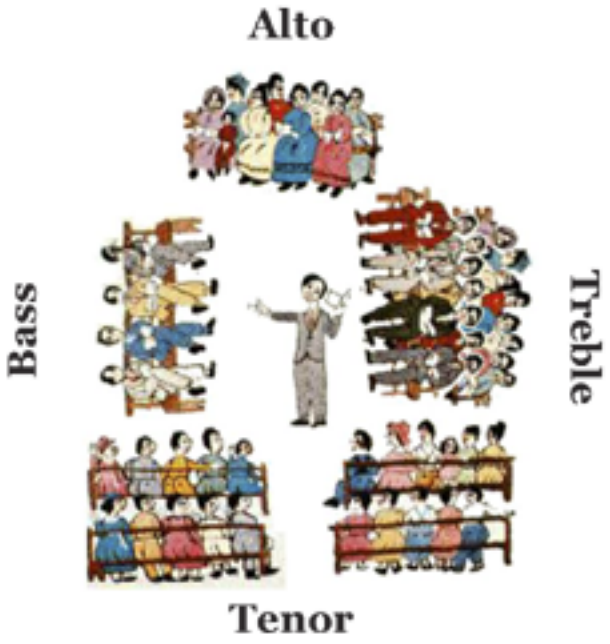
Sacred Harp Singing School Workbook



by David I. Lee
Hoboken, Georgia
December 2004
with additions by
Karen E. Willard
Buckley, Washington
2013 edition

The teachings of this Workbook are based upon the Rudiments of *The Sacred Harp*. Page and paragraph numbers to current versions of the Rudiments in both the 1991 Denson and the 2012 Cooper Sacred Harps are given at the top of some of the pages. It is highly recommended that this workbook be used merely as a supplement to the Rudiments.

Additional copies of this Workbook and its CD are available. Write to 15215 Tubbs Road, Buckley, WA 98321 or KarenWeelyrd@me.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

This package of lessons is intended to teach you how to read and sing Sacred Harp music (also known as Shapenote singing). Many generations of young children, people rich in years, and everyone between, have been taught to sing Sacred Harp music using the principles outlined in this package. The author of these lessons is a fifth generation Sacred Harp singer, and has gained much comfort and pleasure from the ability to sing and enjoy this music.

These lessons are intended to teach only the *basics* of Sacred Harp singing. They are arranged in a progression of understanding and each of the lessons in this package will be more easily understood when you have learned the lessons that come before it. However, you should also feel free to explore throughout the lessons as your curiosity and interest lead you.

The attached CD has demonstrations of some of the lessons. Those lesson pages are marked at the top with a CD 1, or CD 2, etc., which gives the track number on the CD that corresponds to that particular lesson. The CD can be played in a standard CD player or on your computer. Be ready to pause the CD to prevent moving past the lesson you are studying.

For more information about singing Sacred Harp music, you should also read and study the Rudiments of Music printed in *The Sacred Harp, Revised Cooper Edition*. This songbook which was originally published in 1844 underwent a major revision in 1902. [Latest edition in 2012] It has been used as the primary songbook for shapenote singing in southeast Georgia for well over a century.

Read and study these lessons and be sure to attend as many Sacred Harp singings as possible. As with any talent, proficiency is the reward of practice. Don't give up on yourself when studying these lessons. If you give the same effort learning to sing that you gave learning to talk, you could sing as well as you talk. Hopefully these lessons will help open the door for you to enjoy a lifetime of singing Sacred Harp music for the comfort of your heart and soul.

David I. Lee
Hoboken, GA
December, 2004

I have provided a very few changes and two chapters to this workbook by David I. Lee in order to expand it to Denson book singers and to go beyond the entry level singers his chapter addresses..

The songbook first put together by Benjamin Franklin White and Elisha J. King in 1844 had gone through 4 editions by the 1879 death of B. F. White. In 1902 the first next-generation edition, by Wilson Marion Cooper, was brought out. This has remained in print ever since; and each time it has been reprinted, it has been revised by committee in the same way as B. F. White had done it. A number of singings use this book in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas; it has spread to several states outside the South, and is now being sung from in Canada and across the Atlantic Ocean.

Not long after the 1902 Cooper book came out, other books also descending from the 1844 Sacred Harp were published. The ancestor of the Denson book was supervised by Judge Joseph James in 1911, the Original Sacred Harp *, and is now known by its nickname, the James Book. When the supply of that book ran out, two brothers in the Denson family (who had worked with Judge James on his edition), brought out another book, titled* The Original Sacred Harp, Denson edition. *The last official Denson edition was printed in 1987 and the next edition in 1991 carried the new title,* The Sacred Harp, 1991 edition. *This edition, which despite the title is still referred to as the Denson book, is used throughout the U.S., in Canada, and the United Kingdom.*

The national website for information on shapenote singing is `http://fasola.org` *An additional helpful website is* `http://pnwshs.org`

Karen E. Willard
Buckley, WA
Workbook last revised July, 2005; March, 2013; June, 2013

See Denson Rudiments pg. 13 #1-2; Cooper Rudiments pg. ix #3-4

CD 1

Chapter One

PITCH and TIME

A Tune is a series of sounds that are made at different Pitches and held for different amounts of Time, all in succession. There are two important concepts that you need to learn in order to follow a tune in Sacred Harp singing. They are:

PITCH — defined as how high or low you make a particular sound.
TIME — defined as how long you hold a particular sound.

In order to sing together, we must all make the same sound together and hold it for the same length of time. Thus, we need a way to regulate the Pitch (everyone making the same sound) and to regulate Time (everyone holding it for the same length of time).

To regulate the Pitch, we use a Scale. The Scale is a repeating pattern of seven sounds where each sound is a little bit higher than the sound just before it. If we all learn and follow the same Scale, we will be able to pitch our voices to the same sound. You will learn about the Scale in a later lesson.

To regulate Time we use a series of beats, like beating a drum, in a pattern that repeats itself over and over. This allows us to keep up with each other by following the pattern of beats, much like walking together and keeping our steps in time with each other. You will learn about the different modes of Time (different patterns of beats) in a later lesson.

CD 2

See Denson Rudiments pg. 13 #7; Cooper Rudiments pg xv #69-70

NOTE SHAPES

There are four note shapes that the Sacred Harp singers use to read the music. Those shapes are shown below, along with their name and proper pronunciation.

This triangle-shaped note is named “FA” and is pronounced “*fah*”.

This roundish-shaped note is named “SOL” and is pronounced “*sole*”.

This square-shaped note is named “LA” and is pronounced “*lah*”.

This diamond-shaped note is named “MI” and is pronounced “*mee*”.

See Denson Rudiments pgs. 17-18 #9-13; Cooper Rudiments pg. xx Note & N.B.

CD 3

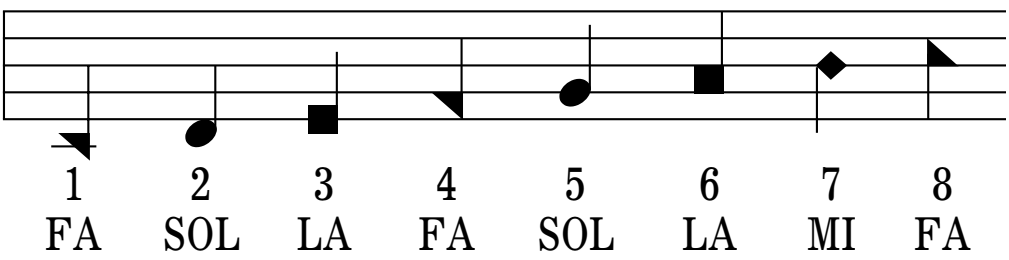
THE MAJOR SCALE

There are 7 unique sounds, or notes, in the Major Scale. When singing the Scale, we sing these 7 notes in order, from lowest to highest. You may think of the Scale as a "staircase of sounds" because, like a staircase, the Scale is consistent and will always move up from note to note by the same amount each time you sing it. The distance in sound from one note to the next is called an Interval. By learning to sing the Scale the same way every time, we can all sing together by starting with Note 1 and setting our voices together at that Pitch and then moving up the same amount each time we raise our voices to the next note.

When we reach the 7th note, we don't stop but sing one more note, just as if we were climbing a staircase and go up one more to reach a landing. In music, when we've sung up the 7 notes of the scale, and then go one more note/stair to a "landing", we call what we have sung, an octave (octave means "eight"). It is really this octave that we sing when we "sing the scale". The 8th note, as you can see in the illustration below, has the same shape and same name as the 1st note. The 8th note shown there is, in fact, the 1st note of another sequence of 7 notes (a repetition of the Major Scale) continuing on up higher. (See the next lesson for more on this.)

Practice singing these 8 notes, over and over, both up and then back down, until you can easily recognize the Intervals between each note. Once you have mastered the Scale by singing from Note 1 through Note 8, it is a good idea to then skip around. Begin singing Note 1 and then skip to Note 3 and then skip to Note 5 and then skip to Note 8. These 1 - 3 - 5 - 8 notes represent the 4 primary notes in this Scale. Also practice skipping from Note 1 to Note 8, from Note 2 to Note 5, and so forth. The more familiar you become with the Scale, the easier it will be for you to read the notes of a song and sing it consistently and in tune with other singers around you. Chapter 3 has additional exercises.

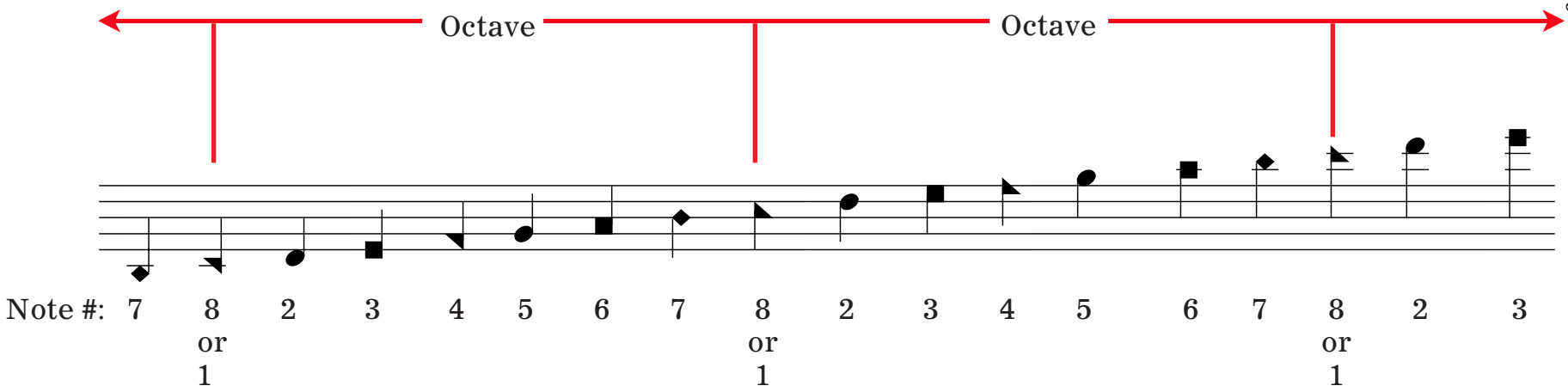
Note: This is the Major Scale. In Sacred Harp music there are only two Scales, each with its regular pattern of intervals between notes. The other scale is the Minor Scale, covered in a later lesson.



CD 4

THE MULTI-OCTAVE SCALE

See Cooper Rudiments pg. xiv illustration



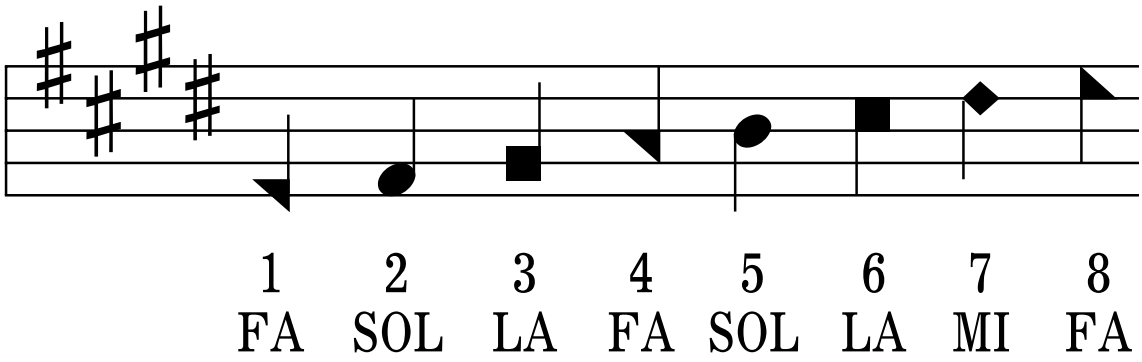
Notice that Note 1 also serves as Note 8 for the Octave below it. Also notice that the Octave simply repeats itself over and over for as low or as high as you can sing. Note 1 and Note 8 are considered Unison in sound, meaning that though they are of two different pitches (Note 8 is higher than Note 1), they have the same tone and are given the same notehead shape and are called by the same name, FA. Note 8 is considered to be the ending note for the Octave below and is also, serving as Note 1, considered to be the beginning note for the Octave above.

See Denson Rudiments pg. 13 #8; Cooper Rudiments pg. xx #114See Denson Rudiments pg. 13 #1-2; Cooper Rudiments pg. ix #3-4

CD 5

THE MUSICAL STAFF

The Staff is a group of five lines with spaces between each of the lines drawn across the page so that Notes may be placed on them in order. This helps the singer to gauge the intervals between the notes and guides the singing. Each of the four parts (Treble, Alto, Tenor, & Bass) are written on a separate Staff. (When you refer to more than one Staff, they are called Staves.) If Note 1 is written *on* the bottom line, then Note 2 would be written *in the space* between line 1 and line 2; Note 3 would be written *on* the second line from the bottom; Note 4 would be written *in the space* between the second line and the third line; and so forth.



CD 6

See Denson Rudiments pg. 13 #4; 21 #1-18; Cooper Rudiments pg. ix #3; xviii #107-129

MELODY & HARMONY

Melody is defined as the tune of the song. When singing a familiar tune, like "Mary Had A Little Lamb," or any other song, we are singing the Melody line of music.

Harmony is defined as the blending of two or more sounds at different pitches that are pleasing to the ear. Discord is caused when those sounds are not pleasing to the ear.

Certain notes in the Scale will harmonize when sung together, other notes will not. Usually, notes that are next to each other in the Scale will not harmonize when sung together (for example Note 1 and Note 2, or Note 3 and Note 4). Notes that are at least two or more steps apart will usually harmonize (e.g. Note 1 and Note 3, or Note 1 and Note 4). Also, harmonies can be made with more than two notes sung together (e.g. Note 1, Note 3, and Note 5, or Note 2, Note 5, and Note 7, and so forth).

Harmony is a major component of Sacred Harp singing. There are four different singing parts which give Sacred Harp singing its unique sound. You will learn about these four parts in the next lesson.

See Denson Rudiments pg. 13 #8; Cooper Rudiments pg. xiv #58

THE FOUR PARTS

The Four Parts of Sacred Harp music are actually four different tunes of music within the same song, all sung together, which create the striking harmonies associated with this style of singing.

The Four Parts are:

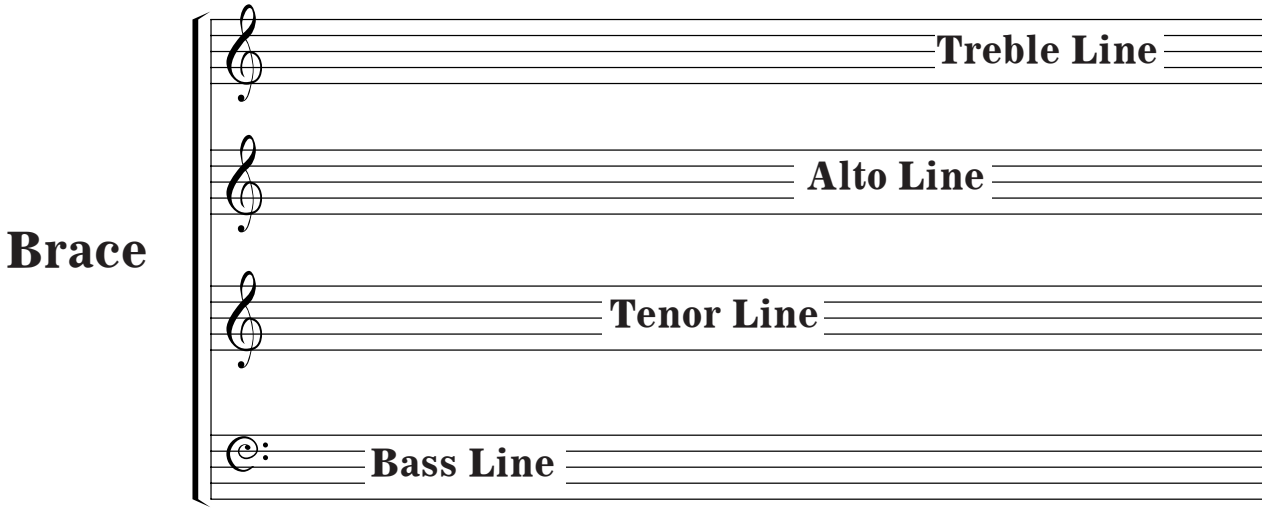
TREBLE — The high harmony part, sung by men, women, boys, and girls.

ALTO — A low harmony part, sung by women and girls; sometimes called Counter.

TENOR — The Melody (or familiar tune) of the song. This part is sung by men, women, boys, and girls. This is the first part that should be studied and learned by children and adults before moving on to the other parts.

BASS — A low harmony part, sung by men.

A Brace of music is a section of the page of music that contains four separate Staves of music, one Staff for each of the four parts. They are arranged on the page in the following order:



See Denson Rudiments pg. 14 #3; 15 #10-11; Cooper Rudiments pg. x #11-46

MEASURE OF MUSIC

A Measure is the amount of space given on a Staff between two Measure Bars that indicates one full group of beats, and as learned in a later lesson, everything between two measure bars represents one cycle of arm motion (for those beating time to the song).

Depending on which Mode of time is indicated for a song, each measure has a fixed number of parts, and a fixed number of beats in the pattern for that mode.

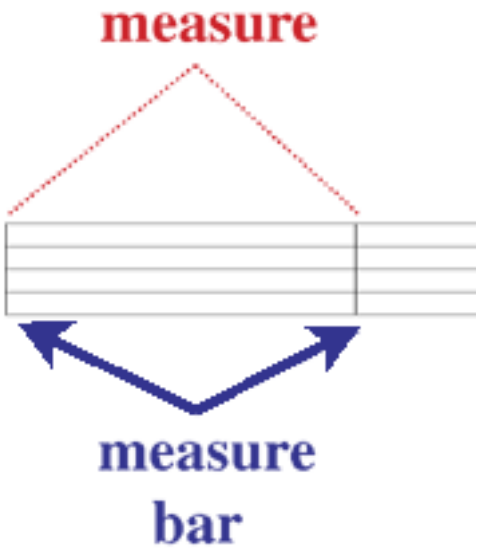
In COMMON TIME, the number of parts will be ONE TWO, or ONE TWO THREE FOUR.

In COMPOUND TIME, the number of parts will be ONE two three FOUR five six.

In TRIPLE TIME, the number of parts will be ONE two THREE.

The Mode of Time for any song is indicated at the beginning of the song by the Time Signature. See the later lesson on the Three Modes Of Time.

