

# A Sight-Singing Primer

Adam Potter, Ph.D.





The background of the slide features a low-angle shot of a clock tower. The tower is constructed from light-colored stone blocks and has a red brick section visible near the base. Two clock faces are visible on the tower's facade. In the foreground, there are out-of-focus branches of a cherry blossom tree with pink flowers and green leaves. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

**A bit about me**



# Deconstructing the Process

- **The sight-singing process:**
  1. Rhythmic skills
  2. Tonal/melodic skills
  3. Coordination skills





# Rhythmic Skills

Reading horizontally



313

S  
Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

A 1  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

A 2  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

T  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

B  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

Keyb.  
red.

317

**Adagio**

S  
Queens thy nur - sing mo - - - - thers.

A 1  
Queens thy nur - sing mo - - - - thers.

A 2  
Queens thy nur - sing mo - - - - thers.

T  
Queens thy nur - sing mo - - - - thers.

B  
Queens thy nur - sing mo - - - - thers.

**Adagio**

Keyb.  
red.



Final page of “My heart is inditing” by G.F. Handel

# Rhythmic Skills



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B  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

**Rhythmic motion is left to right**



# Rhythmic Skills



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Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

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# Rhythmic Skills



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Rhythmic motion is left to right



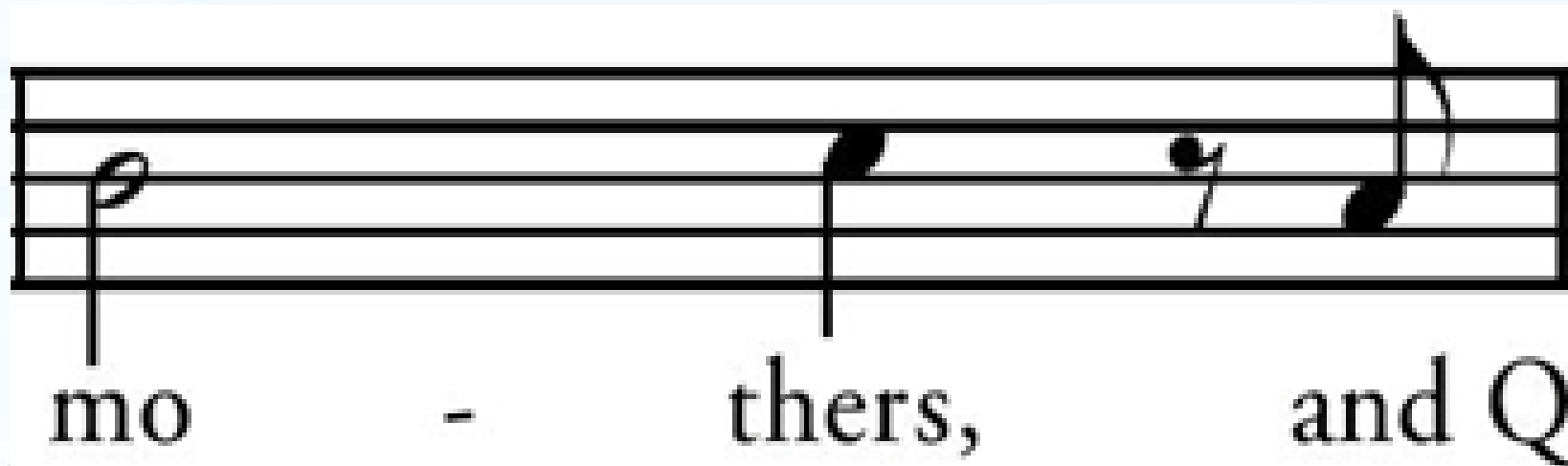
# Rhythmic Skills



Queens thy nur - sing

4/4

# Rhythmic Skills



4  
4

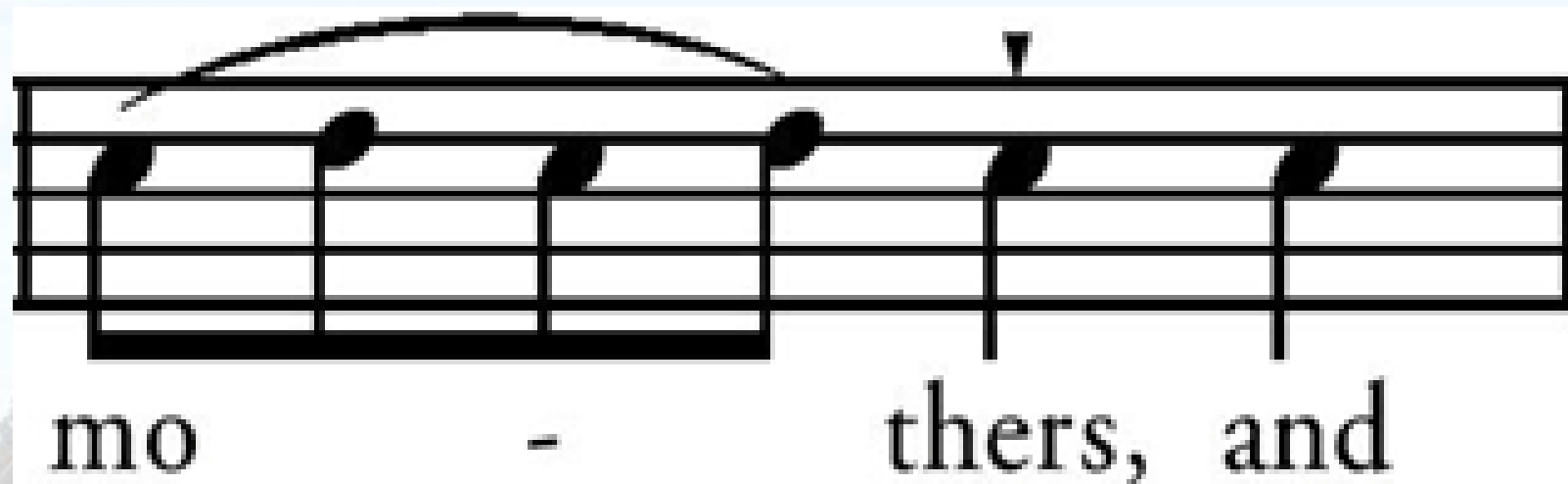




# Rhythmic Skills



# Rhythmic Skills







# Tonal/Melodic Skills

Reading vertically

