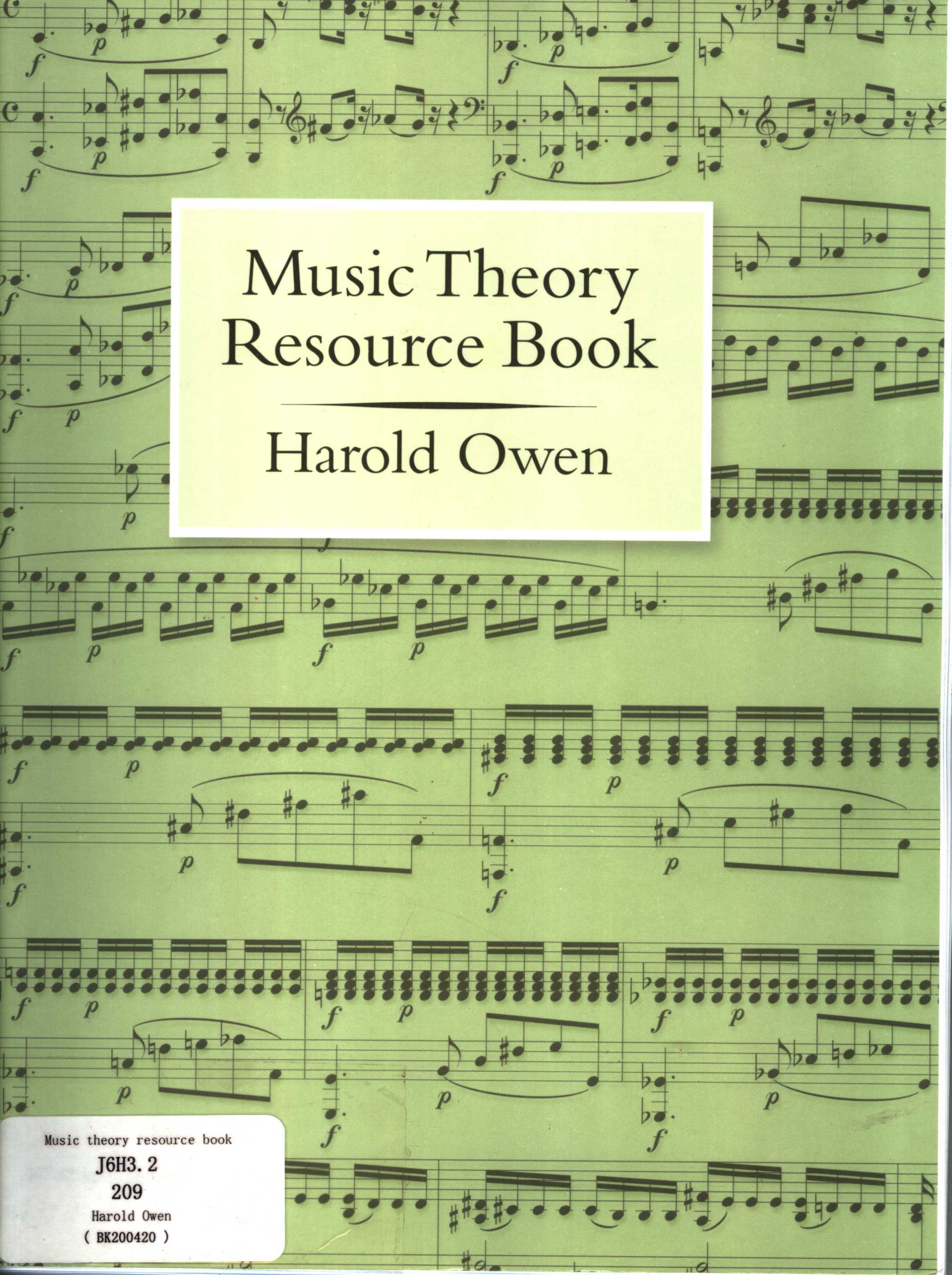

Music Theory Resource Book

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Preface

This book is offered as a resource of musical examples, information, and exercises for first- and second-year college music theory courses and for graduate courses in theory review. The musical examples at the beginning of each chapter are for the most part complete compositions. They can serve as a basic anthology and as the focus for the discussion questions that follow them. The information is given succinctly in outline form, which can serve as a point of departure for the instructor's own style of explanation and demonstration. The outline format will be useful to the students for reference and review. The exercises at the end of each chapter offer a variety of tasks ranging in difficulty from easier ones, designed for all students, to others marked with an asterisk, intended for students with more extensive background, higher skills, and talent. Some are analytical, while others offer problems in scoring, arranging, or simple composition.

Several features not normally found in basic theory texts are a summary of basic acoustics, standard notation practices, music in two and three parts (including the basic principles of counterpoint), jazz harmony, techniques borrowed from musics of non-Western cultures, and two chapters on techniques developed in the twentieth century (Chapter 19 deals with music from 1900–1950; Chapter 20 deals with music since 1950). The musical examples represent a wide variety of periods and genres, including, for example, a mass movement by Josquin des Prez, a Russian folk tune, the lead sheet of a popular song, a humorous choral piece by William Billings, a North Indian raga, variations by Beethoven and Brahms, a chromatic motet by Lassus, and an organ work from the 1980s by Messiaen. Bach, Schumann, Chopin, Mozart, Franck, Debussy, Bartók, Hindemith, Dallapiccola, Stravinsky, Crumb, and Pärt also are represented, as well as several examples I composed especially for this book.

While *Music Theory Resource Book* is not intended as a primary resource in the area of music history, it discusses styles of various periods and examines types of music from all major periods, jazz and folk music, and musics of non-Western cultures. The Style Profiles in Appendix A can provide students with a historical perspective of styles in terms of the musical dimensions of pulse, rhythm and meter, melody, harmony, tonality, genres and structures, texture, and color. For those interested in figured bass realization, Appendix B gives details on this subject using as an example a continuo realization of the opening of the Trio Sonata from *The Musical Offering*, done by a student of Bach.

