Rudiments of Regular and Seven, Shaped Note Music

The rise of the seven shape note systems:

By the middle of the 19th century, the "fa, so, la" system of four syllables had acquired a major rival, namely the seven-syllable "do, re, mi" system. Thus, music compilers began to add three more shapes to their books to match the extra syllables. Numerous seven-shape notations were devised. Jesse B. Aikin was the first to produce a book with a seven-shape note system, and he vigorously defended his "invention" and his patent. The system used in Aikin's 1846 *Christian Minstrel* eventually became the standard. This owes much to the influential Ruebush & Kieffer Publishing Company adopting Aikin's system around 1876. Two books that have remained in continuous (though limited) use, William Walker's *Christian Harmony* and M. L. Swan's *New Harp of Columbia*, are still available. These books use seven-shape systems devised by Walker and Swan, respectively.

Beginning with Jesse B. Aikin's *Christian Minstrel* (1846), many tune-books were printed in seven shapes, representing the seven syllables of the *do re mi* system. Aikins seven-shape notation achieved wide use in the southern United States, where it was adopted in some denominational hymnals. After the American Civil War, singing schools and shape notes became increasingly identified with the South, while declining in popularity in other regions. Many teachers switched from the four-shape system to a seven-shape system to keep pace with new teaching methods. Leading teachers and publishers established "music normal schools" for the training of teachers. Southern firms such as Ruebush & Kieffer and A.J. Showalter began to publish small collections of music every year or two. These upright songbooks gradually began to supplant the large oblong tune-books and their fixed repertoire. After 1900, mass-market publishers such as James D. Vaughan, V.O. Stamps, and J.R. ("Pap") Baxter printed one or more books a year of music that was largely used at singing conventions and, consequently, is known today as convention gospel music. (*See below* Current practice.) These songs, almost always in major keys and intended to be accompanied by the piano, imitated the popular songs and dance tunes of the Victorian era.

1 . For all the different teaching sections in this book, be sure to use the preferred music book or hymnal that the students are familiar with and mark the page numbers in your teaching manual so you can point out the markings that are being taught. Then the students can be aware and that may help bring the information to life for the student.

2 . When possible lead the students in these difficult sections like ties, triplets, holds etc.

3 . Help them to understand rhythm by using a metronome or by counting out time showing them that if they follow the conductor they will stay in time and on beat.

Rudiments of Music

Continued 1

The seven shaped note system is as follows: Though the shape notes are described here, the first part of the lesson uses regular notes to teach you to be able to read both. Though most gospel music books usually use shaped notes and some hymnals but most hymnals have regular notes so don't be confused with the shape of the notes for everything else is the same. With the shaped note system the notes move with the key the music is written in, with regular notes they stay the same on the staff.

Each note in the scale has its own tonality or feel and shape. Scale tonality can be summarized as follows.

do = strong or restful

re = rousing, hopeful, restless

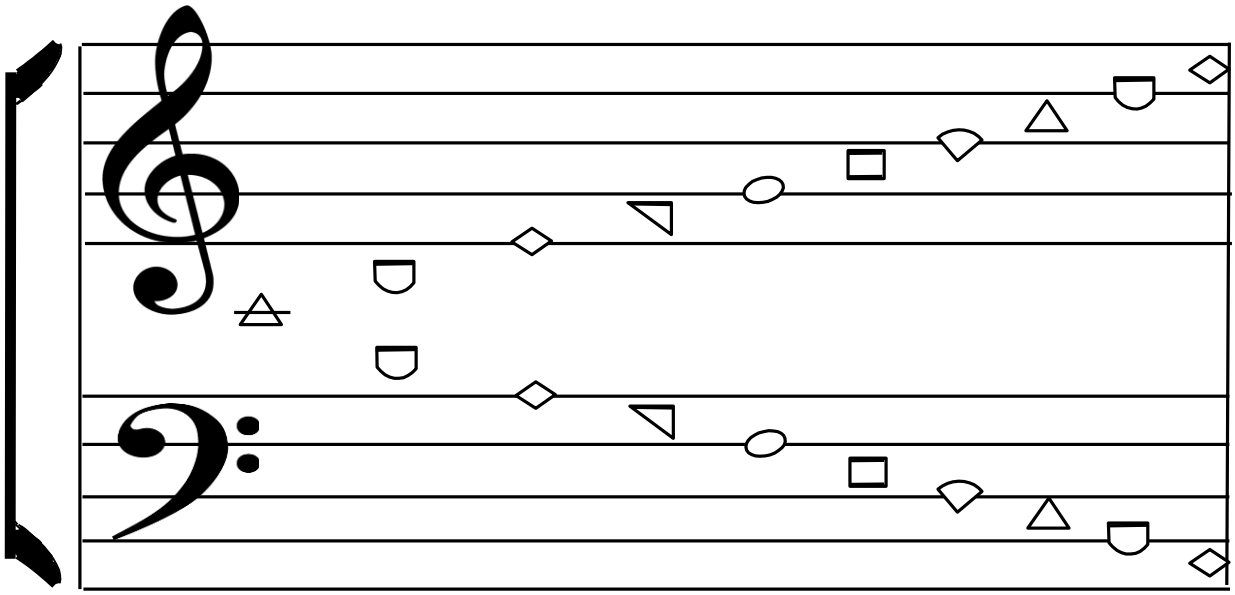
mi = calm, gentle, mild

fa = awe inspiring, devotional, desolate or bold

so = bright, joyous, brilliant

la = sad, mournful, foreboding

ti = restless, piercing, unsettled



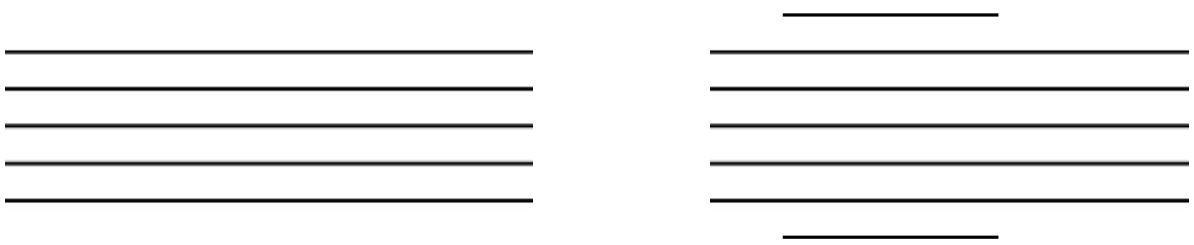
Rudiments of Music

Continued 2

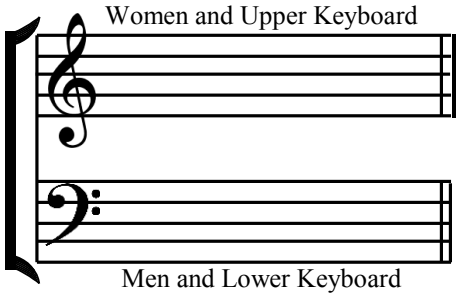
1 . A note is a character used to represent a sound in music, and also by its construction, to indicate the duration of that sound. There are, in number, seven notes which receive their names from the first seven letters of the alphabet:

A B C D E F G

2 . The staff consists of five parallel lines and four spaces, which are counted upward from the lowest, and upon which the notes are placed to fix the pitch of sounds they represent. Each line and space is named a degree. Lines may be added above or below the regular staff to add higher or lower tones. These lines are called ledger lines and the only limit as to how many can be used would be the limit of the instrument being used.

