

Men's Choir

Listening Lesson

May 20, 2020



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**Objective/Learning Target:
Students will learn about intervals.**



Warm Up

1. What is the first thing you think of when you hear the term intervals as they relate to choral music?
2. How many intervals do you think there are in a normal major scale? (Hint: Think in terms of Do-Re, Do-Mi, Do-Fa etc.)



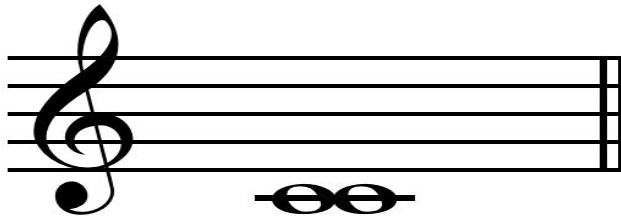
The Intervals

In choral music, almost everything is made around intervals. They guide how chords are made, steps and leaps, the distances between different parts etc. A big part of intervals is how they sound-either when played at the same time or played one right after the other. The intervallic distance between two notes can dictate whether a chord sounds major or minor. This lesson will explore the different types of intervals we have. Here is a video to help explain intervals: <https://youtu.be/2V3bvZu2Xqo>

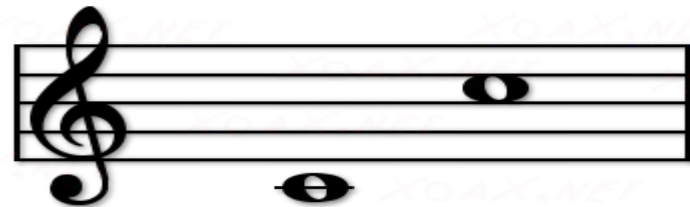
Unisons vs Octaves

Unisons and octaves are often mixed up because they are the same note name. However, they are very different. The perfect unison would be if everyone in the choir sang middle C. Everyone would be singing the same exact note. If the director said to sing a “C” in your Octave, is still Do-Do, but not everyone would be singing the same note on the staff. The unison sounds like the same note twice. An octave sounds like the “Some-where” in the song “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”.

Unison: Low Do-Low Do

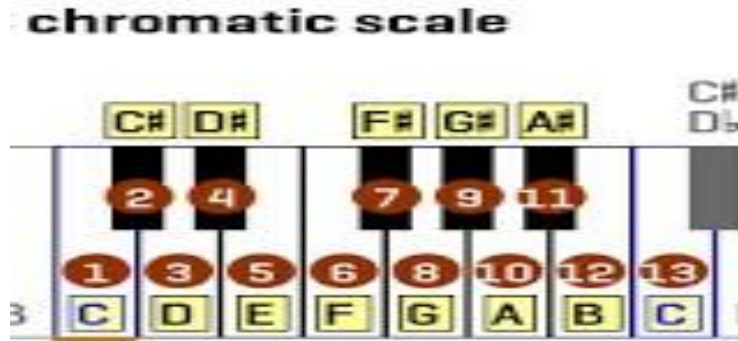


Octave: Low Do-High Do



Minor vs Major 2nds

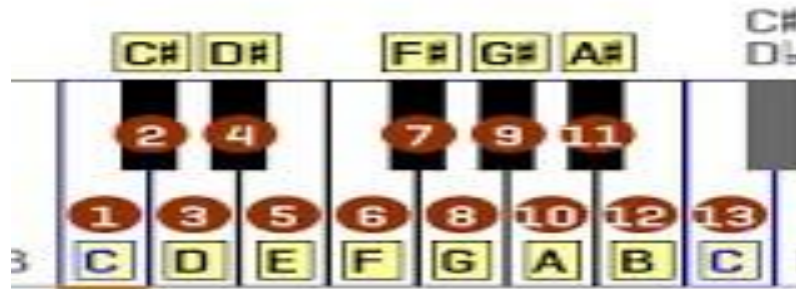
2nd intervals are normally very tricky to hear the difference in. This is because they are a half step and a whole step with whatever note you start on and, as a result, sound very tense. We will use C as our Do. A Minor 2nd is the distance between Do-Di or C to C#. A good way to tell a Minor 2nd is by the “Jaws” theme. The Major 2nd is a little easier on the ears, but is still dissonant. The interval is Do-Re or C-D. You can think “Happy Birthday”.