Analysis is generally limited to the basic building blocks of "musical grammar," but also extends to structural units (motive, subphrase, phrase, period, and small forms). A summary of the basic configuration of larger forms is included. Analytical techniques such as those developed by Schenker, LaRue, and Forte are not discussed, since students will meet them in courses on form and analysis.

Suggestions for the Student

Before a chapter is to be taken up by the class, study each of the examples carefully. Play them on the piano or sing the various parts if you can. See how many of the discussion questions you can answer. Then study the *Definitions, Principles, and Observations* given, and jot down items you wish to have explained more fully in class. Take an active part in the class discussions, and don't be afraid to ask questions. Take part in the class performances of the examples and exercises. Before you hand in your assigned work, make sure you have checked it carefully for clear and proper notation (or good English when asked for prose responses).

Suggestions for the Instructor

Whenever possible, have the class perform, or play recordings of the examples at the beginning of each chapter. Be prepared with additional examples. Use the discussion questions to focus the students on the principles exemplified in the music. The information in the *Definitions, Principles, and Observations* sections have been kept concise, inviting you to explain, amplify, and demonstrate in your own way. Make careful and appropriate assignment of exercises. You may wish to choose from those given. Those marked with an asterisk are for those students ready for special challenges. You may wish to invite students to do them for extra credit. I have found that students appreciate a touch of humor from time to time, and you will find it in several of the exercises.

If you are using this book as a secondary text, you will find the musical examples, discussion questions, and exercises useful. The text information can be used for review and summary. Since the chapters are relatively self-contained, you can select materials in whatever order works best with your primary text and your own preferences.