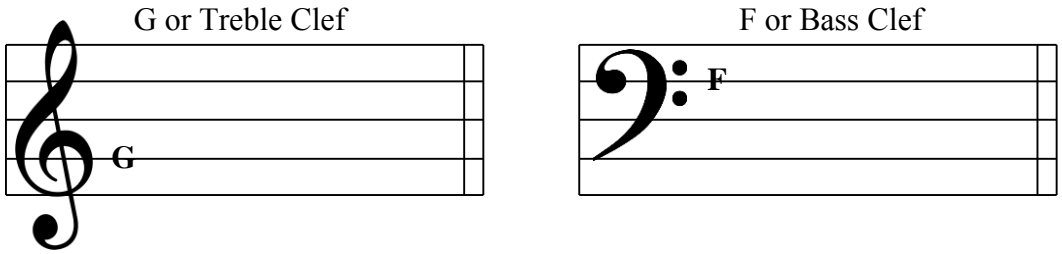


3 . In the music we have under consideration two staves (plural for staff is staves) are used, joined by a bracket or brace. As a general rule, the upper staff is used for female voices and the lower for male voices. The top staff is usually played with the right hand and the lower staff with the left hand referencing middle C as being the divider on the piano keyboard.

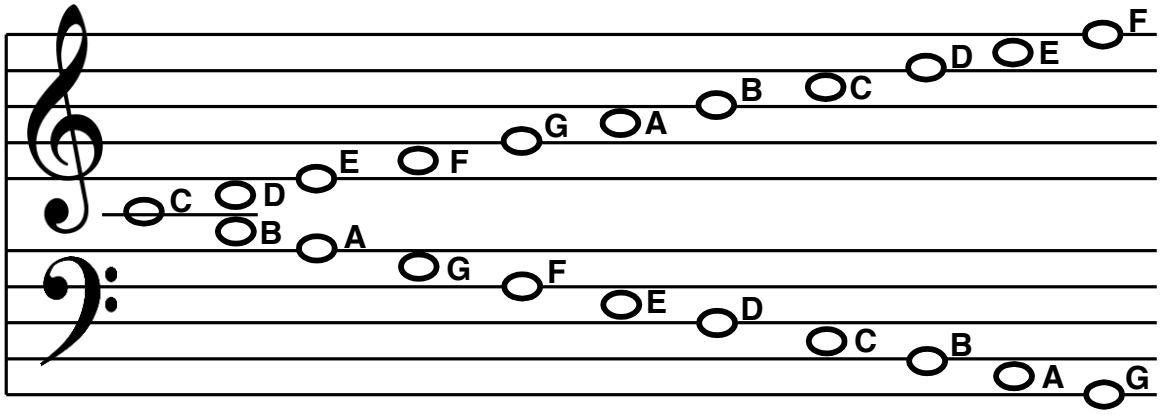


Rudiments of Music
Continued 3

4 . While the relative pitch of the several notes is indicated by their position on the staff, certain signs are necessary to indicate the absolute letter name of the notes on each line or space. The signs are called clefts, and are placed at the beginning of each staff.

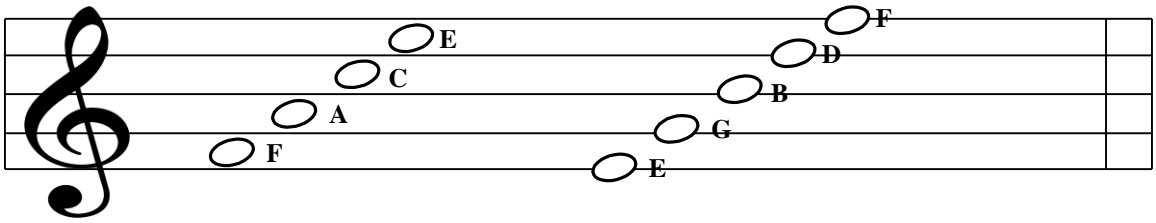


5 . When the two clef signs are added to the staves and one line is added between the staves, this constitutes the Grand Staff. This middle line is always middle C and is the nearest the middle of the piano keyboard. Middle C may be used as a guide for counting up or down to another note.

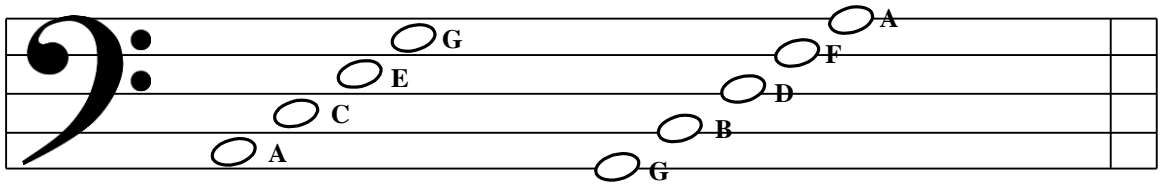


Rudiments of Music
Continued 4

6. Even though the notes are represented on the staff below, they are usually easier to remember and to recognize them faster, if they are learned in groups of lines and spaces as follows.



This is the treble staff. The treble clef (the large fancy symbol to the far left) shows the musician that the staff is treble. Since it curls around the G line, it is also called a G clef. The treble staff begins with the first line as E. Each successive space and line is the next letter in the musical alphabet. The staff ends with the last line as an F. Many mnemonic devices exist to help a person remember which line and space is which. One of the most common phrases to remember the names of the lines is: **E**very **G**ood **B**oy **D**oes **F**ine. To remember the spaces, just remember that they spell **FACE** starting from the bottom.



This is the bass (pronounced 'base') staff. The bass clef, also known as the F clef because it locates the line known as F, is on the far left. The bass clef uses the same musical alphabet as treble, but the letters start in different places. Instead of an E, the bottom line is a G, and the letters proceed logically from there. Again, simple mnemonics can be used to remember the names of the notes. The lines on the bass cleft, from bottom to top are: (**G**ood **B**oys **Do F**ine **A**lways), and the spaces are (**A**ll **C**ows **E**at **G**rass).

Four Part Harmony

1 . Ordinary music is written in four voice parts, corresponding to the four natural divisions of the human voice. These are, naming them in regular order from the lowest to the highest, BASS, TENOR, ALTO and SOPRANO. There are other groups of voices that range between these four, but since we will be studying music written in four parts, we will not discuss the others here.

2 . The Bass is to be sung by men who have low voices of heavy quality, sometimes the voice is of a heavy quality, but not low in compass, such a voice is a bass voice, regardless of its limited range as to the lower tones, for quality more than compass determines the class to which a voice belongs.

3 . Tenor is sung by men who have high voices of light quality or some women with low voices.

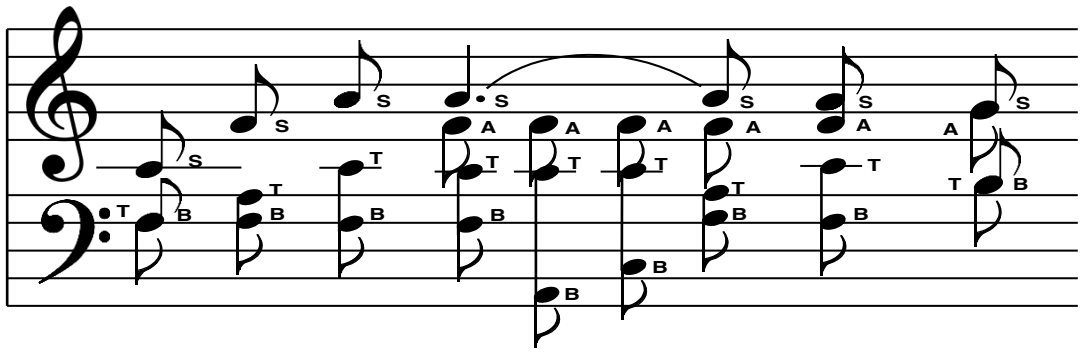
4 . Alto is to be sung by ladies who have low voices of heavy quality, Boys whose voices have not changed may sing alto, but care should be taken that they do not sing in a loud rough tone, No child should be allowed to sing in a thick or chest register.

5 . Soprano is sung by ladies who have high voices of light quality. Most boys whose voices have not changed should sing soprano.