# Tonal Skills



313

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Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

A 1  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

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8 Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

B  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

Tonal motion is up and down

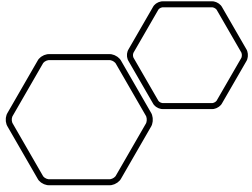


# Tonal Skills



## Two characteristics:

- **Direction**
  - Same →
  - Up (*ascending*) ↑
  - Down (*descending*) ↓
- **Width/distance (*interval*)**
  - Unison (**u**)
  - Step (**s**)
  - Skip (**S**)
  - Leap (**L**)



All intervals fall into one of four classifications



**UNISON**



**STEP**



**SKIP**



**LEAP**

Least wide

Most wide



# Tonal Skills



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Tonal motion is up and down

# Tonal Skills



## Direction

8 Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

The musical notation is on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Red arrows are placed above the staff to indicate the pitch direction for each note: up (↑) for ascending intervals and down (↓) for descending intervals. Horizontal arrows (→) indicate the flow of the melody. The lyrics are written below the staff, with hyphens indicating syllables that span multiple notes.

# Tonal Skills



## Width/distance

s u u s S u S L S s s s s s s s s s s L

8 Queens \_ thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a single line. Above the staff, a series of letters in red (s, u, u, s, S, u, S, L, S, s, s, s, s, s, s, s, s, s, L) are placed above the notes, indicating specific tonal qualities or intervals. The lyrics below the staff are: "8 Queens \_ thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and". The background of the slide is a faded image of a large, historic building with a clock tower, likely a university building.