To recap, a measure is that amount of music between two measure bars* and it should always be full of notes and/or rests, with "full" defined by the time signature.



**In non-Sacred Harp music, a "bar" is what Sacred Harp calls a "measure". One will hear non-SH musicians speaking of so many "bars" of music. To translate that into Sacred Harp nomenclature, one would speak of so many "measures" of music.*

See Denson Rudiments pg. 15 #7-9; Cooper Rudiments pg. ix illustration on right; x #8-10

NOTE SIZES & REST SIZES

(also called Note Duration & Rest Duration)

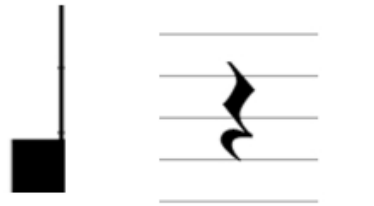
Notes are sized as follows (all sizes apply to each of the four noteheads, whether FA, SOL, LA, or MI, along with their equivalent Rests. A Rest is used in place of a note when the singer is to be silent. Rests may be used at the beginning of a song or anywhere throughout the song. A Rest has the same duration value as the note of the same name. These notes & rests are sometimes quicker and sometimes slower according to the several modes of time. But they always bear the same proportion to each other, whatever the mode of time may be.

whole

The Whole note and rest are each equal to 2 half notes, or 4 quarter notes, or 8 eighth notes, or 16 sixteenth notes. The whole note is a white note with **no** stem. Notice that the whole rest hangs below its staff line.

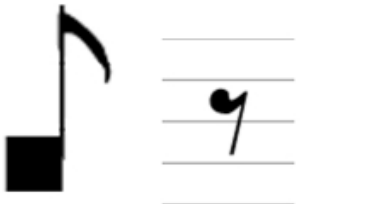
half

The Half note and rest are each equal to 2 quarter notes, or 4 eighth notes, or 8 sixteenth notes. The half note is a white note **with** a stem. Notice that the half rest floats atop its staff line.



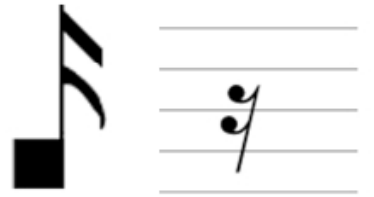
quarter

The Quarter note and rest are each equal to 2 eighth notes, or 4 sixteenth notes. The quarter note is a black note with a stem. The quarter rest might also look like: 



eighth

The Eighth note and rest are each equal to 2 sixteenth notes. The eighth note is a black note with a stem with one flag.



sixteenth

The Sixteenth note and rest are the shortest duration note or rest you will encounter in SH songs. The sixteenth note is a black note with a stem and two flags (*w/ a curly or rectangular shape to the flag, both shown here, depending upon the typesetter*).

+ 1/2

A dot after a rest or note adds 1/2 again the value of that note or rest in duration. Think of it as making the note it is attached to sound or rest longer.

CD 7

See Denson Rudiments pg. 15 #10-16; Cooper Rudiments pg. x #11-46

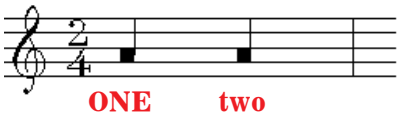
MODES OF TIME

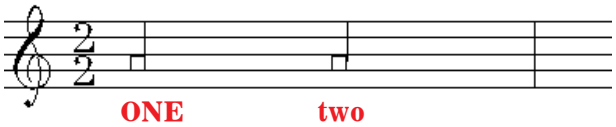
As we learned earlier, Time is how we regulate our ability to hold a note for the same length of time as all the other singers. We use a series of beats, like beating a drum, in a pattern that repeats itself over and over. There are seven patterns, or Modes of Time, that are used in Sacred Harp singing.

The Time signature, see next lesson, tells us the mode of time.

COMMON TIME — there are three modes of Common Time, 2/4 4/4 2/2.

When the time signature is 2/4 or 2/2:
there are two parts to each measure and the regular pattern of beats goes ONE two for each measure. Emphasis is put on the first beat of each measure, and singers will pat their foot once per measure, on the first beat.
2/4 is the fastest and 2/2 is the slowest* of Common Time.





When the Time Signature is 4/4 :

In Hoboken GA and to a lesser extent on Sand Mountain AL: Common Time's 4/4 has a regular pattern of beats that goes ONE TWO THREE FOUR, for each measure until the end of the song. Say each number with equal emphasis (or accent**) in a regular, steady cadence while patting your foot on each number.

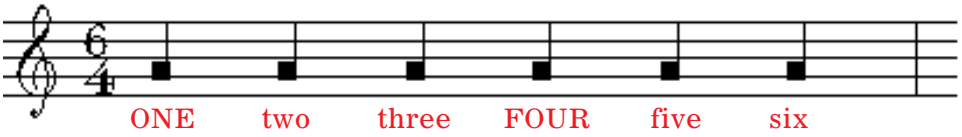
Everywhere else: Common Time's 4/4 has a pattern of beats that goes ONE two THREE four, for each measure until the end of the song. Say the 1st number with full emphasis (accent), the 3rd number with less emphasis, and the 2nd and 4th numbers with the least emphasis, while patting your foot on the 1st and 3rd beats of each measure.

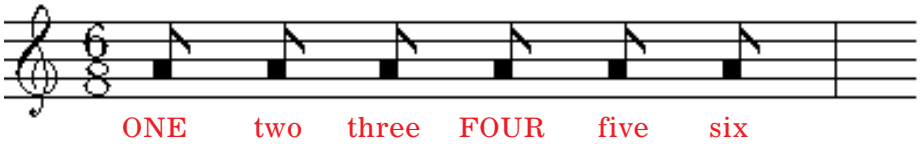
The tempo used with 4/4 is in between the speeds of 2/4 and 2/2.

**This is exactly opposite in non-SH music, where 2/2 is called "cut time" and is performed very fast.*
*** "Accent" in SH means pulsing of the voice.*

COMPOUND TIME — there are two modes of Compound Time

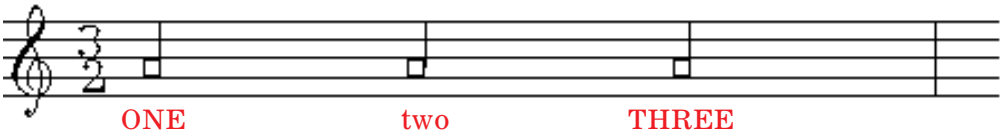
Compound Time is divided into six parts to each measure, and has a regular pattern of beats that goes: ONE two three FOUR five six for each measure to the end of the song. To learn this pattern, say each number in a regular cadence, but put your regular emphasis (or accent) only on the ONE and FOUR while pulling back on any emphasis on the two, three, five, and six. Pat your foot on the ONE and FOUR only. 6/8 is faster than 6/4.

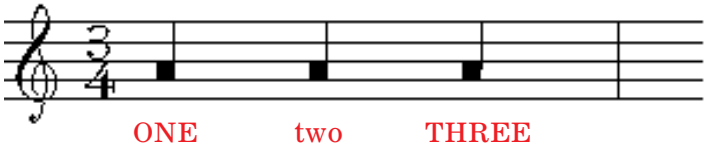




TRIPLE TIME — there are two modes of Triple Time

Triple Time is divided into three parts to each measure, and has a regular pattern of beats that goes: ONE two THREE for each measure of the song. To learn this pattern, say each number in a regular cadence, but put emphasis (or accent) on the ONE and THREE while putting no emphasis on the two. Pat your foot on ONE and THREE. The pattern of beats in this mode is generally slower than in Compound Time. 3/4 is faster than 3/2.





The Modes of Time tell us three things about a song:

(1) how many parts in each measure and the kind of note that fills one part;

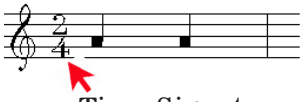
(2) how we are to accent/pulse our voice in each measure (and how we are to move our arms to indicate the beats);

(3) the default tempo for the song. This is not explored in this beginner's workbook as it is a topic for intermediate and advanced leaders and singers.

TIME SIGNATURES

Time Signatures are the numbers at the beginning of a Staff of music that tell the Mode of Time (whether Common, Compound, or Triple) for any particular song, or part of a song (some songs change mode in the middle).

A Time Signature consists of two numbers, one written above the other, like this: $\frac{2}{4}$


Time Signature

Each Mode of Time has its own set of Time Signatures:

COMMON TIME — $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ also written 2/4, 4/4, 2/2

COMPOUND TIME — $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ also written 6/8, 6/4

TRIPLE TIME — $\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ also written 3/2, 3/4

In each of the Time Signatures above, the top number tells the number of parts per Measure and the bottom number tells which size note fills one part. For example, in COMMON TIME, one of the Modes shown above is a **2** over a **4** (said "two over four") and indicates that there are **2** parts per measure and that a Quarter Note fills one part. In COMPOUND TIME, the first Mode shown above is a **6** over **8** and indicates that there are **6** parts per Measure and that an Eighth Note fills one part.

As we learned in the Pitch and Time lesson, it is necessary for all singers to hold each note the same amount of time in order to sing together. We regulate that time by holding each note for a specific part of the measure. Some notes will be held for 2 parts, some notes will be held for 1 part, some for 4 parts, some notes will be held for a half of a part, or any other combination. Once we have determined the number of parts per measure (by using the Time Signature), we can then divide the measure up into the number of notes necessary to equal the number of parts assigned to that measure. Remember that every measure will last the same length of time as long as the mode hasn't changed.

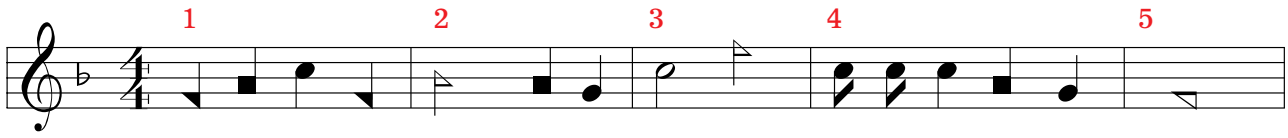
For example, in COMMON TIME, if we see the mode of **2** over **4**, we know that there are two parts per measure. Thus we can have two notes in that measure, one note for each part, or we can only have one note in that measure that will be held for the full time, or we can have four notes in that measure, two notes sung on the first half and the last two notes sung on the second half, or any other combination that adds up to the two parts necessary to fill that measure.

Review the earlier lesson on Note and Rest Sizes (or durations).

CD 8

FILLING A MEASURE

Example 1



The Time Signature on the above song is 4/4 which indicates the 2nd Mode of Common Time. Because the top number is a 4, we know there are four parts per measure. Because the bottom number is a 4, we know that a Quarter Note is equal to one part. Therefore, we know that we must have four Quarter notes (or equivalent) to fill the measure, since each measure in this song is required to have four parts.

In Measure #1, there are 4 Quarter notes. Each Quarter note is equal to one part which gives us four parts in this measure.

In Measure #2, there is a Half note and two Quarter notes. A Half note is equal to two Quarter notes which means the Half note is equal to two parts and the other two Quarter notes are one part each which gives us four parts in this measure also.

In Measure #3, there are two Half notes. A Half note is equal to two Quarter notes which means the Half notes are equal to two parts each which gives us a total of four parts in this measure.

In Measure #4, there are two Eighth notes and three Quarter notes. The two Eighth notes are equal to a Quarter note which gives us one part (a half part per Eighth note) and there are three more Quarter notes in this measure which gives us a total of four parts.

In Measure #5, there is a Whole note. A Whole note is equal to four Quarter notes which gives us four parts in this measure.

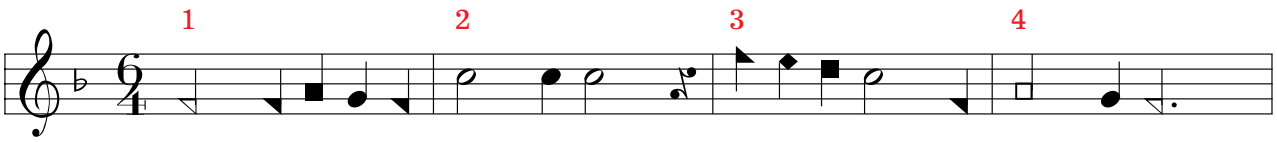
By simple arithmetic, we can see that each of the measures in the song example above is filled with four parts, represented by some combination of notes that are the equivalent of four quarter notes.

[*Note: the sung example on CD track 8 illustrates the pronunciation of FA and LA to be found among Hoboken GA singers. Also heard is an "ornamentation" in the movement from one note to the next in measures 1 & 2. There is a lack of pulsing/accent—see page 14. Much as there are regional variations in American speech, so, too, are there regional variations in Sacred Harp singing.*]

CD 9

FILLING A MEASURE

Example 2



The Time Signature for the above song is 6/4 which indicates the 1st Mode of Compound Time. Because the top number is a 6, we know there are six parts per measure. Because the bottom number is a 4, we know that a Quarter Note is equal to one part. Therefore, we know that we must have six Quarter notes (or equivalent) to fill the measure, since each measure in this song is required to have six parts.

In Measure #1, there is a Half note and four quarter notes. The Half note is equal to two Quarter notes (2 parts) added to the four Quarter notes (4 parts) which gives a total of six parts.

In Measure #2, there is a Half note (equal to 2 Quarter notes or 2 parts), then a Quarter note which is another part, then another Half note (equal to 2 more parts), then a Quarter Rest which is another part, giving a total of six parts in this measure.

In Measure #3, there are 3 Quarter notes (equal to 3 parts), then a Half note (2 more parts), and then another Quarter note (equal to 1 part) which gives a total of six parts.

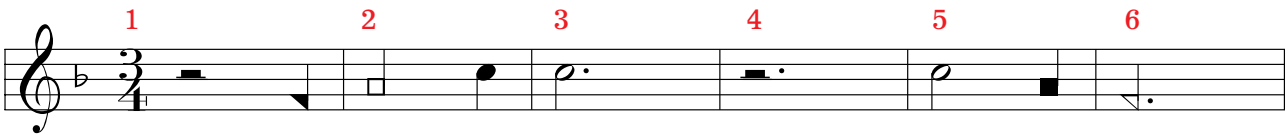
In Measure #4, there is a Half note (equal to 2 parts), then a Quarter note (1 part), and then a Dotted Half note, which is equal to 3 Quarter notes (3 parts) which gives us a total of six parts. Remember that the dot adds half again the value of the note or rest to which it is attached.

By simple arithmetic, we can see that each of the measures in the song example above are filled with six parts, represented by some combination of notes and rests that are the equivalent of six quarter notes.

CD 10

FILLING A MEASURE

Example 3



The Time Signature for the above song is 3/4 which indicates the 2nd Mode of Triple Time. Because the top number is a 3, we know there are three parts per measure. Because the bottom number is a 4, we know that a Quarter Note is equal to one part. Therefore, we know that we must have three Quarter notes (or equivalent) to fill the measure, since each measure in this song is required to have three parts.

In Measure #1, there is a Half rest and a Quarter note. The Half rest is equal to 2 Quarter rests (2 parts) and the Quarter note is equal to 1 part giving us a total of three parts.

In Measure #2, there is a Half note and a Quarter note. The Half note is equal to 2 Quarter notes (2 parts) and the Quarter note is equal to 1 part giving us a total of three parts.

In Measure #3, there is a Dotted Half note. The Half note is equal to 2 Quarter notes (2 parts) and the Dot makes the note half again as long, which adds a Quarter note (1 part) giving us a total of three parts. “Why wasn’t a Whole note used here?” someone may ask. Because although “whole” sometimes implies “all of” in speech, in music a “Whole” note is rigidly equal to 4 Quarter notes and would add up to 4 parts when a Quarter note gets one part – too many for a single measure in this Time Signature.

In Measure #4, there is a Dotted Half rest. The Half rest is equal to 2 Quarter rests (2 parts) and the Dot makes the rest half again as long, which adds a Quarter rest (1 part) giving us a total of three beats.

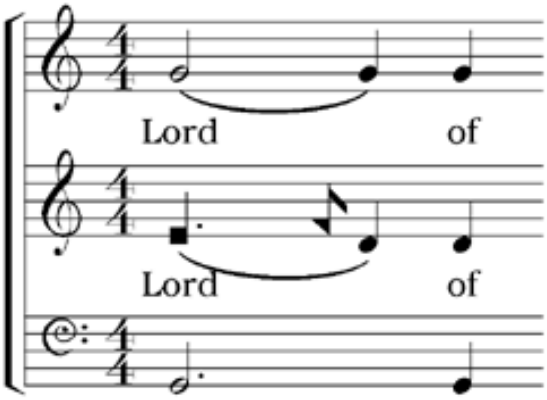
In Measure #5, there is a Half note and a Quarter note. The Half note is equal to 2 Quarter notes (2 parts) and the Quarter note is equal to 1 part giving us a total of three parts.

In Measure #6, there is a Dotted Half note. The Half note is equal to 2 Quarter notes (2 parts) and the Dot makes the note half again as long, which adds a Quarter note (1 part) giving us a total of three parts.

See Denson Rudiments pg. 17 #17-18; Cooper Rudiments pg. xvi #88-90

MUSICAL NOTATIONS

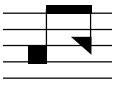
Musical Notations are used throughout songs to indicate special conditions.



Tie
(same notes)

Slur
(different notes)

Beamed-Together Notes
same as a slur



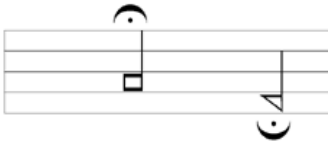
Slurs, Ties, and Beamed-Together notes are all used to indicate how the words or the syllables of words are to be distributed amongst the notes. When the connected notes are the same kind, e.g., both Sols on the same line or space of the staff, don't repeat the note name when "singing the notes", simply observe the total duration of the two notes added together.

Triplets

Triplets are a way of sneaking extra notes into a measure without getting too many beats. They are displayed either as three quarter notes or three eighth notes. The latter are always beamed together. Both kinds always have a little number 3 either above or below the notes. They may or may not also have a slur across all three notes. The singer is to sing one word or syllable across all 3 of the notes. When counting in order to fill a measure, triplets are to have the same duration value as if they were just 2 quarter notes or 2 eighth notes. Song #31 on the top uses triplets. *In Sacred Harp, the first two notes of a triplet are sung more quickly than the last one. This is not the way a choir sings triplets, but it is characteristic of Sacred Harp singers.*

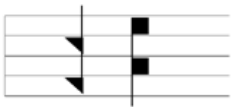
See Denson Rudiments pg. 17 #19 ; Cooper Rudiments pg. xvii #96-99, 101

Pause/Hold
"Birdseye"

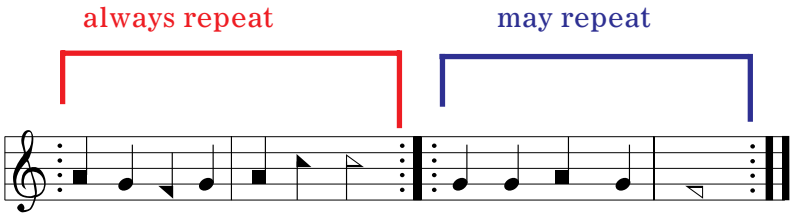


A Hold over a note indicates that the note is to be held longer than its expected number of beats, determined by the leader of the song (so watch your leader).