6 . Ladies voices are naturally an octave higher than men's voices, The difference between a given letter and it's repetition – above or below – constitutes an octave and the two notes produce mentally the effect of one sound. The meaning of the term octave, therefore, is the eighth note, counting regularly from any given note I.E, C to C on the piano keyboard.

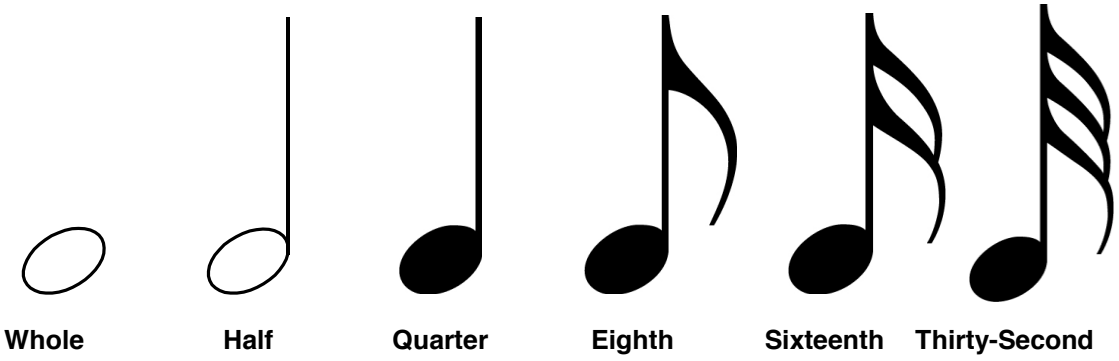
7 . The notes which are to be sung by each part will be determined by the staff they are written on and the way the stem of the note is pointed. We should know at all times which note we are to sing by following the line of notes corresponding with the part we are singing.

8 . When two notes are joined by the same stem both voices parts which sing on that particular staff will be singing regardless of which direction the stem is pointed. When the two voice parts have separate wording, the stems will be separated – the note for the lower voice part (alto and bass) will have stems pointing down. The note for the higher voice part (soprano and tenor) will have stems pointed up. This scale illustrates the parts and how the flags determine which part:

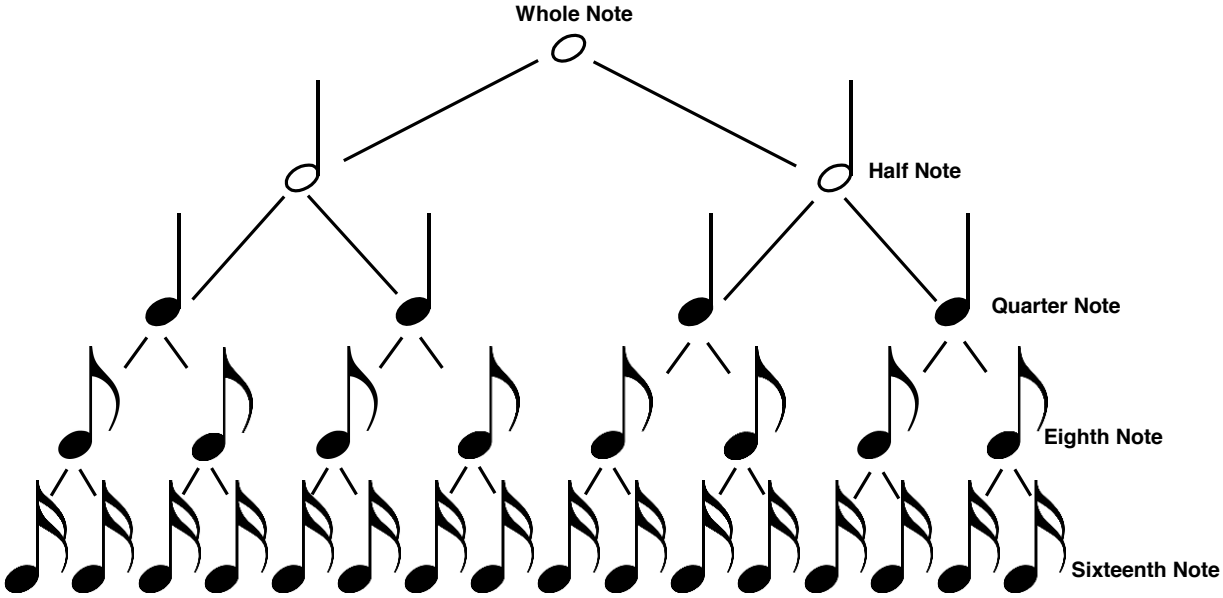


Duration of Sound

The length or duration of a sound is indicated by the construction of the note. In other words, the way the note is made will tell you how long to hold that tone. Whether the stem is turned up or down makes no difference.



In 4/4 time the tree below shows the number of notes required when filling a measure.

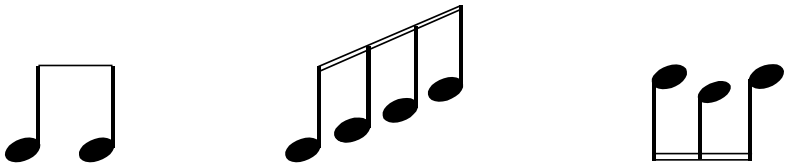


Duration of Sound

Continued 2

Sometimes a tone length is needed for which there is no one note to represent, and in such case notes equivalent to this length are written and connected by a curved line. Such a curved line, when connecting notes indicating the same pitch is called a TIE. When the curved line connects notes indicating different pitches, it is called a SLUR. One syllable of the word is to be sung to as many notes as are connected by the tie or slur, when playing tied notes, only one tone is to be played, making it the length indicated by all the tied notes combined.

When two or more eighths, or shorter lengths, are to be sung to one syllable, the notes representing them are grouped by their flags, thus making the flags serve for slurs.



A triplet is a group of three notes with a small numeral three (3) over or under them. A triplet is to be sung or played in the time ordinarily given two notes of the same value.

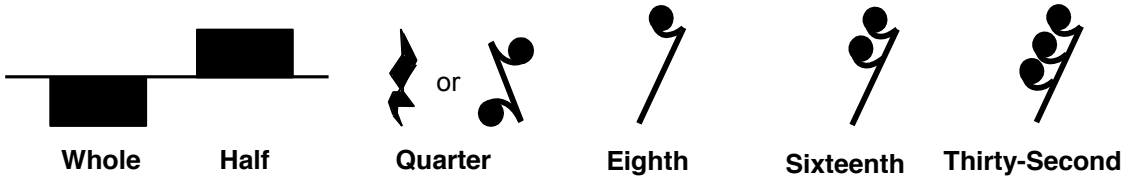
The time value of a note may be increased indefinitely by writing a **Hold** (fermata) over or under it. This same character when placed over or under a rest, or between notes, is called a PAUSE and the meaning is to hold or pause for such time as the director thinks best.

The abbreviation RIT. written over a portion of a piece of music means to become gradually slower in this area. It is usually seen at the ending of a piece.

