A Season of Harmony

From the Waterford Tree Lighting just after Thanksgiving until the concert series at Lourdes Senior Community just before Christmas, the braves of the Big Chief Chorus have traversed afar, ‘braving’ the weather (which this year was thankfully quite mild), and bearing gifts of harmony to hundreds of our neighbors in Oakland County.

Most of the beneficiaries of our harmonious dividends were seen smiling and clapping, a few of whom wetted their cheeks with tears, and one anonymous fan even treated the entire chorus to dinner at Heroes restaurant in Waterford.

In the immortal (perhaps even mildly surprised) words of our fearless director, Tom Blue, while we were warming up for this year’s bus tour, “We must have brought the ‘A’ Chorus today.”

It’s good to know that while our mortal frames are bending lower and lower with each successive Christmas season, it would appear that our musical shine has actually been glowing brighter and brighter. Thank you, Tom for leading us in the development of our craft.

“It has, once again, been a pleasure to serve each of you and to serve the BCC the best I can and to see many of you share a song, a smile on your face or a simple handshake with each other and with our audience members. Smiles and genuine conversations abound. You are truly “ambassadors” for the BCC and the Harmony Society!” (Tom Blue).

The credit for such a successful holiday sing-out season goes to so many hardworking braves. Jeff Doig and Fred McFadyin put smiles on many faces with their impersonations of Rudolph and Santa. Jack Teuber faithfully reached out to arrange our gigs. OverTime and 4GVN along with a pick-up quartet here and there performed special holiday songs. Section leaders, Ray Sturdy, and Greg Moss anchored the baritones and basses respectively, helping the rest of us stay on pitch. Baritone Walt Bachman added German lyrics and Art Carinci, bass, French lyrics for some of the stanzas of our traditional Christmas carols. Art even provided a new Medley for our holiday repertoire, the O Holy Night-Silent Night Medley.

And we can be very proud of the fact that during our 2019 Christmas tour, no windows got broken. In fact, the room at Lakeland Place where we kept our coats no longer has a lock on the door, thanks to some of the residents who look forward to our concerts each year.
Music Theory I: Major Scales
Submitted by Tom Blue (from Harmony University)

Scale degrees can be identified by Solfége, a practice of putting a short word to each scale degree. Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, and Ti are shown here with Do repeated as the Tonic or keytone, and Kodaly hand signs sometimes used to aid teaching and learning Solfége: Notice Do is used twice, repeating the tonic and showing the cyclical pattern of the musical alphabet. This system of words can be used in any key, a practice called Movable Do.

There are many ways to analyze each note of the scale. Numbers 1 – 7 are commonly used, but these are the formal names for each note:

These names are used more in classical music theory, but they are also used from time to time in barbershop theory. For instance, Dominant sevenths stem from the fifth degree of the scale classically called the Dominant.

Here is an example of how the note names, in the key of C, line up with the numbers of the scale degrees (1-8) and also with the solfége comprising the Major Scale.

A Scale is a progression of notes using all seven musical letters. Each scale will have its own DNA composition based upon the intervallic relationships between two different notes within the scale.

Scales are composed of Whole (W) and Half (H) steps. A half step is the smallest increment of pitch in western music, and is represented on the piano keyboard as the interval between adjacent keys regardless of color. A whole step is comprised of two half steps, or an interval of two piano keys regardless of color. A major scale follows a progression from the tonic in this pattern:

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- W - W - H - W - W - H -
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Notice that the notes C# and Db are the same key on the piano. These two notes are enharmonic equivalents. The same goes for D# and Eb, F# and Gb, G# and Ab, A# and Bb. If you were to travel upward from C to D via the black key in between, the note you would play is C#. If you travel downward from D to C via the black key in between, the note you would play is Db. There are also enharmonic equivalents of notes like Fb (E), F# (F), Cb (B), and B# (C). The C Major scale with its interval pattern is:

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C - D - E - F - G - A - B - C
W    W    H    W    W    W    H
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Starting with D as the tonic, can you use this pattern to fill in the notes for the D major scale?

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W W H W W W H
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Upcoming Chorus Events
Rehearsals are 7:30 PM every Tuesday at Canterbury on the Lake, 5601 Hatchery Rd. Waterford, MI 48329. Sing-out warm-ups are 30 minutes before the scheduled times.

Jan. 8, (Tu) 7:00 PM 2019 Installation Banquet , Shark Club, 6665 Highland, Rd. Waterford 48327
Feb. 14, (Th) Singing Valentines 12:45 PM Waterford Senior Center 3621 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford 48328
Feb. 15, (Fr) 12:30 PM Auburn Hills Senior Center 1827 N Squirrel Rd. Auburn Hills
St. Patrick’s Day – Canterbury on the Lake TBD
Apr. 26-27 Pioneer District Spring Convention Grand Traverse Resort, Traverse City, MI.

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