Revised by John Garst

Author's Note. The *Sacred Harp* tradition is separate and distinct from other musical traditions. Accordingly, these rudiments are based on those of previous editions of the *Sacred Harp* by Paine Denson *(Original Sacred Harp, Denson Revision,* 1936), Joe S. James *(Original Sacred Harp, 1911),* and B. F. White and E. J. King *(Sacred Harp, 1844),* except where these are incomplete or where they conflict with actual practice.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. **Sounds** are our perceptions of vibrations in the air, which are caused by vibrating objects. A **musical tone** is a continuous sound of pleasing quality and definite pitch, high or low. **Noise** is a harsh, irregular, and confused sound that lacks a definite pitch.

Musical tones are produced by vibrations of strings, wires, reeds, and diaphragms of musical instruments; of the lips in playing certain wind instruments; and of the vocal cords in singing. Vibrations of shorter or tighter strings produce tones of higher pitch, while those of longer or looser strings produce tones of lower pitch.

2. **Absolute pitch** is measured by the **frequency** of vibration, which is given in cycles (vibrations) per second. High pitch corresponds to high frequency. A person with good hearing can perceive tones with frequencies from approximately sixteen to nearly forty thousand cycles per second.

Relative pitch is used in the *Sacred Harp.* The relative pitches of two tones make an **interval,** which is defined technically as the *ratio* of the higher frequency to the lower one.

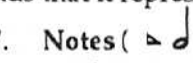
We can recognize intervals by ear, that is, by listening, and we recognize the same interval whether the absolute pitch is high or low. Whether "Happy birthday to you" is sung by a low voice or a high one, we recognize the tune by recognizing the same intervals between successive tones.

3. In addition to pitch, a musical tone has **accent** (degree of emphasis), **length** (duration in time), and **volume** (loudness).

4. In **music,** tones of various pitches, accents, lengths, and volumes are sounded successively **(melody)** or simultaneously **(harmony).** Accordingly, the description of music is divided into **rhythmics** (timing, length, and accent), **melodics** (pitch), **dynamics** (volume), and **harmony** (blending of tones).

5. The *Sacred Harp* uses **four-part harmony.** The parts, in order of increasing pitch, are **bass** (sung by men), **tenor** (men and women), **alto** (usually women), and **treble** (men and women). The doubling of the tenor and treble (and sometimes the alto) in the vocal ranges of men and women creates an effect of six-(or seven-)part harmony.

6. In **musical notation,** all aspects of melodics, rhythmics, dynamics, and harmony are represented by printed characters. To "note" a piece of music is to write it in musical notation. Hereinafter, following common usage, "music" refers to the notation, the sounds that it represents, or both.

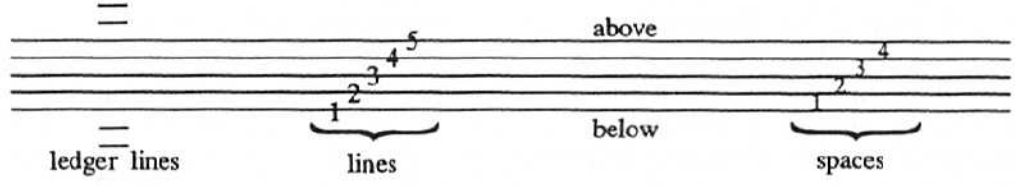
7. **Notes** () represent musical tones, including pitch, accent, length, volume, and sequence in time. Hereinafter, following common usage, "note" refers to either the printed character or the tone it represents, or to both.

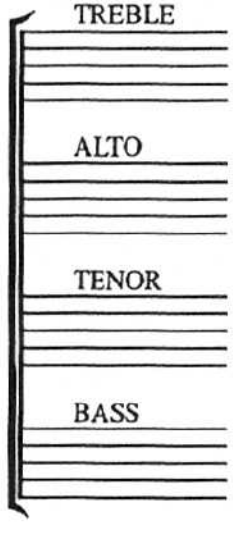
The **head** of each note is one of **four shapes.** Each shape denotes a particular **syllable.** A **triangle** (△) is **Fa** (pronounced "faw"), an **oval** (○) **Sol** ("sole"), a **square** (□) **La** ("law"), and a **diamond** (◇) **Mi** ("mee"). The shapes and syllables are related to pitch.

In conversation, syllables are sometimes called "notes" or "shapes." Thus, in **"singing the notes,"** one sings the syllables, as given by the shapes of the notes.

Rests are periods of silence or the characters that represent them. See Chapter II, Section 8.

8. Notes are placed on a **staff,** a series of five parallel, horizontal lines with spaces between them. The **lines** and **spaces** are counted upward, **1-2-3-4-5** (lines) and **1-2-3-4** (spaces). The **space below the staff** is immediately below line 1, and the **space above the staff** is immediately above line 5.





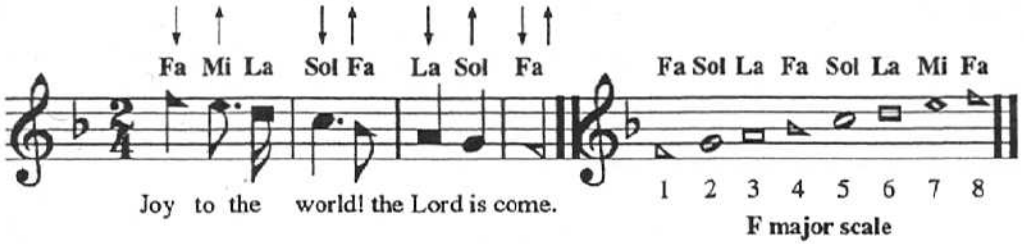
To represent pitch, the head of each note is placed at a particular **position** on the staff, that is, at a particular line or space. The positions adjacent to a line are spaces, and vice versa. A note with a higher position has a higher pitch. The staff is extended, above and below, by adding short **ledger lines** as needed to create positions for notes.

9. Each part has a separate staff. The staffs (or staves) for the parts are placed one above the other and joined at their left ends by a pair of vertical lines to make a **brace.** The figure shows the order of the parts. When there are only three parts, the alto is omitted.

A segment of a staff or brace extends across the page from left to right, then the staff or brace is continued (if necessary) as another segment below the first. Each part is continued on the appropriate staff of the brace.

10. Music is read from the first page on which it is printed to the last; on a given page, it is read from top to bottom; and on a given segment of the staff, notes and rests are read from left to right. This is the same order as words in printed text. Each syllable of the words is printed below (or sometimes above) its note.

11. The music for the first line of the familiar Handel tune for "Joy to the world! the Lord is come," shows how notes follow one another across the staff. It also illustrates other aspects of notation and provides a starting point for understanding scales and intervals. These details are discussed later, where this illustration will be cited briefly as JOY.



12. Modern **standard notation** is written in **round notes** (the head of every note is oval) instead of the **shaped notes** used in the *Sacred Harp*. With certain accomodations, *Sacred Harp* notation can be read by a round-note reader by ignoring the shapes of the notes. The necessary accomodations concern time signatures, method of marking time, and tempo (Chapter II, Sections 10-15); misbarred notation (Chapter II, Section 21); and key signatures and scales for minor keys (Chapter III, Section 15; Chapter IV, Section 4; and Chapter VIII, Sections 13 and 14).

CHAPTER II
RHYTHMICS

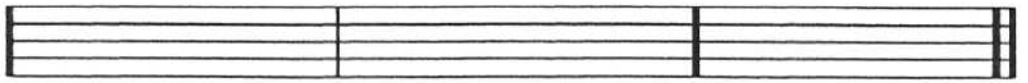
1. **Rhythmics** treats the arrangements of notes and rests in time. Thus, it is concerned with patterns in time and accent.

2. Time is measured in **beats**, short periods of equal length, usually less than a second, that follow one another and fill time without leaving any "holes."

3. Beats are grouped into larger units of time called **measures**, which are separated in notation by **measure bars**, light vertical lines across the staff. Measures are counted successively from the beginning of the piece of music, as printed.