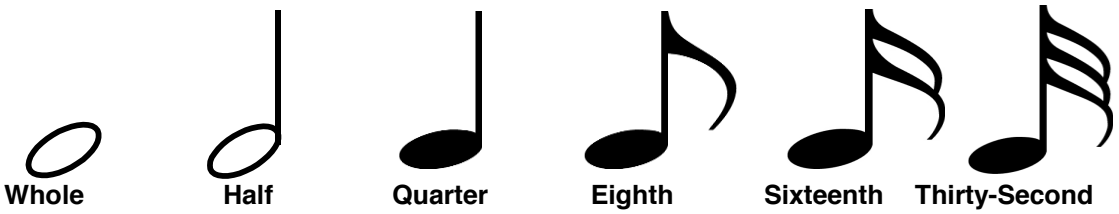
Rit. ……

Rests

A rest indicates a period of silence in music. The most common rests in use are as follows:

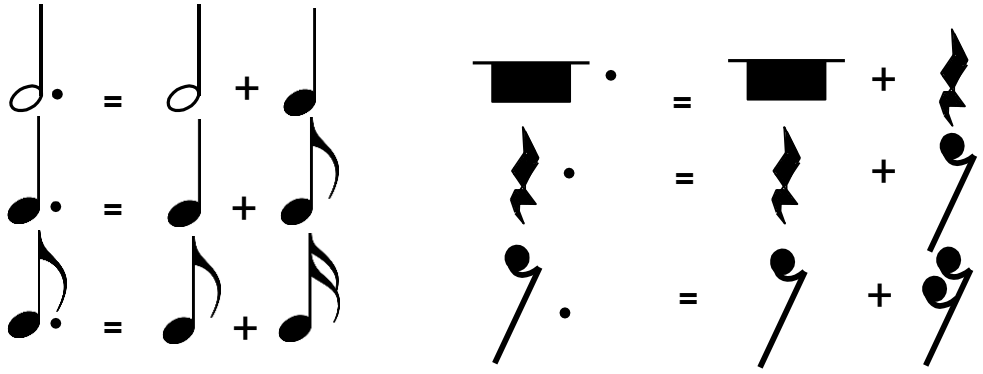


A rest receives the same length of duration as the note by the same name.



Dotted Rests and Notes

A dot following a rest or a note increases the length of duration by one half of its original value.



A second dot after a note or a rest increases the duration of the note or rest one half the value of the first dot.

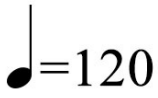
Shaped Notes

The **A B C D E F G** notes, as we just studied them, will always remain stationary on the staff, therefore, they are called absolute tones. The shape of the note has no effect on them as far as their letter names are concerned.

We do have another set of tone names, however, which are determined by the shape of the note. These are relative tones and are: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, and back to Do again (this Do being one octave higher than the first one). The shapes correspond to the names as follows:

These are called relative pitches, because they do not necessarily stay at the same place on the staff, but may move anywhere on the staff depending on the key in which the song is written. If the song is written in the key of C, the DO will be a C all the way through that particular song: and if the song is written in the key of G, the DO will be a G all the way through, etc. We should learn shaped notes because the relation of each to the others remains the same therefore, making it easier to read and sing the music.

It is very important to become familiar with the scale of shaped notes, because it will help to let you know how far to raise or lower the pitch of your voice in singing.



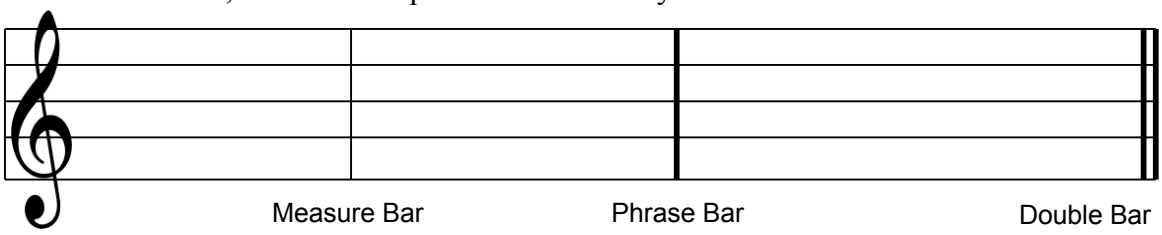
The metronome mark is a unit to measure the tempo of a piece of music. As shown in the image, the metronome mark is indicative of the number of crochet or quarter notes to be played per minute. In a compound time signature, the beat is made up of three note durations, which is when a dotted quarter is used to indicate the beats per minute. A metronome is an instrument (mechanical or electronic) that automatically makes a tone or sound at the rate you chose as outlined by the music mark.

Measures and Time Signatures

1 . The regularity with which tones follow each other in music produces mental pulsations, which are called **BEATS,** The stronger beats are **ACCENTED BEATS**; the weaker ones are **UNACCENTED BEATS**.

2 . Beats flow in groups, and form what are called **MEASURES**, The group of beats is the mental measure – the music which is performed in the time of the mental measure is a measure of music. The first beat of each measure is always accented, thus some define a measure as being ”From one primary accented beat to another”.

3 . Written or printed music is divided into measures by perpendicular lines, named **BARS**. The end of a phrase, section or period is sometimes indicated by a **BROAD BAR.** If the last measure of the phrase, section, or period is in full measure, the broad bar answers the double purpose of measure bar and phrase bar, but when the last measure is not full, the broad bar does not indicate the end of the measure, The end of a piece is indicated by a **BOUBLE BROAD BAR**.



4 . At the beginning of a piece of music we find the **TIME SIGNATURE** (On the staff directly following the clef signs). The lower figure indicates the kind of note taken as a unit of counting (which note will receive one count or beat); the upper indicates the number of these notes that will be necessary to fill a measure, or the number of counts or beats in each measure. For example:

4 = 4 counts in each measure **6** = 6 counts in each measure

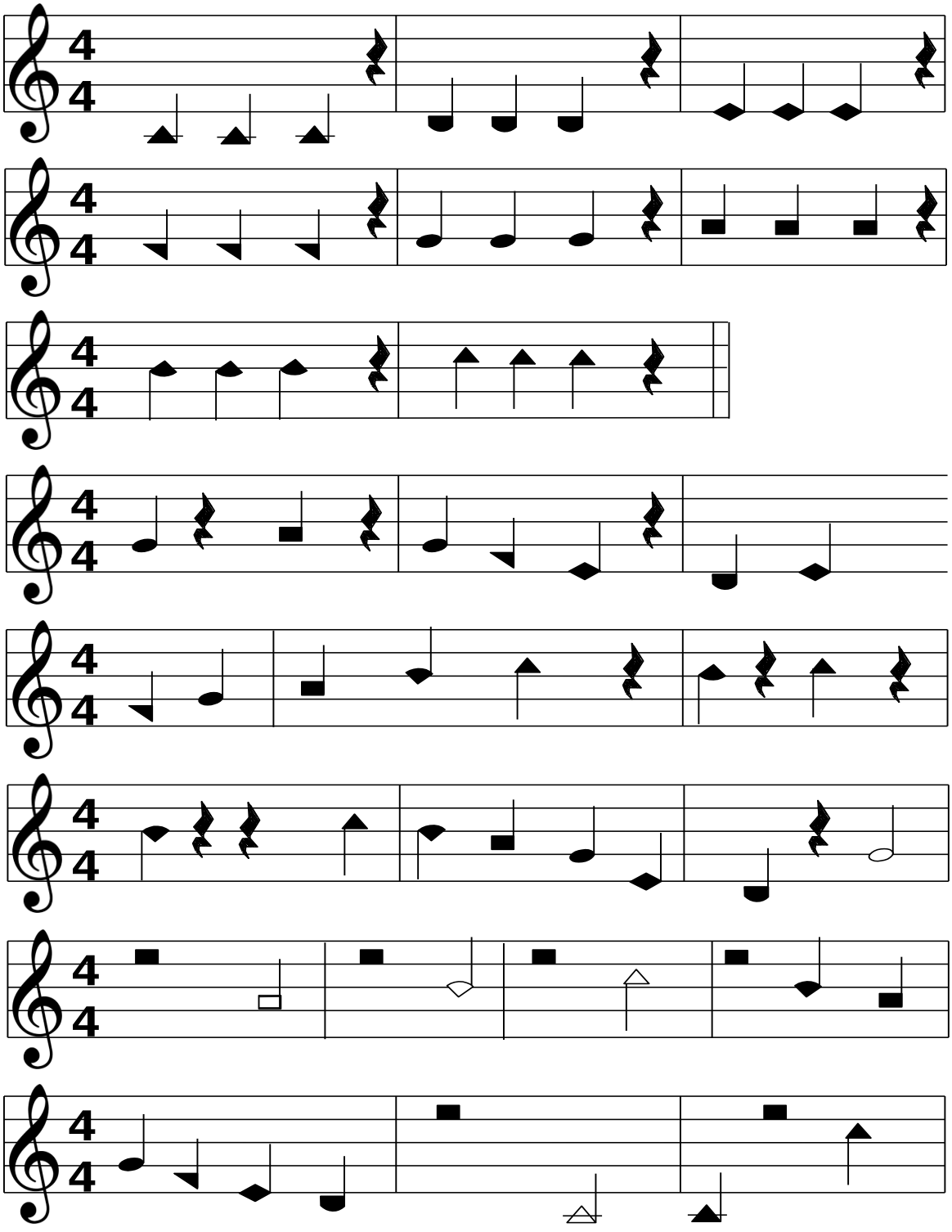
4 = the quarter note gets one count **8** = the eighth note gets one count

