Overview of Music Reading for Choral Singers

STAFF, SYSTEM, RHYTHM, PITCH, AND INTERVALS
Where does notation come from?

1. Notation in Europe was first written sometime between the 6th and 8th centuries.

2. The first notation was written on one line, and only showed the **contour** of the song.

3. Gradually, more lines were added.
Where does notation come from?

- **12th C**: Gregorian chant standardized a standard 4-line staff.
- **13th C**: Five-line staves appeared in Italy.
- **16th C**: British composers were enamored with Italian music, so many went to study with Italian composers.
Music notation in American choral music is basically just 16th century Italian notation.
Starting from zero
Recorded by TOTO

**Africa**

For SATB* and piano with Optional Instrumental Accompaniment

Duration: ca. 3:50

Arranged by
ROGER EMERSON

With a beat ($q = ca. 94$)

ShowTrax CD has 8 measures of percussion before choir enters at m. 9.

Words and Music by
DAVID PAICH and
JEFF PORCARO

Title

Arranger

Composer
Africa
Recorded by TOTO
For SATB* and Piano with Optional Instrumental Accompaniment
Duration: ca. 3:50

Words and Music by DAVID PAICH and JEFF PORCARO

Arranged by ROGER EMERSON

*pempo

With a beat (\( \mathcal{\text{d}} = \text{ca. 94} \))

Piano

Trax CD has 8 measures of percussion before choir enters at m. 9.

One measure

Measure numbers

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo bah.

Am Dm
Clef: B flat major

Time signature: 4/4

Key signature: B flat major
Divisi “Split”

Recorded by TOTO

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With a beat (d = ca. 94)

Piano

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JEFF PORCARO

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah
Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo bah.

Am Dm
Reading Tip #1: Highlight your part!!

Digital sheet music or personal copies
Recorded by TOTO

Africa

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With a beat (d = ca. 94)

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Piano

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo bah.

Bb  Am  Dm
Common “Map” Terms

Often, just following along is the hard part!
The storm is passing over. The storm is passing over.

From here to there.

The storm is passing over. The storm is passing over Hal-le-lu.

Back Repeat.
Endings

Do these measures once

Then repeat

Skip to here the 2\textsuperscript{nd} time
The “Da’s”
Da Segno (D.S.)
Da Capo (D.C.)
DC al Coda
DS al Coda

Example: Lydia, the Tattooed Lady
Familiar Dynamic Terms

- **ppp**
- **pp**
- **p**
- **mp**
- **mf**
- **f**
- **ff**
- **fff**

Forte
Piano
Mezzo
Unfamiliar Dynamic Terms

Subito: literal - “suddenly”
  ◦ Ex: sub. $p$

Sforzando: literal - “trying hard, struggling”
  ◦ Ex: $sfz$ or $sf$
# Making Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VOLUME</strong></th>
<th><strong>SPEED</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crescendo (“rising”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Cresc.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrescendo (“falling”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Decresc.” or “Dim.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diminuendo (“getting smaller”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritardando (“delaying”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Rit.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rallantando (“slowing”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Rall.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerando (“quickening”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Accel.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piu mosso (“more motion”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meno mosso (“less motion”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common Articulations

Staccato ("detached")

Marcato ("march")

Fermata ("stop")

Tenuto ("held")

Accent
## Rhythm symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Rest</th>
<th>Equivalents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breve (Double Whole Note)</td>
<td>♪ or ♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Whole Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Note</td>
<td>♪</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Half Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Note</td>
<td>♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Quarter Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter Note</td>
<td>♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Eighth Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Note</td>
<td>♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Sixteenth Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteenth Note</td>
<td>♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Thirty-second Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-second Note</td>
<td>♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two Sixty-fourth Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixty-fourth Note</td>
<td>♫</td>
<td>🟢</td>
<td>Two One Hundred Twenty-eighth Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rhythms are ratios
Rhythms are ratios
Common rhythm mistakes

Notes are ratios, not specific values

\[ \Large \phantom{} = \Large \text{\texttt{\langly\lang} langly\langly} \]

\[ \Large \phantom{} \neq \Large \text{“4”} \]
Time Signatures

Assigning specific values the ratios

4 beats per measure
Quarter = 1

12 beats per measure
Eighth = 1
Counting: Rhythm Reading for Adults
Hills are wearing white, white cotton blankets,
Both at the same time!

buds that blossom, blossom flow’rs of white.
What to do with rests?

ooh
Making it harder: Dots and Rests

I was fol-low-ing the pack all swal-lowed in their coats with scarves of red tied 'round their
WE ARE NATURALLY DRAWN TO TONIC—LET’S SEE!
Reading Pitch: Stepwise
How do you know where 1 is?

For sharp keys, the last sharp is 7

For flat keys, the last flat is 4
Reading Pitch: Intervals

https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/