Minor vs Major 3rds

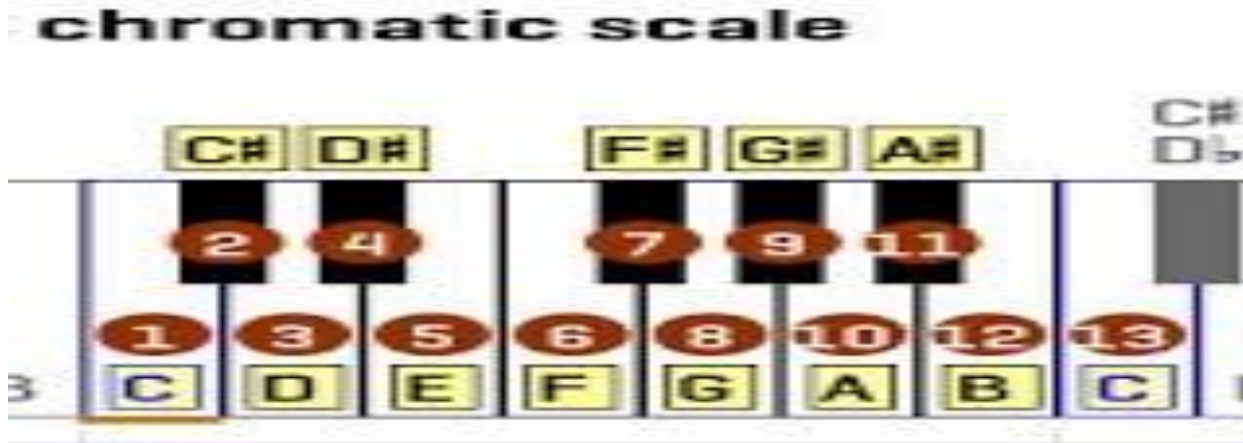
Minor and Major 3rds make up the meat of a chord. They are 3 notes apart from each other and consist of “Do-Mi” for a major 3rd, or “Do-Me” for a minor 3rd. A good way to tell a major 3rd is the “Oh when” from “When the saints go marching in”. For the minor 3rd, it’s Brahms Lullaby. A major third is the first interval that sounds pleasing to the ear. This is why it was so commonly used as composers started to write music for churches.

chromatic scale



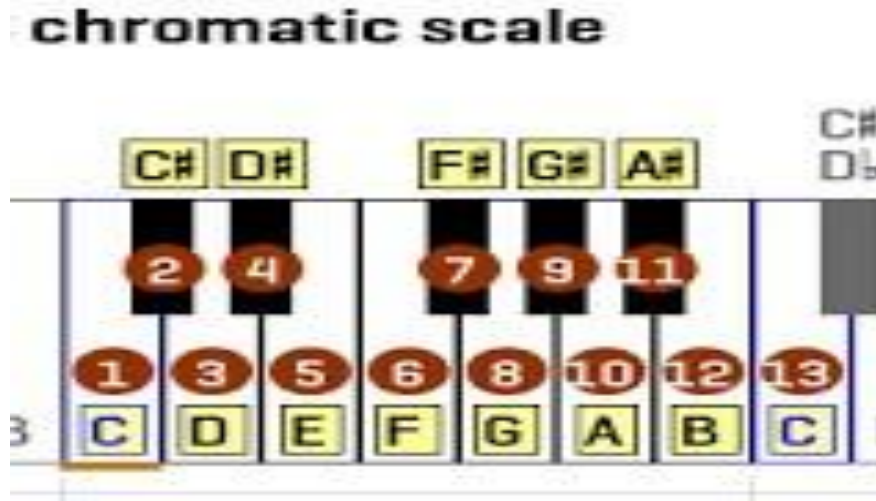
Perfect 4ths vs Perfect 5ths

Perfect 4ths and 5ths are both some of the easiest to distinguish. Perfect 4ths are exactly 4 notes from “Do” and Perfect 5ths are exactly 5 notes from “Do”. Perfect 4ths are best heard from “Here Comes the Bride”. Perfect 5ths can be heard in the Star Wars theme. 4ths are “Do-Fa” and 5ths are “Do-Sol”.