Some of the various time signatures in most common use are:

4	**3**	**3**	**2**	**6**	**9**	**12**	**8**	**4**
4	**4**	**8**	**4**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**2**	**2**

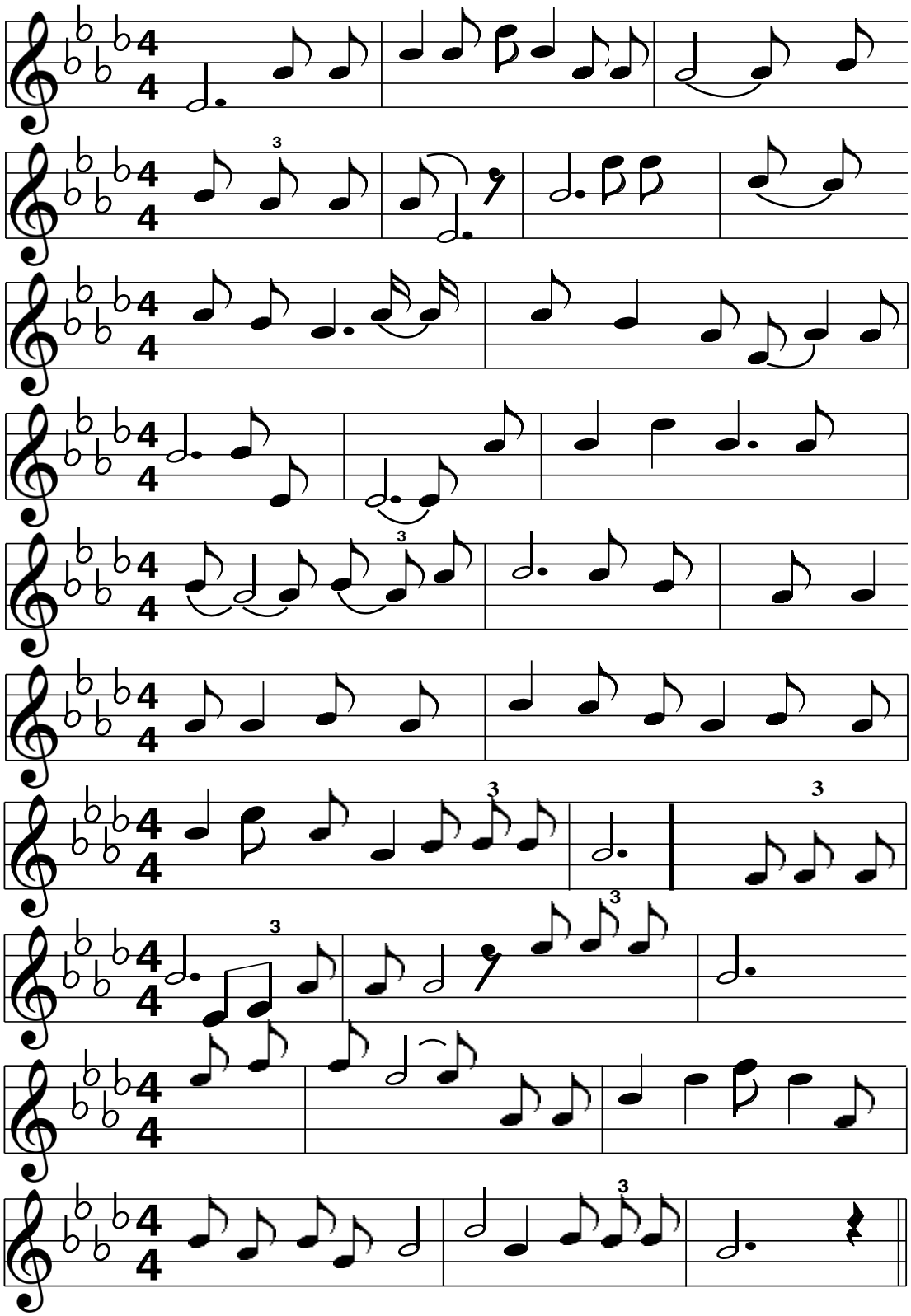
Measures and Time signatures
Continued 2

This is an exercise of notes and rests in a measure in 4/4/ time.



Measures and Time signatures

Continued 3



True or False

	T	F	
1 .	☐	☐	Middle C is always a Do.
2 .	☐	☐	Soprano voices sing the top notes on the treble staff.
3 .	☐	☐	Plural for staff is staves.
4 .	☐	☐	Two staves connected by a brace with the Middle C line drawn between them makes a grand or great staff.
5 .	☐	☐	Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti and Do are absolute pitches.
6 .	☐	☐	Tenor sings the bottom row of notes on the base staff.
7 .	☐	☐	A rest indicates a period of silence in music.
8 .	☐	☐	A dot after a note or a rest increases the duration of that tone or rest by one fourth of its original value.
9 .	☐	☐	A  means to gradually become slower.
10.	☐	☐	The flags on notes should never be connected.
11.	☐	☐	A tie is a curved line connecting two or more notes of different pitches.
12.	☐	☐	A slur is a curved line connecting two or more notes of different pitches.
13.	☐	☐	There are always four counts in each measure.
14.	☐	☐	A measure bar is a double bar.
15.	☐	☐	Rit…… means to become gradually louder.
16.	☐	☐	The top number of the time signature tells you which note will receive one count.
17.	☐	☐	A beat is a mental pulsation.
18.	☐	☐	Where a note is placed on the staff determines the pitch of the tone.
19.	☐	☐	A half note is equal in duration to two quarter notes.
20.	☐	☐	Alto is usually sung by ladies with high pitched voices.

Review

1 . (a) draw two staves; (b) join them with a brace; (c) put the treble and bass clef signs in their proper places; (d) draw a smaller line between the two staves and write on it the name of the note which would appear there.

2 . What are the alphabetical names of all the different notes?

3 . Draw the seven shaped notes and label them.

4 . Do the shaped notes ever change their position on the staff?

5 . Do the alphabetical notes ever change their position on the staff?

6 . Name the four voice parts in four part harmony. (underline the part you sing).

7 . Explain where your notes are found on the staff.

8 . Draw and label a whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth and thirty second note. Draw the rests which correspond to these same names.

9 . What is determined by the notes and rests you have just drawn.

10 . What does a dot after a note or rest indicate?

11 . In a time signature, what does the top number determine?

12 . What does the bottom number indicate in a time signature?

13 . Draw a tie, a slur, and a triplet – explain each.

