson 8.- Simple Canon at the Octave

Lesson 9.- Advanced Harmonic Techniques: Canon by Inversion. Canon at other intervals. Perpetual Canon, Double Canon, Enigma Canon and Spiral Canon

Lesson 10.- Invertible Counterpoint

Lesson 11.- Advanced Motivic Manipulation. Riddle Canons. More elements of Form. Binary Form.

Lesson 12.- Imitative Counterpoint. Final Project