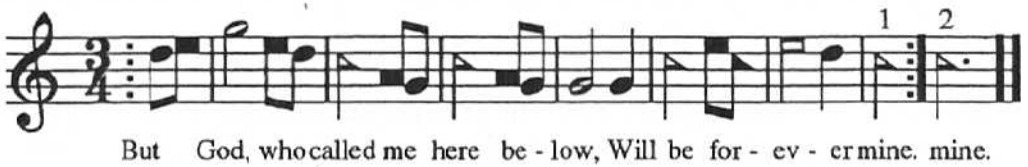
In a brace, corresponding measures of the various parts are aligned vertically and are performed simultaneously. A broad bar, or **phrase bar**, is often used as a measure bar, but its main purpose is to mark the end of one line or phrase of poetry and the beginning of another.

A broad bar followed closely by a narrow one marks the beginning of a segment of a staff. A **double bar** (two broad bars) marks the end of the notation of a piece of music.



4. **Form** may require that certain musical passages be repeated, sometimes to the same words, sometimes to different ones. A **repeat mark** consists of a row of dots, usually one in each space (or sometimes two dots, one above and the other below the third line). If placed to the left of a measure bar, a repeat mark shows that the preceding passage is to be sung twice. In this case, the passage to be repeated extends to the previous repeat mark, or, if there is none, to the beginning. If the repeat mark is to the right of a measure bar, it shows that the following passage is to be repeated. The passage to be repeated extends to the next repeat mark, or, if none follows, to the end.

5. The figures 1 and 2, or **double ending**, at the close of a composition (or a phrase within it) indicate that the preceding passage is to be sung twice, using the notes under the 1 the first time and those under the 2, instead, the second time. If the notes under the 1 and 2 are tied together, then one sings both the second time.



6. **D.C.** or **Da Capo**, usually placed above the staff, is a directive to return to the beginning and to finish at the end of the first strain or phrase. **D.S.**, or **Dal Segno**, directs a return to the sign (𝄋). The label **Fine** (Italian for "end") may mark the end, following a D.C. or D.S. Repeats are not observed after a D.C. or D.S., and if there is a double ending, the second is used.

7. Notes have **relative lengths** as follows.

length:	1	1/2	1/4	1/8	1/16
note:	𝅝	𝅗𝅥	♩	♪	𝅘𝅥𝅯
relative length:	whole	half	quarter	eighth	sixteenth

For any shape, the same system of **stems** (short vertical lines), **color** [white (open) or **black** (filled) head], and **flags** (hanging from the stem at the end opposite the head) is used to denote relative lengths.

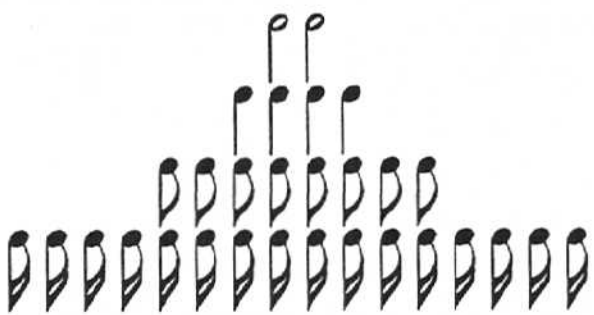
A whole note 𝅝 is equal in length to

Two halves or

Four quarters or

Eight eighths or

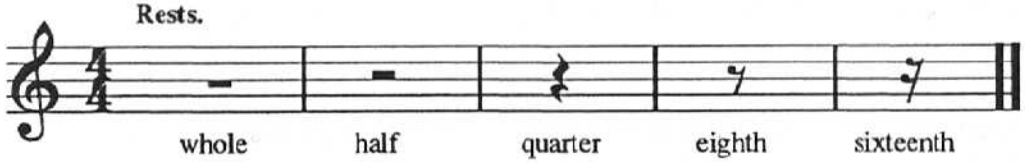
Sixteen sixteenths



The duration of a note (in time) of a given relative length may vary from one piece to another, or even from one performance of the same piece to another, but the durations for the various relative lengths are always proportional as shown above.

8. **Rests** denote silence. **Whole, half, quarter, eighth,** and **sixteenth** rests have the same lengths as the corresponding notes. This figure shows the values of rests and their positions on the staff.

Rests.



whole half quarter eighth sixteenth

9. A **dot** placed immediately to the right of a rest or the head of a note increases its length by half, so that a **dotted** note or rest is 1-1/2 times as long as it would have been without the dot.

A dotted whole note 𝅝 . is equal to 𝅝 𝅗𝅥 or 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 or ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

A dotted half note 𝅗𝅥 . is equal to 𝅗𝅥 ♩ or 𝅗𝅥 ♩ ♩ or ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

A dotted quarter note ♩ . is equal to ♩ ♪ or ♪ ♪ ♪ or 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯

10. A **time signature** denoting the **mode** of time precedes the first note or rest of a piece of music. One whole number is placed over another. Each change in the mode of time is indicated by a time signature at the point of change. In JOY the time signature is $\frac{2}{4}$.

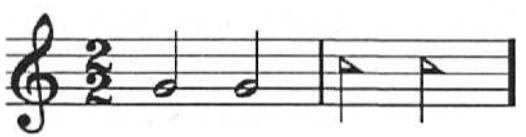
The lower number specifies a note (by length) and the upper one specifies the number of these notes that will fill a measure completely and exactly. Thus, $\frac{2}{4}$ indicates that two (2) quarter notes (1/4) will fill a measure. Any combination of notes and rests with the same total length will also fill a measure.

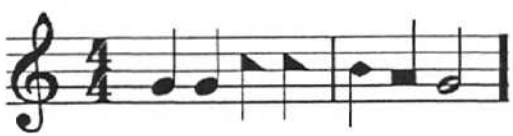
The lengths of notes and rests in beats follow from the number of beats in a measure. In previous editions of the Sacred Harp, the Rudiments state that $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ measures contain two beats, while $\frac{3}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ measures contain three. However, the upper figure of a time signature is often interpreted as the number of beats in a measure, so that $\frac{4}{4}$ has four beats per measure and $\frac{6}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ have six.

11. The modes of time fall into three types: common time, triple time, and compound time.

(a) There are three modes of common time. In each, a measure contains two or four beats. Most notes fall on even divisions of a beat, that is, on the beat, half beat, quarter beat, etc.

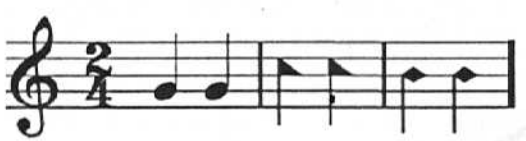
In the first mode $\frac{2}{2}$ of common time, two half notes fill a measure. A half note receives one beat.



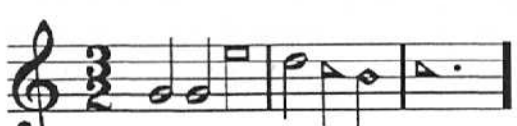


In the second mode $\frac{4}{4}$ of common time, four quarter notes fill a measure. A half note receives one beat if a measure contains two beats, and a quarter note receives one beat if a measure contains four beats.

In the third mode $\frac{2}{4}$ of common time, two quarter notes fill a measure. A quarter note receives one beat.



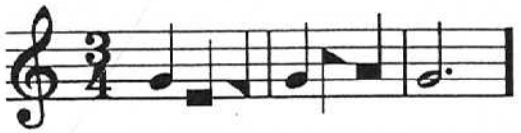
b) Two modes of triple time are used in the Sacred Harp. In each, a measure contains three beats. Most notes fall on even divisions of a beat.



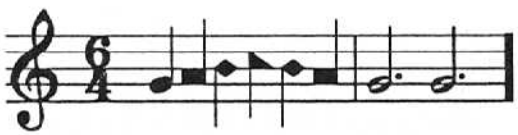
In the first mode $\frac{3}{2}$ of triple time, three half notes fill a measure. A half note receives one beat.

In the second mode $\frac{3}{4}$ of triple time,

three quarter notes fill a measure. A quarter note receives one beat.



(c) Two modes of **compound time** are used in the *Sacred Harp*. In each, a measure contains two or six beats. Most notes fall on divisions of the two beats by three or on one of the six beats.



In the first mode $\frac{6}{4}$ of compound time, six quarter notes fill a measure. A dotted half note receives one beat if a measure contains two beats, and a quarter note receives one beat if a measure contains six beats.

In the second mode $\frac{6}{8}$ of compound time, six eighth notes fill a measure. A dotted quarter note receives one beat if a measure contains two beats, and an eighth note receives one beat if a measure contains six beats.

12. In performance, the **leader marks** (or **beats**) **time** with hand and arm motions. Singers may also mark time, provided that they follow the leader precisely.