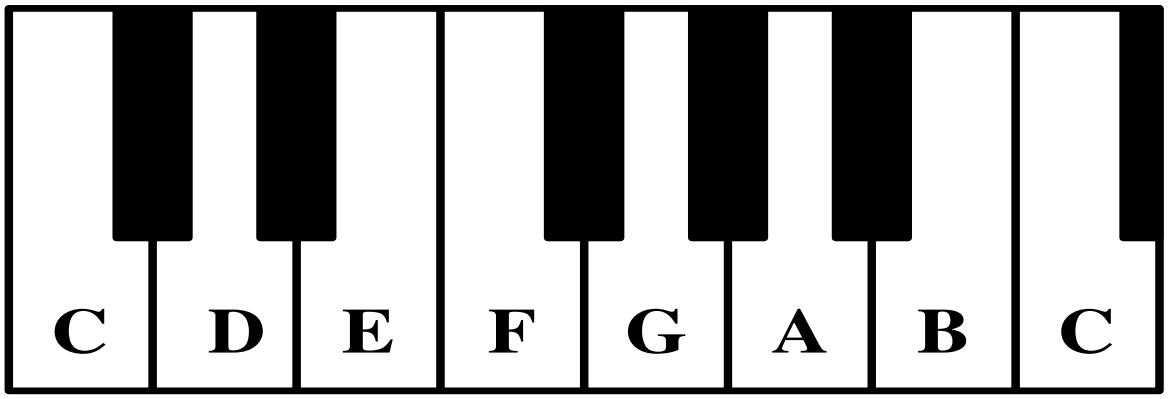
14 . Draw a hold and explain what it indicates.

15 . What does Rit……. mean?

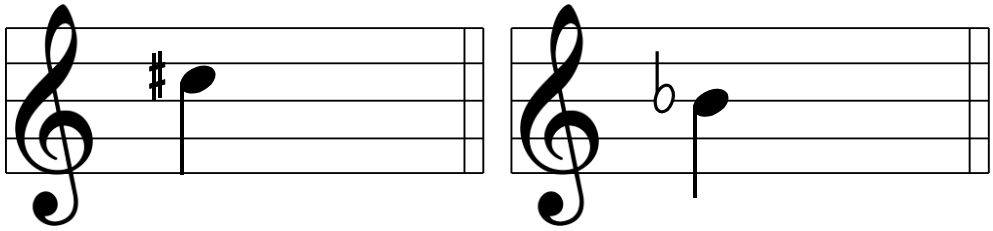
Sharps, Flats, and Naturals

The following diagram represents the piano keyboard from one C to the next C. As a rule, white keys are known as **Naturals,** the black ones as **Sharps or Flats.**

As you sit at the piano, the notes to your right are higher than to your left. This means that each note is higher in pitch than the preceding one as you move to your right, and each one lower in pitch as you move to the left.

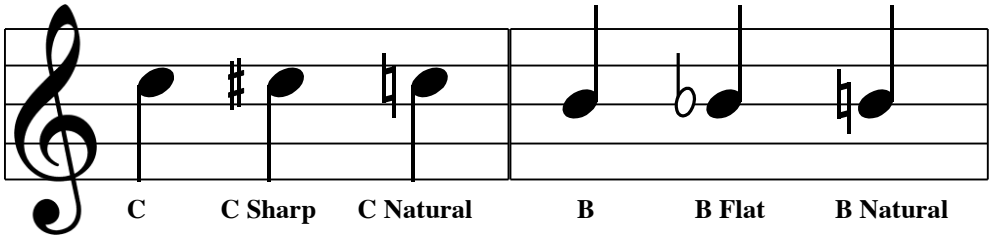


A sharp (#) is a sign placed before a note to raise the pitch of that tone a half-step or semitone. The following diagram indicates a C sharp, thus the black key to the right of C.



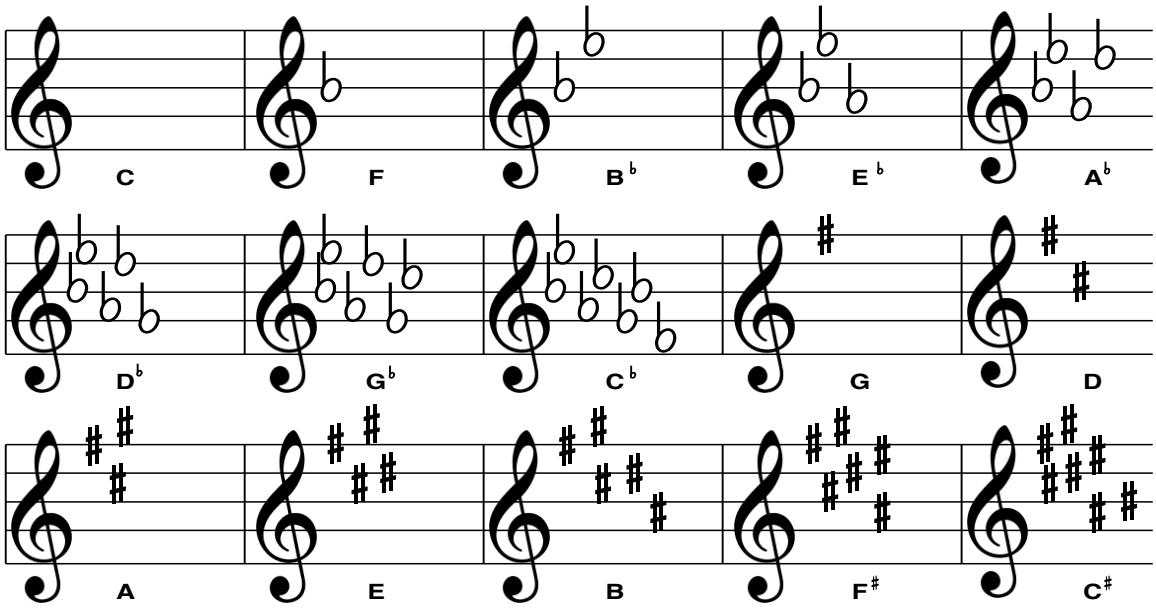
A flat (♭) is a sign placed before a note to lower the pitch of that tone a half step or semitone, The B flat indicated above would be the black key to the left of B on the piano.

A natural (♮) is a sign placed before a note to restore the note to its original pitch after a sharp or flat has been used.

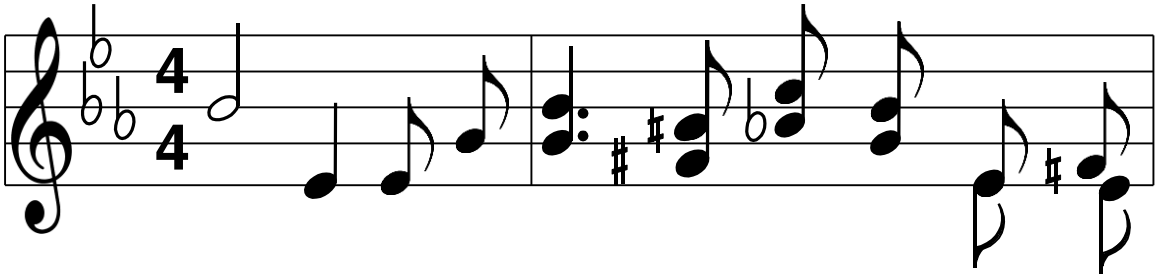


Key Signatures

The **KEY SIGNATURE** is found directly following the clef signs (before the time signature) and tells you the key the writer intended the song to be played or sung in. It consists of sharps or flats, which indicate the notes to be sharped or flatted throughout the song. If there are no sharps or flats, the composer intended for the notes to remain natural for the main part.



Sharps, flats, or naturals which are not indicated in the key signature, but are placed out on the staff are called ACCIDENTALS. Unless an accidental is canceled in the same measure, it is automatically canceled when the next measure bar is crossed.