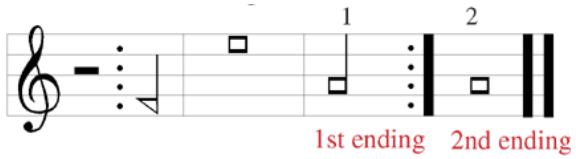
Choice Notes are when two notes are printed one above the other on the same stem. The singer may sing either note as they wish.

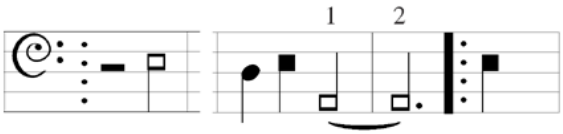


"Choice Notes"



Repeat Dots are the vertical rows of dots shown here at the beginning of measure 1 and the end of measure 2, at the beginning of measure 3 and the end of measure 4. They indicate that the music between the two sets of dots is to be sung twice in a row, i.e. "repeated". If the dots appear at the beginning of a song, as in song #42, then the singer must always sing that section of the song twice, in order to get all the words in. However, when the repeat dots appear later in the song, especially when they enclose the last part of the song, the section that they enclose does not always have to be repeated; it is optionally repeated at the discretion of the leader. Song #52 on the bottom has such a section.

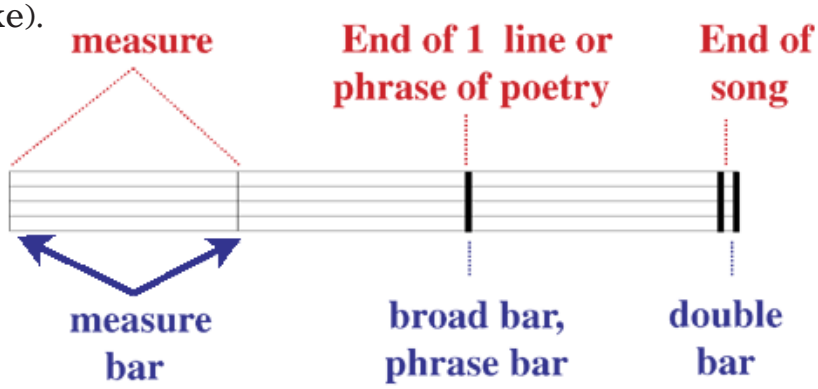




1st & 2nd ending as
in #53 JERUSALEM

Repeat dots are often combined with 1st & 2nd endings. The first time through the section the first ending is sung; the second time through that ending is skipped and the second ending is sung, except in #53 and other songs that look like it where both endings are used the second time through.

There are several kinds of vertical bars stretching across the staff lines: the **Measure bar**, the **Phrase bar**, and the **Final bar**. The **Measure bar** we have already studied. The **Phrase bar,** or Broad bar, in today's tune books most often appears in connection with repeat dots, to help mark off the beginning or ending of the repeated section. It may be placed within a measure so the singer cannot assume that it is always sitting atop a measure bar. In older tunebooks, the Phrase bar was also used to mark where in the music the next phrase of the hymntext would begin or the last one had ended, in order to make it easier for singers who were getting their words from a words-only hymnal held in one hand while they looked at their music from *The Sacred Harp* (or similar tune book) in the other hand. The **Final bar** (also called End bar or Double bar) is made up of two bars together. It is always placed at the right hand edge of the last measure of the song (unless the book typesetter made a mistake).



There are also several terms and symbols used to direct the singer to repeat certain sections of the song in a manner that would be too complicated to indicate with simple repeat dots.

D.C. will be placed at the end of the song when the singer is supposed to go back to the beginning of the song and sing the first part again. The place where the singer is supposed to stop will be marked with **FINE** or a **Final bar**. Because there is often a line of text to be sung only on this second trip through the music, it might be marked with a "D.C." at its beginning. This is done for #69 on the bottom in the Denson book, and for #398 on the top in the Cooper book.

In other cases, a **D.S.** will be placed at the end of the song and means the singer is supposed to look for the special symbol somewhere in the middle of the song and to go back to that spot and sing until a **FINE** or **Final bar** is encountered.

FINE means "end of song"

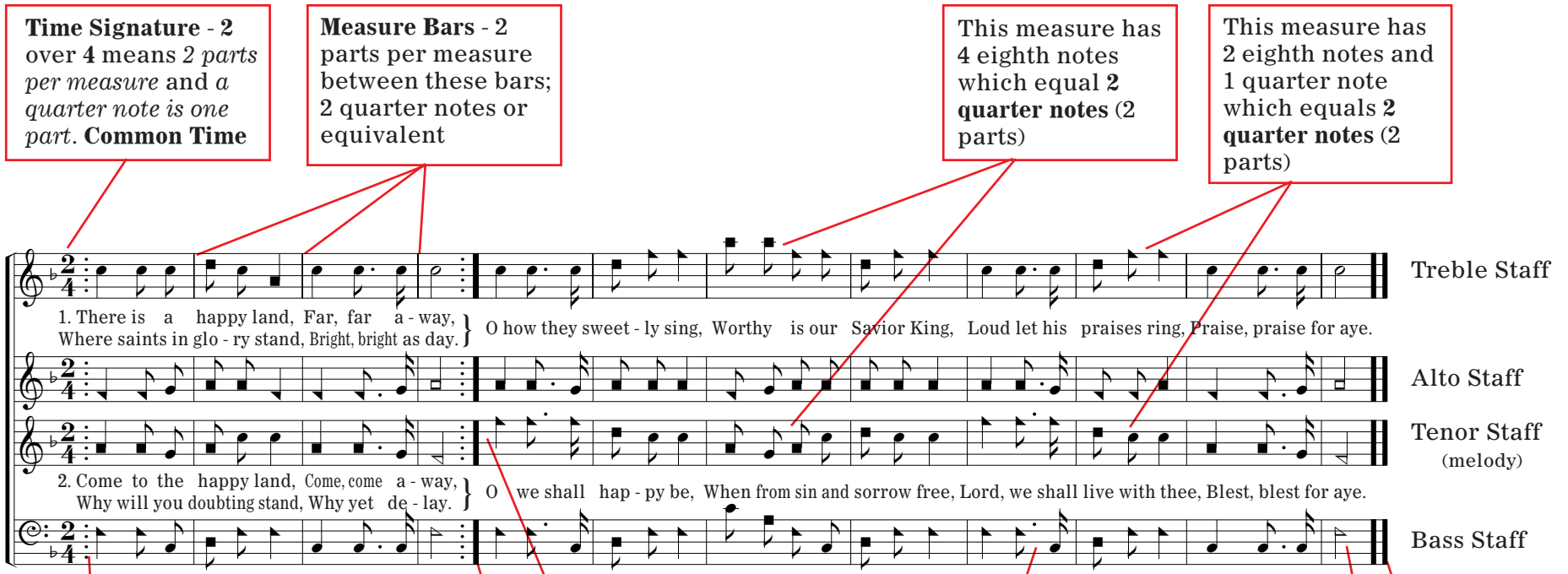
D.C. = go back to beginning

D.S. = go to 𝄋

READING A SONG: "HAPPY LAND"

CD 11

Part One

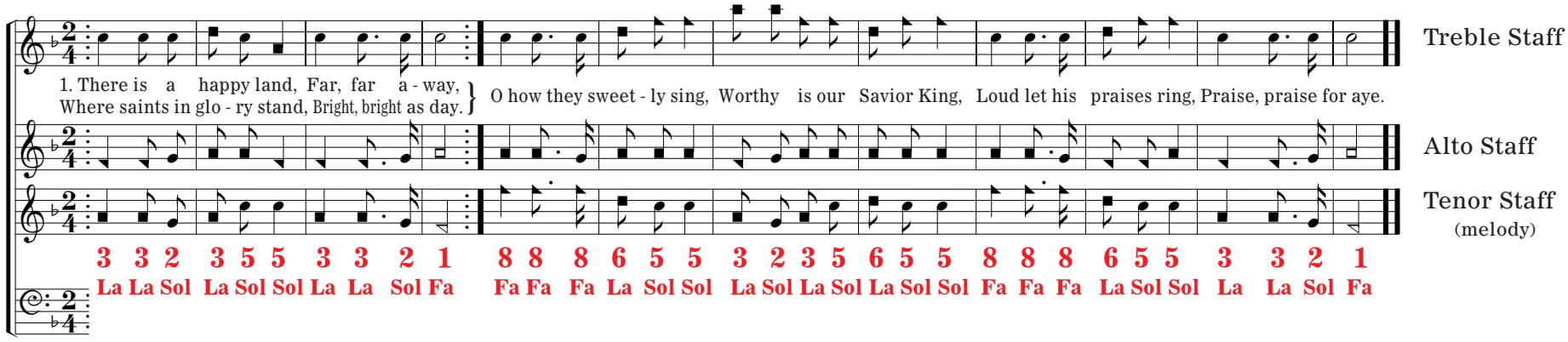


READING A SONG: “HAPPY LAND”

CD 12

Part Two

These numbers represent the Scale Note number of the notes in the Tenor Line. Sing the Scale up and back down and then sing back up to Note 3, which is the beginning note on the Tenor Line of this song. The second note is also Note 3, the third note is Note 2 and so forth. Practice singing the Scale and these notes will be easy to sing by the numbers. Once you are familiar with singing the song by the numbers, start singing this song by the note names, e.g. the first note is LA (Scale Note 3), the second note is LA (Scale Note 3), the third note is SOL (Scale Note 2), and so forth.

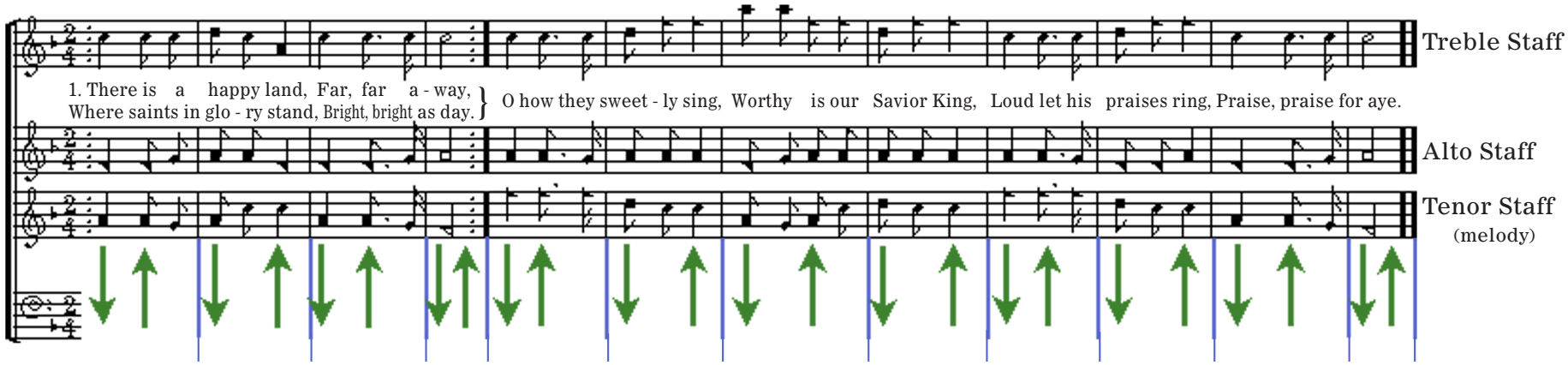


READING A SONG: "HAPPY LAND"

CD 13

Part Three

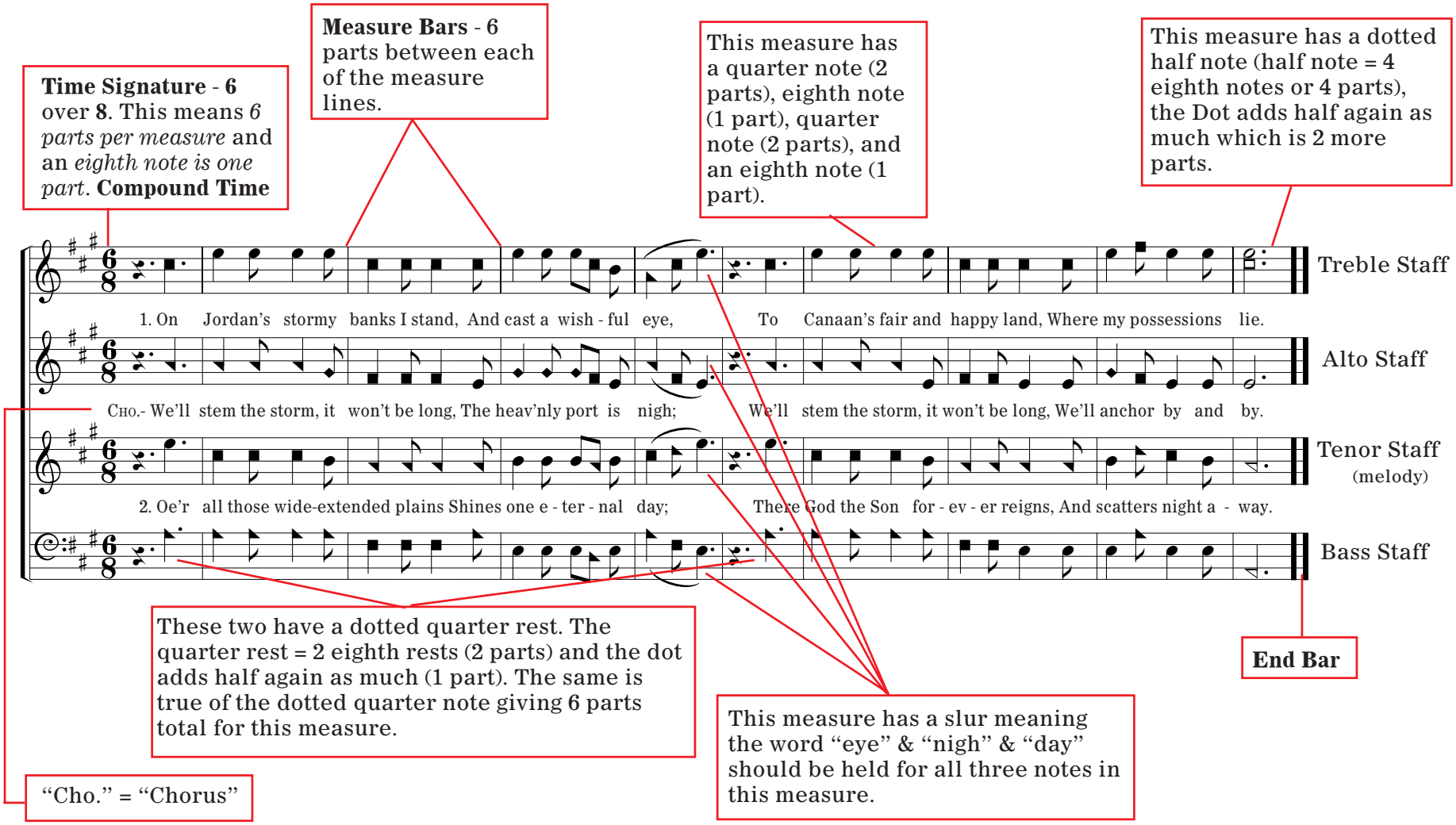
Each green arrow marks a beat of time, and each blue line marks a measure line. There are 2 beats per measure, thus there are two arrows per measure. The first beat is marked by an arrow pointing down; the second beat is marked by an arrow pointing up. Notice that, in Measure 1 of the Tenor line, the first note, LA (a quarter note), is held for one part and the next two notes in the measure, LA and SOL, are eighth notes and are both sung during the second part. The first note, therefore, is held for the same amount of time as the next two notes together. In Measure 2, the first two notes, LA and SOL, are eighth notes and are both sung on the first part. The third note in Measure 2, SOL, is sung on the second part. You should pat your foot on each of the arrows to establish the beat. Next learn to beat time with your hand by moving your hand down on Beat 1 and up on Beat 2 in the same direction as the arrows. Practice beating time while you listen to this song as it was sung at an All-Day Singing on CD track 13. Your voice should "pulse" or accent on the first note of the first beat in each measure. You know it's time to accent if your hand is moving down.



CD 14

READING A SONG: “The Heavenly Port”

Part One

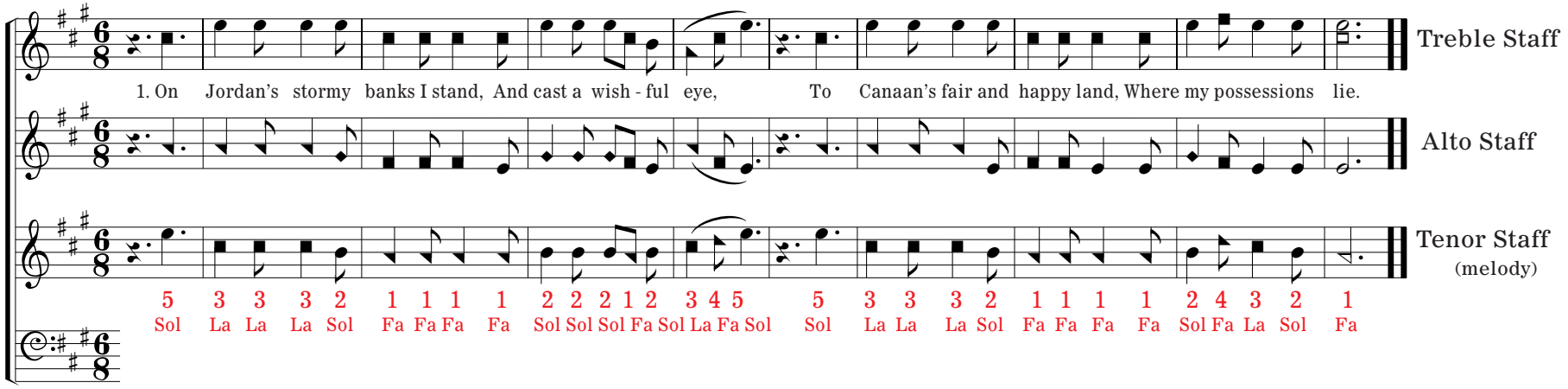


CD 15

READING A SONG: “The Heavenly Port”

Part Two

The numbers beneath the Tenor part represent the position on the Scale of the Tenor Staff notes. Sing the Scale up and back down and then sing back up to Scale Note 5, which is the beginning note on the Tenor line of this song. The next note is Scale Note 3, the third note is Scale Note 3 and so forth. Practice singing the Scale and these notes will be easy to sing by the numbers. Once you are familiar with singing the song by the numbers, start singing this song by the note names. The first note is SOL, the second note is LA, and so forth. Then cover up the printed note names and sing it, using the note names, just looking at the notes themselves.

