



MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS for Barbershoppers

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Music Fundamentals for Barbershoppers



In conjunction with the **Far Western District**'s efforts to provide **MORE** variety at our FWD conventions (in addition to the contests), **Keith Eckhardt** invited me to facilitate a one-hour class on **"How To Read Music"**. I had previously facilitated a series of one-hour classes for my fellow chapter members (prior to our weekly **Masters Of Harmony** rehearsals) and used the Society's textbook, **"Music Fundamentals For Barbershoppers"**, by **Burt Zabo**. This book is a **GREAT** resource and should be on every barbershopper's library shelf at home – or at a minimum, every barbershop chapter's lending library. It can be easily purchased from the Society's **"Harmony Marketplace"** for a mere **\$14.95**. Here's the URL (web link) to purchase the book over the Internet at: www.harmonymarketplace.com/musfunforbar.html

Kirt Theismeyer, Dean of our **"Masters University"** recently wrote a blurb for the **Westunes** and mentioned that I was able to ***"teach anyone how to identify every note on the piano by name"*** as well as the **'music alphabet'** and **'how to read music'** within a one-hour class. Keith immediately asked me to put together some slides/handouts for a Friday morning class in Reno (19 Mar 2004).

The class was a HUGE success and everyone in attendance was amazed at just how simple and easy this whole **"music theory"** process is. As I demonstrated, you just take it one step at a time. I wish I had a videotape of the students once the ***"lights came on"*** and they ***"got it"***. I also promised that I would make the slides available for the FWD Web Site for anyone/everyone to download and use for themselves and/or share with their chapter members.

Again, I urge everyone to order **"Music Fundamentals For Barbershoppers"** and take advantage of the **18+** chapters Burt Zabo has provided for all of us to become better singers. If one person benefits from all of this effort, it is worth the little effort I have invested. Enjoy!

Ken Custer, President
Santa Fe Springs Chapter (Masters Of Harmony Chorus)

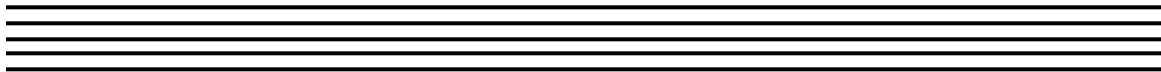
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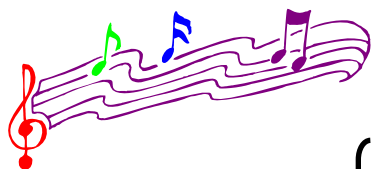
Music Fundamentals for Barbershoppers



STAFF: The language of music is written on a system using five lines (and four spaces).

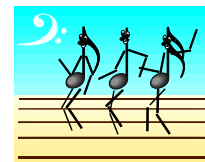


CLEF: A symbol placed on the staff to assign each line & space a letter name.



TREBLE Clef: 

BASS Clef: 



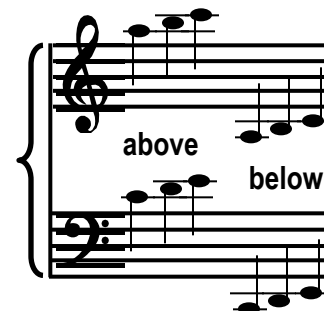
BRACE:
or
BRACKET:



GRAND Staff: Placing a TREBLE Clef above a BASS Clef (2 “staves”) joined by a brace or bracket.

STAVES: Plural of “STAFF”

LEDGER LINES: Short lines placed above or below a staff.