The first beat of each measure is marked with a downward stroke of the hand, a **downbeat** (symbol **d**). The beat begins at the end of the stroke. For two-beat measures, the second beat is marked with an upward stroke, an **upbeat** (symbol **u**). Thus, time is marked by the series $\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d & u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right.\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d & u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right|$. In JOY, down- and upbeats are denoted by down and up arrows over the notes.

Three-beat measures are marked $\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d\,d\,u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right.\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d\,d\,u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right|$. The first down stroke should end with the forearm near a horizontal position, so that there is room for the second down stroke.

Four- and six-beat measures can be marked with these same hand strokes. Thus, the $\frac{4}{4}$ mode of time can be marked and $\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d & u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}4\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right.\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d & u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}4\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right|$ and $\frac{6}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d & & u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}4\text{-}5\text{-}6\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right.\left|\begin{smallmatrix}d & & u\\ 1\text{-}2\text{-}3\text{-}4\text{-}5\text{-}6\text{-}\end{smallmatrix}\right|$.

Although leaders may assume considerable discretion in the manner of marking time, modest downward and upward strokes are much to be preferred to "winding", "grabbing" and "snatching" methods.

13. Every measure must contain notes and rests whose lengths (in beats) add up to that of a measure, exactly, in the given mode of time. The student should verify that this is true of each measure of JOY. Sometimes a partial measure at the beginning is complemented by another at the end, so that the two together make a whole measure.

14. A note or rest that begins at the beginning of a beat is said to fall **on the beat**. Other notes are **off the beat**.

The first note or rest in each measure falls on the first beat of that measure. A note that falls on the first beat of a measure is given a **primary accent** by enunciating it a little more emphatically and making it a little louder than others.

A note falling on the second beat of a two-beat measure of common or compound time is given a **secondary** (less pronounced) **accent**. In triple time, the secondary accent is on the third beat. In a four-beat or six-beat measure, the secondary accent is on the third ($\frac{4}{4}$) or fourth ($\frac{6}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$) beat.

The student can get a good feel for the inherent rhythms of the various modes of time by reciting the counts of the beats with the proper accents, as follows, where boldface represents a primary accent and italics a secondary one:

12|*12*|**12**|*12*| ---------- ($\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$)

123|*123*|**123**|*123*| ---------- ($\frac{3}{2}$ $\frac{3}{4}$)

In four- and six-beat measures, the accents are:

1234|**1**234|**1**234|**1**234| ---------- ($\frac{4}{4}$)

123456|**123**456|**123**456|**123**456| ---- ($\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$)

Accents should be distinct, but if overdone the performance will sound "choppy."

Under special circumstances, where there is syncopation or misbarring (Sections 20 and 21), accents are displaced from their normal beats.

15. **Tempo** is the frequency (speed) of beats. In the *Sacred Harp*, the mode of time is a guide to tempo. In common time, $\frac{2}{2}$ is slower than $\frac{4}{4}$, which is slower than $\frac{2}{4}$. In triple time, $\frac{3}{2}$ is slower than $\frac{3}{4}$, and in compound time, $\frac{6}{4}$ is slower than $\frac{6}{8}$. In associating tempo with the time signature, the *Sacred Harp* tradition follows a practice dating back to the mensural notation of the 13th century.

Evenso, tempo is at the discretion of the leader. It should be appropriate to the music and poetry, and it should be neither so slow as to drag intolerably nor so fast as to give the impression of racing or to inhibit the clear pronunciation of the words.

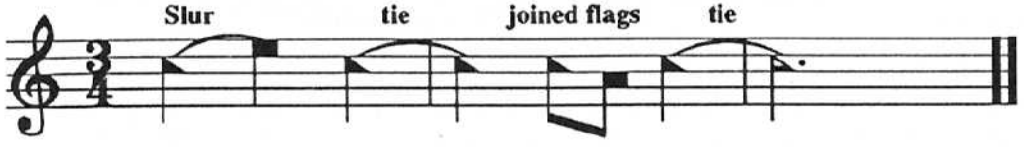
In standard notation, a measure of $\frac{2}{2}$ is usually shorter (in seconds) than one of $\frac{4}{4}$, the opposite of the *Sacred Harp* tradition.

An accurate tempo can be set with a **metronome**, a mechanical or electrical device for marking the beginnings of successive beats with sounds or flashes of light. The notation **mm = 120** means that there are 120 equal beats per minute.

16. The student should practice singing both the **notes** (syllables, corresponding to shapes) and **words** (text, **poetry**) of JOY while marking time. Time should be marked smoothly and evenly. Due attention should be given to accents. The student should also practice randomly chosen selections from the *Sacred Harp*. It is not necessary to sing these passages. To practice timing and accent, one can recite the notes, words, or any

nonsense syllables. To divide beats evenly in giving notes their proper lengths, it may be helpful to think "1-and-2-and..." or "1-a-and-a-2-a-and-a...." To divide beats into thirds, think "1-and-a-2-and-a...."

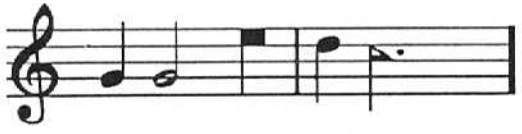
17. A **slur** is a curved line spanning notes of successively differing pitches (different positions on the staff), and a **tie** is a similar line spanning notes of the same pitch (same position on the staff). In either case, one syllable of the poetry is applied to all of the notes of the group. In singing, enunciate the syllable at the first note and continue it smoothly through the other notes. Notes with joined flags (**beams**) are treated as slurred.



18. A **triplet** is a group of three notes of equal length to be sung in the time of two. It is denoted by a figure 3 above or below the group of three notes: 3. To help execute a triplet in one beat, think "1-and-a" or "2-and-a". The length of the beat for the triplet must be the same as that of a typical beat. To help execute a triplet in two beats, divide each beat into thirds and let each note of the triplet occupy two successive thirds: "(1and)(a-2)(and-a)," where the parentheses enclose the fractions of beats that correspond to a single note of the triplet.

19. A **hold (pause)** 𝄐 placed over a note or rest shows that it may be held beyond its normal length, at the *reasonable* discretion of the leader.

20. **Syncopation** occurs when a short note at a naturally accented beat in a measure is followed immediately by a longer note, which is usually held through the beginning of the next beat. In such a case, the accent shifts to the longer note.



21. Poetry, like music, has natural accents (see Chapter VII). When the natural accents of the poetry do not correspond to those of the printed music, the notation is said to be **misbarred**.

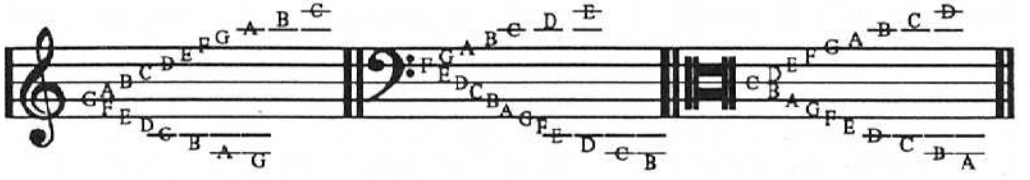
In performing a misbarred piece, one follows the notation in marking time but not in singing accents. Where there is a conflict between the poetry and the music, the poetry overrules the music and determines the accents.

CHAPTER III
MELODICS

1. **Melodics** concerns pitch and patterns of successive pitches.

2. **Letters A, B, C, D, E, F,** and G are assigned to notes. Each letter corresponds to a particular position on the staff and relative pitch. For successive ascending positions on the staff, the letters fall in alphabetical order, starting over with A after G. However, the letters don't have the same positions on every staff.

3. The **clef** assigns a particular letter to a particular position on the staff. Two clefs are used in this edition of the Sacred Harp. The **treble clef**, 𝄞, which appears at the beginning of JOY, assigns G to the second line. It is used for the tenor, alto, and treble parts. The **bass clef**, 𝄢, assigns F to the fourth line and is used for the bass part. The **alto clef**, 𝄡, was used in early editions of the *Sacred Harp* to place C on the third line of the staff.



4. *Sacred Harp* music should be pitched so that all singers can reach their parts comfortably. Thus, the notation does not adhere to the international standard **concert pitch**, in which the frequency of A above "middle C" is **440 cycles per second**.