# Tonal Skills

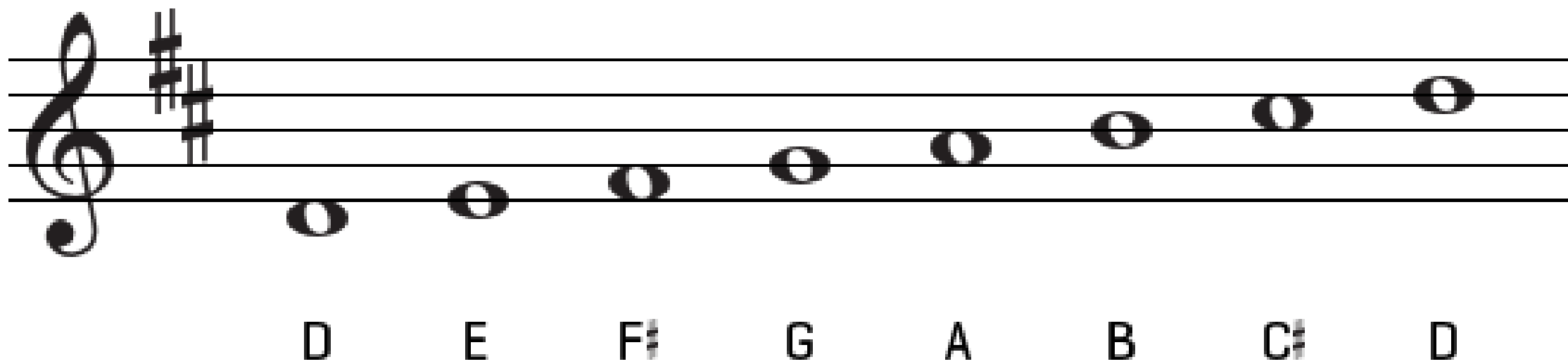


## IMPORTANT-TO-REMEMBER ABOUT WIDTH/DISTANCE



- A **step** goes from a note on a line to the space immediately above or below, or from a note on a space to the line immediately above or below
- A **step** is the **simplest** interval—think of a *scale*
  - *Unless there is an accidental present*

# Tonal Skills



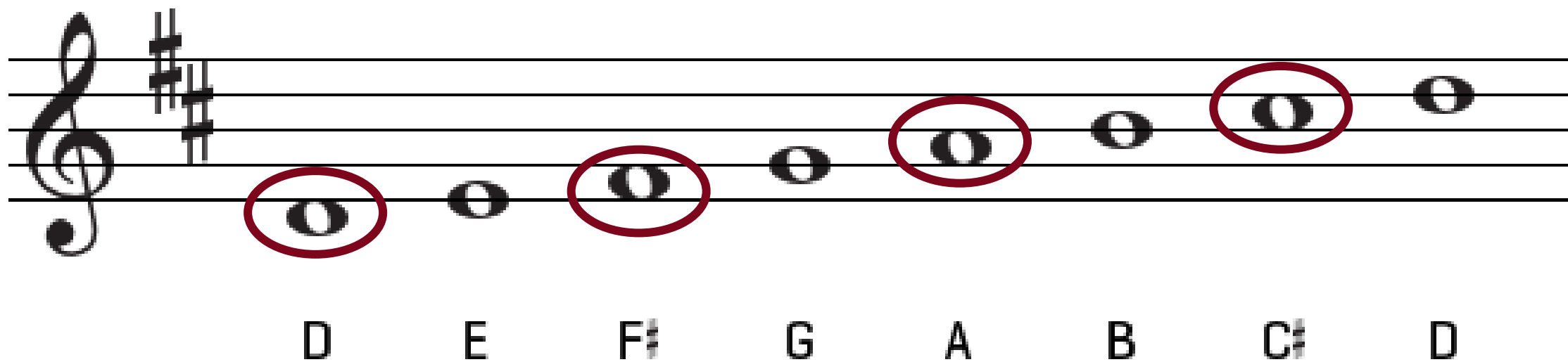
## IMPORTANT-TO-REMEMBER ABOUT WIDTH/DISTANCE



