

music *Made Easy*

Lesson Plan Session 1 Lines and Spaces

(On Video) Welcome to the **Music Made Easy Webinar!** This is the first session in a series of Webinars to teach music reading skills. My name is Jim Faull and I have been a lifelong minister of music. After serving churches in 5 states, I spent 9 years as director of Music and Worship for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Currently, my wife Marty and I spend our time developing and marketing Worship Planning and Music Reading software to benefit Ministers of Music and Choir Members.

Choir is one of God's tools to fight the powers of darkness in our world. Even in earliest times, God sent the choir ahead of the armies of Israel to announce the upcoming victory. Never once did the choir get slaughtered! That should certainly help recruitment. An effective logger needs a sharp saw; an effective choir member needs to sharpen their music skills.

The Music Made Easy Webinar is designed to help you sharpen your ability to read and understand printed music. This is not a freshman theory class, but rather a practical guide to navigating a piece of choir music. It is not necessary to have Music Made Easy installed on your computer for this Webinar, but MME will help with your personal study.

We will try to keep a good pace going, but not rush through the lessons. The class is for folks who want to learn more about how to navigate a piece of choir music and follow their part from beginning to end. If this is too slow for you, please bear with us and we will get to some more challenging information, like hemi-demi-semi-quavers, or hemiola. Hemiola, by the way, is not a blood disease.

The language of Music is a **code** that consists symbols too numerous to mention, and even a foreign language that tells what pitch to play or sing, and how long to play or sing. Most of the music in the world uses only the 12 primary pitches and deciphering the code produces music. Let us look at this code.

Our first lesson will discuss Lines and Spaces, Staff, Grand Staff, Clefs, Bar Lines, Measures, Musical Alphabet, Notes, and navigating with the Road Signs of music.

Tour of Music Made Easy

First, we will take a brief tour of **Music Made Easy**. The opening screen is just a preview of lessons in **Music Made Easy**. You can skip this page by rolling your mouse over the **Skip Intro** on the bottom left.

The Blue Screen is the Main Menu for the program. As you roll over the various menus, you get a preview of the lessons within. The primary menus are listed on the left of the screen and you can see the 3 sub menus to the right.

Let us look at the **how to navigate** page. Most pages have a **Help Window** that loads when the page is opened. The window will go away when you roll over it with your mouse, and then move off of it. To bring it back touch the **Help** button with your mouse.

Upper left **Navigate** button brings up a menu list.

Basic Definitions

We must start with a few definitions.

- **Note** – A symbol that shows **Pitch** and **Duration**
- **Pitch** – How ^{high} or **LOW** a note sounds - vibrations
- **Duration** – How long a note sounds - time
- **Beat** – The basic pulse of music - time
- **Rhythm** – The controlled movement of beats in time
- **Melody** – The horizontal flow of pitches
- **Harmony** – The vertical simultaneous sound of multiple pitches

A **note's pitch** is shown by its vertical relationship to other pitches. Higher **pitches** are placed above lower **pitches** and lower **pitches** are placed below higher **pitches**. **Duration** is shown by the **shape** of the **note**. The horizontal flow of **pitches** creates **melody**. The pulse of the notes creates **beat**, and the flow of **beats** creates **rhythm**.

Notes placed on a vertical line could show high or low, but it would not show the horizontal flow of notes. And notes placed only on a horizontal line would not show the vertical relationships. Since notes need a **canvas** that shows **both vertical** and **horizontal** positions, a system was needed to show both. A grouping of horizontal lines and the spaces between them show both high and low, and left to right shows the horizontal flow. These lines and spaces are called the **staff**.

Show Grand Staff, pause page use spotlight.

[Click Staff Menu – Grand Staff](#)

The early musical staff was composed of **11** lines and **10** spaces. This is called the grand staff. The notes placed on the grand staff represent the lowest note the average Bass singer can sing comfortably, and the highest note the average Soprano singer can sing comfortably. Certainly, there are sopranos who sing higher, and basses who sing much lower notes, but most music is written within the range of the notes on the **Grand Staff**.

The problem with the **Grand Staff** is that it is difficult to identify exactly which pitch was represented, if it were some distance from the top or bottom line. Special lines were identified to help lock in on which notes were being used. The middle line is known as **middle C**. ([Click show middle C](#))

Clefs came along to help the eye identify specific lines on the Grand Staff. ([Click show clefs](#)) The upper clef is called the **Treble** clef, for higher pitched voices, and the lower clef is called the **Bass** clef for lower pitched voices. The **Treble** Clef wraps around **G** above Middle C and the **Bass** Clef identifies the **F** below Middle C. The 2 dots surround the F.

To simplify, the Grand Staff of **11** lines was split into 2 **staves (plural of staff)** of **5** lines each. ([Click split staff](#)) The extra line or Middle C, is common to both the upper and lower staves. What developed is the modern staff of **5 lines** and **4 spaces**. It is easy for the eye to quickly relate the notes, since there are **2** lines on **top** and **2** lines at the **bottom** of the center line of each staff. These two staves indicate groups of notes that are higher (**treble**) or lower (**bass**).

The Staff

Show the Staff

This page shows the importance of organizing notes with the **staff**. Notice that this staff has **5 lines** and **4 spaces**. Back up to where just the note heads appear. It is hard to tell without the staff whether the note heads on the left and right are lined up. When the staff is present you can tell which note heads are on lines and which ones are on spaces. Back up one more time and see how the notes appear. You can see why we need the staff to help position notes.