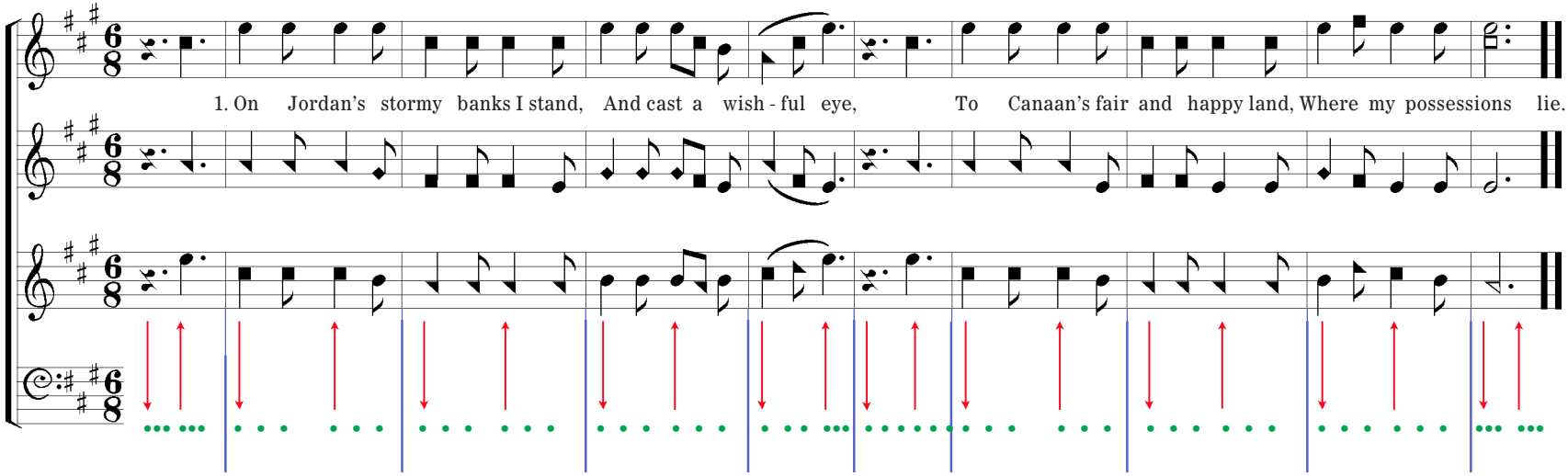


CD 16

READING A SONG: “The Heavenly Port”

Part Three

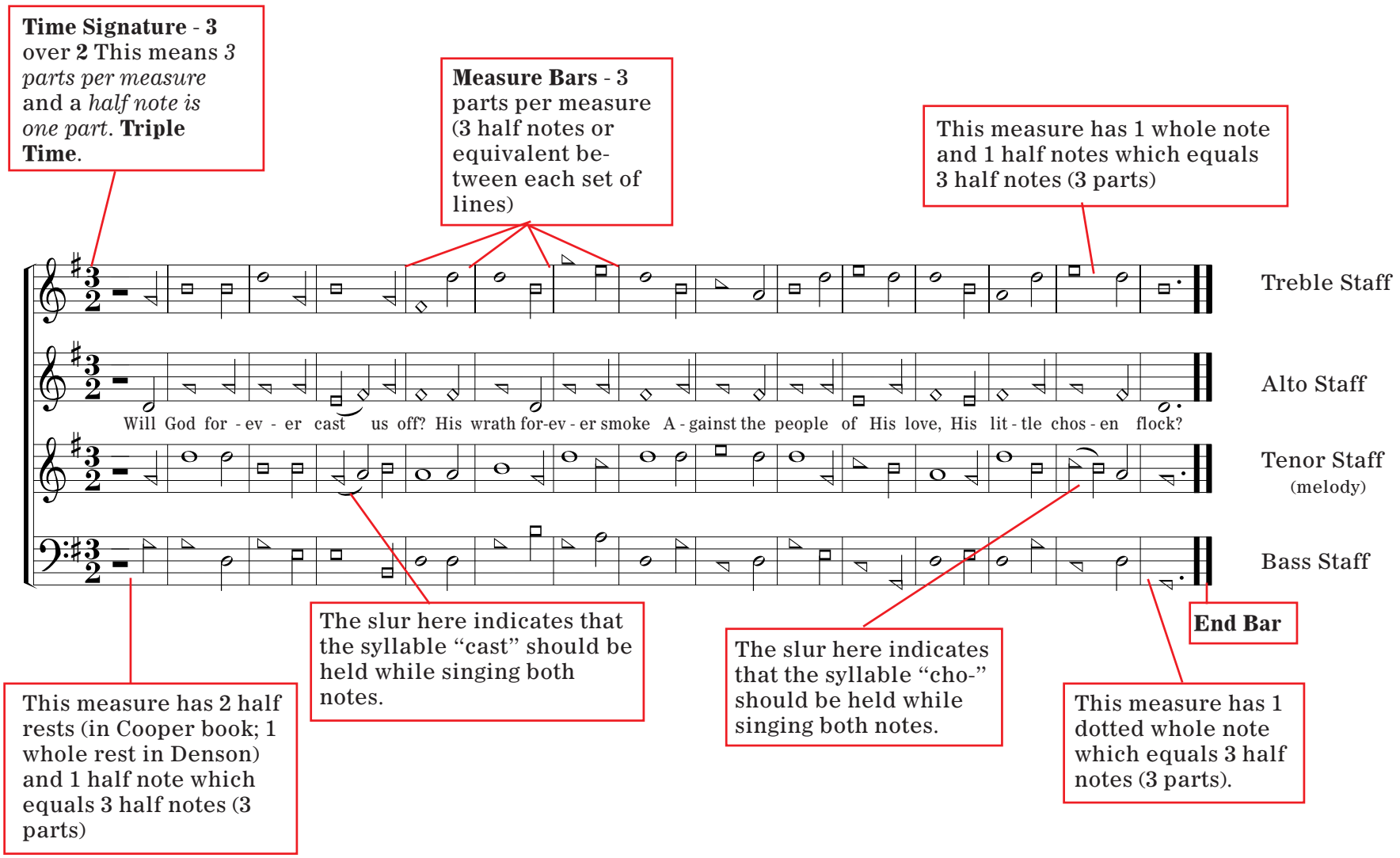
The blue lines below indicate the measure bars, the green dots show the parts, the red arrows show your hand motion. There are 6 parts per measure, thus there are 6 green dots per measure. Everywhere except in the region around Hoboken, GA, your hand will go down on Beat 1, moving steadily, and will reach the area of your waist by part 3 and will reach the beginning point on part 6, ready to start back down on beat 1. Before trying the hand motion, you should first pat your foot on the 1st and 4th parts of each measure to establish the rhythm. When you feel comfortable doing this, try the hand motion, as shown by the red arrows. Try doing this as you listen to this song as it was sung at a Denson book All-Day Singing, on CD track 16. Accent your voice on parts 1 and 4.



READING A SONG: "MEAR"

Part One

CD 17

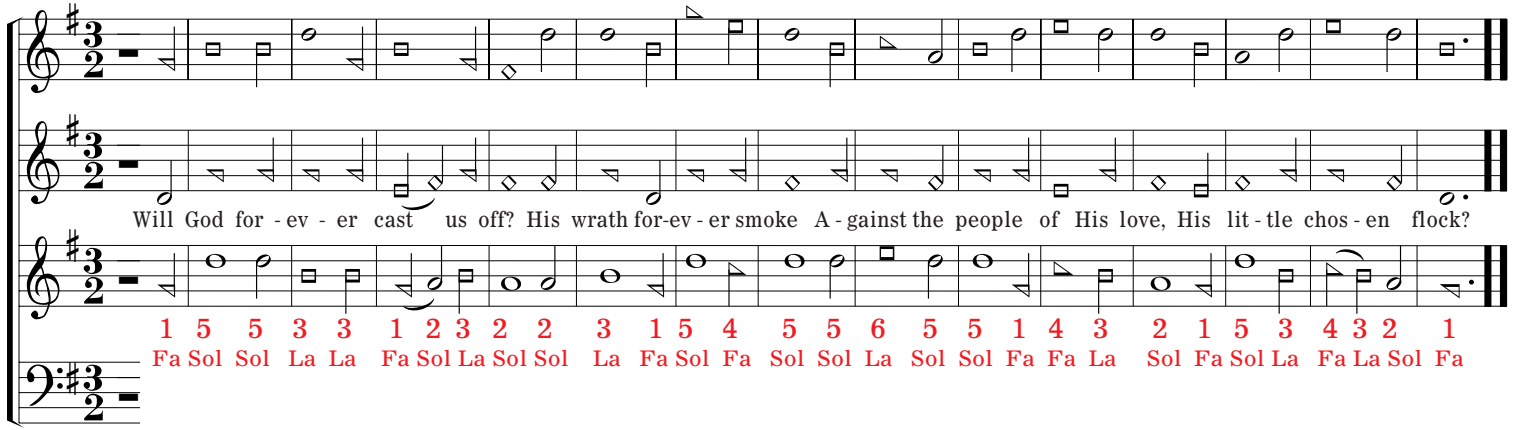


READING A SONG: "MEAR"

Part Two

CD 18

These numbers are the Scale Note numbers for the notes on the Tenor line. Sing the Scale up and back down and then sing Scale Note 1, which is the beginning note for the Tenor. The second note is Scale Note 5, the third note is Scale Note 5 and so forth. Practice singing the Scale. Once you are familiar with singing the song by the numbers, start singing this song by the note names. The first note is FA, the second note is SOL, and so forth.

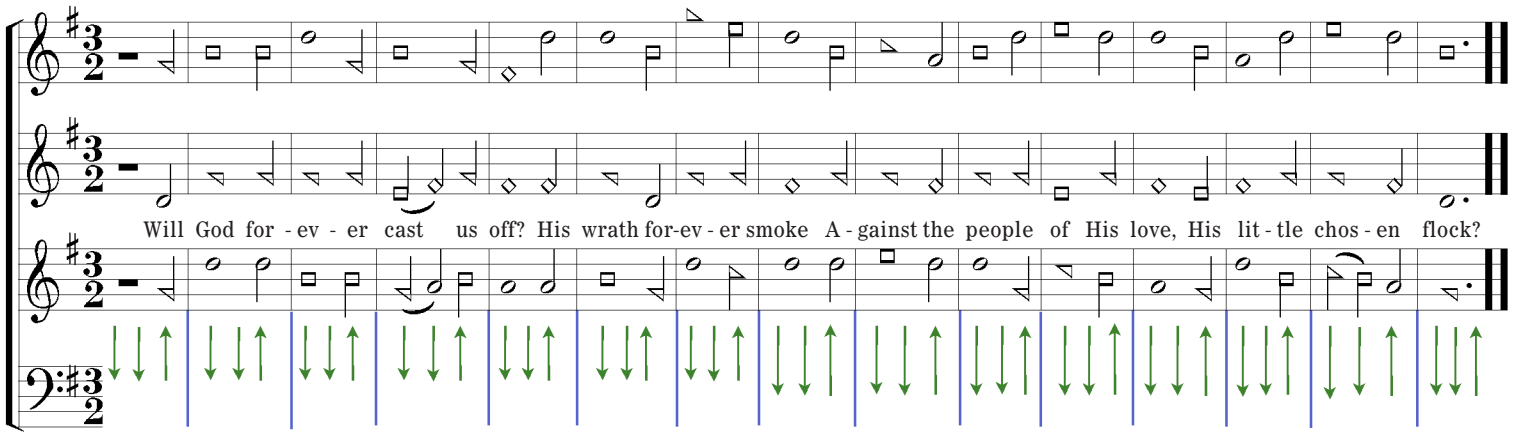


READING A SONG: "MEAR"

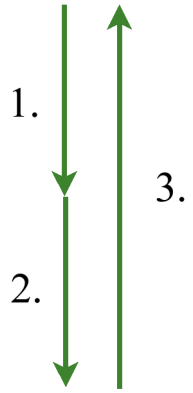
Part Three

CD 19

Each arrow marks a beat of time. There are 3 beats per measure, thus there are 3 arrows per measure. The first beat is marked by an arrow pointing down, the second beat is marked by an arrow pointing down, and the third beat is marked by an arrow pointing up. Notice that, in Measure 1, the first 2 parts are for a Rest, and the 3rd beat is the beginning note of the song. In Measure 2, a 2-part note is first, then a 1-part note. You should accent your voice on the 1st beat of each measure.

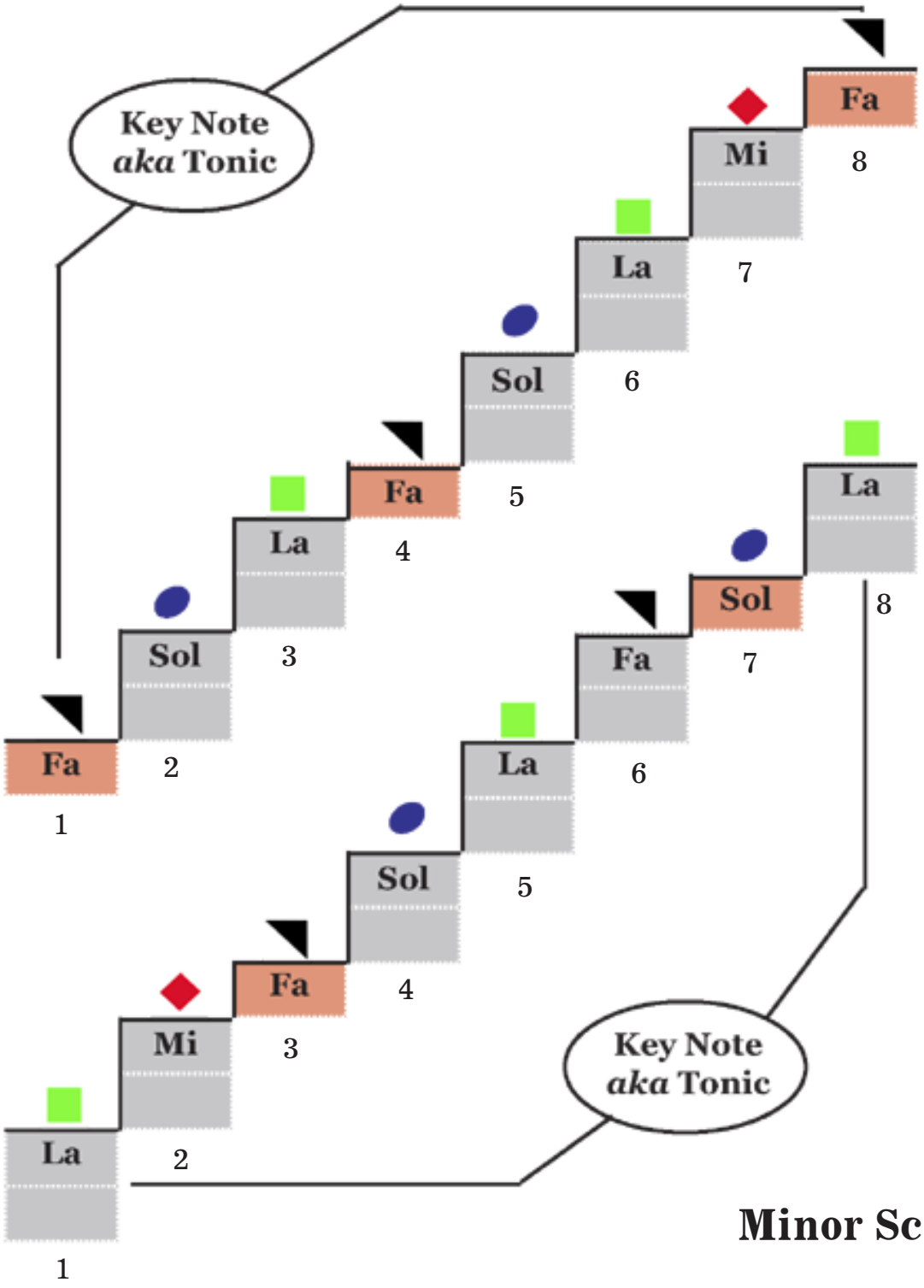


When you are ready to beat Triple time with your hand, move it down about half-way between shoulder and waist on Beat 1, the rest of the way to your waist on Beat 2, and then back up to the start position on Beat 3 as illustrated on the right.



See Denson Rudiments pg. 17-19 #9-16; Cooper Rudiments pg. xx Note and N.B.

Major Scale



Minor Scale

MINOR SCALE

CD 20

All the songs in the previous lesson have used the Major Scale. Approximately 1/3 of the songs in *The Sacred Harp,* however, use a second scale, the Minor Scale. You've learned that the Scale, whether Major or Minor, lines up all the notes to be found in a song in a sort of staircase fashion. The illustration on the facing page takes that analogy literally and the scales are displayed as a staircase with two sizes of steps (rather than on the music staff). Some steps are two units tall and some are one unit tall.

Sing the Major Scale while you are looking at the "staircase". Notice the distance you raise your voice to get up that first step to Scale Note 2, (we call this a "whole step"), then the second step to Scale Note 3. Proceeding onward, notice that you don't have to raise your voice quite so much to get up the step from Scale Note 3 to Scale Note 4, (we call this a "half step"). From Scale Note 4 to Scale Note 5, however, the distance you raise your voice is back to the expected distance (a whole step), and from Scale Note 5 to Scale Note 6 is another whole step, and from Scale Note 6 to Scale Note 7 is again a whole step. To finish off the octave you'll sing the 8th Scale note, raising your voice from Scale Note 7 to Scale Note 8, but you only raise it a half step.

This pattern belongs to the Major Scale. Notice that Scale Note 7 is MI, and that both Scale Note 1 and Scale Note 8 are FA.

Sing the Major Scale up and then back down, and when you reach the beginning FA of the Major Scale, keep going down, to MI, and then to LA. You are now at Scale Note 1 of the Sacred Harp Minor Scale.

CD 21

The Minor Scale also has a pattern of steps that belong to it. Notice that MI is Scale Note 2 in the Minor Scale. Thus, in both the Major Scale and the Minor Scale, Mi is found next to Scale Note 1 (aka Scale Note 8). For the Major Scale, Mi is just below this note (FA), and for the Minor Scale Mi is just above this note (LA).

Because there are fewer songs using the Minor Scale, and also because in our daily lives we hear fewer Minor songs on the radio or tv, our ears are not as accustomed to the sound of the Minor Scale. You will need to practice singing the Minor Scale until it becomes second nature to raise your voice up the "staircase" in the correct pattern. Sing along with the example on track 21 of the CD.

Look at the internal relationships in the major scale for the two groups of Fa-Sol-La. The steps between Fa1, Sol2, and La3 (in any combination) are identical to the steps between Fa4, Sol5, and La6 (in any combination). This is why only 4 notes are needed for a 7-note scale. (Sorry: it doesn't quite work for the minor.)

A Minor Song in the Denson Book

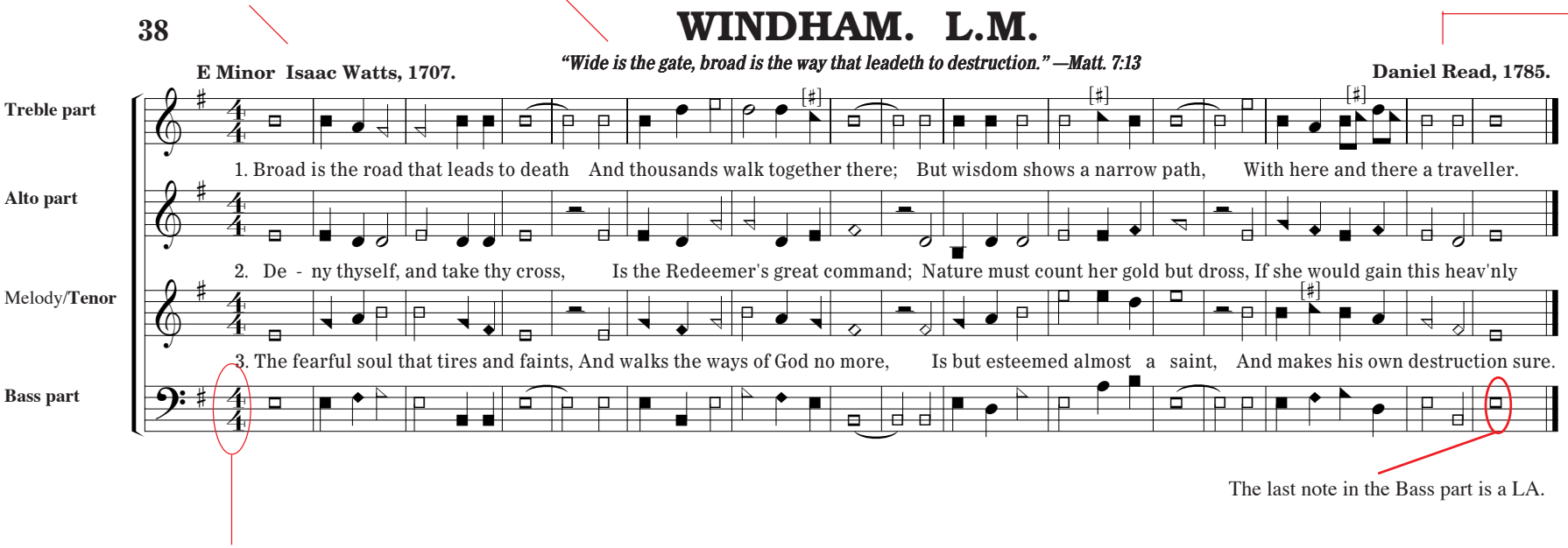
The Denson book notes the key in which the tune is printed, followed by the source of the words and the date they were written or first published. The printed key rarely corresponds to the pitch in which the tune is sung. This is selected to fit the comfort of the singers, by a "keyer" often without any pitchpipe aid.