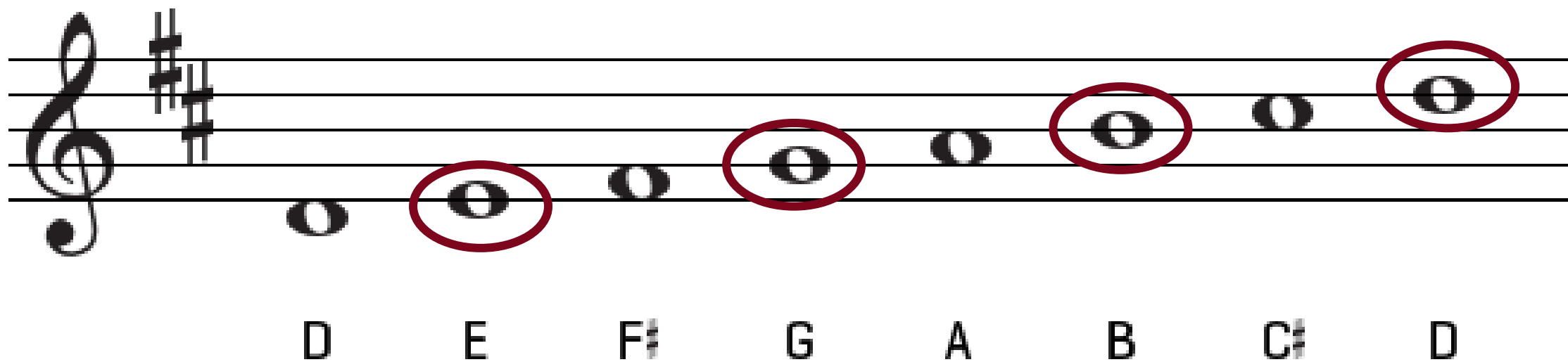
- A **skip** goes from a note on a line to the next above or below, or from a note on a space to the next space above or below
- You can also think of a *scale* to figure out a **skip**
  - *Unless* there is an accidental present



# Tonal Skills



# Tonal Skills



# Tonal Skills



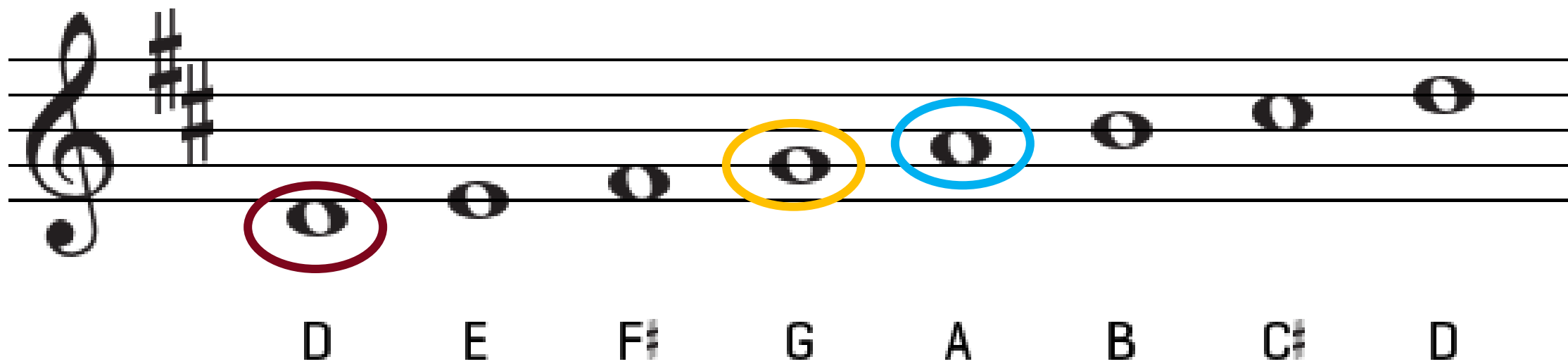
## IMPORTANT-TO-REMEMBER ABOUT WIDTH/DISTANCE



- A **leap** requires more decoding



# Tonal Skills



# Tonal Skills



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B  
Queens - thy nur - sing mo - thers, and Queens thy nur - sing mo - thers, and