The Musical Alphabet

Show the Musical Alphabet

The **musical alphabet** uses the letters **A, B, C, D, E, F, & G**. They are the names of musical pitches and are the **white** keys on the piano. As you move from left to right through the **musical alphabet** the **pitch** gets higher. The **musical alphabet** is repeated a little over **7** times on the **88** keys of the **piano**.

The **piano** consists of **white** keys and **black** keys. **Black** keys are **sharps** or **flats**, and are grouped by **2's** and **3's**. The patterns of the **black** keys identify notes on the keyboard. "**C**" is the **white** key to the **left** of a group of **2 black keys** and "**F**" is the note to the **left** of a group of **3 black keys**.

Black keys play **sharp** or **flat** notes. The **black key** to the **right** of any **white key** is a **sharp** with that **key name**. The **black key** to the **left** of any **white key** is a **flat** with that **key name**. **Black** keys have a **sharp** name and a **flat** name.

Accidentals

Show Sharps and Flats - Accidentals

Accidentals

Scroll through Accidentals using the Next button

- Flats resembles a lower case "b"
- Sharps resembles a "#" sign as on your telephone
- Naturals
- Double Sharps are for later
- Double Flats are for later

Accidentals Example

Show Accidentals Example

The Natural has no effect on this G because it is only to cancel another accidental. Listen to the Flat and its effect on the G. Notice it looks like lower case "b". Listen to the sharp and its effect on the G. Notice it looks like a "#" sign.

Lines and Spaces

Show Staff - Lines and Spaces

Each line, and each space has a unique letter name. Any note placed on that line or space takes that name. All the lines and spaces represent a white note on the piano. We will discuss the names of the black keys a little later.

Start on the bottom space of the Bass clef (A) and alternate lines and spaces to show the letter names.

On this page, as we touch a line or space or a key on the keyboard, we are shown the pitch name. Notice that as we progress through the pitch names, they go from **A** through **G**. Once we get to **G**, we start over on **A**. (*It is not a compliment when someone tells you they think you just sang a J!*)

An assignment for you for next session:

- Ladies learn the lines and spaces of the Treble Clef
- Men learn the lines and spaces of the Bass Clef

Some shortcuts are the acrostics you see on the left of this page. As you roll over them with your mouse, they give a phrase to help remember the pitch names. Like this: (**Roll over Acrostics**)

Clefs

Show Staff - Clefs

Let us look at clefs up close and personal.

Clefs were introduced to identify specific lines to make reading and identifying pitches easier. The two clefs we use mostly in choir music are the **Treble** and **Bass** clefs.

- The **Treble** or **G clef** is on the upper staff and identifies the 2nd line from the bottom as the **G** above **middle C**. All notes in the **Treble Staff** are above **middle C**.
- The **F clef** or **Bass clef** identifies the 2nd line from the top as **F** below **middle C**. All notes in the **Bass clef** are below **middle C**.
- The **C clef** or **Alto clef** identifies any line as **Middle C**. Singers do not use the **Alto Clef**. Primarily, it is used by the Viola.

Measures

Show Bar Lines and Measures

A **Bar Line** is a **vertical** line that divides the **staff** into **measures**. A **measure** is the distance between **2 Bar Lines**. **Measures** break up the flow of notes into units that are related to **duration** and **beat**. There will be a certain number of **beats** in each **measure**. (*I grew up in New Orleans and our elementary band director was explaining measures and such to us one day, and asked the question, "What is the distance between 2 bars?" A student responded, "About half a block." I guess in New Orleans he is probably right!*)

(Click Measure Numbers) **Measures** are numbered consecutively, and the numbers are handy for locating where to look to practice a section. Much of our music today has measure numbers to make finding a rehearsal spot easier. Sometimes sections of measures are indicated with a letter of the alphabet.

Double bar lines indicate the end of a piece of music, or a section of that piece.

Ledger Lines

Show Ledger Lines

What happens when you need to extend the staff for notes too high or too low to fit? A **Ledger Line** is a **short horizontal** line above or below the staff that extends the range of the **staff**. Ledger lines maintain the vertical spacing of the staff and extend just beyond the note head.

The **Lines and Spaces** video showed only the note names of the actual lines and spaces of the 2 clefs. **Ledger Lines** show additional notes that are above or below the staves.

The first **Ledger Line** below the **Treble** staff is the same as the first **ledger line** above the **Bass** staff, and is **Middle C**. As we continue down the ledger lines below the treble staff, you see that the **B** and **A** are the same as the **B** space above the Bass staff and the top line **A**. Going up the ledger lines above the Bass staff you can see that the **C**, **D** and **E** are the same as the **C**, **D** and **E** starting the first ledger line below the Treble staff.

Altos sometime sing notes that could be written in the **Bass** staff, and **Tenors** sometime sing notes that could be written in the **Treble** staff.

Keyboard on Pitch and Scales Menu

Show Keyboard on Pitch and Scales Menu

Let us look at some ledger lines with a keyboard. This **Grand Staff** is split apart a little farther to allow space for ledger lines and note heads. As we move from the **Middle C** you can tell that both **Staves** share **Middle C** in common. The **Bass** clef **D** above the **Middle C** ledger line is the same as the **Treble** clef **D** just below the staff. If the two staves were moved back together, these ledger lines would be unnecessary, but it would be hard to distinguish **Men's** notes from **Ladies'** notes.

Let us jump to the top of the **Treble** staff and see the ledger lines for high soprano notes. There is the high **A, B and C**.

We will roll over some **Black** keys and you can see that each black key has 2 possible letter names, its **sharp** name and its **flat** name.