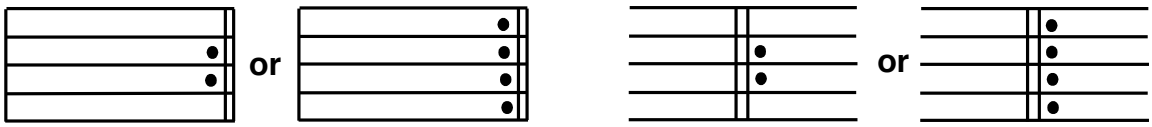
A **DOUBLE SHARP** (𝄪) raises the pitch of a given note two half steps and a **DOUBLE FLAT** (𝄫) lowers it two half steps.

A **DOUBLE SHARP** in front of a **G** would, therefore, make it sound the same as an A. A **DOUBLE FLAT** in front of a **B** would make it sound the same as an A.

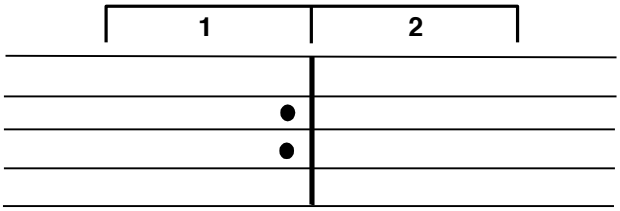
When studying shaped notes, you will find that **Do**, the key note will always be the alphabetical key note. Therefore, if you are in the key of **C** – **Do** will be a **C**, etc.

Repeat Signs

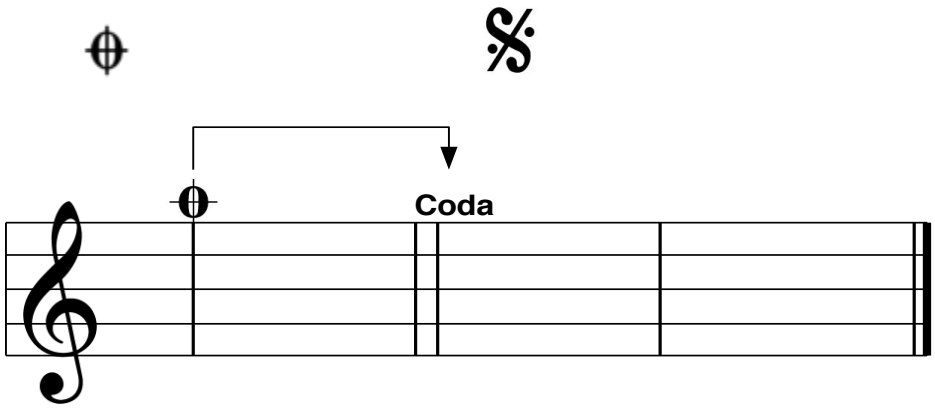
A double bar is placed at the end of a composition, or at an important division between parts. The double bar with dots means the section of music is to be repeated, either from the beginning or from some point, not so far back, where there is another double bar with the dots on the right and side.



After a repeat it may be necessary to omit the last few measures leading to a repetition and substitute others, which is indicated by these marks:



Other signs of repetition are **D.C.** (Da Capo) (dah-kah'-poh), which means to go back to the **D.C.** and repeat to **FINE** (the end) and **D.S.** (Dal Segno) (Dahl-sayn'-yo), which means go back to the **Segno** sign and repeat to **Fine**. The signs are placed further back in the music: The first sign below is a **Coda** the second is **Segno.** The **Coda** directs you to jump from that point (sign) to a section marked coda.



GRACE NOTE A grace note is a small note added into the music for the instrument only and is not to be sung. You will find that they complement the music, but should be disregarded by the vocalist.

Words and Marks Indicating Tone, Tempo, Etc.

fp **Forte-piano** A section of music in which the music should initially be played loudly (forte), then immediately softly (piano).

pp **Pianissimo** Very soft. Usually the softest indication in a piece of music, though softer dynamics are often specified with additional *p*s.

p **Piano** Soft. Usually the most often used indication.

mp **Mezzo piano** Literally, half as soft as *piano*.

mf **Mezzo forte** Similarly, half as loud as *forte*. If no dynamic appears, *mezzo-forte* is assumed to be the prevailing dynamic level.

f **Forte** Loud. Used as often as *piano* to indicate contrast.

ff **Fortissimo** Very loud. Usually the loudest indication in a piece, though louder dynamics are often specified with additional *f*s .

< **Crescendo** A gradual increase in volume steadily increasing during the passage.

> **Diminuendo** Also **Decrescendo** A gradual decrease in volume steadily decreasing during the passage.

— Loud > Louder ∧ Loudest

Moderato - In moderate tempo.

Allegro - Very lightly

Presto - Very fast

Accel. - Becoming faster

Rit. Ritardando; - To become gradually slower

Rall. Rallentando - To become gradually slower

A tempo – Back to the regular tempo, after deviation

Ad lib. – As you wish

Fine – Ending

Legato – closely connected, smooth, gliding

Staccato – disconnecting the tone

Refrain - Chorus - A repeated part of a song coming after each stanza

Techniques of Conducting

Part 1

1 . A song leader should appear to have self- confidence at all times. There are two primary ways of obtaining this. The first is to have a thorough knowledge of music, which comes from hard study and repeated practice. The second, no less in importance, is to have the assurance within yourself that you have the Holy Spirit to help you at all times. This requires that you exercise your faith unto salvation and trust in God that He will never forsake you as long as you are trying to do His will.

2 . Try to coordinate your music with the sermon so the harmony of the word continues and is reinforced as the congregation sings and reflects on God and His Holiness

3 . Be sure to always start on time

4 . Take your place where the musician, pianist, organist or other instruments, can see you, since they will be following your lead as well as the singers.

5 . Announce your page number distinctly and loudly enough that everyone can hear clearly.

6 . Stanza – say “first” stanza, “second” stanza, etc. It is better usage than verse.

7 . After giving sufficient time for the number to be found, nod slightly to the musician to start playing the introduction.

8 . When the musician has played nearly to the end of the introduction, raise your hand to the starting position. This movement has a twofold purpose. (1) Signals the musician to bring the introduction to a close at the next logical point in the music, (2) Gets the attention and readiness of the singers.

9 . Start your stroke – the musician and singers starting with it. Do not wait for the musician to start first.

10 . Keep the arm relaxed and working from the elbow, Never allow the wrist to work as a hinge when conducting.

11 . Every full measure must start with a down stroke, which is the accented stroke. The last stroke, in any measure must be an up stroke. Not every song begins with a full measure, however, so we first look to see how many beats there are in a full measure, then count the number of beats in the first measure, and start our stroke so that the last one will be an up stroke.

Techniques of Conducting

Part 2

12 . All strokes should be made with the back of the hand up, with the exception of the up stroke. For that movement the hand is turned a little at the wrist with the palm slightly up.

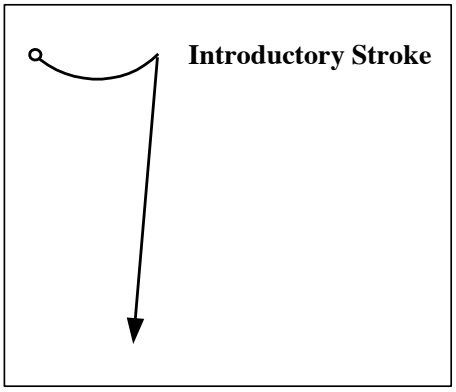
13 . When a hold, or a pause is written in the music, the conductor should indicate the length of time the note or rest is to be held by a long slow stroke.

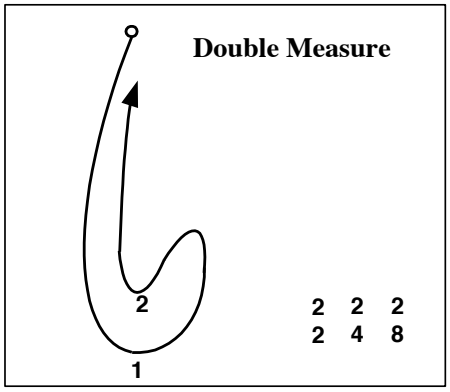
14 . The stanza and the chorus of a song may be written in different time, therefore changing the conducting pattern. It is best to look over the entire song before starting, so you will be prepared for the switch.