5. The **unison** consists of two notes with the same pitch. The **octave** is an interval in which the frequency of the higher note is exactly twice that of the lower. The octave relationship is so strong that notes one or more octaves apart are sometimes treated as if they were unisons. Further, notes that are exactly one or more octaves apart have the same letter, shape, and syllable. In JOY the interval between "Joy" and "come" is one octave. The corresponding notes are both F, both triangles, and both Fa.

6. A **half step** (or **half tone**) (symbol **h**) is the smallest interval recognized in Western music. Twelve successive half steps span one octave exactly. In JOY, the intervals "Joy to" and "the Lord" are half steps. In the letter system, the intervals B-C and E-F are half steps.

7. The **flat** (♭) and **sharp** (♯) symbols are related to half steps. The flat lowers, and the sharp raises, the pitch of the affected note by a half step. Thus, B♭ (pronounced "B-flat") is a half step lower than B. To emphasize that B is not flat or sharp, the **natural** symbol (♮) can be used: B ♮ (pronounced "B-natural").

8. Two successive ascending half steps span one **whole step** (or **whole tone**) (symbol **w**). In JOY, the intervals "to the," "the world," "world! the", "Lord is," and "is come" are all whole steps. The intervals A-B, C-D, D-E, F-G, and G-A, are whole steps.

9. A **scale** is the set of different pitches used in a piece of music. In the standard representation of a scale, the notes are arranged in order of ascending pitch, beginning with the fundamental note, which is called the tonic, and spanning one octave. Notes outside that octave are exactly one or more octaves lower or higher than those in it. The

upper tonic is included in order to show the interval leading to it, even though it is related to the tonic by an octave. The scale for JOY is illustrated.

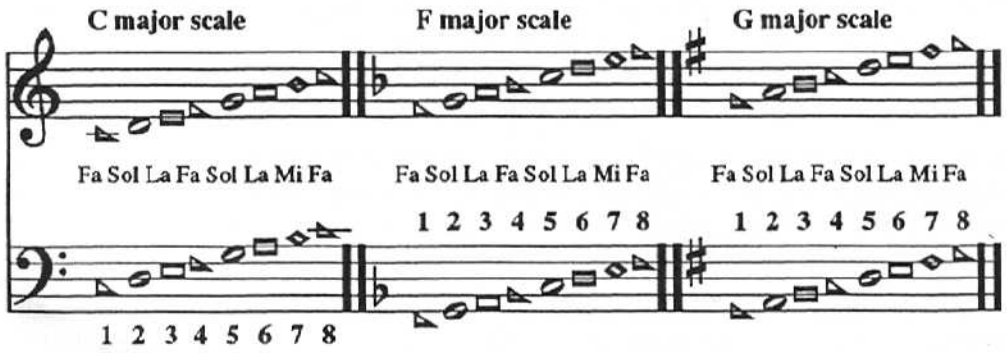
10. The scales used in the *Sacred Harp* are **heptatonic** (seven-tone), meaning that they consist of seven pitches in a span of one octave, not counting the upper tonic. **Hexatonic** (six-tone) and **pentatonic** (five-tone) scales are regarded as heptatonic scales with gaps in them.

11. The **degrees** of a scale are its successively ascending pitches. The eight degrees spanning one octave are numbered beginning with the tonic as 1, as shown in JOY. Degree 8 is also degree 1 of the next higher octave of the scale. Degree 8 may also be labeled degree 1a ("1 above"). Similarly, degree 1b is one octave below degree 1 and degree 5aa is two octaves above degree 5.

Adjacent degrees of a heptatonic scale are represented by notes at adjacent positions on the staff. Thus, the successive degrees of an ascending scale are represented by notes at successive positions. No position is skipped or repeated. The student should verify this for the scale shown in JOY.

12. Two scales (or **modes**) are recognized in *Sacred Harp* notation, **major** and **minor**. Either scale can be in any **key**, that is, its tonic can be any letter (natural, flat, or sharp) or pitch. The tonic lends its letter to the name of the key. Thus, "key of E♭ major" denotes the major scale with tonic E♭, while "key of C♯ minor" denotes the minor scale with tonic C♯.

13. From degree 1 to degree 8, the major scale (Ionian mode) has the syllable sequence Fa-Sol-La-Fa-Sol-La-Mi-Fa and the interval sequence w-w-h-w-w-w-h, with half steps at degrees 3-4 (La-Fa) and 7-8 (Mi-Fa).



The figure illustrates the following principle for the keys of C, F, and G major: *The degrees of a scale have the same shapes, syllables, and relative positions on the staff in every key and under every clef.* The student should study the figure carefully and verify this statement. This is the principle that allows shaped notes to be read by their shapes and relative positions.

The eight notes of JOY are those of a descending major scale. The student can use the pitches of JOY to establish those of the degrees of the major scale. The major scale should be practiced, with the syllables given by the shapes of the notes, until it becomes second nature. With practice, one can learn to sing the correct pitches when presented with the notes of the scale in any order.

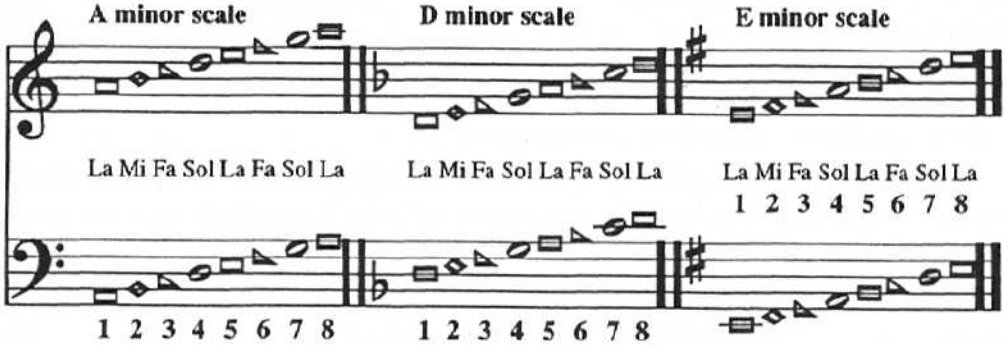
14. A **key signature** is a set of flats or sharps at particular positions on the staff. It is placed near the left side of each segment of the staff and at other points if necessary. Each flat or sharp in the key signature affects every note that follows it on the same line or space (until another key signature appears). In JOY, the key signature consists of one flat at B.

The key signature, or its absence, denotes the key by assigning a letter to the syllable Mi. If there is no key signature, Mi is B. When there is one flat, as in JOY, Mi is E. (See Chapter IV.)

Any piece of major music can be noted in any major key. If the key is changed, the notes may move, as a group, up or down on the staff. If one note moves up three positions, then every note moves up three positions, and so do the half- and whole-step intervals between notes at adjacent positions on the staff.

Some pieces would require excessive use of ledger lines if written without a key signature. This is avoided by a proper selection of a key signature.

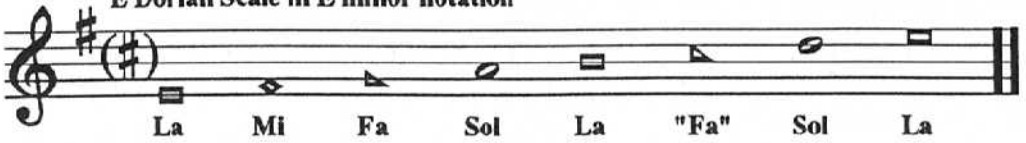
15. The minor scale printed in the *Sacred Harp* is the natural minor (Aeolian mode). Its syllable and interval sequences are La-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Fa-Sol-La and w-h-w-w-h-w-w, with half steps at degrees 2-3 and 5-6.



The natural minor scale can be constructed from the major scale by moving the tonic from Fa down to La (Section 19).

Traditionally, minor music is sung in the Dorian mode, with the sixth degree a half step higher than the natural minor notation indicates. The interval sequence is w-h-w-w-w-h-w, with half steps at degrees 2-3 and 6-7 (see Chapter IV, Section 4; and Chapter

E Dorian Scale in E minor notation

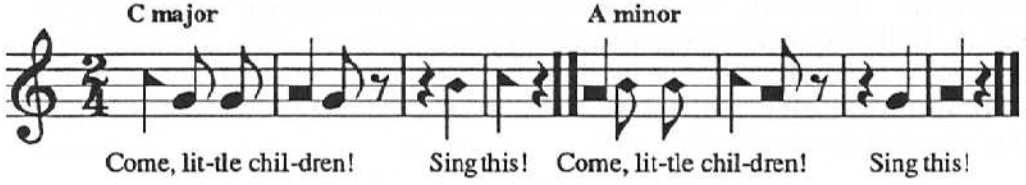


VIII, Sections 13 and 14).