Review

Let us review for a moment. We have defined:

- **Note** – A symbol that shows **Pitch** and **Duration**
- **Pitch** – How ^{high} or **LOW** a note sounds - vibrations
- **Duration** – How long a note sounds - time
- **Beat** – The basic pulse of music - time
- **Rhythm** – The controlled movement of beats in time
- **Melody** – The horizontal flow of pitches
- **Harmony** – The vertical simultaneous sound of multiple pitches
- **Bass and Treble Clefs**-Each Identifies a specific pitch
- **The Musical Alphabet**
- **Staff**
- **Lines and Spaces**-you are memorizing your clef and lines and spaces
- **Sharps, Flats and Naturals**
- **Bar Lines**
- **Double Bar Lines**
- **Measures**
- **Ledger Lines**

Road Signs of Music

Show Road Signs of Music

Road Signs of Music – Help to navigate music scores. To operate this page, click the Road Sign of your choice.

Segno

Click Segno

⌘ **Segno or Sign** - The **Segno** ("sane-yo") is a symbol that indicates a bar line to which you will be returning at some point in the music. You should make a mental note of its location. **You WILL be back!**

D.S. al Segno

[Click D.S. al Segno](#)

 *D.S. or dal Segno* - go back to the **Segno** and continue from there.

Click Coda

[Click Coda](#)

 *Coda* - the beginning of the final section of music. Normally, you will be directed to this symbol by a *D.S. al Coda*, or a *second time to Coda*.

D.S. al Coda or dal Segno al Coda - go back to the Segno and continue from there. When the instruction is *D.S. al Coda*, go back to the Segno  and then at the "*2nd time to *", go to the *Coda*.

Da Capo

[Click Da Capo](#)

Da Capo or D.C. - go back to the beginning and continue from there. *D.C. al Coda* means to go back to the beginning and then at the **2nd time to ** go to the *Coda*. 

Repeats

[Click Repeats](#)

Repeat signs - Repeat Signs come in pairs. The 2nd Repeat Sign sends you back to the 1st Repeat Sign. **Repeat signs** are variations of double bar lines. **Repeat signs** always come in pairs. The first **repeat sign** has **2 dots** to the **right** of the double bar, 1 above and 1 below the center line of the staff. Its partner is just the opposite, with the **dots** to the **left** of the double bar. Always notice the first **repeat sign** since you will be coming back to it.

Practice Score to Show Endings

[Click Practice Score](#)

1st Ending - 2nd Ending - Repeat Signs and Endings are short-cuts used to avoid re-printing identical measures. At the end of the 1st ending, repeat back to the Repeat Sign, then skip the 1st ending to the 2nd ending.

Notice on the **Practice Score** how the green block flows according to the **Road Signs**. See how it goes back to the first **Repeat Sign** after getting to the second **Repeat** in the **1st Ending**, then skips the **1st Ending**, to take the **2nd Ending**. Next, please notice the **Segno**. We will be coming back here! The **2nd time** we get to the end of this staff, we will observe the **2nd time to Coda** message. After going back to the **Segno**, we jump to the **Coda** at the end of the staff.

Let us see that one more time.

If 5 minutes or more is left, Show Staff Quiz
Show Staff Quiz

Thanks for wanting to improve your music reading ability! It is a good sign when people desire to become better at their skill. Let me remind you to memorize the lines and spaces of your staff;
Ladies-Treble, Men-Bass.

Preview Next Lesson

Next week our lesson will begin with a quiz, then a brief review of this lesson. Then we move quickly into Notes, Note Values, Duration, Dots, Rests, and more . . .

End of Session 1

Lesson Plan Session 2

One reason I believe that choir is part of God's plan:

2nd Chronicles 5:11-14

Also the **Levites** which were the **singers**, all of them of **Asaph**, of **Heman**, of **Jeduthun**, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:)

It came to pass, as the **trumpeters and singers were as one**, to make **one sound** to be heard in **praising** and **thanking** the **LORD**; and when they **lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music**, and **praised** the **LORD**, saying, For **He** is good; for **His** mercy endures for ever: that then the house was filled with a **cloud**, even the house of the **LORD**;

So that the **priests could not stand to minister** by reason of the **cloud**: for the **glory of the LORD had filled the house of God**.

MMEStaff.doc

Show MMEStaff.doc This file is downloaded from MME website

We are going to begin this session reviewing our homework assignment. You should have downloaded this file and moved the Clef and Line and Space names to their correct locations. Here is where they should go:

Quiz Menu

Show Quiz Menu

Next, we are going to review the **quizzes** from session 1. You should have downloaded the quizzes and taken the test before this evening, but if you were unable to, just anticipate the correct answer.

Staff Quiz

Show Staff Quiz

Let us begin at **Da Capo**. (That is the **beginning!**) **Lead group through Quiz**

Accidentals Quiz

Show Accidentals Quiz - Lead group through Quiz

Road Signs Quiz

Show Road Signs Quiz - Lead group through Quiz

The Note Menu

Show Note Menu – Main Menu - Notes

Notes and Note Values – Music is a coded language. When you learn the code, it will unlock treasures of music. The code is not difficult to break with some understanding of the symbols.

Note Definition

Show Note Definition

Note definition - A Note is a symbol that describes two qualities of Music to the performer, **Pitch** and **Duration**.

Pitch – How ^{high} or **LOW** a note sounds. The pitch is shown by the vertical position of the note on the staff

Duration – How long a note sounds; shown by the value given the note.

Build a Note

Show Build a Note

Notes have shapes that tell us what their value is. We are not going to discuss **Pitch** and **Duration** yet, but simply learn about the construction of Notes. Notes are composed of the following shapes:

- **Head** – a slightly egg-shaped oval Some notes are composed only of the **Head**. Usually these notes have the longest duration.
- **Stem** – a vertical line attached to the right side of head and going up, or attached to the left and going down
- **Flag** – appears to be like a flag on a flagpole not fully furled

We will be exploring **several different ways** of understanding **Note Values**. Hopefully at least one of them will make sense to you.