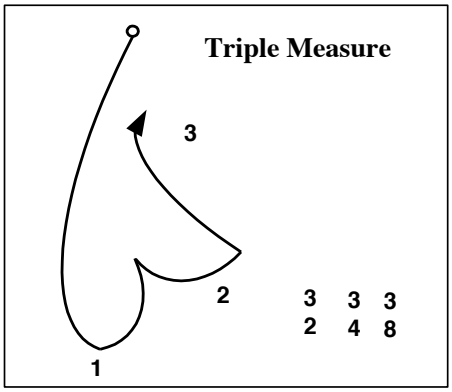
15 . There should be a clear cut-off stroke at the end of the song, and the leader and the congregation should be ready to cut their last tone clearly at the same time.

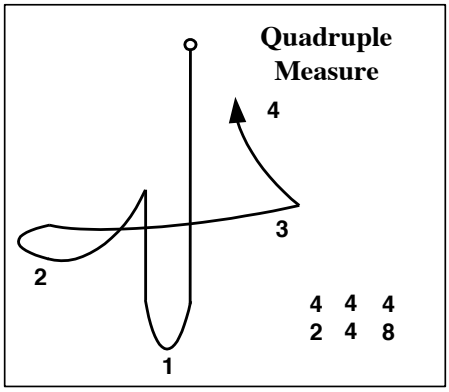
16 . As most Church services open with singing, it becomes the song leader's responsibility to set the mood for the worship service. He should honestly seek the leadership of the Spirit in selecting the songs, as good Gospel singing tends to lift the mind from things of the world and place them on Spiritual things. Be pleasant – people sing better when they are in a good frame of mind.

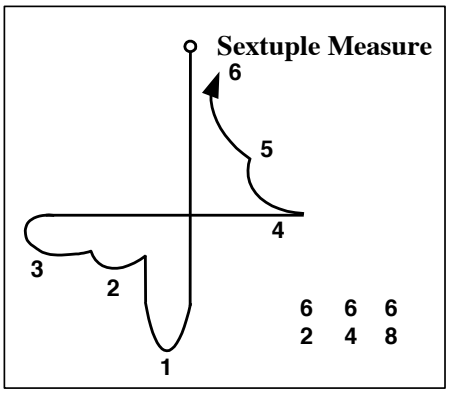
Conducting Patterns

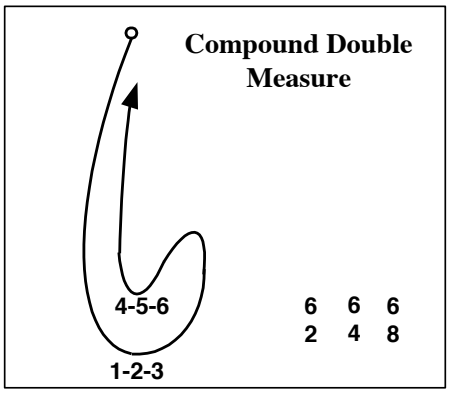


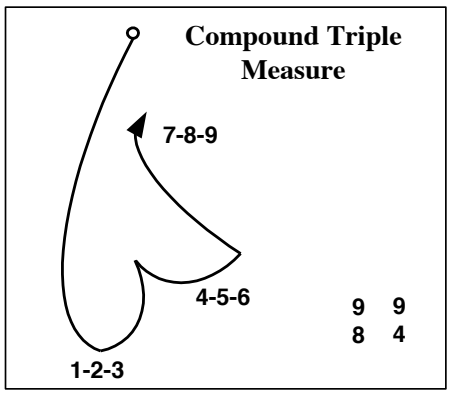


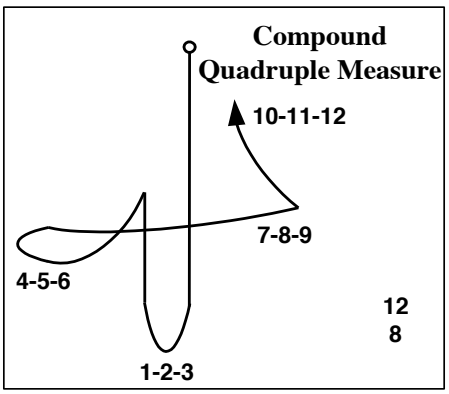












FINAL EXAMINATION

Part 1

1 . Draw a sharp and tell what it does.

2 . Draw a flat and tell what it does.

3 . Draw a natural and tell what it does.

4 . Draw and explain a double sharp and a double flat.

5 . What is an accidental?

6 . Explain the key signature.

7 . Explain three different repeat signs.

8 . What is a grace note?

9 . Explain the full Italian name for the piano.

10 . Why is the introductory stroke important in conducting?

11 . Explain the difference between simple and compound measures in conducting.

12 . Is the first measure in a piece always a full measure?

13 . Explain the two best ways to gain self confidence in conducting.

14 . Explain the effect of a pleasant conductor on the congregation.

15 . How should the conductor indicate a hold in the music?

16 . Explain the position of the hand while directing.

17 . Which is the better usage, verse or stanza?

18 . Explain the cut off stroke.

19 . What does good Gospel music have a tendency to do for a congregation?

20 . In what way do you think your singing and/or conducting has improved since this study began?

FINAL EXAMINATION

Part 2

	T	F	
1 .	☐	☐	The key signature comes in front of the time signature on the staff.
2 .	☐	☐	The signature for the key of C has one sharp.
3 .	☐	☐	A flat raises the pitch of a tone one half step.
4 .	☐	☐	The key signature tells you what time the song is written in.
5 .	☐	☐	A double sharp raises the pitch of a tone two half steps.
6 .	☐	☐	D. S. means return to the first and repeat to fine.
7 .	☐	☐	D .C. means repeat from the sign to fine.
8 .	☐	☐	Grace notes are not to be sung.
9 .	☐	☐	Most of our musical terms are written in Italian.
10.	☐	☐	Tempo means time, or speed.
11.	☐	☐	The Holy Spirit can be of great help to you in your singing.
12.	☐	☐	A lot of practice is of no help in learning music.
13.	☐	☐	The conductor should follow the lead of the piano player.
14.	☐	☐	The leader should announce the page number in a loud, clear and pleasant voice.
15.	☐	☐	A congregation actually sings better for a pleasant leader.
16.	☐	☐	The leader should do his best every time he has the opportunity.
17.	☐	☐	The time is never changed within the same piece of music.
18.	☐	☐	It is good for a conductor to be as familiar as possible with a piece of music before attempting to lead it.
19.	☐	☐	An accidental is a mistake made by the music publishers.
20.	☐	☐	A clean, strong cut off stroke is very important in conducting.
21.	☐	☐	You should breathe only at commas and periods if possible.
22.	☐	☐	You should never breathe in the middle of a word.
23.	☐	☐	Your throat will get sore if you breathe correctly.

FINAL EXAMINATION

Part 3

1 . Draw two staves and join them with a brace.

2 . Put the two clef signs in their proper places.

3 . Put the key signature in its proper place for the key of G

4 . Put in the time signature that would indicate four beats in each measure and the quarter note receives one count.

5 . Using shape notes fill three measures with the correct number of notes and/or rests, using lead and bass notes only. You may use ledger lines if you wish.

6 . Put the markings in place which would indicate that this is the last score in the piece.

7 . Put a hold somewhere in the score.

8 . Put in either a tie or a slur.

9 . Put the marking at the proper place that would indicate the piece should be sung loudly.

10 . Add one accidental.

11 . Add the marking that means to become gradually slower in the last measure.

12 . Add the repeat sign that indicates return to the beginning and sing to Fine.