

Lawrence Berk papers on the Schillinger System BCA.007

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Berklee College Archives
2013/07/25
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Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical Note</u>	4
<u>Scope & contents</u>	4
<u>Arrangement</u>	5
<u>Administrative Information</u>	6
<u>Related Materials</u>	6
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	7
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	8
<u>Theories of rhythm, harmonization of melody, counterpoint, general harmony, instrumental forms of harmony</u>	8
<u>Theory of counterpoint</u>	9
<u>Special theory of harmony</u>	10
<u>Theory of melody & pitch scales</u>	10
<u>General theory of harmony</u>	11
<u>Pedal point, melodization, harmonization</u>	11
<u>Special theory of harmony</u>	12
<u>Special theory of harmony</u>	12
<u>Permutations</u>	12
<u>Pitch scales & geometrical inversions</u>	13
<u>An introductory course in arranging</u>	13

Summary Information

Repository	Berklee College Archives
Creator	Berk, Lawrence
Creator	Schillinger, Joseph, 1895-1943
Title	Lawrence Berk papers on the Schillinger System
Date	circa 1930s
Extent	1.0 Cubic feet : 1 records carton.
Language	English

Preferred citation

[Identification of item], in the Lawrence Berk papers on the Schillinger System, BCA-007. College Archives, Stan Getz Library, Berklee College of Music.

Biographical Note

Lawrence Berk (1908-1995) grew up in Boston's West End and was the founder and first president of Berklee College of Music, a position he held from 1945-1979. Berk graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in architectural engineering in 1932. He was a pianist, composer, arranger and educator.

Berk was particularly influenced by Russian-born mathematician, music theorist, composer, and educator Joseph Schillinger (1895-1943), who developed a unique mathematical system of music composition and analysis known as the Schillinger System of Musical Composition (SSOMC). The SSOMC was utilized by various well-known popular musicians, including George Gershwin, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, and others (Hazell, Ed, and Lee Eliot Berk, *Berklee: the First Fifty Years*. Boston, Berklee Publication, 1995. Print. p. 4).

Lawrence Berk worked as a composer and arranger for CBS and NBC radio in New York in the 1930s, during which time he studied with Schillinger. Berk went on to become one of a dozen instructors sometimes referred to as the "12 disciples" who were authorized to teach the Schillinger System of Musical Composition. In 1945, Berk purchased a three-story building at 284 Newbury Street and established his own music school based on these methods. Schillinger House soon became widely renown as an innovative school for jazz and contemporary music and was eventually renamed Berklee College of Music, as it is known today (Hazell, Ed, and Lee Eliot Berk, *Berklee: the First Fifty years*. Boston, Berklee Publication, 1995. Print. pp.10-11).

Scope & contents

This collection consists of 11 binders comprised of notes, formulas and other figures compiled and created by Lawrence Berk, founder of Berklee College of Music. Although materials are undated, it is assumed that these materials were produced in the 1930s as a result of Berk's private study with Joseph Schillinger, creator of the Schillinger System of Musical Composition (SSOMC). Therefore, these papers presumably contain the foundation of Berklee's early curriculum.

The materials in this collection include handwritten notes by both Berk and Schillinger, and lessons on various aspects of the Schillinger system: theories of harmony, rhythm, melody, counterpoint, pitch scales, permutations, and geometrical inversions. The final binder also contains an introductory course in arranging, presumed to have been authored by Lawrence Berk and possibly others.

Schillinger's methods were later compiled and published posthumously as the Schillinger System of Musical Composition, consisting of 12 books presented over 2 volumes. With the assistance of

independent Schillinger scholar Phil DiTullio, the series-level notes in this collection relate Berk and Schillinger's notes to the corresponding book in the published version.