Beams and Flags

Show Beams and Flags

We have already seen **8th Note** and **16th Note flags**. Let us see what happens when these notes are grouped together. Instead of a measure full of notes with flags, we can group them together with **Beams** for easier reading. Look at the two **8th notes** with flags. Here is what they look like with **Beams**.

Now look at four **16th notes** with **flags** and see what they look like with **beams**.

Note Values

Show Note Values



Note Values – The very basic understanding of note values relates well to a dollar. A dollar can come as a whole dollar, 2 half dollars, 4 quarters, etc. We will assign each quarter to be equal to 1 beat. Think of a measure that has 4 beats. It could be represented by 4 quarters, 2 half dollars, or 1 whole dollar, or a combination of 2 quarters and a half dollar. To fill a measure, we will need the equivalent of 1 dollar's worth of beats.

A whole dollar is comprised of 4 quarters. A whole note is comprised of 4 quarter notes. A whole dollar is comprised of 2 half dollars. A whole note is comprised of 2 half notes. The analogy with money breaks down when we half a quarter since we do not have a coin equal to half a quarter. In music, as in math, it becomes like a fraction and we call it an 8th note. It takes 2 eighth notes to equal one quarter note, so it would also take 8 eighth notes to fill up a measure of 4 beats. We will only subdivide beats as far as 16ths in these lessons. Most choir music does not subdivide the beat into 32nd notes.

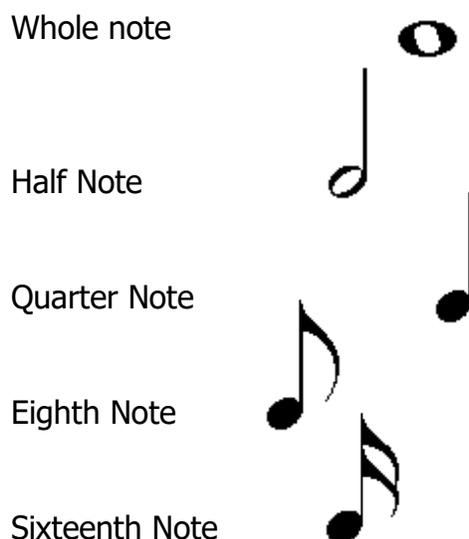
MME Notes in 4/4 Measure – Word document downloaded
Show MME Notes in 4/4 Measure

This is a Word document you can use to practice organizing beats in a measure. You will be emailed a link to download this page so you can practice. The **value** of the measure will be worth **4 beats** or equal to **1 whole note**. The **quarter note** will have the pulse of the beat. For right now, just ignore the **Dot**.

We can show **4** beats by showing the **Whole note**. We can also show it by showing **2 half notes**. Next, we show **4 Quarter notes**. We can also show a **half note** and **2 quarters**. The notes can be arranged in any order if the combined value totals **4 beats**.

Note Values

Show Note Values



Note Values Tree

Show Note Values Tree

The Note Values Tree – shows a diagram of how the notes relate to each other. To use this page effectively, use the **space bar** to pause the **timeline** and the **arrow keys** to move forward or backward. You will notice the flags and beams on **8th** and **16th** notes.

Duration

Show Duration

This page shows how notes relate when the quarter note gets one beat. As we roll over a **note value** at the top, notice the total number of beats. This is the first time we are assigning a beat value to a note. Every note value could have 1 beat. When that happens, the relationships between the notes stay the same. We will look at that more when we deal with **Time Signatures**.

Dotted Duration

Show Dotted Duration

Next, we look at the Dot- The **Dot** does a **number** on a **note**. That number is $\frac{1}{2}$, **.5**, or **50%**. That is right, when a dot is just to the left of a musical note it adds half of the value of that note, back to the note. Let us look at what the dot does to these note values: **Show the relationships on this page**

MME Notes in 4/4 Measure again

Show MME Notes in 4/4 Measure again

We are going back to the **Word** document now. Let us see some of the variations using the **Dot**. We will only be dotting the half note for now. The dotted half is equal to 3 quarters, so we can have a dotted half followed by a quarter or a quarter followed by a dotted half note.

Rests – Notes Menu

Show Rests

Leopold Stokowski said, “**Music is created on the canvas of silence.**” **Rests** represent silence in a musical piece. We will roll over the rests at the top of this page. Notice the similarity between the **whole** and **half rest**. To show an easy way to remember this, in just a moment we will look at the **Legend of the Hats**.

The relationships between rests is exactly like the relationships between notes

Rest Values

- Whole Rest = Whole Note
- Half Rest = Half Note
- Quarter Rest = Quarter Note
- Eighth Rest = Eighth Note
- Sixteenth Rest = Sixteenth Note

These rest values can be more quickly seen by using the right arrow key to move along through the rests.

Rhythm Menu

Show Rhythm Menu

We are getting ready to have some fun. We are first going to look at **Time Signatures**.

Time Signatures

Click Time Signatures

Time Signatures show how the beats are organized and what note value gets 1 beat. We will look at **2/4**, **3/4**, and **4/4**. The **upper** number shows the **number of beats** in a measure. The **lower** number shows **what kind of note** gets **1 beat**.

As we roll over the **time signatures** at the top, we see **what kind of note gets 1 beat** and **how many beats are in a measure**. Any note value can be equal to 1 beat and beats per measure range from 1 to 12.