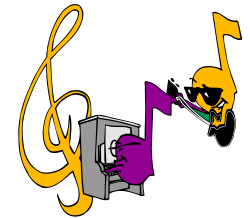
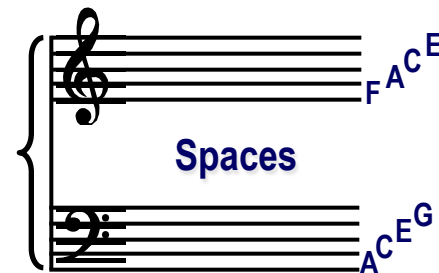
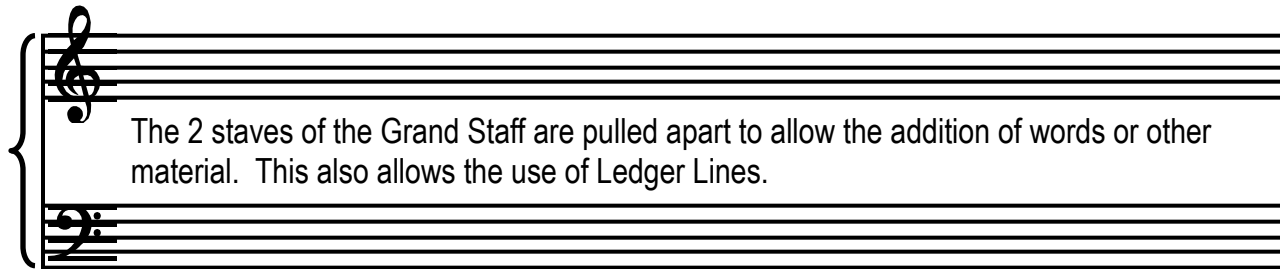
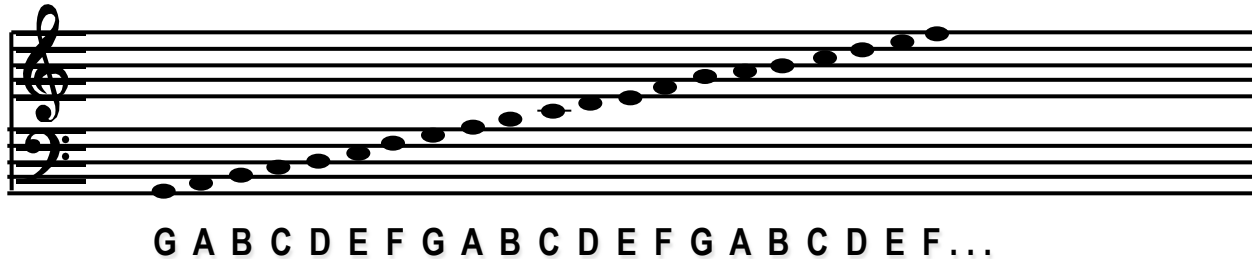
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MUSICAL ALPHABET: ABCDEFGABCDEFGABCDEFG...

OCTAVE: The distance (interval) from a given note to the next note with the same letter name (above or below)

