A Treatise of Musik, Containing Principles of Composition
(First published as Livre troisième, Principes de Composition, Paris 1722)
Jean-Philippe Rameau (1685–1764)
Publication: London, John Walsh, 1752
MT50.A2 R173 1752

The Source: This English translation is the third book of a larger work by Jean-Philippe Rameau entitled the Treaty of Harmony or Traité de l'harmonie. The first edition was originally published in 1722 in French. Later, an English translation was published in London in 1752. This book’s content ranges from the basics of Baroque theory to more complex part writing and compositional techniques of the time.

Significance: Rameau's techniques laid the foundation for many other theoreticians that came after him. His descriptions of fundamental bass were ground-breaking. It is important to study the evolutions of musical theory to find context for what we study today. Without being able to understand the basics of part-writing or chordal motion, there is no sense in trying to write music. Rameau’s work was “cutting edge” for the eighteenth century and was studied by important composers who followed, such as Mozart and Beethoven. His thoughts and ideas came from his predecessors but also his own studies. This book is especially useful for those researching Baroque theory or composing music classical music.

Provenance: The front cover of this book has an inscription that reads Sackville Gwynne Esq. Research shows that he may have been an eighteenth century squire of Glanbran, United Kingdom. He seems to have had some importance as a relative of William III. There is no definitive evidence that this individual was in fact the man who owned the volume, though he lived during the time that this English translation appeared.


Quote: “Musick without movement loses all its grace; therefore if is not enough to apply to the composition of chords only, but you must also endeavor to give to each part a certain movement.” (112)

Bibliography

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/490604/Jean-Philippe-Rameau


Rameau, Jean-Philippe. *A Treatise of Musick : Containing the Principles of Composition, Wherein the Several Parts Thereof Are Fully Explained, and Made Useful Both to the Professors and Students of That Science / by Mr. Rameau. Tr. into English from the Original in the French Language.* London: R. Brown, 1752.

Shannon Rookey, Adrian Barrera Ramos, Lydia Hynson
Colorado State University
Methods of Music Research
Fall 2014
A Treatise of Musick, containing the Principles of Composition.

Wherein the several Parts thereof are fully explained, and made useful both to the Professors and Students of that Science.

By Mr. Rameau, Principal Composer to his Most Christian Majesty, and to the Opera at Paris.

Translated into English from the Original in the French Language.

Entered at Stationer's-Hall, and Published according to the Act of Parliament.

London:
Printed by Robert Brown, For the Proprietor,
And Sold by John Walsh, in Catherine-Street in the Strand, and all the other Musick Shops in Town.

MDCCLII.
# Table of the Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAP. I</td>
<td>Introduction to Practical Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAP. II</td>
<td>Of the fundamental Basi</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAP. III</td>
<td>Of the perfect Chord, by which begins Composition in four Parts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAP. IV</td>
<td>Of the Succession or Sequence of Chords</td>
<td>ib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAP. V</td>
<td>Of some Rules which must be observed</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of Intervals inverted.

Notes that create the Octave, are in the Main but one, and
or Bounds to all the Intervals, since all the Notes in
included in an Octave.

Joining the two C’s, by which the Gamut begins and ends,
the same Note, it may easily be apprehended that, what-
soever Intervals; but by observing, that the first C is below
and the Second is above, there seems to be a Difference in Appearance is proper to be explained.

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccccc}
C & D & E & F & G & A & B & C & D
\end{array}
\]

The Gamut appears, that

\[\text{to the Second C, that same D; }\]

Third to the first

\[\text{to the second C makes the Sixth }\]

\[\text{at F makes the Fourth }\]

\[\text{at the second C makes the }\]

\[\text{also that G make the Fifth }\]

\[\text{Fourth to the Second; }\]

so that

\[\text{covered, that one Interval arises }\]

\[\text{we take any other for the first Degree, by placing }\]

\[\text{at the End of the Gamut, and following the }\]

\[\text{will always find the same Thing, that is to say, that the }\]