Counting

Click Counting

Show/Hide Staff and **Bars**. It is easier to count when the Bar lines are present, and the measures are well defined. The Staff lines seem to clutter the screen for now so we will remove it.

The numbers to the left of each staff show how many beats are in each measure. We are assigning the **quarter note** to receive **1 beat** in this exercise. Notice the final whole note. The note stays lit until the downbeat of the next measure. A note does not end until the next note or rest begins. A common fault of choral music is shortchanging note values. Proper choir singing should require full note and phrase values.

Counting 2

Next to Counting 2

When we add rests, they are counted just like notes. Click the Silence Rests button to see the count but not here the beat.

More . . . 4/4 Pattern

Show More . . . 4/4 Pattern

A little bonus here . . . We are doing a quick conducting lesson. This is the 4/4 conducting pattern. First, we will look at the ictus of the beat. The ictus is the exact point where the beat occurs. We show its location by a bounce away from the next beat. Pretend that the beats are imaginary trampolines. Your job is to determine where each trampoline is placed, in relation to your body, and then show your choir where each one is by bouncing your hand on it. Remember, you must bounce away from the next beat to set up the proper attack.

You can practice this on your own with **Music Made Easy**.

Vocal Ranges

Show Vocal Ranges . . .

To help you get a handle on what your voice part should be, let us look at vocal ranges. Please understand that these are not universal ranges correct. They vary from person to person. The ranges shown are averages.

End Session 2

Lesson Plan Session 3

Welcome to **Session 3** of the **Music Made Easy Webinars**. We begin with a brief review of **Session 2**. I hope you had a chance to practice with the **MME Notes in 44 Measure.Doc** file. Sorry if you do not have **Microsoft Word** or **Corel WordPerfect** to utilize that file.

In **Session 2** we discussed **Note Values, Rests, Duration, Dotted Duration, Counting, Conducting** the **4/4 pattern**, and had a brief look at **Vocal Ranges**.

Notes Quiz

Show Notes Quiz - Lead group through Quiz

Fermata

Show Fermata

We are going to look at 3 very important symbols of music and then a grouping of dynamic markings that help you better interpret the music score.

The first is the **Fermata**. This symbol indicates a pause on a particular note or rest. The pulse of the music comes to a complete halt until the director indicates differently. When this occurs in solo music, it is held at the discretion of the soloist. A choir member should watch the director for the cue to begin again.

This symbol is sometimes called the bird's eye. We will touch it and see why . . .

Crescendo and Decrescendo

Show Crescendo and Decrescendo

The **Crescendo** is a symbol that indicates a **gradual increase** in volume. Sometimes, the symbol is used and sometimes just the word or abbreviation **cresc.** is used. **Crescendo** can be demonstrated by gradually increasing the volume on your **iPad**. The **key** word here is **gradual**. Usually the director also indicates this process with the **back side of the left hand**, fingers outstretched, while the hand is moving gradually higher.

The **Decrescendo** is a symbol that indicates a **gradual decrease** in volume. Sometimes, the symbol is used and sometimes just the word or abbreviation **decresc.** is used. Usually the director also indicates this process with the **palm of the left hand**, while the hand is moving gradually lower.

Next, let us look at an illustration that shows the symbols for both **Crescendo** and **Decrescendo**. Here the **Crescendo** is compared to a megaphone as used by a cheerleader to amplify her voice. The voice is at a softer volume on the speaking end than on the listening end. The conical shape of the megaphone amplifies the sound. You will notice that the shape of the **Crescendo** symbol follows the outline of the megaphone and indicates to start softly and gradually get louder and likewise the **Decrescendo** starts large and taper down to indicate gradually getting softer.

One of the great benefits of choir singing is the breath control that is required. It is therapeutic! Singers tend to be healthier and live longer than non-singers! Sounds like an ad for the choir!

Dynamics

Show Dynamics

Dynamics are notations that indicate relative volume levels in a piece of music. There are two primary words used, **piano – soft**, and **forte – loud**. Since loud and soft are very relative, there are degrees of loud and soft for the musician. I am reminded of the fellow who learned how to whisper in a sawmill. His soft would have to be very loud to be heard. A choir that sings only loudly all the time would certainly be boring. Dynamics help us get the attention of the listener. The choir that gives greater attention to dynamics is usually the better choir.

It would probably be easier to indicate dynamic levels with numbers, but we have a system of letters that represent words for the dynamic levels. We will look at what these are and what they mean. We will discuss **8** different levels of dynamics.

A prefix term that is used in conjunction with **piano** or **forte** to indicate **moderately soft** or **moderately loud** is the word **Mezzo**. You can see we have the term **mp** or **mezzo piano** and **mf** or **mezzo forte**.

Another term we use as a suffix which indicates **very** is "**issimo**". Near the extreme ends of the dynamic levels we have pianissimo and fortissimo. They mean very soft and very loud. For the extreme levels we add another **issi** and this indicates **very, very loud** or **very, very soft**.

Each choir member needs to learn their own dynamic levels so when the director or the music asks for a specific dynamic, the choir member can produce it.

We will roll over the various dynamic signs so you can see what they indicate.

More . . . Metronome

Show More . . . Metronome

Metronome markings indicate the exact tempo or speed of the flow of beats of the music. In 1815 **Johann Maelzel** invented and later patented a portable metronome. To this day we refer to the tempo of a musical piece with **MM** markings for **Maelzel's Metronome**. A marking of **MM 72** would indicate 72 beats per minute.

We will click a couple of the **MM** markings to show the difference in tempo.