If you are using this book for a graduate theory review course, a comprehensive diagnostic test given at the beginning of the course will indicate the students' strengths and weaknesses. Some chapters can be covered quickly, and some will need in-depth study. Assignments can be a sampling of the easier and the more challenging exercises. Your students are likely to have very diverse skills and knowledge; you may wish to assign different exercises to different students. A lively discussion among the students, each contributing his or her own knowledge and experience, can be much more valuable than pure lecture.

Contents

PART TWO

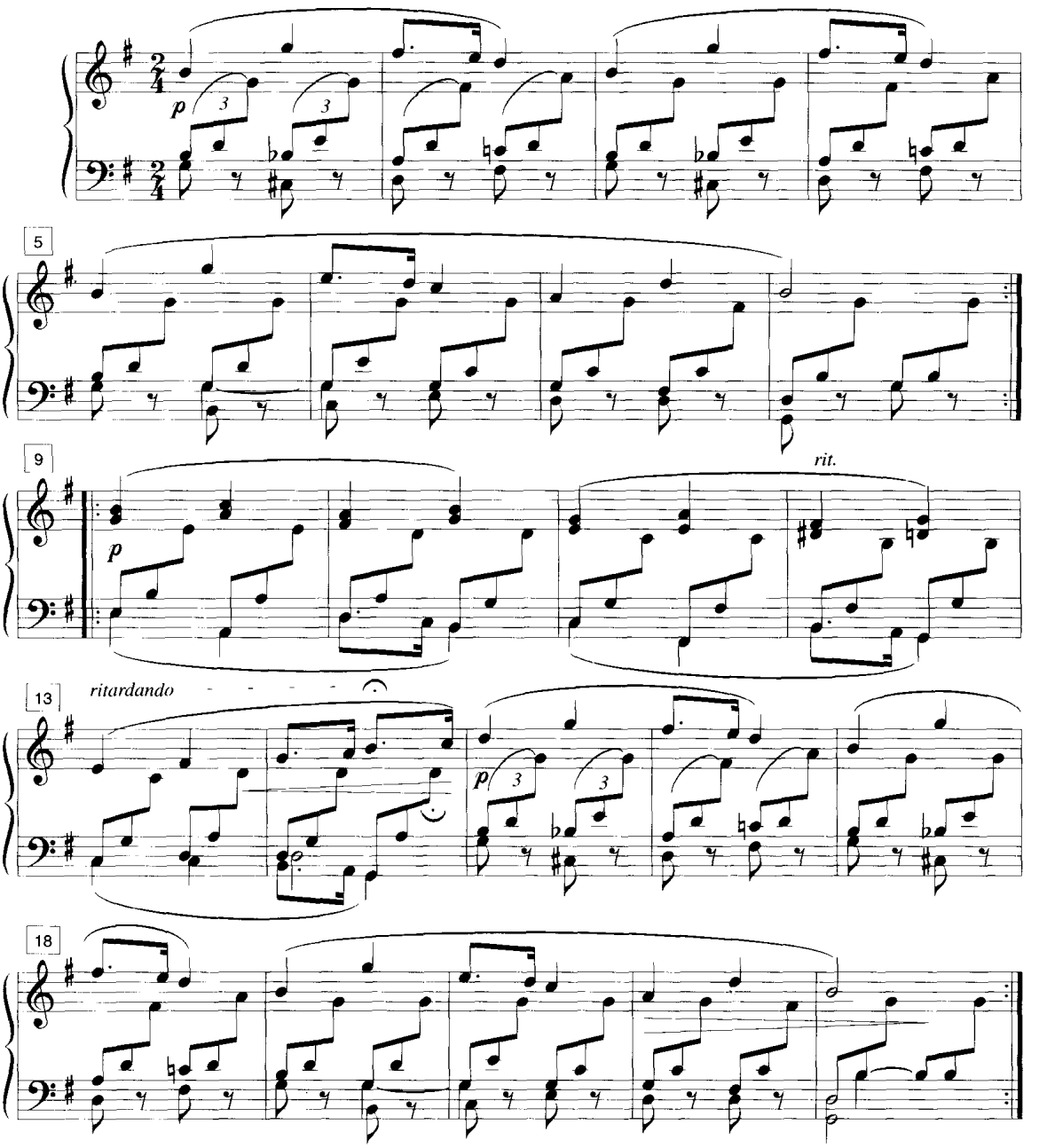
Part One

CHAPTER 1

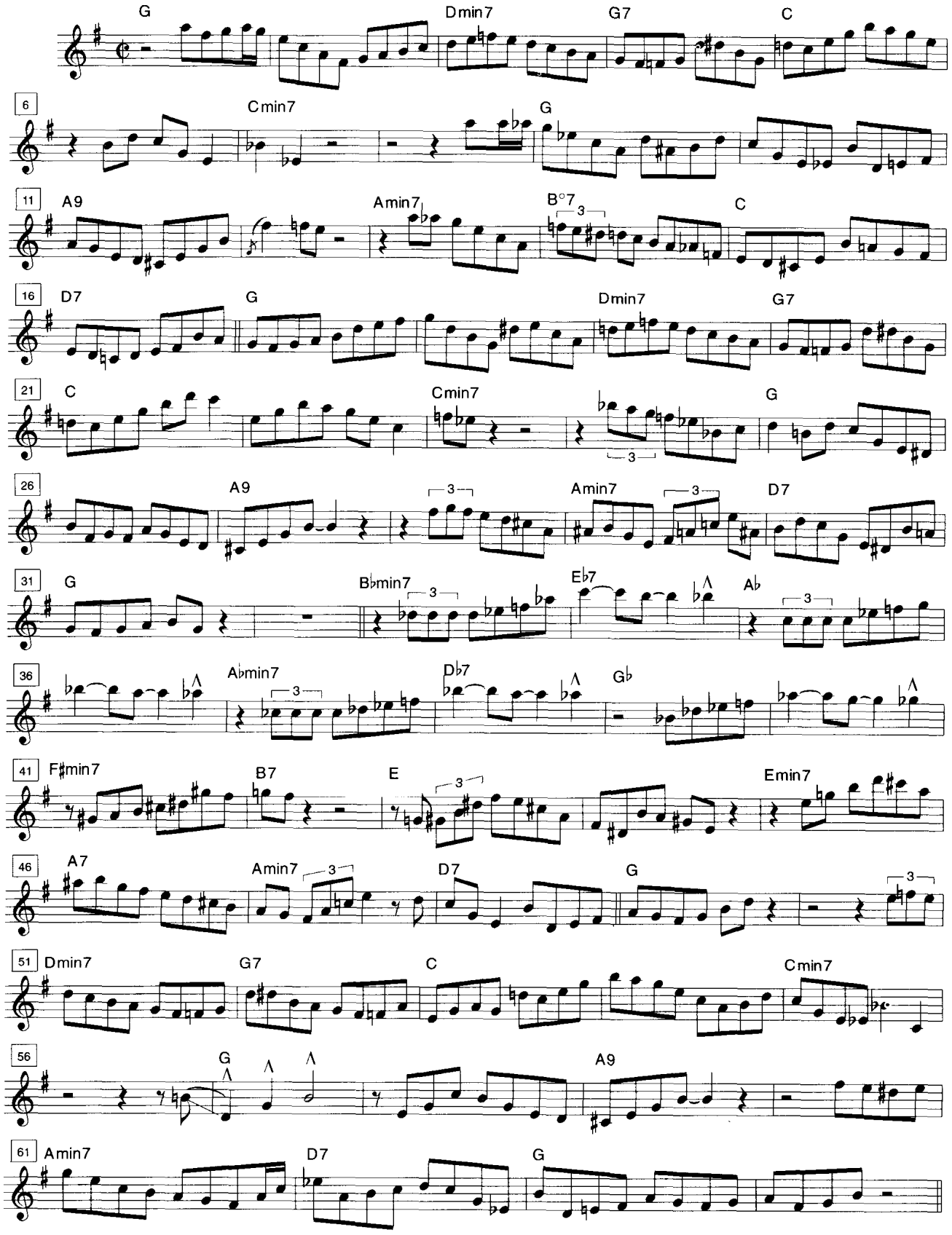
THE NATURE OF MUSIC

Study these scores as you consider the questions that follow them.