It is traditional to sing "Fa" at the sixth degree, even though the pitch actually corresponds to "Fi" (Section 20). The C♯ in parentheses in the key signature of the figure is understood but not printed in Sacred Harp notation.

16. The sounds of major and minor music are different. To some, minor music seems to be dark, somber, sad, or mournful, while major music seems to be bright and joyous. However, these are not natural responses to the music, they are learned. In the Sacred Harp, settings of texts to music do not conform to naive notions of sad minor and joyful major music; minor music can be joyful.

A feeling for the difference in sound between major and minor can be gained from the following exercise. At the left is the notation for the familiar major-key jingle "Come, little children! Sing this!" (brief citation: SING). At the right is another jingle, in a minor key, set with the same words and using the same pitches. The student should sing both tunes, obtaining the pitches for the notes of the minor tune from the corresponding notes of the major one. A difference in the flavor of the sound will be clear.



SING is in the **natural** keys, that is, keys without a signature, so that all notes are natural, not flat or sharp. The natural keys are C major and A minor.

17. **Intervals** are named after degrees of the scale. If an interval is the same as that between the first (tonic) and the fifth degree of the scale, the interval is called a fifth. In a major key, the following intervals between degrees of the scale are all fifths: Fa(1)-Sol(5), Sol(2)-La(6), La(3)-Mi(7), Fa(4)-Fa(8), etc.

Intervals of an octave or less include **unison, minor second** (half step), **major second** (whole step), **minor third, major third, perfect fourth, perfect fifth, minor sixth, major sixth, minor seventh, major seventh**, and **octave**. The fourth and fifth are **perfect** because they are the same intervals in both major and minor scales. **Thirds, sixths**, and **sevenths** differ in major and natural minor scales, with the minor interval being a half step less than the major interval in each case. Thus, the minor third spans one-and-a-half steps, while the major third spans two whole steps.

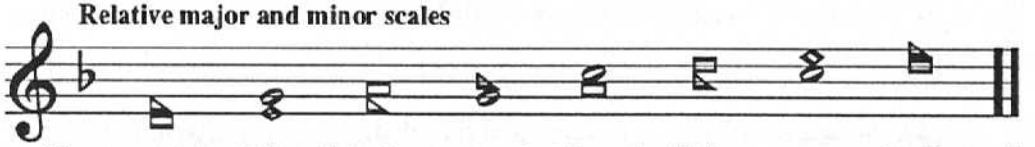
Augmented means increased, and **diminished** means decreased, by a half step. Thus, an **augmented fourth** is the same as a **diminished fifth**, an interval of three whole steps.

18. Shaped notes facilitate reading music. The shapes carry the same information as the clef and key signature. Thus, a shaped-note reader can ignore both the clef and key signature and use only the shapes of the notes and their relative positions on the staff. However, one who reads by the methods of standard musical notation must determine pitch by staff position only and must pay careful attention to the clef and key signature.

19. **Relative** major and minor keys have the same signature. Examples include C major/A minor, F major/D minor, and G major/E minor.

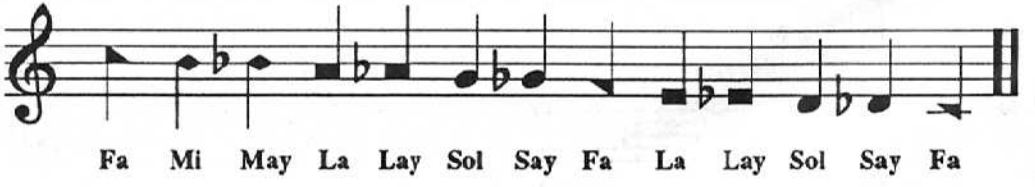
The major tonic is Fa above Mi, and the natural minor tonic is La below Mi. Thus, the tonic of a natural minor scale is a minor third below that of its relative major scale.

Relative major and minor scales



20. An **accidental** is a flat, sharp, or natural used within a measure. It affects all subsequent occurrences of the degree on which it is placed until the measure ends or another accidental appears at the same degree. An accidental natural at a particular degree can cancel the effect of a flat or sharp in the key signature. The *Sacred Harp* contains very few accidentals.

The syllables for notes with accidental sharps are Fi ("fee"), Si ("see"), and Li ("lee"). Those for flats are Say, Lay, and May. Accidentals can be used to represent the **chromatic scale**, in which each successive interval is a half step.



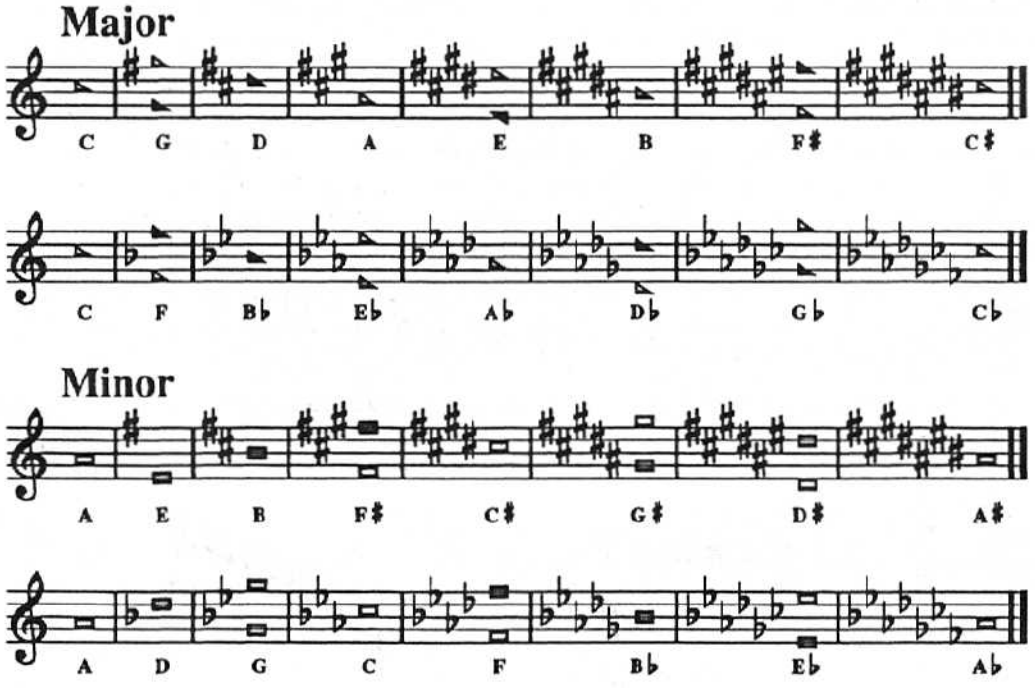
CHAPTER IV
KEYS

1. To find the tonic from note shapes, locate Mi. The major tonic is Fa above Mi, and the natural minor tonic is La below Mi. If Mi is absent, it would lie between the La and Fa that are a third apart.

The last note sounded in the bass part is always the tonic. If the syllable is Fa, then the key is major, and if it is La it is minor. Under the treble clef, it lies two positions higher on the staff than under the bass clef.

2. Under the natural key signature, the positions on the staff represent the pitches of the C major and A minor scales. If the fourth degree of the C major scale, C-w-D-w-E-h-F-w-G-w-A-w-B-h-C, is raised by a half step, the resulting order of intervals is that of the G major scale, G-w-A-w-B-h-C-w-D-w-E-w-F♯-h-G. The fourth degree of the original C major scale, when raised a half step, becomes the seventh degree of the the G major scale, in which the tonic (G) is a fifth higher than the original tonic (C). Conversely, lowering the seventh degree of the G major scale lowers the tonic by a fifth, converting the scale to C major. The relative minor scales are affected in a parallel fashion. These changes apply, with analogous results, to any key.

3. By starting with C major/A minor and repeatedly adding sharps (one at a time) to raise the fourth degree, a series of new keys and key signatures is generated. If flats are added instead, to lower the seventh degree repeatedly, another series is generated.



All possible keys are reached in these **transpositions of the key by fifths**.