Maelzel was an inventor and musician. He made several ear trumpets to aid Beethoven with his hearing. He also invented a machine that would play all of the instruments of a military band called the **panharmonicon**, powered by bellows and directed by revolving cylinders storing the notes. In **1813** he met Beethoven and convinced him to write a piece for the **panharmonicon**, entitled "**Wellington's Victory**" (Op. 91). It was rewritten for orchestra, and was first performed in **1813**.

Later it caused a bitter conflict between the two men, when Maelzel claimed ownership of the piece, and Beethoven sued.

Rhythm . . . Duplets and Triplets

Show Rhythm . . . Duplets and Triplets

Last session we spent some time counting beats in measures. This session we want to look at some even **8th** notes, **triplets**, and dotted **8th** – **16th** patterns. These rhythms are often glossed over and not given their actual value.

We will start with even **8th** notes. The ampersand represents the “**and**” or “**upbeat**”. You recall when we talked about conducting the **4/4 pattern**, we said that the beats always go in a **downward** direction. That works fine for the primary pulses in a measure, but the beats that are not on the primary pulse have a specific direction as well. We call 8th notes that are not on primary beats “**upbeats**”. For simplicity sake we call these “**and**”. In conducting these beats **bounce** on the ictus or beat away from the direction of the next beat. The angle created by this **bounce** shows the **exact location** of the **beat** to the musicians.

Let us get the feel of even 8th notes. [Click Even 8th Notes](#)

Count out loud so you can get accustomed to the feel of these **8th** notes. Make sure the “**and**” of the beat is precise.

Click Even 8^{ths} and 8th triplets

Now we will listen to even **8^{ths}** and **8th triplets**. After getting used to the pulse of even **8th** notes, when we listen to **8th** notes and **8th triplets**, there is a definite tension. We are squeezing an extra pulse, so we have **3** notes occupying the space that was taken by **2** notes. As the **triplets** are pulsing, the **ampersand** continues to mark the even **8th** pulse. This is where the **tension** can be felt. Do you feel it? We will need to move on, but this is a page you may want to return to later in **Music Made Easy** to master this rhythm.

Click Dotted Rhythm

The first thing to notice is the short beam on the **16th** note. The longer beam is a single **8th** note **beam**, and since the dotted **8th** is equal to one **8th** + one **16th**, to fill out the value to a full beat, it must either contain a **16th** note or **16th** rest. Since the dotted **8th** is also equal to three **16th** notes, this pattern will make more sense when you see the **three 16th** notes. So, let us look at the rhythm pattern of the dotted **8th** – **16th**, and see what we can learn.

Rhythm . . . Dotted 8th – 16th

Show Rhythm . . . Dotted 8th – 16th

We are moving to a page that has a takes several steps to introduce the dotted **8th** – **16th** notes rhythm. Many choirs sing these dotted rhythms without precision. They tend to be performed more like triplets than precise to the value of the **16th**.

As we roll over the dotted **8th**, you can see the ghost of the three **16th** notes that equal the dotted **8th**. Let us play this rhythm without the enhancements. You can hear there is a precise location for the **16th** note. To help us feel the exact location, we click the example at the top of the page that shows **four 16th** notes on the **4th** beat. This will indicate the exact location of all **4**. Now, do the second example that ties the three **16th** notes together. They sound as one. Next, we show the dotted rhythm, but still “ghost” the **16th** notes. Finally, we play the last example without the helps, but now you do not need them.

Rhythm . . . Dotted 16th – 8th

Show Rhythm . . . Dotted 16th – 8th

This page uses the same teaching method to explain the dotted **16th** followed by the **8th**.

Pitch and Scales . . . Pitch Definition

Show Pitch and Scales . . . Pitch Definition

We have spent quite a bit of time on note values and rhythm, so we turn our attention to **Pitch**. Remember that the definition of **Pitch**, is how **high** or **low** a **note** sounds. **High** notes are on the **right** side of the **Keyboard** and **Low** notes are on the **left** side. Also, **Higher** notes are located higher on the staff, and **lower** notes are positioned **lower** on the staff. Notes that are located on the same position of a staff and are unaffected by accidentals sound the same.

Review

Whole and Half Steps

Show Whole and Half Steps

Western Music is composed using **Whole** and **Half** Steps. We will show the difference between **whole** and **half steps** on this keyboard. With a good understanding of the keyboard and the way pitches relate, it is possible to understand the way **pitches** are related on the **staff**.

Notice that whole steps can be **white** to **black**, **black** to **black**, or **white** to **white**. **Half** steps can be **white** to **black**, **black** to **white**, or **white** to **white**. You should train your ear to tell the difference between Whole and Half steps.

Listen to some half steps, and then some whole steps.

Lines and Spaces

Show Lines and Spaces

We take another look at this page to show how we need the keyboard to help understand the relationships of whole and half steps. Sometimes moving from a line to a space is a whole step and sometimes it is a half step, so we need to look at the keyboard to see, so we need to look at the keyboard. The top space **E** in the treble staff moving to the top line **F** is $\frac{1}{2}$ step, but the 3rd space **C** moving to the 4th line **D** is a whole step. Viewing this on the keyboard shows there are no notes

between the white note **E** and the white note **F**, but there is a black note **D#/Eb** between the white note **C** and the white note **D**. **Examples:**

Scale Definition

Show Scale Definition

The discussion of whole and half steps leads right to a discussion of scales. What is a scale? Any series of tones arranged in a step by step rising or falling order of Pitch. A scale defines the relationship of each pitch to the others in a musical piece. A song built on a major scale or key will have a distinctly different flavor than a song built on a minor scale.