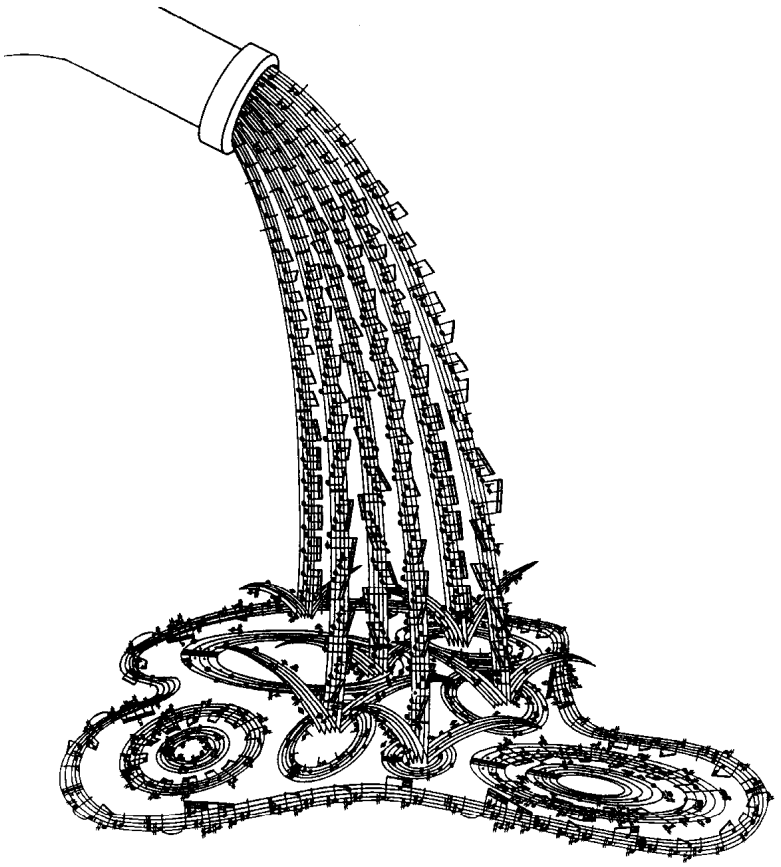
Example 1-1 Von fremden Ländern und Menschen from *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15 by Robert Schumann (1810–1856).



Example 1-2 Jazz solo on "Cherokee" by Charlie Parker (1920–1955), transcribed by Carl Woideck. (Used by permission of Carl Woideck.)



Example 1-3 *"to the last drop"* from *visible musics* by William Hellerman (b. 1939) (© 1973 by William Hellermann—All rights reserved. Parts available through American Composers Alliance, 170 W. 74th St., NY, NY 10023. *"to the last drop"* for six mallet instruments by William Hellermann. This piece is one of a series of works with the group title, *Eye Scores*. First performed at the Kitchen performance space in New York City, 1978, by six vibraphones positioned around the perimeter of the space. A realization of the score can include taped sounds of water and visuals relating to water.)



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is music? How would you describe it to an English-speaking alien?
2. Name as many kinds of music as you can. What kinds are written down and what kinds are not?
3. What kinds of music are made up on the spot?
4. What is an arrangement?
5. What is music made of—what are its elements or dimensions?
6. What is meant by *musical style?*
7. What is meant by *musical texture?*
8. How do we know what music was like before our own century?
9. Most music we know requires three types of musicians: a composer, one or more performers, and an audience. Can you think of music that alters this formula?