Arrangement

This collection consists of 11 series; with subseries assigned to Series I & IV as follows:

* Series I: Theories of rhythm, harmonization of melody, counterpoint, general harmony, instrumental forms of harmony

- Subseries 1: Theory of rhythm
- Subseries 2: Harmonization of melody
- Subseries 3: Correlation of melodies (counterpoint)
- Subseries 4: General theory of harmony
- Subseries 5: Elements of melodic figuration
- Subseries 6: Instrumental forms of harmony

* Series II: Theory of counterpoint

* Series III: Special theory of harmony

* Series IV: Theory of melody & pitch scales

- Subseries 1: Theory of melody (primary)
- Subseries 2: Pitch scales

* Series V: General theory of harmony

* Series VI: Pedal point, melodization, harmonization

* Series VII: Special theory of harmony

* Series VIII: Special theory of harmony

* Series IX: Permutations

* Series X: Pitch scales & geometrical inversions

* Series XI: An introductory course in arranging

The arrangement of this collection was based on the original order received, with series assigned to each of the 11 binders originally housing the papers. Subseries were assigned in cases where different books

(in what later became the Schillinger System of Musical Composition) appeared to have been housed together.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Berklee College Archives 2013/07/25

Access

This non-circulating collection is open for research use by appointment on site at the college archives (Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with evening hours available upon request). Advance notice is required to retrieve archival items because these materials are stored offsite. Use of audiovisual materials may require the production of listening or viewing copies. To schedule an appointment or request further information, please email (archives@berklee.edu) or call (617-747-8001) the college archivist. These papers have also been scanned and are available online here: <http://library.berklee.edu/archives/virtualDisplay-schillingerHouse>.

Processing Note

These materials were processed with interpretive and descriptive assistance from Phil DiTullio of the Schillinger Society (<http://www.schillingersociety.com/>), who provided the information included in series-level scope and content notes.

Related Materials

Related Materials

Related materials may be found in BCA-006 (Jerome Gross and Bert Henry papers on the Schillinger System), which consists of correspondence coursework completed by Dr. Gross under Schillinger, as well as notes and other memorabilia created and compiled by Bert Henry, another authorized teacher of the Schillinger System of Musical Composition who briefly operated the Schillinger Center of Cleveland.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Schillinger System of Musical Composition

Collection Inventory

Series I: Theories of rhythm, harmonization of melody, counterpoint, general harmony, instrumental forms of harmony : 13 folders.

Scope and Contents

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Books I (Theory of Rhythm), VI (The Correlation of Harmony and Melody), VII (Theory of Counterpoint), IX (General Theory of Harmony), and VIII (Instrumental Forms). The handwriting in this series appears to be Joseph Schillinger's.

Subseries 1: Theory of rhythm

Scope and Contents

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book I (Theory of Rhythm). Topics include: periodicity, rhythmic resultants; variations (2, 3, 4 elements); permutations of higher orders; square of binomial, square of trinomial; generalization of the square, cube of trinomials; rhythm of variable velocities.

Subseries 2: Harmonization of melody

Scope and Contents

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book VI (The Correlation of Harmony and Melody), Chapter 3 (Harmonization of Melody).

Correlation of melodies (counterpoint)

Subseries 3: Correlation of melodies (counterpoint)

Scope and Contents

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book VII (Theory of Counterpoint).

Subseries 4: General theory of harmony

Scope and Contents

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book IX (General Theory of Harmony). Topics include: two, three, and four-part harmony.

Subseries 5: Elements of melodic figuration

Scope and Contents

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book IX (General Theory of Harmony) on the elements of melodic figuration.

Subseries 6: Instrumental forms of harmony

Scope and Contents

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book VIII (Instrumental Forms).

Series II: Theory of counterpoint : 9 folders.

Special theory of harmony

Scope and Contents

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book VII (Theory of Counterpoint). Topics include: counterpoint, density & tension, resolution of dissonances; correlation of melodies (counterpoint); imitation (canon); fugue; modulations in two-part counterpoint; two-part counterpoint fugue & couplings; continuity of couplings. The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's, with the exception of notes on the continuity of coupling.

