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www.SantaresMusicPeople.Com, and the directors  
 of the Fort Lauderdale Sunshine Chordsmen  
 present this online music theory series  
 (Barbershop Edition - Lesson #03)  
 <\*)>>< Andrew E. Reid, General Editor  
 Posted at: <http://www.barbershopchorus.com>  
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One of the more difficult tasks associated with a cappella singing is to be able to sightread a new chart and sing your part, especially if it's not the melody, from one pitch to another without resorting to guessing what the intervals are or relying on a section leader. This constant moving from one note to another, especially if there isn't any sort of melodic contour associated with the line of notes that's being sung, can be quite frustrating.

There are three basic skills that are required to accomplish this task on a steady and consistent basis. The first is to always be aware of what "key" you are in at any given moment, understanding the scale intervals and chords that are associated with that key, and knowing where your part falls into the overall structure. Another skill is to be able to instantly read what the intervals are that you are being asked to sing, and being able to jump from interval to interval, on a consistent basis, without scooping or sheer guessing. A trick I use is to associate common intervals with songs I already know; for example, if you are approaching a minor third, you can quickly think of "Hello, Dolly," -- "Here Comes the Bride" works for the interval of a Perfect Fourth, and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," works wonders for Perfect Fifths. Both of these skills, along with the necessary skill of reading rhythms properly, will be dealt with in future lessons, but suffice it to say that these are the tools that we all will be needing to have "at the ready" when the situation presents itself.

What I would like to start with is the closest and most common intervals, the major and minor second, otherwise known as the whole step and the half step. The best way to approach the knowledge of these intervals is to be thoroughly practiced in scale designs, which are almost totally made up of major and minor seconds. (As opposed to "chords" which are primarily based on the intervals of the major and minor third...) To do this, I would like to re-familiarize you to solfeggio, which is a great tool when working with seconds and other common intervals. (For a good article on "Solfege" along with related and redirected topics see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solfeggio> ) There is a common practice of keeping "Do" always at "C" -- but for now, I would like to work with a "Movable Do," which shifts depending on what key you're in at the moment. I also like to use "Sol" instead of "So" (both versions are in common use these days,) and I will be using "Ti" instead of "Si" when discussing the "Leading tone" ("Si" is more prevalent outside of the United States.)

Starting with the "Ionian" mode, which we know more familiarly as "The Major Scale," I will chart the possible interval combinations and what they are called in harmonic language. The following should be studied and not put aside until the material is completely internalized. Rote memorization can work at first, but a complete understand of the following material should be realized with the intention of using this knowledge as a building block for further study and practice in the quest for sight-reading music straight from the written page.

(lesson 3 - page 2)

**Solfeggio to (Harmonic and Melodic) Interval Conversion Chart:**

Do to Re = major second	Re to Mi = major second
Do to Mi = major third	Re to Fa = minor third
Do to Fa = perfect fourth	Re to Sol = perfect fourth
Do to Sol = perfect fifth	Re to La = perfect fifth
Do to La = major sixth	Re to Ti = major sixth
Do to Ti = major seventh	Re to Do = minor seventh
Mi to Fa = minor second	Fa to Sol = major second
Mi to Sol = minor third	Fa to La = major third
Mi to La = perfect fourth	Fa to Ti = TRITONE
Mi to Ti = perfect fifth	Fa to Do = perfect fifth
Mi to Do = minor sixth	Fa to Re = major sixth
Me to Re = minor seventh	Fa to Mi = major seventh
Sol to La = major second	La to Ti = major second
Sol to Ti = major third	La to Do = minor third
Sol to Do = perfect fourth	La to Re = perfect fourth
Sol to Re = perfect fifth	La to Mi = perfect fifth
Sol to Mi = major sixth	La to Fa = minor sixth
Sol to Fa = minor seventh	La to Sol = minor seventh
Ti to Do = minor second	Ti to Fa = TRITONE
Ti to Re = minor third	Ti to Sol = minor sixth
Ti to Mi = perfect fourth	Ti to La = minor seventh

It's not clear on first glance, but if you go through the above chart you will notice that the adjacent intervals are usually major seconds, with the two exceptions of Mi to Fa and Ti to Do which are minor seconds. It is because of this uneven spacing of the major scale that we on two occasions above run into the "tritone" -- which is a difficult interval to sing either against a different voice part or in a melodic line -- and will be discussed more fully later.

In more obscure scales you may also run into diminished and augmented intervals, but these interval do not naturally occur in the unaltered Greek modes; the major scale, as noted above, being the Ionian mode and the natural minor scale being the aeolian mode -- more on this later.

Some of you may also be wondering why some intervals are called major/minor, and others called "perfect." This has to do with the overtone series and the way and the order that these harmonies were brought into western acceptance as being "consonant" as oppose to "dissonant" sounds. It might be interesting to note here that the sound of the unsupported harmonic tritone was considered demonic, and musicians during the middle ages could be "excommunicated" for singing it in public. (This would have been considered a very serious infraction indeed.)

Shameless Plug: Music Lessons are available at St. Benedict Episcopal Church, Plantation, FL  
Cost is \$12/ half hour. Barbershop learning tapes are also available upon request...  
Please visit: <http://www.santaresmusicpeople.com> for contact information.