A short Biblical text that is either the source of the words or related to the words is included under the title as an introduction.

This is the tune name. Tunes are often named after towns, states, rivers, countries or people. The name rarely reflects the words of the song, as the words tend to be used with several tunes.

This is the meter of the poetry that will fit this tune. L.M. stands for Long Meter, which means 4 lines of 8 syllables each. See pg 21 in tunebook.

The verses are usually printed one per staff: vs. 1 under the treble, vs. 2 under the alto, and vs. 3 under the tenor. Other arrangements are common depending on the tune and words. Syllables may not line up exactly with their notes. It is thus a challenge to find which one goes with which note.



This is the source of the tune, either a composer's name or the name of a tunebook. The year of composition or of first printing is given when known.

The last note in the Bass part is a LA.

This is the time signature. 2nd Mode of Common Time. Four parts per measure with the quarter note getting one part. Accent the 1st & 3rd parts with your voice.

Chapter Two

When a singing has someone "keying" each song, pointing out the opening pitches for each part, and one or more singers assisting the leader in beating time, the still-learning singers get along quite well having only mastered the material in Chapter One. The experienced singers provide aural role models for how to sing each song, also. It is for those times a still-learning singer attends a monthly singing that — for whatever reason — lacks skilled "keyers," leaders and singers, that these next two Chapters are presented. With the knowledge acquired in the following Lessons, singers will be able to determine whether the next song that is to be sung uses the Major or the Minor scale, what their part's opening note will be, how to deal with accidentals, and even to "key" the song using a pitch pipe and thus take the first steps towards becoming a Sacred Harp "keyer."

WHICH SCALE IS USED?

You now know there are two scales used in Sacred Harp music, and you can sing both of them. But how do you know which scale is used with any given song? Shapenotes make this easy: simply look at the last note of the song, in the Bass part. If that note is a FA, then the song uses the Major Scale. If that note is a LA, then the song uses the Minor Scale.

Look across the page at WINDHAM. Look at the very last note in the Bass part: it is a LA. That means this song uses the Minor Scale.

Look at page 29 in this workbook, MEAR. The very last note in the Bass part is a FA. MEAR uses the Major Scale.

Look at page 26 in this workbook, THE HEAVENLY PORT. The very last note in the Bass part is a FA. This song uses the Major Scale.

Look at page 23 in this workbook, HAPPY LAND. The very last note in the Bass part is a FA. This song uses the Major Scale.

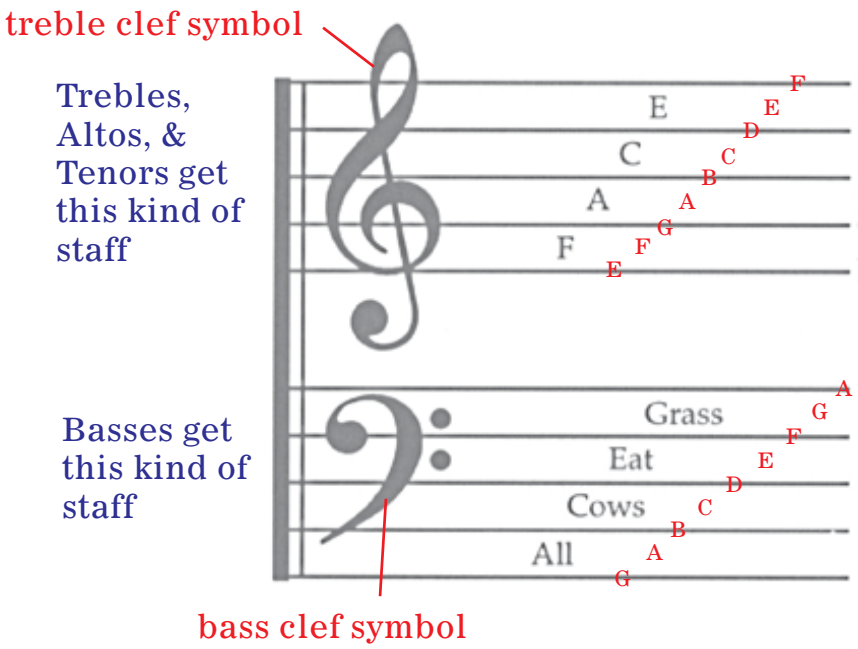
In fact, the last note in the Bass part not only will always be a FA or a LA, but that note will be the Scale Note 1 or 8 of either the Major Scale or the Minor Scale. Always...

Most of the time, the last note in the Tenor part will also be the same note as in the Bass, but not always. In the Denson book, for example, #s 44, 73, 82 top, 89, and 129 show a FA as the last note in the Bass part, but a SOL as the last note in the Tenor part.

Thus the rule is to look to the last note in the Bass.

LINES & SPACES AND CLEF SYMBOLS

There are two kinds of musical staves used in *The Sacred Harp* of today: the Bass Clef staff and the Treble Clef staff. The Bass Clef symbol or the Treble Clef symbol is placed at the left hand side of each staff.



The Treble part, the Alto part (usually), and the Tenor part are written on a Treble Clef staff. The Bass part, (and sometimes the Alto part, e.g. see #36 bottom in the Denson book), uses the Bass Clef staff.

Notes — FAs, SOLs, LAs, and MIs — are placed on the staves either *on the lines* of the staff or *in the space between* the lines. These lines and spaces are designated by letters from "A" to "G." Thus a particular note can be described by its name (whether FA or LA or SOL or MI) *and* its position (whether on the G line or the A space, and so forth). In the above illustration, the lines and spaces are labelled in red.

For the Treble Clef Staff, the bottom line is labelled E, the space above it is F, the 2nd line is G, and the 2nd space is A. Proceeding upwards from there, the subsequent letters of the alphabet are used until F is reached, the top line.

For the Bass Clef Staff, the bottom line is G, and the space above it is A. From there upwards each line and space is labelled B through G, with the top line starting the sequence over again with "A."

> *If more notes are needed than provided for on the 5-line staff, they are printed above or below the staff using short lines called "ledger lines." The illustration on page 37 uses them.*

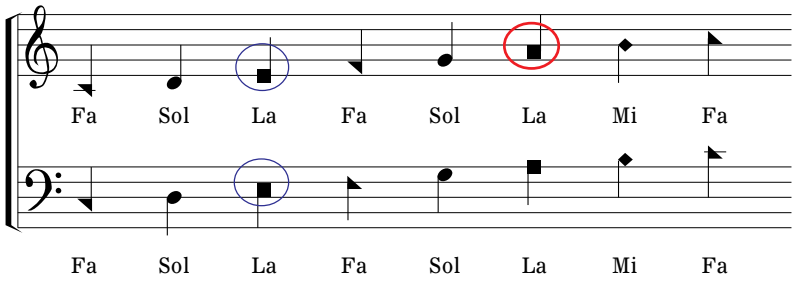
Some find it helpful to remember the mnemonics of "FACE" and "All Cows Eat Grass" for the labels of the spaces, bottom to top, of the Treble Clef staff and the Bass Clef staff respectively.

Others prefer to remember that the bottom space of the Bass Clef staff is A, and each line and space above it proceeds alphabetically through to G and then the sequence starts over. Similarly, the 2nd space from the bottom of the Treble Clef staff is remembered to be "A."

The last note in the Bass part is Scale Note 1 or 8. Its shape tells you whether the song uses the Major Scale (if it is FA), or the Minor Scale (if it is LA). What if you don't sing Bass; how will you know which FA or LA on your Treble Clef staff matches that FA or LA on the Bass Clef staff?

- You need to find Scale Note 1 on *your* staff,
- so that you may sing the Scale and find your opening note.

A note that has the same shape and is positioned on the staff space or line with the same name as another note, is the same Scale Note. A FA on C is the same Scale Note as another FA on C, regardless of whether it is on the Treble Clef staff or the Bass Clef staff. So if the last note in the Bass is FA on C, the FA sitting on the C line or space of the Treble Clef staff will be Scale Note 1 (or 8).



In the illustration above, the two blue-circled notes are on different staves. The note in the top staff is on a Treble Clef staff and it is positioned on the E line of that staff. The bottom note is on a Bass Clef staff and it is positioned on the E space of that staff. Both notes are LAs. They are therefore both considered to be the same Scale Note. In this illustration, they are both Scale Note 3 of the Major Scale. They are the same note, but displayed on two different staves and in two different Clefs. The red-circled note is also a LA, and it is positioned on a space. But the Treble Clef staff space it is positioned on is called "A", making it a LA on A. So it is a different Scale Note from the blue-circled LAs.

Scale Note 1 in one song will not always be positioned on the same spot on the staff in all songs, because different songs may use different key signatures, which we need not learn about (aren't you glad?), we merely learn to find its location. Since Mi is either just above it (minor songs) or just below it (major songs), try looking for Mi, if that note is used in your part, to double-check that you've correctly found the position for Scale Note 1 on your staff. Once found, sing the scale to figure out your opening note. In the two songs which follow, work out whether they're major or minor, where their Scale Note 1's are, and what the opening notes for each part are. Then sing 'em.

NEW BRITAIN. C.M.

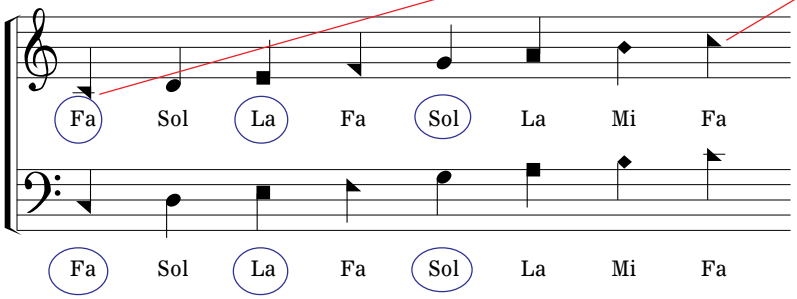
1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see. see.
2. Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved; How precious did that grace ap - pear, The hour I first be - lieved! - lieved!

3. Thru man - y dan - gers, toils and snares I have al - read - y come; Tis grace has bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home. home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope se - cures; He will my shield and por - tion be, As long as life en - dures. - dures.

5. The earth shall soon dis - solve like snow, The sun for - bear to shine; But God, who called me here be - low, Will be for - ev - er mine. mine.

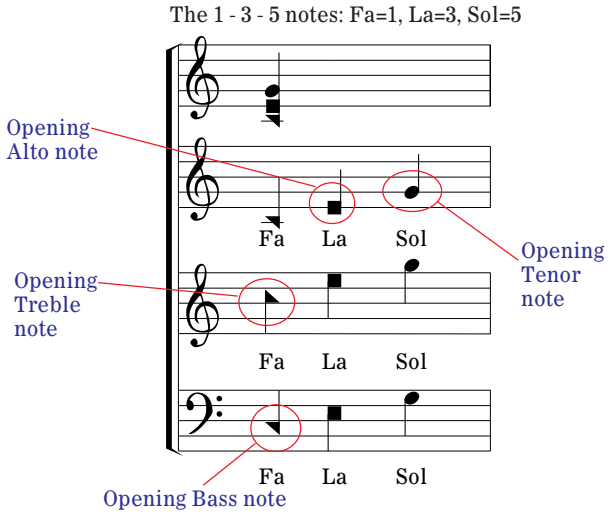
The last note in the bass is a FA, so the song is a MAJOR song. The FA is positioned on the C space.

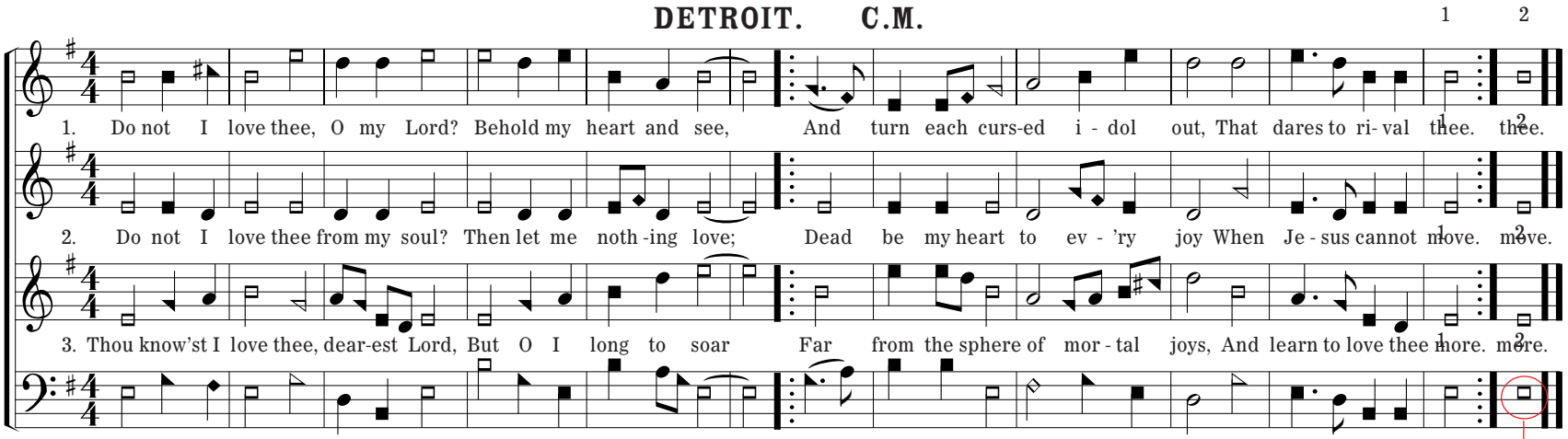
The last note in the Bass part is a FA on the C space of the Bass Clef staff. So this song uses the Major Scale, and Scale Note 1 is FA on C. There are two places on the Treble Clef staff that are labelled “C” — here and here, an octave apart.



The C major scale with 1 - 3 - 5 notes circled

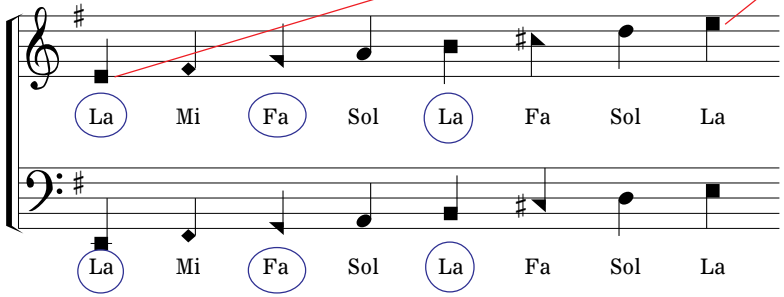
Knowing where on the Treble Clef staff Scale Note 1 is positioned, each singer may now sing up the Scale to find their opening note.



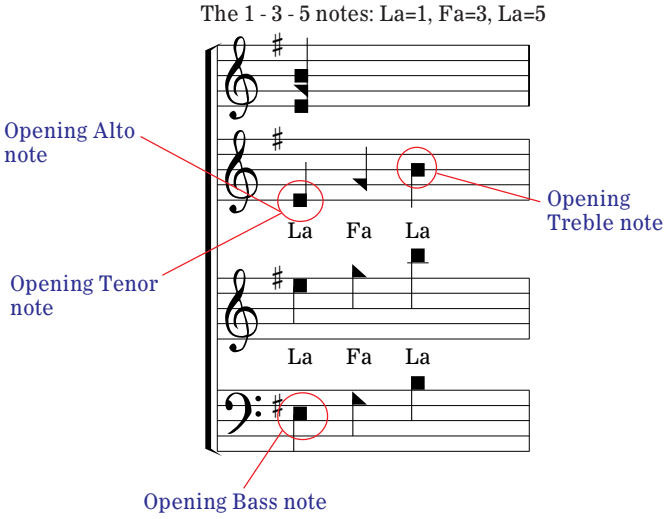


The last note in the bass is a LA, on the E space, so the song is a MINOR song.

The last note in the Bass part is a LA on the E space of the Bass Clef staff. So this song uses the Minor Scale, and Scale Note 1 is LA on E. There are two places on the Treble Clef staff that are labelled "E" — here and here, an octave apart.



The E minor scale with 1 - 3 - 5 notes circled

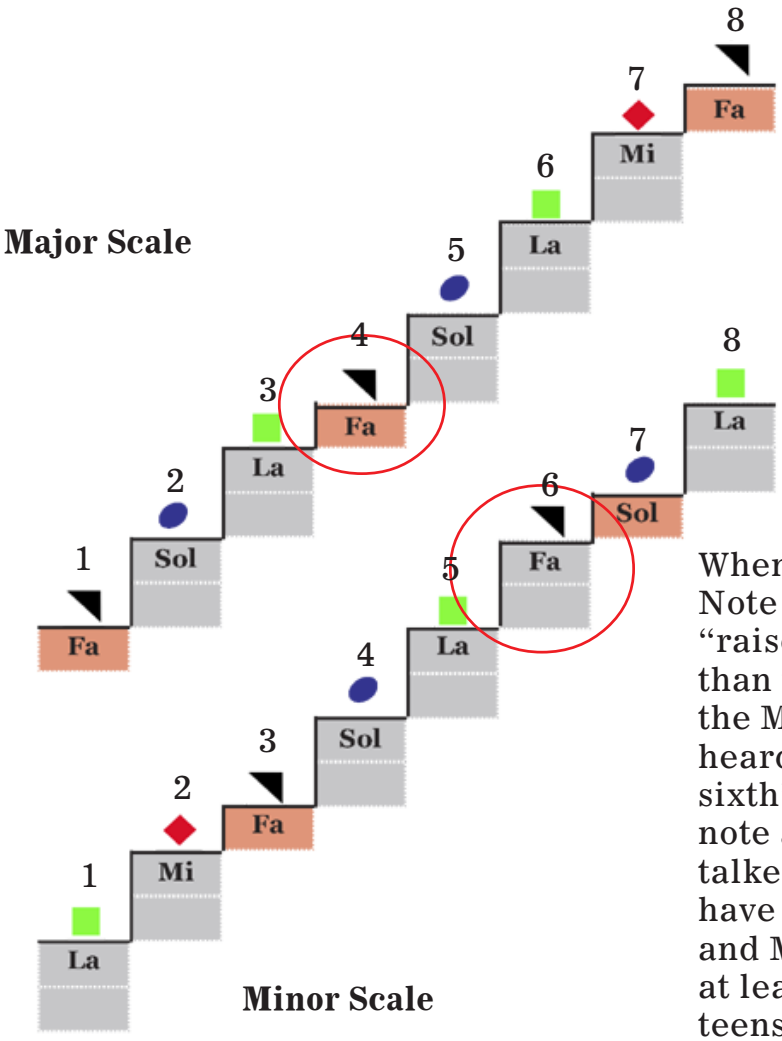


Knowing where on the Treble Clef staff Scale Note 1 is positioned, each singer may now sing up the Scale to find their opening note.