Tonal motion is up and down

# Tonal Skills



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Tonal motion is up and down

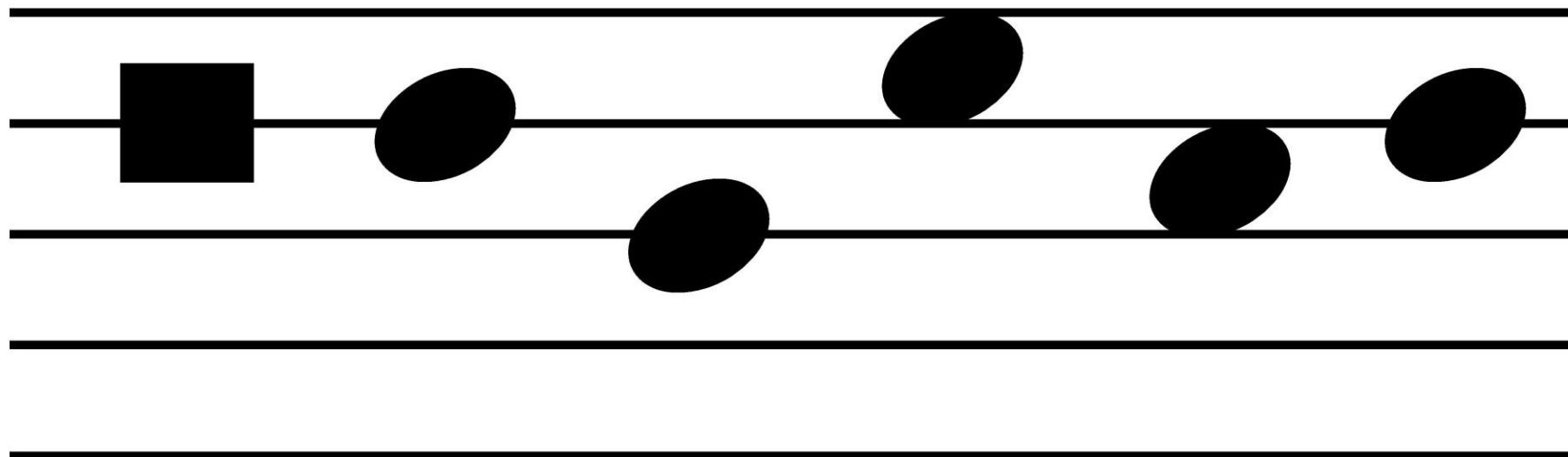
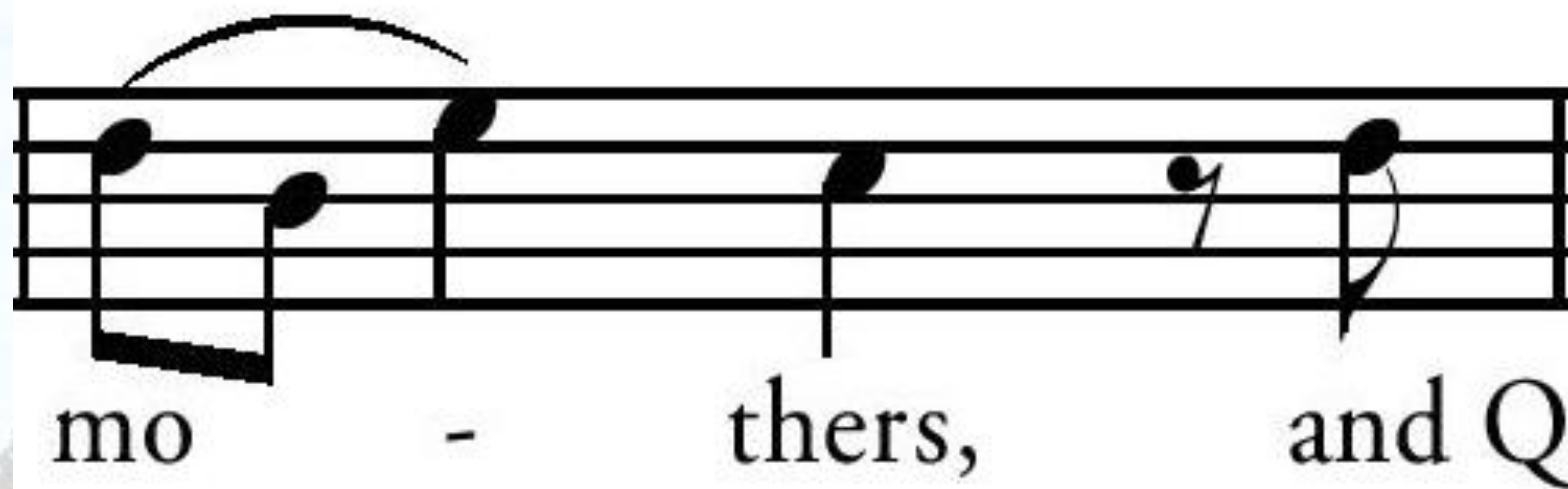