C-Major Scale Stairsteps

Show C-Major Scale Stairsteps

Musical scales are organized by octaves or 8 tones. There are 12 distinct tones between the beginning note and the ending note of the same name, but the scale only uses 8 of them. The major scale uses 8 consecutive notes. The C Major Scale is played only on the white keys.

The organization of whole and half steps is identical for ANY major scale. The order is **whole – whole – half – whole – whole – whole – half**.

C-Major Scale on the Staff

Show C-Major Scale Staff

On this page we show the relationship between notes played on the keyboard, and notes displayed on the staff. We will do an upward scale and then a downward one. Notice that the interval arrangement of whole and half steps stays consistent in both directions. **Upward Scale: C - whole – D - whole – E - half – F - whole – G - whole – A - whole – B - half – C.** **Downward Scale: C - half – B - whole – A - whole – G - whole – F - half – E - whole – D – whole – C.**

Major Scales

Show Major Scales/Circle of 5ths

The **Circle of 5^{ths}** is an interesting phenomenon in the mathematics of music. We click **Show Steps**, and you will notice that the step progressions stay the same regardless of which key we roll over. Let us roll over the major scales represented in the **Circle of 5^{ths}** in just a moment, we can see each scale has the same step structure in common with the others. **Remember to roll over Clear Scales in the center of the Circle before touching another or you will have a mess of notes!** Let me drive us around the **Circle of 5^{ths}**. This will take just a moment.

Every key is related to the key to its left and the key to its right. The **Circle of 5^{ths}** shows the direct relationship between keys that contain on each other's tetra chords (4 note scales). The upper tetra chord of the key on the left equals the lower tetra chord of the main key. The upper tetra chord of the main key is equal to the lower tetra chord of the key on the right. The Key on the right starts on the 5th pitch of the scale on the left. Let me show you:

Example:

C Chord Upper tetra chord = **G-A-B-C** same as **lower** tetra chord of **G**
 Lower tetra chord = **C-D-E-F** same as **upper** tetra chord of **F**

A chord built on the root of the main key is I; the same chord on the left key is IV of the main key; the chord on the right is the V chord of the main key. Thus, every group of 3 keys could be represented by IV – I – V. Nearly every Country Western song can be sung using just the primary chords of the 3 keys.

As we move in a counterclockwise direction from the key of C, we add a Flat to the key. When we move in a clockwise direction from C, we add a sharp each time.

End Session 3

Lesson Plan Session 4

Welcome to **Session 4** of the **Music Made Easy Webinars**. We begin with a review of last **Session 3**.

Symbols Quiz

[Show Symbols Quiz - Lead group through Quiz](#)

The **Symbols Quiz** has **18** questions. I am sure you got these all correct, but let us go through them.

Chromatics Scale

[Show Chromatics Page \(Sharps and Flats\)](#)

A scale that we have not looked at is the chromatic scale. The chromatic scale is a scale of half steps, with no whole steps being present. We said at our last session that that there are 12 different half steps between octaves. Counting the instances of the octave which is a repeat of the starting note 1 octave higher there are a total of 13 pitches. We will show a chromatic scale from C to C going in an upward direction, and then going in a downward direction.

You can see and hear that every tone between the octave C's is played.

Major Scales Circle of Fifths

[Show Major Scales Circle of Fifths Page](#)

We are going to take another look at the **Major** scales on the **Circle of Fifths** page. There are unique relationships between Major scales. Some of those are:

- As we travel in a **counterclockwise** direction from the **key** of **C**, we add **1 flat** per **key**, until we have **7**
- As we travel in a **clockwise** direction, we add **1 sharp** per **key** until we have **7**
- All adjacent keys have either the first **4** or last **4** notes in common. We call these groups of notes **tetrachords**.

- Starting with the key of **C#** moving counterclockwise, each key falls naturally into the next key, and is the easiest modulation. **Modulation means to change keys.**

We spoke at our last lesson about the flats and sharps that are present in major scales, but we did not talk about Key Signatures. The Key Signature tells the musician in advance which notes will be **sharped** or **flatted**. It is beneficial to note the **key signature** so every time a note is used that has a **flat** or **sharp** in the signature, there is no need to place the **sharp** or **flat** next to it. Only when the music calls for a sharp or flat that is not in the **Key Signature** will those symbols be used. After an accidental is used, the **Natural** sign may be used to cancel the flat or sharp. Also, the bar line will cancel accidentals.

Remember to roll over the **Clear Scales** in the center of the circle before rolling over a Key. To show the **Key Signature**, **click** the **Key** with the **left** mouse button. To remove the accidentals, **double-click** the **Key**. Notice when both the **Key Signature**, and the accidentals are showing, that the **Key Signature** includes all the sharps or flats used. **Demonstrate**

I want to reiterate how closely the adjacent keys in the Circle of Fifths are related. Though we are not getting into a discussion of chords, any 3 adjacent keys are so closely related that 90% of Country Western songs can be performed using only chords built on the first degree of the scale from the adjacent cluster of 3 keys. Country Western music uses the **I IV** and **V** chords. The middle key of the cluster is the **I** key, the key to the right is the **V** key and the key to the left is the **IV** key.

Key Signatures Page

[Show Key Signatures Page](#)

Key Signatures are groups of the **sharps** or **flats** used to form a scale. They are placed to the **right** side of the **clef** on the **staff**. When a note appears in the music, the **sharp** or **flat** in the key signature is applied to that note. This avoids the clutter of **accidentals** in every measure.

This is a good practice page to learn **Key Signatures**. After you roll over a Key with the mouse, single click it to view the Key Signature. Remember, as we go counterclockwise from **C**, we add 1 **flat**. As we go clockwise from **C**, we add a **sharp**.