SINGING MINOR SCALE SONGS

This lesson is aimed at those who already know enough about music from university-trained academic musicians to have noticed that we do not sing our Minor songs as you expected, based on your training. Everyone else may skip this lesson and continue to learn, "by ear," from long-time Sacred Harp singers and the audio examples, just how the Minor songs are actually sung.

The Minor Scale: In a previous lesson, you were instructed to find the beginning of the Minor Scale by first singing the Major Scale up and back down, and then to continue downwards into the octave below the one you started in and to go down to MI and then to LA, stopping at LA. What you were not told then, in order to keep things simple, was that when you start at LA and sing upwards you will be singing the same notes (i.e. raising your voice the same amount for each note) as you would be doing if you were singing your way up the Major Scale only until you reach Scale Note 6 of the Minor Scale. Look again at the "staircase" for each scale, which shows the amount we raise our voices for each step up:



When we reach for the 6th Scale Note in the Minor Scale, a FA, we "raise" our voices a higher amount than we would if we were singing the Major Scale. You may have heard others speak of "raising the sixth" in Minor music. This is the note and this is what is being talked about. Shapenote singers have been singing their Minor scale and Minor music with this note for at least as far back as the eighteenteens, and probably far earlier.

Complicating things for you, is that our music will rarely alert you to this difference between the two FAs. After all, we practice our scales and after a while it just becomes natural to us to sing that Minor Scale Note 6 as it is in the scale whenever we encounter it in our music. So to experienced Sacred Harp singers, there is no need to clutter up the music with extra stuff. Recall we ignore key signatures so why should we think a Fa needs an extra symbol?

One notable exception is the way WOOD STREET in the Denson book is printed (#504). In that song, Scale Note 6 (FA) appears in the Treble and Tenor parts. Every time it does, it has a little symbol next to it: 

This tells the classically trained musician to sing this note with the sound that an experienced Sacred Harp singer would use automatically, without it.

Most everywhere else in the book, Minor songs are not printed this way. Look again at WINDHAM on page 34 of this workbook. The treble and tenor parts both have the 6th Scale Note, and in this illustration (but not on page 38 of Denson SH) there is a symbol in brackets positioned above the FA. This is to remind you how you ought to be singing that note.

CD 22 Open your Denson songbook to #302 LOGAN. In this Minor song Scale Note 6 appears in the Treble and Tenor parts as FA on C. Now listen to CD track 22. The 6th Scale Note can be heard quite clearly especially in the tenors' singing in the fuging section on the word "re-move".

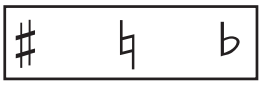
CD 23 Turn to #224 in Cooper or Denson, SAVE LORD OR WE PERISH. The 6th Scale Note appears in both the Treble and Tenor parts. It is a FA on C. The tenors again do a good job of singing it out. Find this note in the tenor part and then listen to CD track 23.

CD 24 Find DETROIT in your songbook (#39 on the top in the Denson book and #68 on the top in the Cooper book). Scale Note #6 is used in the first measure in the Treble part and towards the end in the mea-sure with the word "mor-tal" in the Tenor part. It is FA on C. Listen to CD track 24 (these singers are using the Denson book so the alto you hear will not match what is printed in the Cooper book). The Trebles sing their 6th Scale Note well but it comes through even more clearly when the Tenors sing it.

A final word on the 6th Scale Note of Minor songs: Real life is more richly varied than outlined in this Lesson. At a singing some singers will be un-aware of how to correctly sing the 6th Scale Note. Traditional singers will subtly vary their 6th Scale Note sound, depending upon which song they are singing, though they always raise it at least a little bit, if not the full 1/2 step.

ACCIDENTALS

Accidentals are symbols placed in the music next to individual notes. They are not used by most shapenote composers and although they are mentioned in some of the Rudiments of our songbooks in the 20th c., many shapenote singers are not fully aware of them.



"What are they for?" someone asks. They are intended to modify the sound of an individual note so that it is different from the way it sounds in the Scale. (You can see why this makes them of not much use to shapenote singers.) Most of the time the accidentals were introduced by musicians (sometimes not by the original composer) to provide a raised 7th Scale Note in Minor songs and a raised 4th Scale Note in Major songs: harmonic innovations strongly resisted by many shapenote singers. B. F. White himself taught that the harmonic minor scale, (a scale which uses accidentals), was without any substantial value.

"Why do we see them in our shapenote songbooks?" The Sacred Harp has always included music from many sources and in most cases, the songs will be printed just as they were found, making sure only that the notes are printed with our beloved shapes. Because we learn how our notes are to sound by practicing our two Scales, we do not learn what the sounds are that these symbols instruct us to make. So most of the time, on most of the songs in our book – even those with accidentals – we will sing the song as if the accidentals were not there. This causes a problem when there are folks at a singing that are not aware of this.*

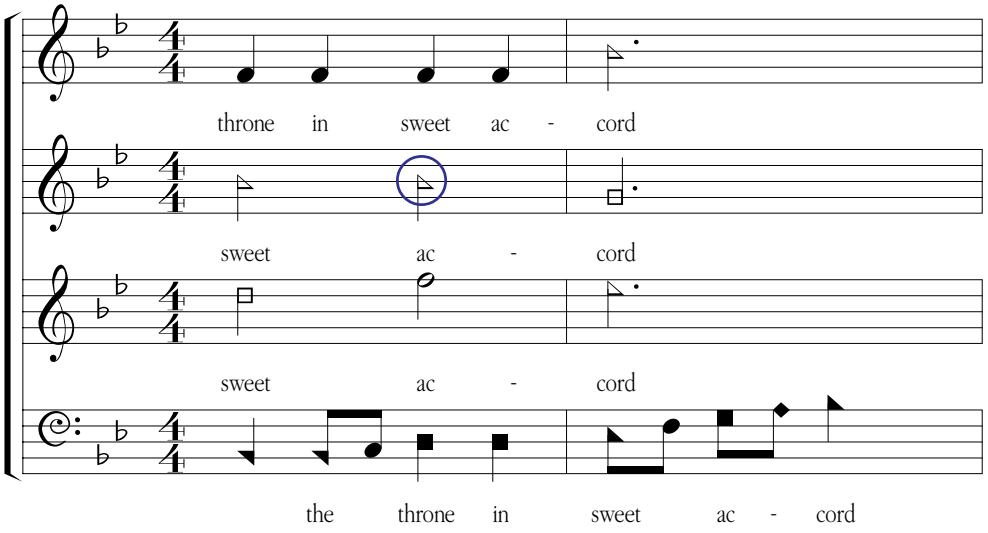
CD 25 Take another look at WINDHAM on page 34 of this workbook and compare it to the way it looks on page 38 of the Denson book. There are accidentals in the Alto part and in the Tenor part. Many traditional singers will sing those notes as if they had no accidentals. Listen to the CD track 25 for what happens at a singing when one strong person observing the accidental, on the alto part, manages to "pull" the rest of the alto singers off the note they started out on and onto the "foreign" note. By the final verse they're all singing it.**

*Adding complexity is the fact that in a few areas of traditional Denson book Sacred Harp singings, accidentals have always been taught and used. There was much controversy over this issue between those folks and B. F. White and his fellow teachers in the early days. See http://pnwshs.org for the handout on this topic. Singers outside these traditional areas do not have this excuse, however. Also, accidentals, with one exception, are not found in the Cooper Sacred Harp.

**This is an example of a lapse in good Singing etiquette: since the majority of the altos present were ignoring the accidental, the singer who wanted to use it should have gone along with the majority for the sake of the singing on that day. Or perhaps that singer simply didn't know what she was doing and couldn't hear the others above her own voice, which is still a lapse in manners, but of a different sort.

There are some songs in the book that have accidentals that all singers will observe because they are so written that they simply won't sound good otherwise, e.g. Denson's BOYLSTON (compare it to #447t in the Cooper book,) or Denson's #454. But even for these songs, there are Denson Sacred Harp singers so opposed to accidentals (or bewildered by them), that they have worked out completely different notes to sing in those spots.

A variant alto heard at Sand Mountain AL Singings on #454.



In most cases, the accidental can simply be ignored and the note sung as if the accidental were not there. In such songs, the harmony is more "Sacred Harp-like" and "old sounding" without the accidental.

This concludes the series of Lessons for entry-level beginners. With what you have learned here, you will be well on your way to becoming a graceful, assured Sacred Harp singer. The page in front of you is no longer intimidating and you will be able to drink in the richness of the experience that is singing Sacred Harp. Not touched on here are the many spiritual layers of meaning present in the music and the texts, nor the traditions of fellowship that, over time, become more important to most of us than the music itself.

Leading from the center of the square is a skill eventually acquired by most singers, (see the next chapter) along with How to organize and carry out an All-Day Singing, How to Cook for an All-Day Singing, The History of Shapenotes and the Books that use them, What is the Minutes Book and How is it used, How To Use the Internet to find All-Day Singings — did you realize you were embarking on a lifelong journey of discovery when you first began this new activity?

God bless you all, and come sit next to me at the next singing where we meet.

Pages 46-58 have been added to this workbook in response to expressed needs by attendees at Camp Fasola adult camp in 2013: "please provide interval drills and written down tips on leading and beating time."

KEYING*

Learning how to find the best sound for the "key note" and give to the Sacred Harp Singing Class their opening pitches for any song in the book is an advanced skill. It is a skill that only a few Sacred Harp singers will acquire.

But singers need not remain silent and unsinging when they find themselves without the services of a skilled "keyer." If you are by yourself, simply pick a pitch for your Scale Note 1, find your opening note, and start singing. If it turns out to be too high or too low, adjust your Scale Note 1 sound accordingly and start over.

This will not be acceptable at even a small singing, however, as you will not want to waste valuable singing time endlessly searching for a good pitch for Scale Note 1 for each song.

In such circumstances, use an aid such as a pitch pipe. A pitch pipe is readily available at music supply stores, or get an app for your smartphone.

1) Determine the last note in the bass as outlined in the preceding lessons, and the name of the staff line or space it is positioned on.

2) Find that line or space name on the pitch pipe.

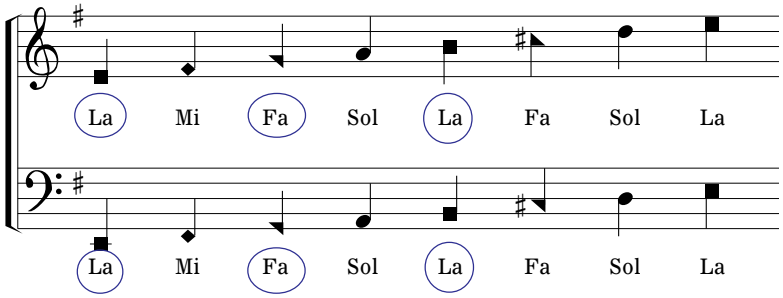
3) Move counter-clockwise two or three positions and blow that pitch. This will be the sound of your Scale Note 1.

"*Why don't you blow the same pitch (same letter) as the last note in the Bass?*" someone asks. Because in most cases that pitch would be too high for average singers. We are under no obligation to sing our songs in the same pitch at which they are printed in the book. Tastes vary and everyone is encouraged to find the best pitch of each song for their own situations, so that the trebles are not screeching too high, and the basses are not growling too low, and the song sounds good.

In general, selecting a sound that is two or three positions on the pitch pipe lower (counter-clockwise) than the printed pitch works well. A few individual songs will need greater or lesser deviation than this. When you encounter one of these songs, make a note of what pitch worked best for your group next to the tune name, in your book.

*This Lesson on the use of the pitchpipe is provided for the sake of those singers who find themselves in a singing group that has no one with the skill to pitch the songs for the class. The pitchpipe is a **very temporary** aid that singers should not become dependent upon; it should be abandoned as quickly as possible.

Example: if the last note in the Bass part is a LA on E, the song is printed in E minor.



The E minor scale with 1 - 3 - 5 notes circled

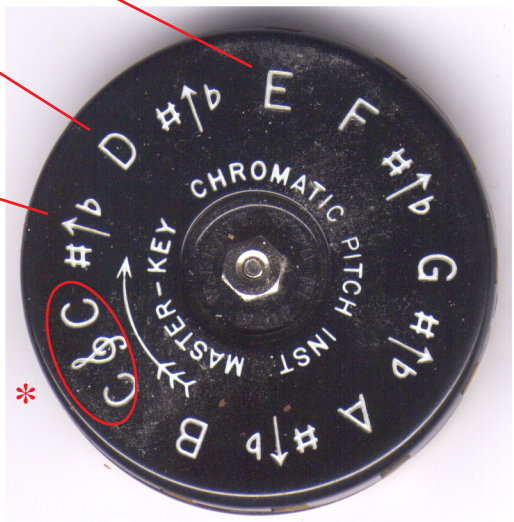
Look at the pitch pipe and find the "E".

Move counter-clockwise two positions or three.

Blow this sound as your Scale Note 1.

Sing it out. Sing the Minor Scale and then the 1 - 3 - 5 notes (La - Fa - La). If necessary, sing up or down the scale to find the opening note for each part.

Launch into the song, by singing the notes. As you sing you'll know right away if your choice was a good one.



*

If the key is wrong, stop the class when you reach the end of the singing of the notes and blow what you think will be a better pitch (usually two or so positions to the left or right of the one you started with); quickly sing the 1 - 3 - 5 notes of the new "key" to set the change into everyone's head, and proceed to sing the song with the words. (But don't bother to stop the singing if the choice was only a little bit wrong. Make a note to yourself of what to try the next time.)

As soon as possible, begin to try and "key a song" without the use of this aid. But until that skill is developed, use the aid and SING.

For those who think they'd like to become a regular "keyer," plan to travel to traditional singings and take notes of what the "keyer" for the singing is doing on each song. Listen to field recordings and note what pitch was chosen on each song, compare it to the pitch you thought up on your own. Attend Camp Fasola, which offers classes on keying.

* *The two "C's" that are circled here are to be considered as one position when counting leftwards or rightwards, because they are the same scale note an octave apart.*

Chapter Three

Interval Drills

Your progress in learning to sight sing will speed up if you will regularly practice these interval drills. Looking at the column: Sing the first note on left, then sing the note to its right. Sing the second row and so on. Listen to the accompanying audio example and match tones with the presenter. Sing the major exercise, with a friend perhaps. A keyboard is shown, in case you have access to one, with the scale laid out on the keys.

Major Scale Intervals.

From 1 to 2 = a major second.

From 2 to 3 = a major second.

From 1 to 3 = a major third.

From 3 to 4 = a minor second.

From 2 to 4 = a minor third.

From 1 to 4 = a perfect fourth.

From 4 to 5 = a major second.

From 3 to 5 = a minor third.

From 2 to 5 = a perfect fourth

From 1 to 5 = a perfect fifth

From 3 to 6 = a perfect fourth.

From 2 to 6 = a perfect fifth.

From 1 to 6 = a major sixth.

From 6 to 7 = a major second.

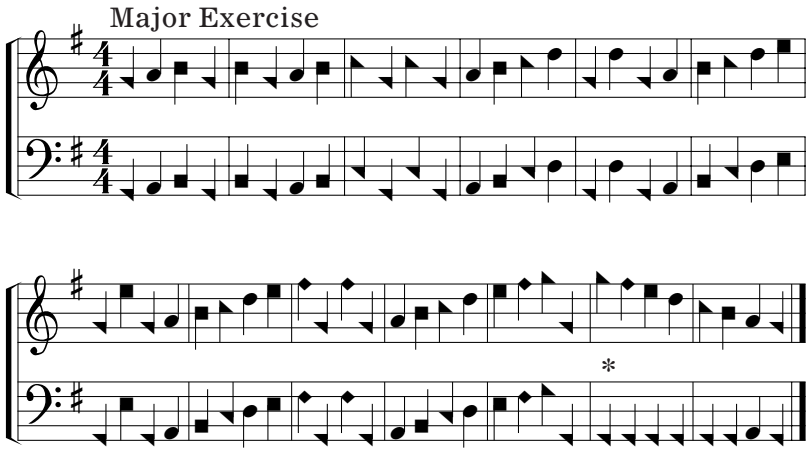
From 5 to 7 = a major third.

From 4 to 7 = a greater fourth.

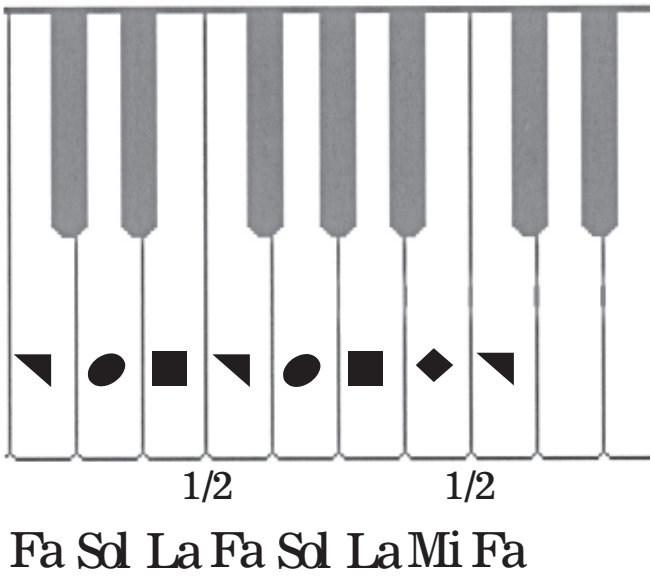
From 3 to 7 = a perfect fifth.

From 2 to 7 = a major sixth.

From 1 to 7 = a major seventh.



** At this point, if singing with a bass, let the bass sing what is printed in the bass clef staff, otherwise let the bass conclude by singing down the scale.*



Work through the Minor Drills in the same way as on page 46. Because it is less well-known, try to spend even more time on this than on the major.

Minor Scale Intervals.

From 1 to 2 = a major second.

From 2 to 3 = a minor second.

From 1 to 3 = a minor third.

From 3 to 4 = a major second.

From 2 to 4 = a minor third.

From 1 to 4 = a perfect fourth.

From 4 to 5 = a major second.

From 3 to 5 = a major third.

From 5 to 8 = a perfect fourth.

From 1 to 5 = a perfect fifth.

From 3 to 4 = a minor second.