# Tonal Skills



Queens \_ thy nur - sing

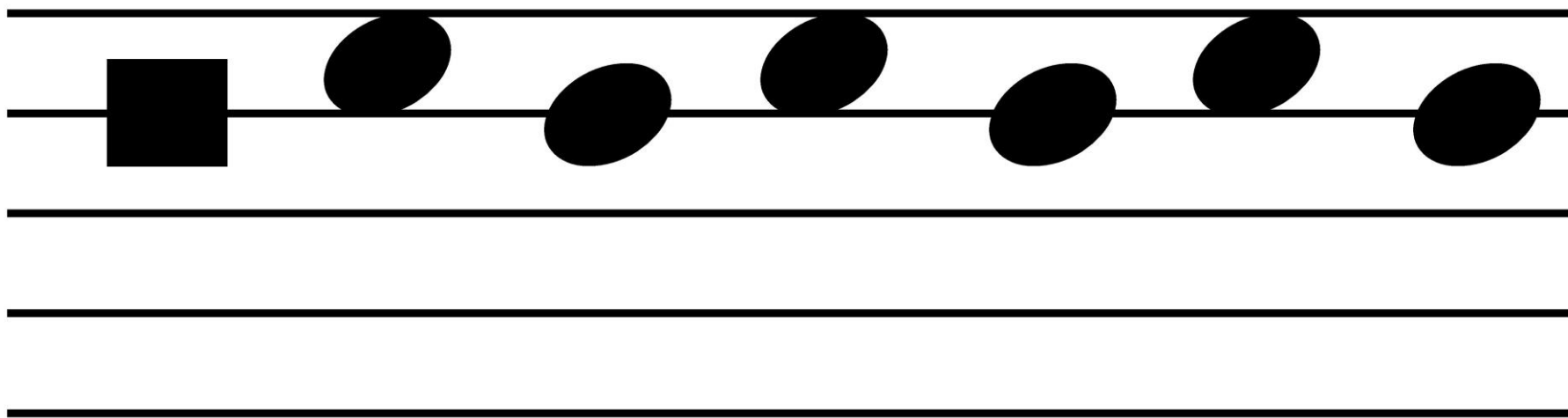
# Tonal Skills



# Tonal Skills



Queens thy nur - sing





# Tonal Skills

A musical staff with five lines. The first four notes are on the first line (F4), the fifth note is on the second line (G4), and the sixth note is on the second space (A4). A slur covers the first four notes. The lyrics 'mo - thers, and' are written below the staff, with a hyphen under the first note and a comma after the fifth note.

mo - thers, and

A musical staff with five lines. The first note is a black square on the first line (F4). The next five notes are black ovals: the second is on the first space (G4), the third is on the second line (A4), the fourth is on the second space (B4), the fifth is on the third line (C5), and the sixth is on the third space (D5).

■ ● ● ● ● ●



# Coordination Skills

**Simultaneously reading both horizontally and vertically**

# Coordination Skills



- Isolating rhythm and pitch aids accuracy when coordinating the two into genuine reading
- Practice in small chunks, even bar-by-bar
- Strive to move from *following* your vocal leaders to *becoming* a vocal leader



# Materials from Today's Class

[www.adampottermusic.com/london-city-chorus](http://www.adampottermusic.com/london-city-chorus)





The background of the image is a photograph of a stone wall with a metal railing on the left. A person is sitting on the stairs, wearing a grey sweatshirt with 'ROBERTS WESLEYAN COLLEGE' printed on it. A semi-transparent red banner is overlaid on the top half of the image, and a semi-transparent grey banner is overlaid on the bottom half.

# Learn More About The Roberts Chorale

Facebook  
[facebook.com/therobertschorale](https://facebook.com/therobertschorale)

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[@therobertschorale](https://www.instagram.com/therobertschorale)

YouTube  
[youtube.com/c/therobertschorale](https://youtube.com/c/therobertschorale)



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Questions?



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