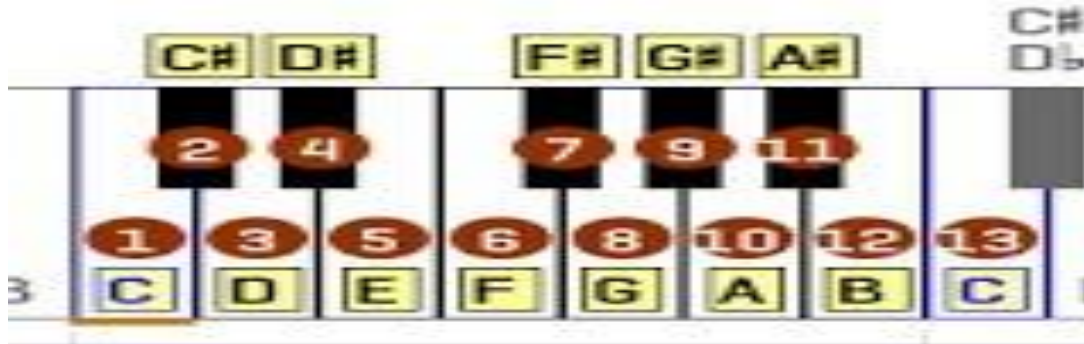
The Tritone

The tritone is 1 half step below the perfect 5th interval. It can be described as “Do-Fi” or “Do-Se”. It is an awkward sounding interval that can best be heard by singing “The Simpsons Theme”. The Tritone was often called the devil’s interval because it was the ugliest sounding interval.



Minor vs Major 6th

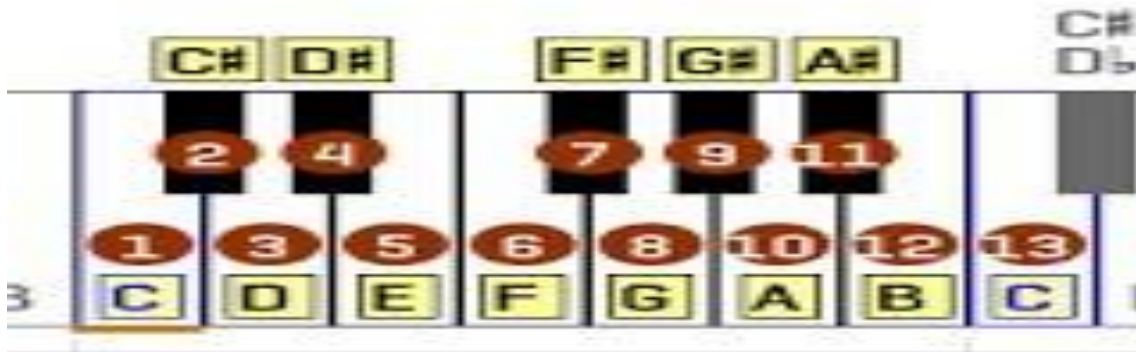
Major and minor 6ths are where it starts to stretch further apart, so inverting the intervals might work better. Instead of listening up for them, listen down. If you invert them, then they would sound like a minor or major 3rd. The best way to hear a major 6th is the “NBC” theme. The minor 6th can be best heard in Scott Joplin’s “The Entertainer”. This is “Do-Le” or “Do-l **chromatic scale**”



Minor vs Major 7th

The Major and the Minor 7th, just like the 6ths, are very distanced and it makes it hard to hear them. If you listen down, they sound like a 2nd. This interval goes from “Do-Te” or “Do-Ti”. The popular song you can think of for a Minor 7th is “Somewhere” from “West Side Story” and for the Major 7th, think “Take On” from “Take On Me”.

chromatic scale





Individual Practice

Knowing what you have learned from this lesson, go to <https://www.musictheory.net/exercises/interval> and see if you can identify 30 in a row correctly. Remember to count the lines and spaces to find the distance and then factor in the accidental. Flats make the pitch go down $\frac{1}{2}$ step and sharps make the pitch go up $\frac{1}{2}$ step.



Additional Practice

For extra practice, find two other instances in pop music that would help you remember each interval.