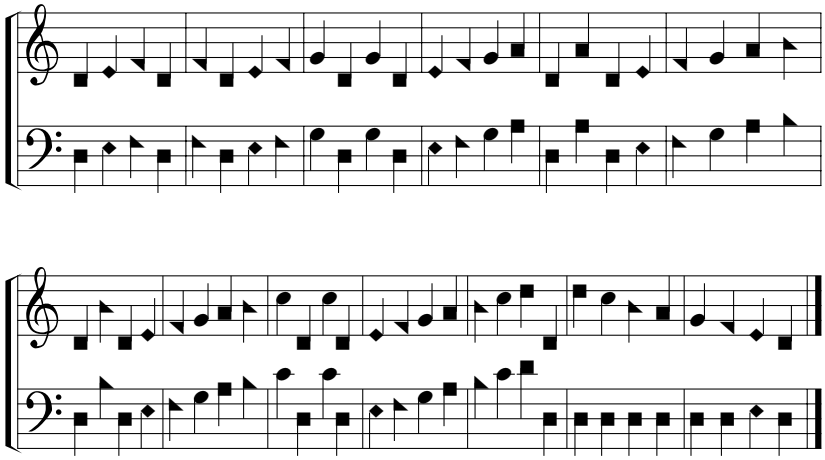
From 4 to 6 = a major second.

From 3 to 6 = a greater fourth, or tritone.*

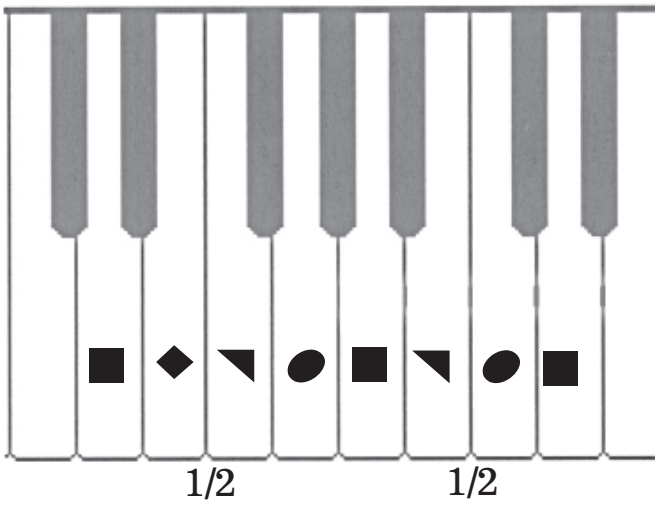
From 2 to 6 = a perfect fifth.

From 1 to 6 = a major sixth.

Minor Exercise



"Traditionally, minor music is sung... with the sixth degree a half step higher than the natural minor notation indicates." page 18 Denson SH, last paragraph. *The appropriate tones are shown here on a keyboard.*



La Mi Fa Sol La Fa Sol La

* As illustrated on pg. xx, of the Cooper SH Rudiments, the first FA to the second FA interval in the major scale is narrower than the first FA to the second FA interval in the minor scale due to where the 1/2 steps occur in the two scales.

Beating Time & Leading

All the many details included in the lessons on Modes of Time, Time Signatures, and Accenting come together in this Lesson. A Glossary of nouns as used in Sacred Harp will be helpful:

Accent: Particular stress or emphasis on one part of a musical phrase, as governed by the mode of time and the poetic meter.

Beating The Rest(s): For a song that begins with a rest, a leader might decide to begin Beating Time at the beginning of the first measure, rather than to skip over the opening rest(s) and simply lift the hand for the first note of the song.

Beating Time: Downward and upward motions of the hand to keep everyone together in time. It indicates the leader's desired speed, and the motion of the hand should always be distinct and regular.

Bringing In Parts: A graceful manner of turning toward the different vocal parts as they enter during fuging pieces. This is not required of a leader but is an art that is widely admired in the practice of those who do it well.

Courtesy: This is a type of cut-off at the end of a song where the leader, having ended as always with the hand up, sustains the final chord beyond its written length, and subtly closes or lowers the open hand as a signal for the singers to release the final chord. Provided it is not overdone, it is the mark of an elegant and accomplished leader.

Front Bench: Those sitting in the row of chairs closest to the center of the square. They, especially the tenor front bench, are expected to assist all leaders who need help setting and sustaining the rhythm of their songs, and to reflect the arm motions of the leader to the class behind and to the sides of the Leader. They also serve as the leaders of their section (always beginning the song on time and making their fuging entrances robustly) and through their ability to sing a song with their eyes off the printed page, make possible the synergy of a song particularly well-rendered.

Leader: The leader stands in the middle of the square, faces the tenors, and directs the class through the song by **Beating Time**. The song(s) chosen by the leader, as well as their verses, repeats and the tempo, are all considered part of their "Lesson."

Lesson: Everything the leader does during their time in the middle of the square is called their "Lesson."

Meter: In Sacred Harp, "meter" is an aspect of poetry, not rhythm or tempo. This is one of the differences of Sacred Harp from modern choral music. In Sacred Harp, rhythm and tempo are determined by the mode, which is indicated by the time signature. See Meter in the Rudiments of our book.

Modes of Time: A system by which beating time, rhythm, speed, and accent in Sacred Harp are collectively governed. The seven modes of time (3 of Common,

2 of Triple, 2 of Compound) are each indicated by a Time Signature. The primary accent is always on the first beat in all modes of time. Each mode is bound to a particular speed. These speeds are not today observed in absolute terms, but the speeds of the modes are kept proportional to one another. 2/4 and 6/8 are the quickest, next comes 3/4, then 4/4 and 6/4, and the slowest are 2/2 and 3/2. The mode of a given song determines how the leader will move their hand and arm.

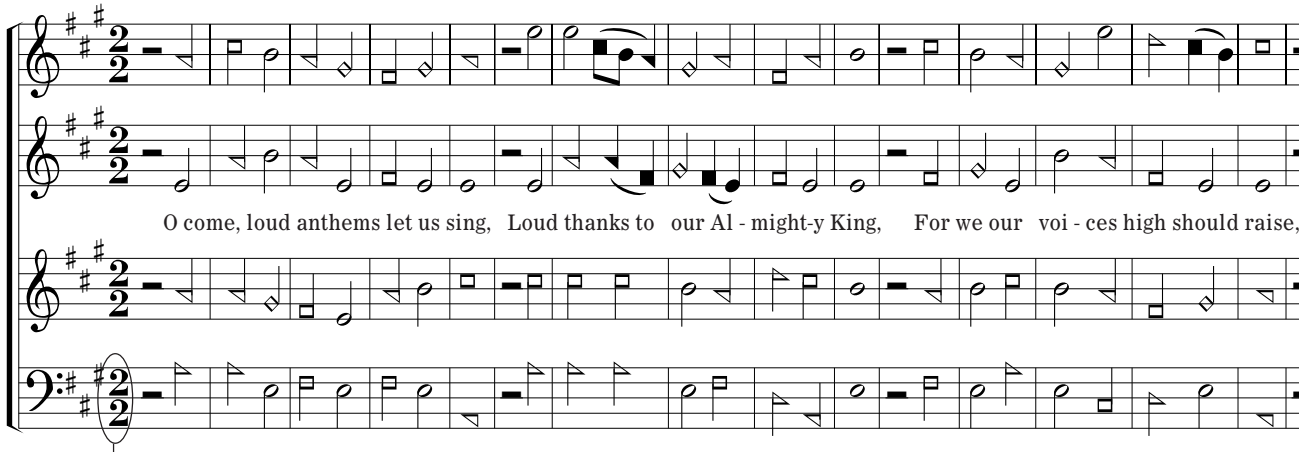
Time Signature: Numerals placed at the beginning of each song in the form of a fraction, which identify which mode of time the song is in. The top number indicates how many parts each measure has. The bottom number indicates what kind of note — half, quarter, eighth — fills one part. Each Mode of Time has its identifying time signature and in the Sacred Harp, there are only seven possible time signatures:

	Common	Triple	Compound
First Mode	"two over two" 2/2	"three over two" 3/2	"six over four" 6/4
Second Mode	"four over four" 4/4	"three over four" 3/4	"six over eight" 6/8
Third Mode	"two over four" 2/4		

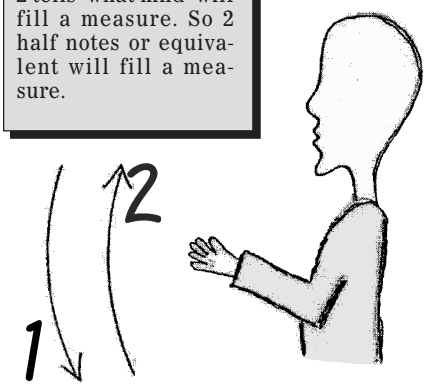
It will also be helpful to review the basic lessons on Filling a Measure in order to get the most out the following lessons on beating time and leading and accenting with the voice. You are at the point where everything learned previously is brought to bear.

Leading Common Time Songs

OLD HUNDRED. L.M.



The top 2 tells 'how many' and the bottom 2 tells 'what kind' will fill a measure. So 2 half notes or equivalent will fill a measure.

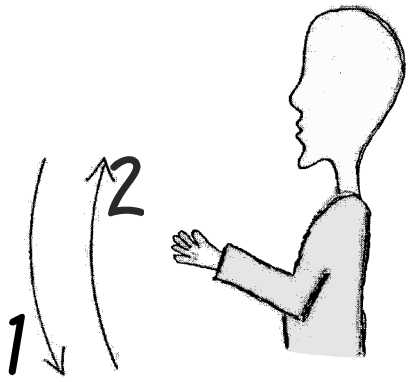


The 1st Mode of Common Time is 2/2: Enter the square and announce "**Number 49 on the top**". Face the tenors for the entire duration of this song. Do not turn to look at the other parts. *Assuming you choose to beat the opening rest,* announce to the front bench tenors that you'll "beat the opening rest." Hold your arm slightly away from your body (to give the altos a chance to see what you're doing, *though if the bass, tenor, and treble front benchers are all beating along with the leader, the altos will have no difficulty*), bent at the elbow and hand held up at about shoulder height. Your hand should be relaxed. Throughout the song your arm will go down and up. Give a nod to the keyer to give the opening pitches. As you hear the class echoing back their opening notes, bring your forearm down for the first beat. For the 2nd beat you'll bring your forearm and hand back up to the start position. As your hand begins its upward motion both you and the class should begin singing. You should never completely stop moving — unless, see below — and your goal is smooth relaxed movement. (Picture a pendulum.) Don't "chop wood"; don't thrust your arm forward into the faces of the tenor front bench; don't swing your arm backwards into the faces of the alto front bench; don't cock your hand up and down at the wrist. Just down and up with the entire hand and forearm. This down-up motion between the shoulder and the waist is used for all three modes of Common Time.

This song has no repeats. The trick to getting the class to make a smooth transition between the end of the singing of the notes to the beginning of the verse is this: when you reach the last measure of the song, Stop (i.e. when you reach

the end of the last measure, hold your arm & hand still, in the up position, and look squarely in the face of one of the front bench tenors). Then resume beating time for the words, including the rest at the start unless you've opted to start the song on the upbeat. In this case, when you're ready to have the class go to the words, resume movement, (you'll have to drop your hand just a bit) so you can sing as you lift your arm upwards to shoulder height.

Some other 2/2 songs:
70t GAINESVILLE
149 THE TRUMPET (in Denson)
39 EDEN OF LOVE (in Cooper)
133 JOHN 4:14 (in Cooper)
213b WARNING (in Denson)
313b COBB (in Denson)



The 3rd Mode of Common Time, 2/4, is led the same way as 2/2.

Some 2/4 songs:
30t LOVE DIVINE (in Denson)
70b EVENING (in Cooper)
76b DESIRE FOR PIETY

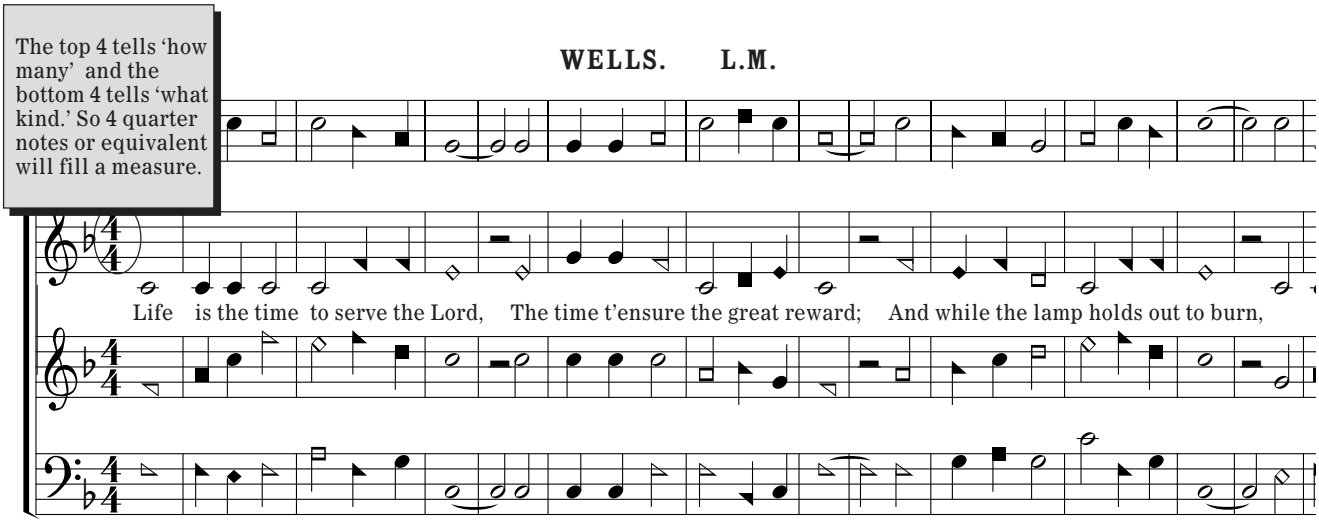
2/4's default tempo is close to 1.5 seconds per measure while 2/2's default tempo is about 3 seconds per measure.

Accenting in 1st and 3rd Modes of Common Time: You should be "pulsing" (that is, "accenting") your voice every time your hand starts down. Every once in a while, you'll come across a 1st or 3rd Mode of Common Time song in which the second part of one of the measures has more than one note in it. In that instance, you should give the first note in the second part of the measure, as your hand starts moving up, a secondary accent. Otherwise, there's just one accent per measure.

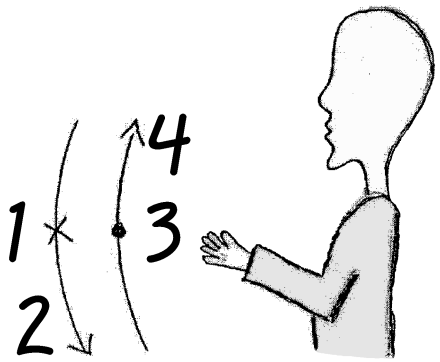
This is a good place to note that accenting is more the singer backing off on the volume of all the notes in a measure except the notes requiring accenting, than it is of adding even more volume to the accented notes. Thus the primary accented notes should be produced at the singer's full sound, the secondary accent somewhat less, and the unaccented notes even less than that. In this way proper accenting gives the voice a bit of a rest every measure, and is one of the practices that accounts for the endurance of experienced singers.

If the leader does not usually sing the tenor part, he/she should set themselves the goal of someday always doing so when they stand in the square to lead. The too high or too low notes in that part can be simply mouthed, but the tenor front bench should not be hearing some other part coming at them from the leader — unless you're still learning. In this case much will be forgiven; but do work on learning the tenor...

The 2nd Mode of Common Time is 4/4: Enter the square and announce "**Number 28 on the bottom**".

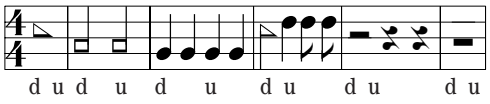


Unlike #49t, singing begins immediately, with no opening rest. There are four beats in this mode of time, and the primary accent falls on the first beat and the secondary accent falls on the third beat. It is easier than it sounds at first: Primary accent happens as your hand begins to go down, and secondary accent happens as your hands starts to come up.



Notice where the "1" occurs?

Many of us have learned to beat this mode of time incorrectly and we have to work at getting it right.* In much of the non-SH music world, the "1" of music with four beats to the measure happens at the bottom of the arm stroke. But not in Sacred Harp. In 1844 B. F. White illustrated in his Rudiments how to beat time for this mode (he used the older term "mood") by showing a "d" for the 1st note in a 4-note measure and a "u" for the 3rd note.



This illustration from the 2012 Cooper Rudiments is nearly identical to the 1844-1869 illustration.

In other words, the arm was <u>still going down during the 2nd beat</u> of the measure and <u>still going up during the 4th beat</u> of the measure. *Thus "1" cannot be at the bottom of the stroke for 4/4 songs*. Close observation of renowned leaders such as Hugh McGraw or Jeff Sheppard confirms the practice was still being taught at the end of the 20th century among Denson singers, and it never stopped being taught Cooper singers.

** Unless you live in Hoboken, Georgia or up on Sand Mountain in Alabama. In those two cases you learn to use a variant arm movement for the 2nd Mode of Common Time in which you move your arm down, then left, then back right, then up to the starting position. Because this is a variant, if you choose to use it be sure to notify the tenor front bench by saying "I'll beat this in four."*

SUMMARY:

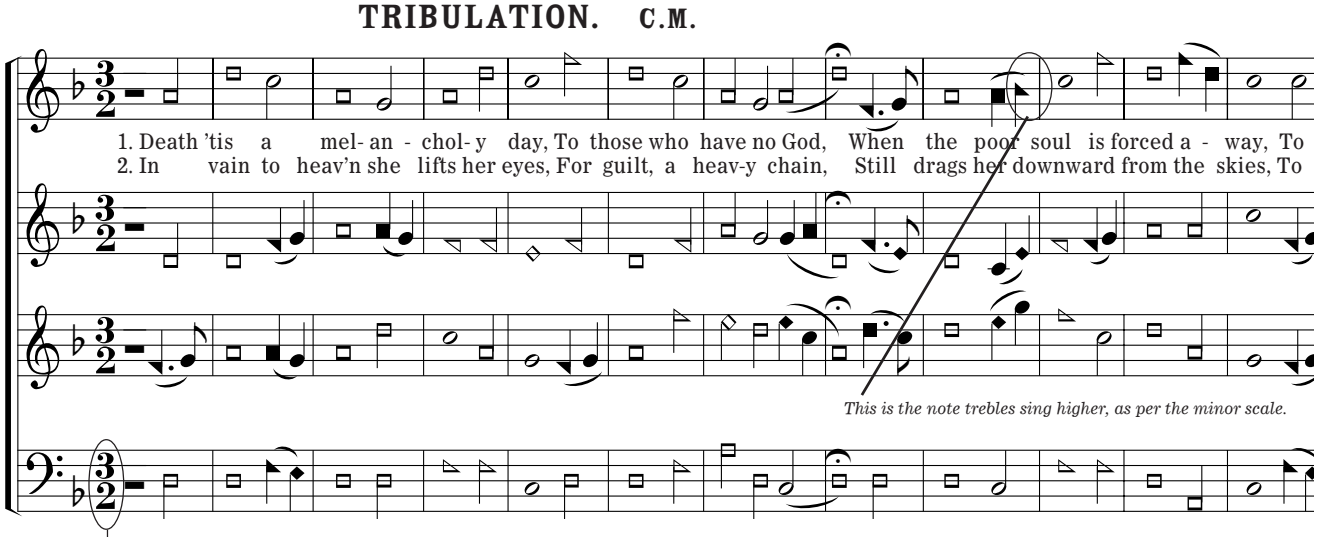
These three modes of Common Time are pronounced “two over two,” “four over four,” and “two over four.” 2/2 is the slowest of the three, 4/4’s default tempo is at about 2.5 seconds per measure, and 2/4 is the quickest.