Once the first sharp is placed (at F), the position of each succeeding sharp is a fifth above the last: F♯, C♯, G♯, etc., and once the first flat is placed (at B), each succeeding flat is a fifth below the last: B♭, E♭, A♭, etc.

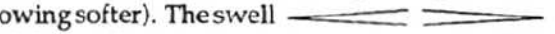
Mi is always at the position of the last sharp (already present) or the next flat (that could be added) to the signature. For example, two sharps are at F and C, Mi is C♯, and the key is D major/B minor. Similarly, three flats are at B, E, and A; Mi is D, and the key is E♭ major/C minor.

4. Round-note readers can obtain the proper key signature for the Dorian mode (Chapter III, Section 15) by dropping the last flat or adding another sharp to the natural minor key signature.

CHAPTER V
DYNAMICS

1. **Dynamics** concerns volume (loud or soft).

2. *Sacred Harp* dynamics are mostly discretionary. The singing is usually strong, with a natural tendency for higher notes to be louder. This tendency must not be overdone. Singers should pay careful attention to the leader, who will use smaller motions for softer passages and larger motions for louder ones.

3. Italian words and abbreviations used as directives for volume include **pianissimo, pp** (very soft); **piano, p** (soft); **mezzo piano, mp** (moderately soft); **mezzo, m** (moderate); **mezzo forte, mf** (moderately loud); **forte, f** (loud); and **fortissimo, ff** (very loud). Those for varying volume are **crescendo, cres** or  (growing louder) and **diminuendo, dim** or  (growing softer). The swell  is a combination in which a crescendo is followed by a diminuendo. An **organ tone** has the same volume thoughout.

CHAPTER VI
MECHANICS OF SINGING

1. Tones are produced only while exhaling, under the control of the **diaphragm**, a muscular partition between the chest and abdominal cavity. Whether standing or sitting, the body should be erect and completely free of unnatural motions, allowing the diaphragm to function properly.

2. Inhale as needed to maintain a firm voice, but never so as to interrupt the flow of the music. The best places are at punctuation marks in the text, at the ends of phrases, and after emphatic words. Inhale with the lips partly closed in order to protect the sides of the throat, which should be kept open at all times while singing.

3. The voice should be pure, full, firm, and certain. Good delivery depends on a correct position of the body, complete control of the breath, proper positions of the throat and mouth, and firm action of the vocal cords. Unnatural contractions or distentions of

the mouth or throat should be avoided. One should open the mouth enough to avoid obstruction of the tone by the lips or teeth.

4. The voice should be natural and unpretentious. The ideals of popular, art, concert, and opera singing do not apply to the *Sacred Harp*. In particular, few traditional **Sacred Harp** singers produce a conscious **vibrato**, or pulsation of the voice. In group singing, vibrato can create undesired harmonic effects.

5. Every word should be pronounced correctly and distinctly. Words are divided into syllables as they are vocalized naturally, not necessarily as the dictionary may divide them. Thus, one sings "mu-sic" (not "mus-ic") and "sto-ry" (not "stor-y").

6. "The" is pronounced "thee" when it precedes a word beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u, sometimes w or y) or vowel sound. Otherwise, especially if unaccented, it can be pronounced "thuh."

THEE angel of the the Lord came down.

THEE iron fetters yield.

THEE honor of thy name.

Were THEE whole realm of nature mine?

THEE yearning of the heart.

CHAPTER VII
METER

1. Poetic **meter** is the pattern of accented (symbol /) and unaccented (symbol —) syllables. The fundamental unit is the **foot**. The common feet are the **iamb**, **trochee**, **anapest**, and **dactyl**.

iamb = — / trochee = / — anapest = — — / dactyl = / — —

2. The titles in the Sacred Harp are for tunes or pieces of music. Each tune is suited to a particular poetic meter. A metrical designation, printed next to the title, gives the meter of the appropriate poetry. Any poetry with this meter can be sung as a tune is not restricted to the poetry printed with it.

3. One type of **metrical designation** gives the number of syllables in each line and number of lines in a stanza (verse). Thus, 9898 denotes a four-line stanza with nine and eight syllables per line, alternating. In addition, some standard meters are named.

common meter, C.M.:	iambic 8,6,8,6
common meter double, C.M.D.:	iambic 8,6,8,6,8,6,8,6
long meter, L.M.:	iambic 8,8,8,8
long meter double, L.M.D.:	iambic 8,8,8,8,8,8,8,8
short meter, S.M.:	iambic 6,6,8,6
short meter double, S.M.D.:	iambic 6,6,8,6,6,6,8,6
common particular meter, C.P.M.:	iambic 8,8,6,8,8,6
long particular meter, L.P.M.:	iambic 8,8,8,8,8,8
meter hallellujah, H.M.:	iambic 6,6,6,6,8,8
common meter hallelujah, C.H.M.:	iambic 8,8,6,8,8,6
meter 12s, M.T. or 12,12,12,12:	anapestic 12,12,12,12
meter 8s and 7s:	trochaic 8,7,8,7
meter 11s:	anapestic 11,11,11,11
meter 7s:	trochaic 7,7,7,7

4. **Particular meter, P.M.,** denotes poetry with its own peculiar meter, that is, not one of the standard meters. A hymn in a particular meter requires a special tune for that meter.

CHAPTER VIII
HARMONY AND COMPOSITION

1. Harmony consists of tones sounded simultaneously. Composition involves the art of binding tones together in a pleasing and interesting way.

2. Harmony is the most distinctive feature of *Sacred Harp* music. It sets it apart from most other music.

3. Late 18th-century New England composers (represented in the Sacred Harp by Billings, Read, Swan, Morgan, and others) used harmony that is basically **tertian**, that is, based on intervals of thirds. In contrast, the harmony used by the early 19th-century compilers of singing-school manuals (such as the *Sacred Harp*) is basically **quartal**, that is, based on intervals of fourths and their close relatives, fifths. In the early 20th century, alto parts were added to the three-part pieces in the *Sacred Harp*, resulting in a hybrid harmony, part quartal and part tertian.

4. *Sacred Harp* harmony does not follow the rules of **conventional harmony**, which were well established by the late 18th century. Billings fiercely declared his independence ("I don't think myself confined to any rules of composition laid down by any who went before me") and he practiced what he preached. Later compilers of singing-school manuals copied their rudiments from one another and, ultimately, from works describing conventional harmony, but they paid little attention to these rudiments when composing or arranging.

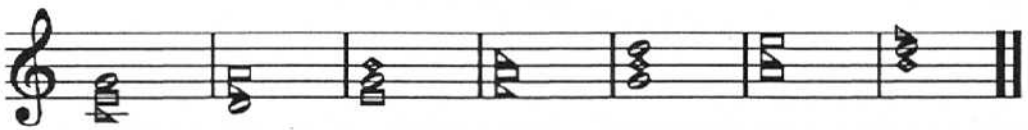
5. In **polyphony**, no one part stands out. *Sacred Harp* music is polyphonic. The tune (melody, air) is carried by the tenor part, but the other parts, ideally, are good melodies on their own, making all parts interesting.

Conventional harmony is **homophonic**. The tune is assigned to high voices, usually

the soprano, so that it will stand out. The other parts provide unobtrusive harmonic support.

6. A **dyad** is a combination of two notes not related as unisons or octaves. A **triad** is a similar combination of three notes. For the present purposes, both are considered to be **chords**. The fundamental note of a chord is called its **root**, and a chord is in its **root position** when the root is the note of lowest pitch.

Triads are used in tertian harmony, including conventional harmony. A conventional triad consists of the root plus the third and fifth scale degrees above it. The name of the triad is the same as the **harmonic name** of its root.



Tonic Supertonic Mediant Subdominant Dominant Submediant Subtonic

Triads of minor scales are named analogously.

Dyads, especially fourths and fifths, are the fundamental chords of quartal harmony.

7. In *Sacred Harp* (polyphonic) harmony, quartal or tertian, the chord changes frequently, often with every successive note. Thus, the harmony is **dispersed** or **freely moving**. In conventional harmony, the same chord is often used for several successive notes, or even measures.

8. Harmony is based on ideas of **concord (consonance)** and **discord (dissonance)**, of **tension** and **resolution**, and of **progression**. Some intervals are classified as concords and others as discords. A concord is a pleasing, stable-sounding harmonic interval. A discord is a displeasing, unstable-sounding one. A discord provides tension (you wish it would go away), and the progression from a discord to a concord resolves that tension. Harmony consists of an interesting progression through a series of discords and concords.