Key Signatures Shortcuts

[Show Key Signatures Shortcuts](#)

These shortcuts will help you be able to quickly tell what **Key** the music is in. Now we are primarily talking about **Major** keys. Most of our music is in **Major keys**, so these shortcuts all apply to **Major Key Signatures**. Two **Key Signatures** require memorizing. They are **C** with no **sharps** or **flats** and **F** with **1 flat**.

Sharps: The name of the **key** is $\frac{1}{2}$ higher than the last sharp added. Let us test this out on the **Key Signatures Page**.

Flats: The name is the **key** is the same as the **next to last flat added**, which is the **flat just to the left of the farthest flat to the right**. Let us test this out on the **Key Signatures Page**.

Key Signatures Quiz

Show Key Signatures Quiz and Guide them through it

Intervals

Show Intervals

Let us visit the Intervals of thirds on the Intervals page. We will discuss **Size Vs. Quality** when it comes to Intervals. Both intervals are thirds. However, **Quality** says that one is **Major**, and one is **minor**.

Size is determined by counting the lines and spaces between the 2 notes, including the lines where the notes are. Quality is determined by counting the half steps between the notes.

Roll over the **Size button**. Based on Size, both Intervals are thirds. Adding the two lines and the space between them equals 3. There are 3 lines or spaces between them.

Roll over the **Quality button**. The Interval on the left is major because there are 4 half steps between them. The Interval on the right is minor because there are 3 half steps between them.

Sight Singing

Show Keyboard Intervals Upward

A good way to practice sight singing Intervals is to sing the #'s. As you sing them, remind yourself which interval you are singing. Sometimes it helps to use the number of the note, like **1- 2; 1- 3; 1 – 4; 1 – 5; 1 – 6; 1 – 7; and finally, 1 – 8.**

Keyboard Intervals Upward

Show Keyboard Intervals Upward

Let me say that these intervals are being figured from the tonic or root note of the **C Major scale** which is **C**. The interval of a Major 3rd always sounds like a Major third, regardless of its starting note. Therefore, if you will train you ear to recognize intervals, your sight-reading ability will flourish. Practice singing each of the intervals in a major scale starting with the **C** and going to the next note, which is **D** and a **Major 2nd**. Then practice singing **C** to **E**, which is a **Major 3rd**. Then sing **C** to **F** which is a **Perfect 4th**; **C** to **G** – **Perfect 5th**; **C** to **A** - **Major 6th**; **C** to **B** – **Major 7th**; and **C** to **C** – **Octave**. As you sing them, remind yourself which interval you are singing. Sometimes it helps to use the number of the note, like **1- 2; 1- 3; 1 – 4; 1 – 5; 1 – 6; 1 – 7; and finally, 1 – 8.**

We are not going to dwell on minor, diminished, or augmented intervals, but I want to show you how to find them. To access these, click the **minor-augmented-diminished intervals** label on the keyboard.

Keyboard Intervals Downward

Show Keyboard Intervals Downward

The downward moving intervals are worth considering after you can sing all the upward intervals. This page works just like the Upward page.

Intervals on Staff Page

Show Intervals on Staff Page

These intervals are shown on the staff, to help you relate them to the printed page of music. **Major** and **Perfect** interval labels are on the right, minor diminished and augmented interval labels are on the left. Note that the smallest interval is the **minor 2nd**.

Staff Steps Page

Show Staff Steps Page

These intervals do not sound but should help you learn the number of steps in an interval. It is the **number of steps** that determines the **Quality** of an interval. The **number of lines and spaces including** the note locations determine the **Size** of the interval.

Name the Interval Page

Show Name the Interval Page

This was the most challenging page to create in **Music Made Easy**. The page lets you click any 2 notes on the keyboard, play them and then it tells you which interval you chose. The challenge was to have the program remember the first note played and then calculate the distance between the 2 notes. The numbers of half steps determine the **Quality** of an interval, and the next calculation compared the number of half steps to the interval that has that many half steps. I would have to shoot you if I told you how I did it!

To use this page, you must remember to always roll over the **Mouse Here to Reset** under the keyboard.

Now we will click some notes and let the **Music Made Easy** program show you the interval. I wish I had this page when taking ear training in college!

Pitch and Scales Quiz

Show Pitch and Scales Quiz - Lead group through Quiz

Choir Stuff

Many things other than just the notes or musical markings on the page of music must be important to an effective choir member. As you would familiarize yourself with a book before you read it, you want to do the same with a piece of music:

- Title
- Copyright date
- Composer
- Arranger – what does “arranged by” mean? The arranger is the one who takes the basic song and decides key, style, flow, etc.
- Words and Music by or Lyricist
- Suggested tempo – how does the director know how fast or slow a song should be sung?

- What is a tune? . . . Tunes sometimes have names . . . A familiar tune may have a different set of words.
- A piece of music may be dedicated to someone or may have been commissioned to commemorate a special occasion.

Good Posture and Singing Skills:

- Stand or sit erect with both feet on the floor and lean slightly forward.
- Hold your music where you can see the director just over the top of your music.
- Be prompt and pay attention! Resist the urge to engage in excessive talking and visiting with your neighbors at inappropriate times. Most choir practices are limited on time and wasting the director's time is a waste of time for everyone in attendance.
- Continue to look attentive and in the mood of the song even until the last note of the accompaniment has been played.
- Even in rehearsal it is important to use good posture and singing skills – you will feel better about the time spent, and actually benefit physically from the activity.
- Communicate with your face, eyes (raise your eyebrows a little) and have a bright enthusiastic look.
- Have a testimony and a desire to communicate it.
- Above all – Be Faithful