The exact tempos for all modes of time vary by Sacred Harp region, but the speed relationship of the modes remains the same. The leader should exercise an informed discretion in selecting a tempo for their lesson.

For all three modes of Common Time, the hand and arm move down and up. For 2/4 and 2/2, the “1” is at the bottom of the stroke; for 4/4 the “1” is halfway down, with “2” at the bottom of the stroke.

For all three modes of Common Time, the primary accent is on the first note in the measure. 4/4 has a secondary accent, which occurs on the first note in the third part of the measure, i.e. as the hand and arm start up.

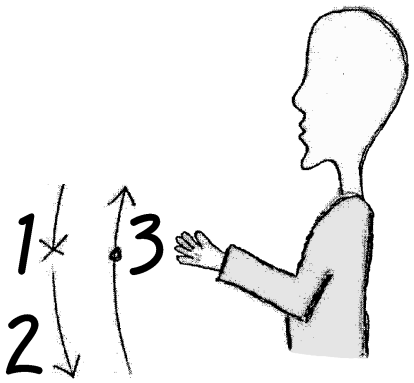
Leading Triple Time Songs



The top 3 tells 'how many' and the bottom 2 tells 'what kind.' So 3 half notes will fill a measure, or any combination that adds up to 3 will complete a measure.

The 1st Mode of Triple Time, 3/2: Enter the square and announce **"Number 29 on the bottom"** (Denson book) or **"Number 184 on the bottom"** (Cooper book) and your verse choices.

Face the Tenors holding your arm up. As you hear the class sounding their opening chord (having been given their notes by the keyer), begin beating: down, down, and start singing as your arm comes up. Despite the greater distance travelled by the arm for the 3rd beat, that beat is equal in duration to the other two — move your arm faster going up.



Your hand and arm will move down, down, up for each measure. Beat 1 is halfway down, beat 2 is at the bottom and beat 3 is at the top.

The default tempo for 3/2 is about 3 seconds per measure.

If you choose to observe the bird's eye, then when you reach that measure, only just begin your downward stroke ever so slightly then hold your arm in the air. Some leaders will then slowly drop their arm to the bottom of their stroke, timing it so that when they reach the bottom they are ready to resume singing on the 3rd beat. Watch various leaders and how they treat a bird's eye occuring on the 1st beat of a measure.

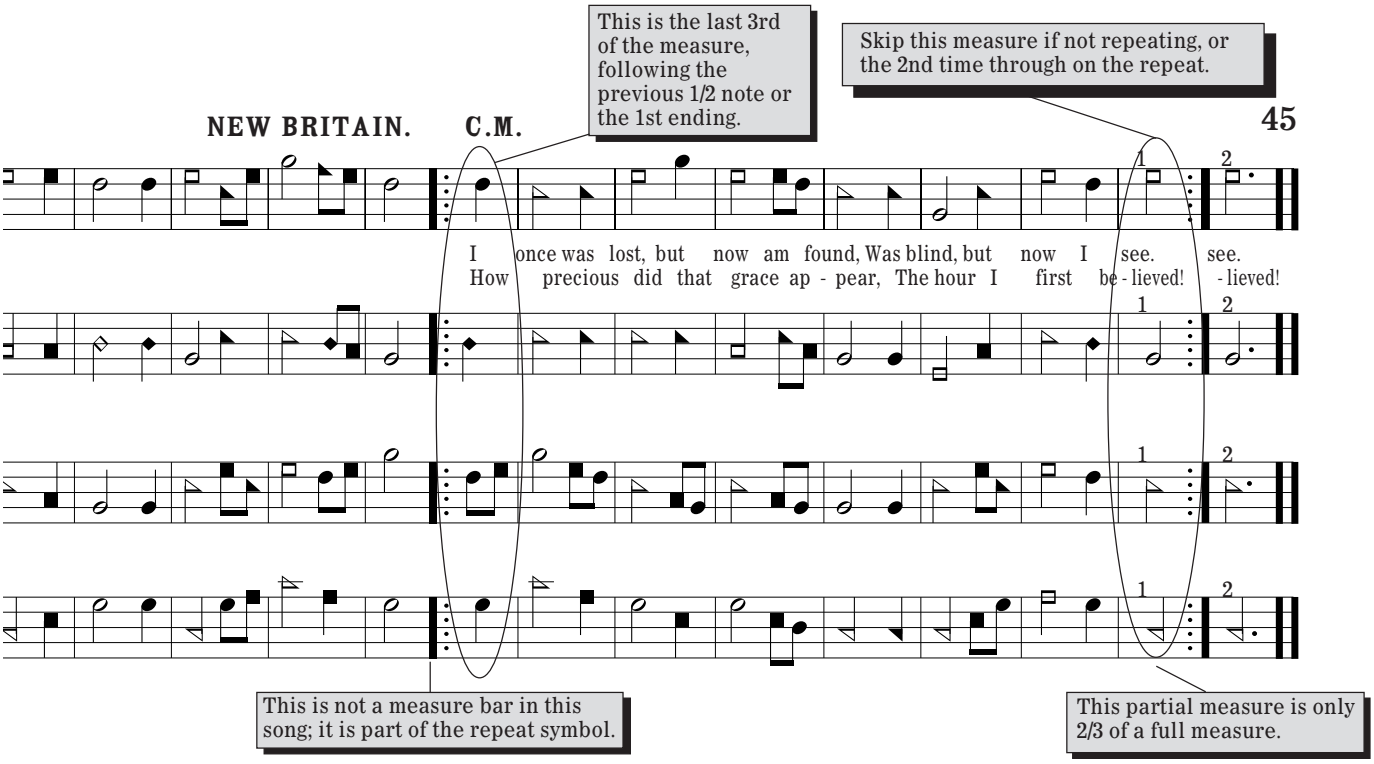
Do not thrust your arm forward; do not swing it behind you; don't over-emphasize the stopping point of each beat. Even though there are three distinct beats, you still want a fairly smooth arc to your arm movement. Let the beats show, (you don't want singers to only see a down-up) but strive for subtlety.

The 2nd Mode of Triple Time, 3/4: A favorite of many, this triple time song is a good one to start with. Enter the square and call out "**45 on the top.**" It has 5 verses and a 1st and 2nd ending (if you choose to repeat the 2nd half of the song). It begins after a half rest. Begin it in the same way described for TRIBULATION.

At an all-day singing, pick only two verses with a repeat on the notes and the last of your verse choices, or 3 verses with no repeats.

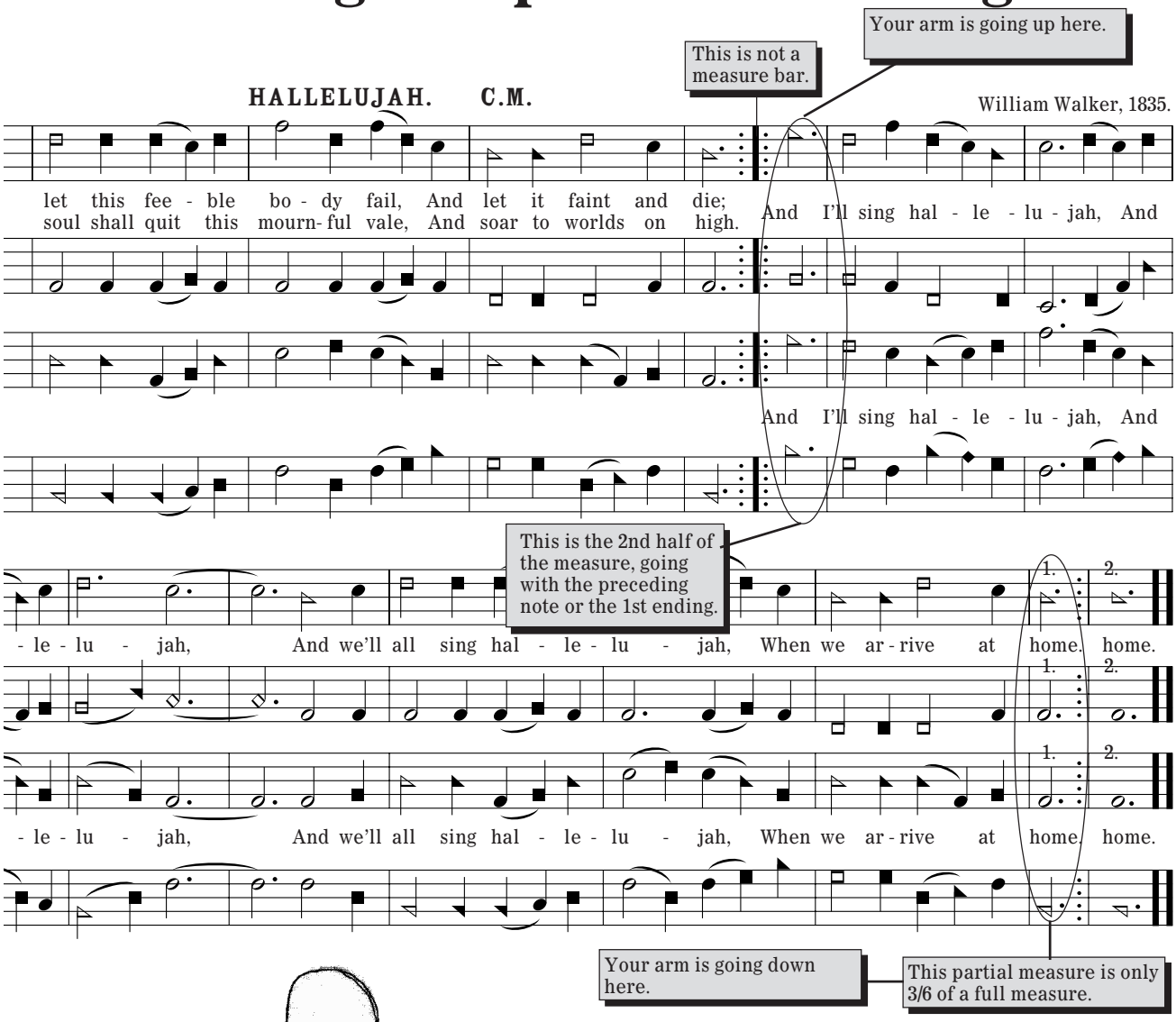
It is critical that you Do Not Stop Your Arm Movement when you are using the 1st ending; and conversely, that you DO stop and hold your hand in the air briefly at the end of singing the notes and after each verse, when you do not take the repeat.

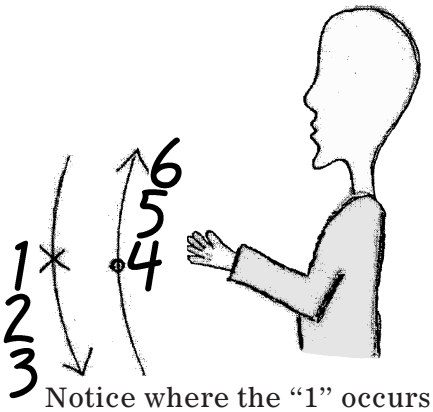
The same arm movement is used for both modes of triple time. The default tempo for 3/4 is about 2 seconds per measure. Voice accent is on "1" with lesser emphasis on "3". A variation of this arm movement is seen in leaders from Hoboken, GA.



When beating triple time at one's seat, it is tempting to get into the habit of swinging your arm to the left across your body for the second beat, because you usually don't have enough vertical space to accomplish the proper down-down-up. The danger is that you're teaching the muscle memory of your arm incorrectly when you do this. Then in the excitement and nervousness of standing in the middle of the square, your arm will do what you taught it to do, and you'll be disappointed in yourself...

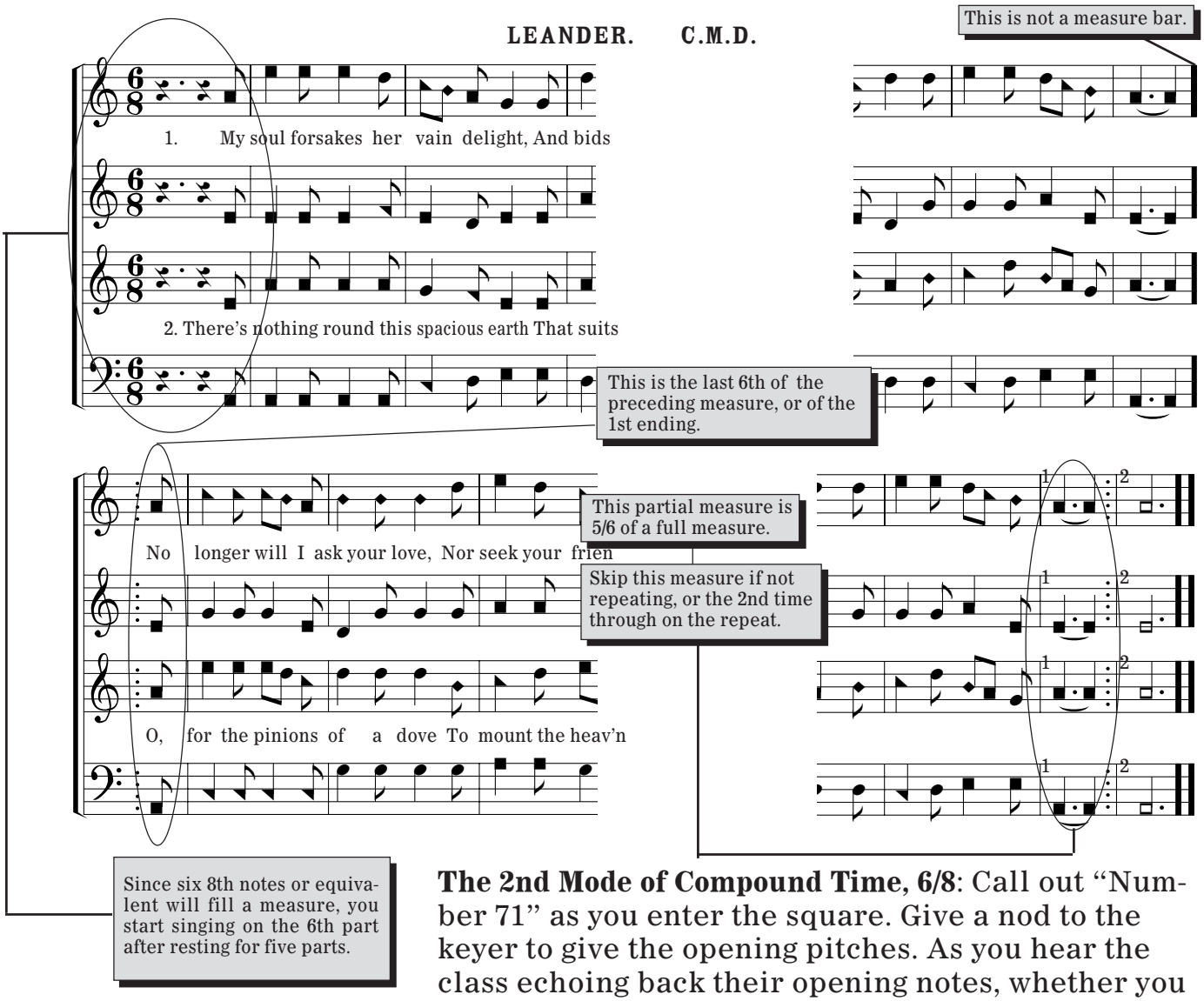
Leading Compound Time Songs





Notice where the "1" occurs?

The 1st Mode of Compound Time, 6/4: Enter the square and announce "**Number 146**." At an all-day singing, request the class to sing no more than two verses of this song. Beginning leaders are advised to beat the rest (and warn the Tenors they'll be doing so). Start singing as you bring your arm up. The leader should "feel" that Compound Time is different from Common Time, with a bit of a lilt about it. When learning it, some teachers suggest letting the hand fall while saying "one, two, three." Wait a moment and raise it up while saying "four, five, six." Gradually join the two halves until all is smooth and regular. The "1" is **not** at the bottom of your stroke; it **is** at the bottom for 2/4 and 2/2 & this is one difference in the two modes. *(In the 1991 Denson HALLELUJAH, the 2nd ending is missing; but not in Cooper. If you choose to repeat the 2nd half of #146 in Denson, then treat what is printed in the book as the 1st ending that it is, and when you're ready to sing the 2nd ending, act as if that last measure looked like the 2nd ending here.)*



The 2nd Mode of Compound Time, 6/8: Call out "Number 71" as you enter the square. Give a nod to the keyer to give the opening pitches. As you hear the class echoing back their opening notes, whether you include the rests or not, *do not jump the gun on when to start singing*. This song, and there are many others like it, doesn't begin until the last 6th of the measure. You sing just before your arm starts down for the beginning of the 2nd measure. (Which is why many leaders opt to beat the rests on songs like this.) The second half of the song is either repeated (using the 1st ending) or not, (always skipping the 1st ending), at your option.

These two modes are pronounced "six over eight," and "six over four." The default tempo for 6/8 is quicker, at 1.5 seconds per measure, than 6/4, at 2.5 seconds per measure. A very very slight pause at the bottom of the arm movement can be seen in some experienced leaders, in both modes.

Your voice will give the primary accent on "1" and a secondary accent on "4". When proper accenting is missing, compound time mode songs sound awful; with it they are among the most delightful in the book. *(A most beautiful variation in leading Compound Time songs is seen in Hoboken, GA, leaders. This variation should probably not be used at other all-day singings — check with the chair first.*

Leading Final Tips

1) Have your song choice ready, and be aware of any options you will be expected to exercise (which verses, optional repeats, etc.) before you enter the square.

2) If you want to lead a song that is new to you, practice it before leading it at a convention or all-day singing, especially if the song is little used (unfamiliar) as the class might be relying on *you* to help them sing it effectively.

3) Announce your song and choices in a firm loud voice aimed at the Tenor front bench.

4) Face the tenors. Turning and bringing in the parts on fuging tunes is an intermediate skill not covered here. (Besides, seeing leaders' faces other than when getting the cue for their fuging entrance scares the altos.)

5) Stand in the middle of the square, not on the toes of the singers on any of the front benches.

6) Make sure your triple time arm movements are just down, down, up with no forward or backward movement of your arm. You're not pitching or bowling.

7) Most of your arm movement should be from your elbow, not your shoulder.

8) If the lowest point of your hand movement comes barely below your waist, you won't be tempted to swing your arm behind you. This saves the song from slowing down, and saves you from attack by the alto whose face you just knuckled.

9) Keep your upper body straight — no bending at the waist — and head up. Someday you'll also be able to smile at a singer in the second row.

10) At the end of the song, keep moving your arm if you are taking the repeat; stop moving with hand up if not. Say "Thank you" and leave the square.

"The leader's job is to help the class get the most out of the song spiritually and musically; the leader is not a performer; it's not really about you."—David Ivey

"I love dancing but there's a time and a place. The middle of the square is not the place." You should, though, "Strive for graceful movements."—Shelbie Sheppard

"Leading is about what you can do to help the class sing a song."—2006 Camp Fasola

"Practice leading in front of your mirror."—Joyce Walton

"Practice leading in the square at your monthly 2-hr singings."—Karen Willard

"Don't forget to check the back of your skirt or the front of your trousers just before entering the square."—Shelbie Sheppard

"Leading is equal parts confidence and humility."—David Ivey

"When the front bench tenors ask you what verses you want to lead, they are really saying 'which one or two' do you want?"—Jeff Sheppard

"The front benchers' job is to make the leader look good regardless of his/her skills... they need to be servants and to assist the leader. All four front benches should be beating the time along with the leader."—Judy Hauff

"Leading is a conversation with the class."—Paine Denson