9. In the quartal harmony of the *Sacred Harp*, the concords are unison, perfect fourth, perfect fifth, and octave. All other intervals are discords. Sometimes the third is treated as if it were a concord.

A fifth is the **inversion** of a fourth, and *vice versa*. For example, Fa(1)-Fa(4) is a perfect fourth in root position. If Fa(4) is transposed an octave lower, the resulting **inverted fourth** is a perfect fifth, Fa(4b)-Fa(1). Root-position and inverted chords use the same degrees of the scale, some in different octaves.

10. In conventional tertian harmony, the concords are unison, major and minor thirds, perfect fifth, major and minor sixths, and octave. All other intervals, including the perfect fourth, are discords. Triads are built of successive concords, although some interesting effects can be achieved by blending a concord with a mild discord.

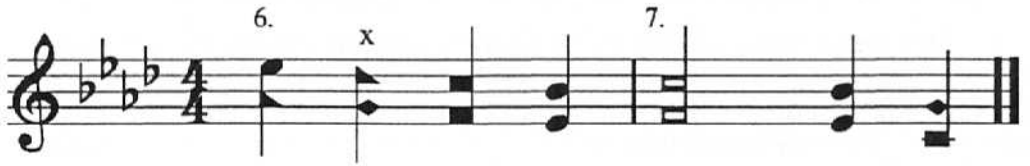
Triads can be used in the root position, the **first inversion**, where the root is transposed an octave higher, leaving the middle note of the root position as the lowest of the inverted chord, or the **second inversion**, where the root and middle notes are transposed octaves higher, leaving the highest note of the root position as the lowest of the inverted chord.

11. The discrepancies between the lists of concords and discords for quartal and tertian harmony show that the sense of consonance and dissonance is conditioned (learned). In composing, one should explore the harmonic possibilities and evaluate each case by its sound in its own context. It is best not to be a slave to a preconceived list of concords and discords.

12. One rule of conventional harmony that is frequently violated in the *Sacred Harp* states that chords should be complete triads (or triads augmented with another note). In fact, most of the chords in 19th-century compositions are dyads. Even when alto parts were supplied in the 20th century, many of the chords were left as dyads by having the alto double a note in the existing harmony. This is especially true of minor pieces.

13. Another rule of conventional harmony prohibits the motion of parts in parallel (or consecutive) fifths and octaves, where two voices maintain a constant interval over several notes. Parallel octaves are built into Sacred Harp singing when men and women sing the same part. In addition, parallel fifths between parts are a natural part of quartal harmony, and they abound in the Sacred Harp.

The parallel fifths between the bass and tenor parts in measures 6-7 of WONDROUS LOVE (159) are especially interesting because they suggest that the composer intended the Dorian mode (which is sung in practice), not the natural minor (which is written).

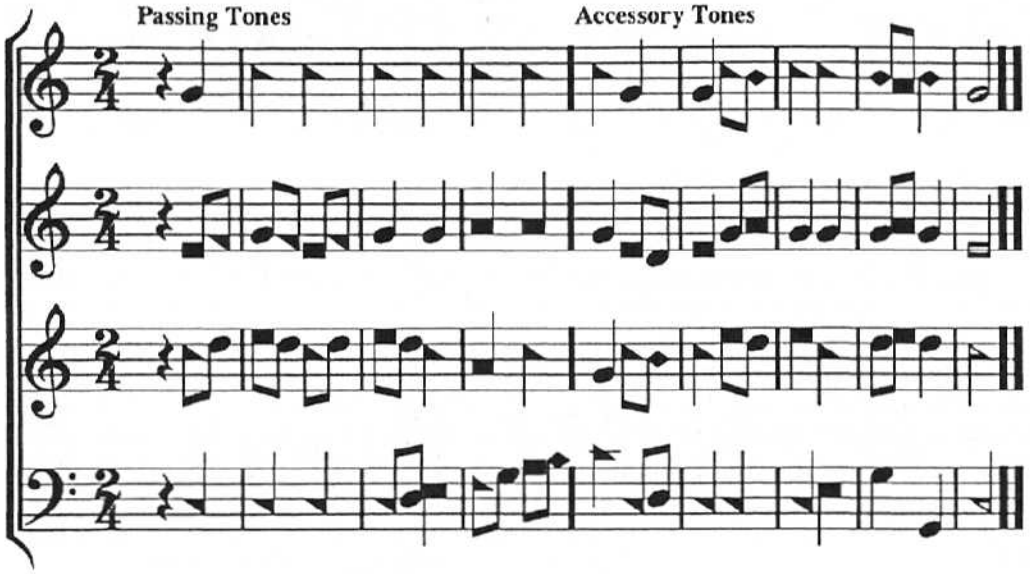


In this passage, all of the printed intervals are perfect fifths except the one marked with an "x", which is a diminished fifth. When WONDROUS LOVE is sung in Dorian mode, all of the intervals in question are perfect fifths.

14. Parallel fifths result when two parts have the same sequence of intervals in the upper and lower **tetrachords** of the major or Dorian scale. The lower tetrachord consists of degrees 1-4 and the upper tetrachord of degrees 5-8. For the major scale, the interval sequence within each tetrachord is w-w-h, and for the Dorian mode, it is w-h-w. For the natural minor scale, however, the interval sequences differ in the lower (w-h-w) and upper (h-w-w) tetrachords.

15. A **mutual tone** belongs to each of two successive chords. If a part has a mutual tone in the first chord, it can retain that note in the second chord, thereby binding the two together.

16. A **passing tone** is a discord that is introduced, usually as part of a slur and always at an unaccented part of the measure, to help the melody pass from one principal note to another. An **accessory tone** is similar tone that lies between two notes of the same pitch.



17. Like chords, the notes of the tune itself wander through unstable pitches on the way to the final resting pitch, which is almost always the tonic. A tune that ends on another note sounds unfinished.

The last chord of a piece is almost always rooted in the tonic. In three-part harmony, it is usually the tonic-fifth dyad, while in four-part major pieces, it tends to be the tonic triad. Even in four parts, however, minor pieces tend to end with the tonic-fifth dyad.

18. Given a tenor part (tune), many composers write the other parts in the order bass, treble, alto. Whatever order is used, each part should be an interesting melody on its own. While writing a part, the other parts should be kept in mind, so that interesting possibilities are not excluded.

The best teacher is example. The student composer should study the harmonies in the *Sacred Harp*, especially those of pieces that he or she particularly admires. The possibilities of both quartal and tertian harmony, and their mixtures, should be considered.

Certain keyboard instruments and almost all desktop computers allow musical composition with recording, playback, and easy editing, providing promising possibilities for the *Sacred Harp* composer.

CHAPTER IX
MUSICAL FORMS

1. A **song**, in a general sense, is any utterance with a musical modulation, whether by the human voice or those of birds or other animals. "Song" is often used to refer a piece in the *Sacred Harp*.

2. An **anthem** is a composition set with words that are taken from the Bible, prayer book, or other sacred writing.

3. An **ode** is a musical setting of a poem of noble sentiment and dignity of style, especially one commemorating or honoring a particular subject, such as a person or special occasion.

4. A **prelude** is an introductory portion of a piece of music.

5. There are many types of **chants**. In general, a chant is recited in a musical tone, mostly on one pitch (or a few), sometimes without evident rhythmic form.

6. A **hymn** is a song of thanksgiving to, praise to, or love of God.

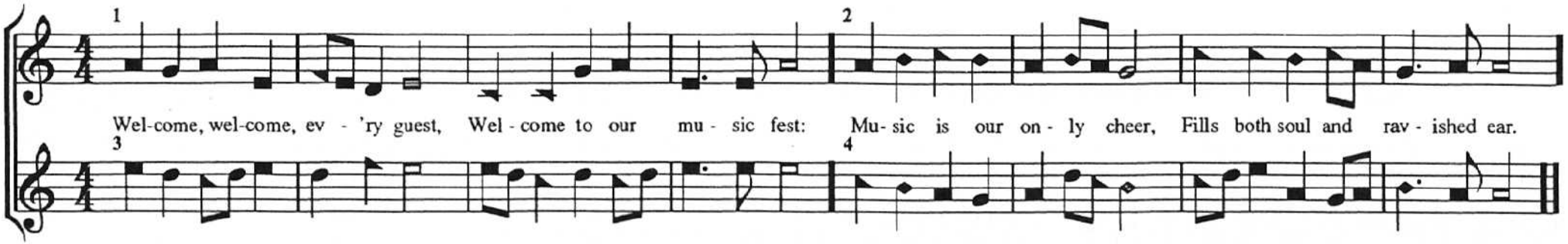
7. A **psalm** is a song based on a text from the Book of Psalms of the Old Testament of the Bible. Psalms may be paraphrased or rewritten in a metrical fashion. The Biblical psalms were originally Hebrew songs.