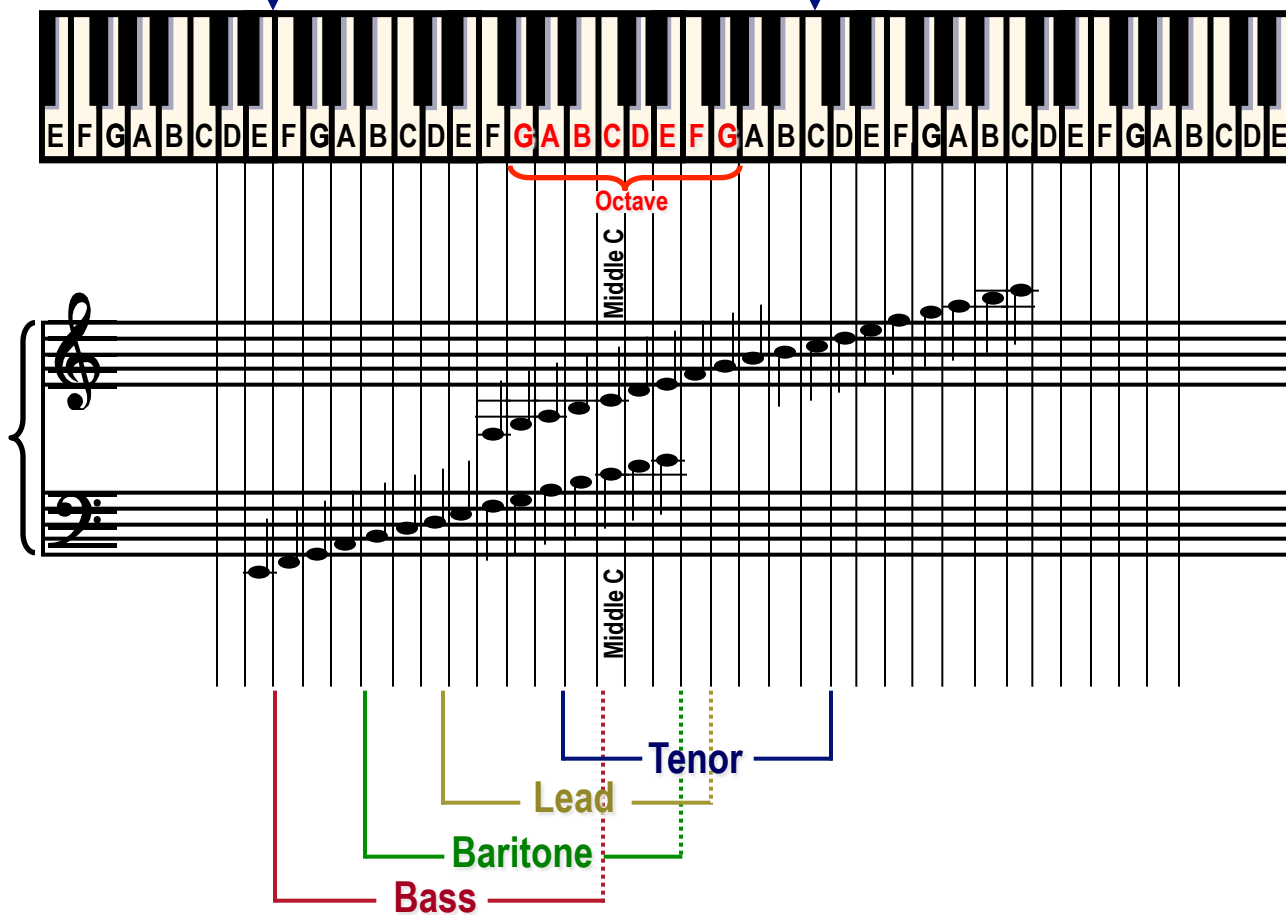
ABCDEFGA BCDEFGB CDEFGAB DEFGABC EFGABCD FGABCDE FGABCDEF GABCDEFG



All Cows Eat Grass

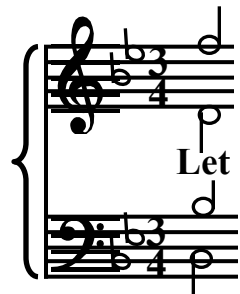


Keyboard Range of Men's Barbershop Music



This exercise is designed to help you identify the notes in a chord and which part is singing the **Root**, **3rd**, **5th** and/or **7th**. It is **NOT** meant to teach you how to arrange or to analyze anything too complicated. But, it **IS** a way to help the beginner to understand the general breakdown structure of a chord. I was taught this technique many years ago in a FWD Harmony Education Program (HEP) weekend seminar by the late Bob Johnson who was then the Executive Director of the Barbershop Harmony Society (SPEBSQSA, Inc). Therefore, I am just giving the basic highlights here. I think you will find it very easy to understand and enlightening and more important, **USEFUL**. For instance, the majority of **Barbershop Seventh** chords have the **Leads** and **Basses** singing either the **Root** or **5th**. The **Baritones** and **Tenors** sing a lot of **3rd** 's and **7th** 's. The **Root** is the **most predominant** note in the chord and the **5th** is the next, followed by the **7th** and **3rd**. The **3rd** is the **most difficult** to sing (especially for **Leads** and **Basses**) because you have to be on the **top side** of the note. Knowing this ahead of time really helps the singer to identify those **3rd** 's. This is one of the **PRIMARY** reasons why a quartet and/or chorus sings **flat**.

Let's begin by taking the first few chords in "**Let Me Call You Sweetheart**". The first chord ("Let"), first identify the notes of each chord. The **Bass** is on ____, the **Bari** is on ____, the **Lead** is on ____, and the **Tenor** is on ____.



The image shows a musical staff with two staves, Treble and Bass, in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The Treble staff has a whole note chord consisting of G4, Bb4, and D5. The Bass staff has a whole note chord consisting of G3, Bb3, and D4. A bracket on the left groups the two staves. The word 'Let' is written below the Treble staff.

Tenor = ____

Lead = ____

Bari = ____

Bass = ____

Once you have identified the notes of the “Let” chord (**Bass = b**; **Bari = b**; **Lead = d** & **Tenor = f**), then you use the worksheet and **circle each note** of the chord. The only rule here is that you must **not** circle two letters side by side. You **must** circle every other letter.

RIGHT

a b c d e f g a (b) c (d) e (f) g

WRONG!!

a b c (d) e (f) g a (b) c d e f g

The next step is to start at the **far left** of the circled letters and put a **R** over the 1st letter, **3rd** over the 2nd letter, **5th** over the 3rd letter and **7th** over the 4th letter.

R **R** **3rd** **5th**
a b c d e f g a (b) c (d) e (f) g



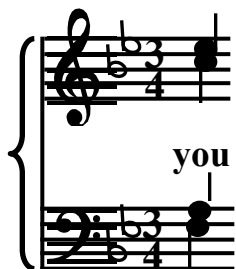
Tenor = f (5th)

Lead = d (3rd)

Bari = b (R)

Bass = b (R)

You’ ll notice first that there was not a 7th in this chord because the **Bass** and **Bari** were on the same note – an **octave** apart. The other interesting thing is that the **Lead** is on the 3rd (very unusual). Now, let’ s analyze the 4th chord, “**you**”:



Tenor = e (7th)

Lead = c (5th)

Bari = a (3rd)

Bass = f (R)

R **3rd** **5th** **7th**
a b c d e (f) g (a) b (c) d (e) f g

**A real
Barberhop 7th
Chord!!!**

[illegible]

CONGRATULATIONS!!!
You did it!!!

IT'S
OVER!



See how easy it really is?