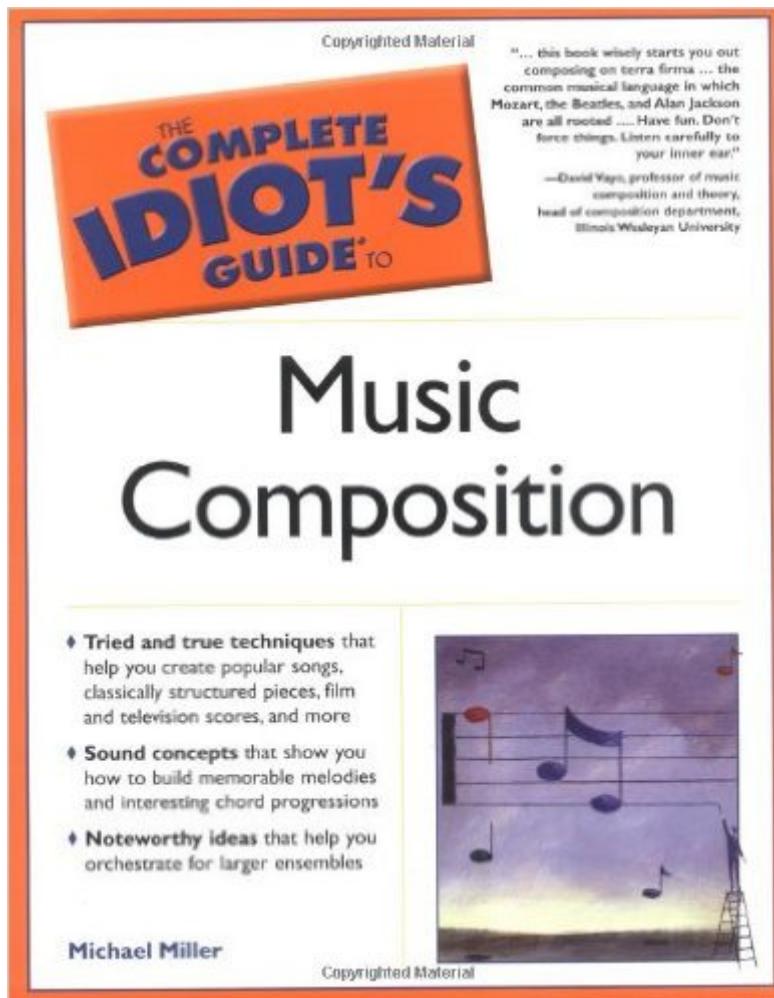


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# The Complete Idiot's Guide To Music Composition (Idiot's Guides)



## Synopsis

Write the songs that make the whole world sing. A step-by-step guide to writing music, this book shows musicians how to compose simple chord progressions and melodies, and leads them through more advanced compositional techniques and musical forms. Designed for composers of all types of music, it includes instruction on composing stand-alone melodies, using different scales and modes, themes and variations, orchestration, and composing for film, theater, and videogames. -Perfect complement to *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Music Theory* and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Songwriting* -Includes a comprehensive glossary of musical terms, as well as an appendix of various computer-based composition tools -Easy-to-use oversize trim

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Just like this author's previous book, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Music Theory", information is presented in a very readable way without losing necessary details. The author presents many musical examples and each chapter has exercises with some solutions included in the back of the book. This book is designed to be read from beginning to end, and the exercises are very instructive in that by doing them you WILL learn how to compose music based on formal techniques. This book consists of 18 chapters in 5 parts, with each part showcasing a different aspect of composition. Since does not show a table of contents for this book at the time I am writing this, I shall summarize for the purpose of completeness:Part 1 is entitled "Before You Start," and it describes different types

of composition, and discusses the tools needed to start composing music. Part 2 is entitled "Harmonic Composition," and discusses the art of composing music, chords-first. Also described is the creation of a harmonious chord progression, using both standard and extended chords, and using chord substitution to create more sophisticated compositions. Part 3 is labeled "Melodic Composition," and introduces melody creation techniques, including scales and modes, structural tones, embellishments, rhythm, syncopation, melodic contour, flow, tension and release. Also discussed is fitting chords to a melody and reharmonizing existing chord progressions. Part 4 is entitled "Developing the Composition," and gives instruction on transforming a composition from something basic to a substantial work. Short melodies are transformed into a full musical piece. The use of repetition, variation, and creating multiple-voice compositions is included.

This is a well-written introduction to traditional composition. The examples are plentiful and nicely illustrate the concepts being discussed and the organization of the book has been carefully thought through. I only have a few complaints/reservations about recommending the book: First, the book is very much focused on traditional composition techniques. That's the author's intention, and that's great for most people. However, if you're looking for a book that will help you understand the structure of modern (non-pop) music, there are probably better resources. (That said, if you have \*no\* background in composition, I think it is wise to read this book before trying to do unconventional things... as in, understand the rules before you break them). The author has little interest in electronica and non-diatonic compositions, so if you're looking to compose NIN- or Slayer-like stuff, then you won't be using many of the tools described in this book (though you will use some of them). There \*is\* a chapter on non-diatonic/chromatic composition, but the author treats these techniques primarily as a means of "spicing up" a traditional composition, rather than a separate approach to composition all together. Second, the author's examples and approach assume that the reader has/plays the piano or keys. I am a guitarist, and while I understand that illustrating harmony/melody combinations or counterpoint, etc. is most easily done with the piano (assuming a single musician), it would be nice if the examples were chosen to be a little more generalizable. I also think one would have a very difficult time trying to work the examples in this book with any instrument that cannot play chords.

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