8. A **spiritual song** is a song with sacred content, usually not a psalm or hymn, as in the Biblical phrase, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs."

9. A **set piece** is a piece of music set with particular words and designed to be used with those words only.

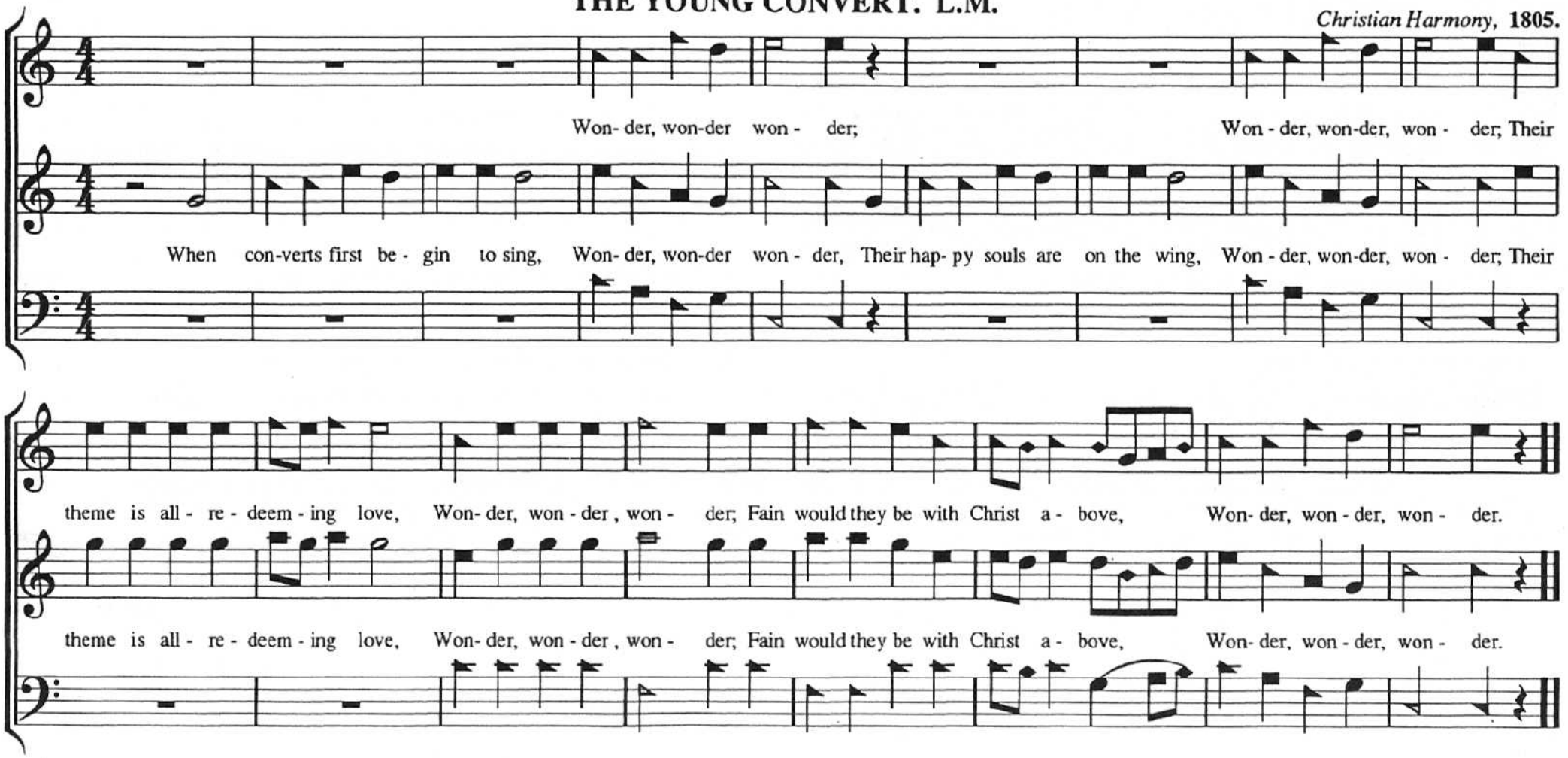
10. A **fuguing tune** has at least one section in which the parts fall in one after the other, with the same or similar rhythm and with related melodic lines, at different pitches. At the end of the section, the parts come together. LENOX (40), NORTHFIELD (155), and ALABAMA (196) are excellent examples.

Chapter X - Singing Exercises



THE YOUNG CONVERT. L.M.

Christian Harmony, **1805.**



FIRE ALARM. In Four Parts.

CHAPTER XI

ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF SINGINGS AND CONVENTIONS

1. An **annual singing** lasts one day and a **convention** two days or more. In another sense, a convention is an organization that sponsors singings. A **special singing** occurs only once, has a frequency other than annual, or occurs irregularly. Most **all-day singings** last from 9 or 10 a.m. to 3 or 4 p.m. Conventions, churches, or other groups sponsor **singing schools**, where one can learn to read music and sing from the *Sacred Harp*.

2. Although the proceedings at singings tend to be informal, there is a formal structure of officers and committees, and the minutes of singings are usually published.

3. The singers sit in rows of pews or chairs that face to the center of a hollow square. To the immediate left and right of the tenors are the basses and trebles, respectively. The altos face the tenors.

4. A session begins with a call to order by the chairman, who leads a selection, calls upon the chaplain (or another) for an opening prayer, makes welcoming remarks, and presides over the election of new officers. Typically, officers include chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, and chaplain. Arranging and memorial committees, and sometimes others, such as finance, hospitality, and resolutions committees, are appointed by the chairman.

5. The chairman calls the group to order after each recess and generally presides. The vice chairman may replace the chairman, at the discretion of the chairman or if the chairman is absent. The secretary keeps the minutes, which include a brief description of the proceedings, a list of leaders and the page numbers of the pieces led, and reports of committees. The treasurer collects donations, the main purpose of which, usually, is to cover the expense of having the minutes printed. The offices of secretary and treasurer are sometimes combined. The chaplain may be called on to lead in prayer at opening, dinner, and closing. The arranging committee identifies leaders and calls on them to lead, often giving notice to the next leader as well. The memorial committee identifies those who have died since the last meeting (and sometimes others) and formulates a memorial lesson and report. The locating committee determines the location of the next session of the body. The resolutions committee drafts resolutions.

6. When called, the leader steps into the hollow square, faces the tenor section, and announces the page number of his or her selection ("159," or "number 45 top," or "EASTER ANTHEM, page 236"). Others may repeat the page number so that all may hear it correctly. After everyone has a chance to find the page, the leader or other designated person sounds the pitches of the tonic and others, possibly the dyad or triad built on the tonic or the opening notes of all of the parts. The leader commences after the singers have had time to find their pitches. The notes (syllables Fa, Sol, La, and Mi) are sung first, then the words of one or more verses. At many singings, a leader is allotted two songs, but this depends on the time available and the number of leaders present. After finishing ("teaching a lesson"), the leader retires to his or her regular seat, making way for a new leader.

7. A recess of five minutes or more is taken every hour or so. After a recess, the chairman or vice chairman calls the singers ("class") back by standing in the hollow square, calling a number, and leading it. Those who are not in their seats hear the singing and soon take their places.

8. At the memorial lesson, usually just before lunch, the chairman of the memorial committee may make remarks, read the names of the deceased, and lead songs in their memory. These duties may be shared with others.

9. Where circumstances permit, dinner on the grounds is from 12 noon to 1 p.m. There is a blessing by the chaplain or another, after which all help themselves from a long table. Usually, the food is provided by local people, often by members of the host church or community.

10. HOLY MANNA (59) and PARTING HAND (62) are often, but by no means always, used as opening and closing songs.