Series III: Special theory of harmony : 8 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book V (Special Theory of Harmony). Topic include: seventh chords, exchange of common tones, diatonic zero cycle; resolution, preparation, application, symmetric system; hybrid 5 part harmony, symmetric system, S(9) resolution & preparation; forms of transformation, symmetric, forms of S(9); general system, S(11) diatonic harmony & symmetric system, chromatic system; modulation technique; the scale of key signatures; chromatic harmony. The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's.

Series IV: Theory of melody & pitch scales : 10 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Books IV (Theory of Melody) and II (Theory of Pitch-Scales). The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's.

Subseries 1: Theory of melody (primary)**Scope and Contents**

Pitch scales

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book IV (Theory of Melody). Topics in this subseries include: primary & secondary axes; time ratios of the secondary axes; pitch-ratios of the secondary axes; correlation of “P” and “T” ratios of the secondary axes; climax and resistance; superimposition of the time-rhythm on the secondary axes; superimposition of pitch-scale on the secondary axes; forms of trajectorial motion thru secondary axes; composition of continuity.

Subseries 2: Pitch scales**Scope and Contents**

The materials in this subseries appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book II (Theory of Pitch-Scales). Topics in this subseries include: pitch scales; three-unit scales (two intervals); four-unit scales.

Series V: General theory of harmony : 5 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book IX (General Theory of Harmony). Topics include: general theory of harmony; three-part harmony; four-part harmony. The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's.

Series VI: Pedal point, melodization, harmonization : 8 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Books VI (The Correlation of Harmony) and VIII (Instrumental Forms). Topics include: pedal point in symmetric system; melodic figuration; melodization of harmony (diatonic); instrumental forms of

Special theory of harmony

harmony; symmetric melodization; chromatic melodization; harmonization of melody (D-M) (D-H). The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's.

Series VII: Special theory of harmony : 7 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book V (Special Theory of Harmony). Topics include: harmony (diatonic system); symmetric system progressions and structures; symmetric zero cycle; irregular doublings, 6th chords, doublings in S(6); G6 in symmetric harmony; G 6/4 in symmetric harmony; chromatic system. The handwriting in this series appears to be both Joseph Schillinger and Lawrence Berk's.

Series VIII: Special theory of harmony : 7 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book V (Special Theory of Harmony). Topics include: harmony (diatonic system); symmetric zero cycle (Co); irregular doublings; sixth chords, passing chords, G 6/4, continuity; G6 in symmetric harmony; G 6/4 in symmetric harmony. The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's.

Series IX: Permutations : 10 folders.**Scope and Contents**

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Book I (Theory of Rhythm). Topics include: variations (2 elements, 3 elements, 4 elements); permutations of the higher orders; simultaneity and continuity (homogeneous); series of factorial and fractional continuity, square of a binomial; square of a trinomial; generalization of the square; cube of a binomial, cube of

Pitch scales & geometrical inversions

a trinomial; generalization of all powers, rhythm of variable velocities. The handwriting in this series appears to be Lawrence Berk's.

Series X: Pitch scales & geometrical inversions : 10 folders.

Scope and Contents

These materials appear to be similar to those of Schillinger System of Musical Composition Books II (Theory of Pitch-Scales), I (Theory of Rhythm), and III (Variations of Music by Means of Geometrical Projection). Topics include: pitch scales, table of resultants with and without fractioning; theory of melody; time ratios of the secondary axes; pitch-ratios of the secondary axes; modal transposition, modulations; the second group of scales; composition of continuity; symmetric systems of musical pitch, the third group; symmetric systems of musical pitch, the fourth group; geometrical inversions. composition of harmonic continuity thru geometrical inversions, geometrical expansions. The handwriting in this series appears to be Joseph Schillinger's.

Series XI: An introductory course in arranging : 2 folders.

Scope and Contents

This appears to be an introductory course in arranging written by Lawrence Berk and possibly James McInerney and/or Lyle Dowling.