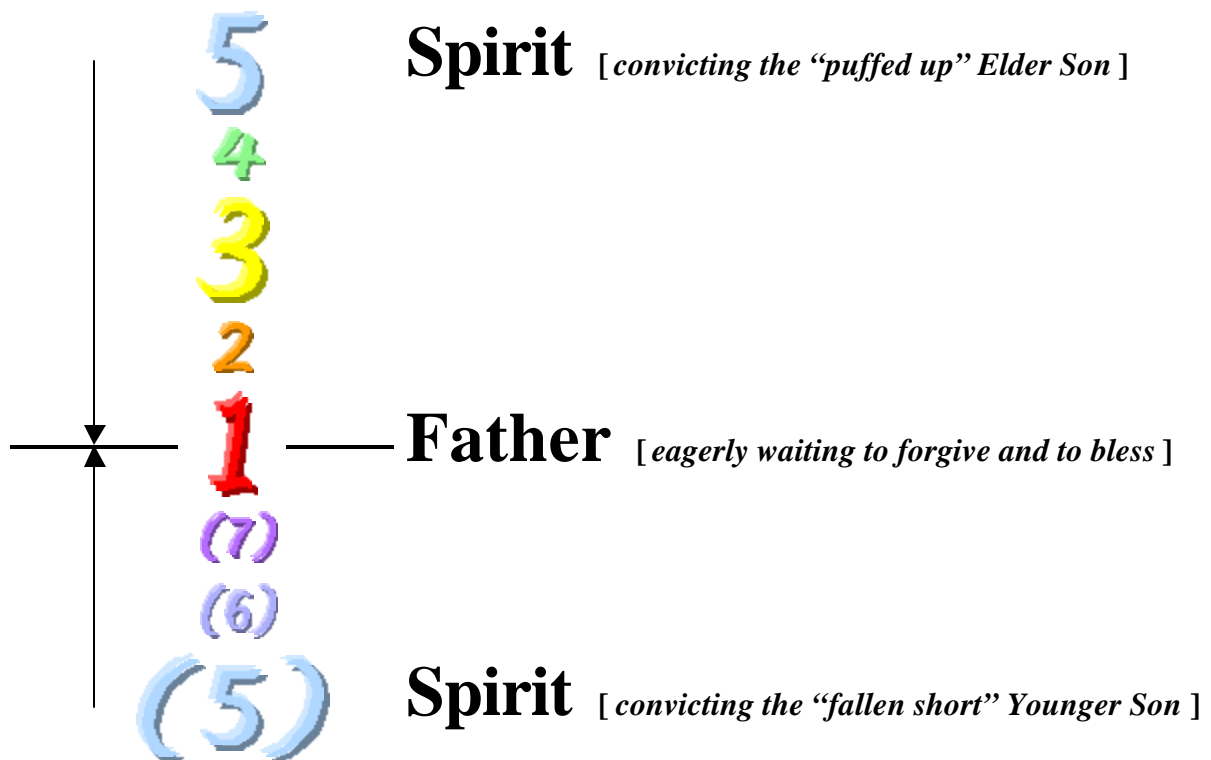


# THE SONG *inside* THE SONG

- A DEEPER LOOK -

M. J. Milford

Although by definition **5** is a Resting Tone, it loves making grand leaps to **1** or **8**. Again and again – both in melodies and underlying bass parts – it catapults to the Tonic, establishing and re-establishing it as plumb line. If **5** and **(5)** represent the Holy Spirit, He clearly spends far more time moving than resting... convicting us than comforting us. Nothing pictures this musical phenomenon better than the story of the Prodigal Son.



Both the Younger Son and the Elder Son had rebellious hearts toward the Father, but they expressed it in different ways. The first fell short. The second was puffed up. The “bad” brother knew he needed forgiveness, but the “good” brother was blinded to it. (Such was the condition of the Scribes and Pharisees.) The “**(5)** - **1**” and “**5** - **1**” intervals are music’s reminders that we are never beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit’s voice.

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SECRETS in the RAINBOW

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## ANOTHER WORD FROM THE HEART

Appetites vary... some feed – others graze! In regard to delving deeper into a matter, this book is written for the second person, the one interested in gaining insight not only into the rewarding skill of sight-reading, but also the intriguing link between music and Scripture.

The goal of “**THE SONG *inside* THE SONG**” is two-fold:

- 1 ] to help “B” singers learn how to sight-read music
- 2 ] to help every singer see God’s handprint in music

While the first part of the goal is acceptable to all who want to become more effective in their various singing endeavors, the second part of the goal (that helps to achieve that end) will be met with everything from “*Now, that’s over the top!*” to “*Wow, that’s so inspiring!*”

When it comes to spiritual things, some are private and ill at ease with “Jesus” talk, while others are public and think nothing of sprinkling their chitchat with “*Praise the Lord!*” Instead of compartmentalizing their relationship with God, they seem to breathe it in and out.

On a practical basis... a Biblical illustration that one churchgoer will see as poignant, another churchgoer will see as preachy. Out of respect for the comfort zone of both groups, this book is separated into four components. Representative of what is to follow is this chart.

**“THE SONG *inside* THE SONG”**

**12 PITCHES – *continually reflecting* – 12 PATTERNS**

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**FATHER – SON – SPIRIT**

**1 - 3 - 5                      5 - 3 - 1**

*The SPIRIT convicts the sinner of God’s Holiness.*

**(5) - 1                      5 - 1                      5 - 8**

*GOD draws us to a relationship with Him in these 7 natural tendencies.*

**(6) - (5)    (7) - 1    2 - 1    4 - 3    6 - 5    7 - 8    9 - 8**

## SCRIPTURAL INSIGHT IN THE NOTES

When Diana, the Princess of Wales, announced a June 1997 visit to the United States, the pomp surrounding the event caused a media frenzy for weeks. Reporters were primed to comment on every detail, and cameras were positioned to catch every angle of her elegance. British royalty doesn't step on American soil every day of the week!

But, what if the news had focused only on Diana's limousine? "*Absurd!*" you say. Yet, when it comes to the vehicle of music in the worship of God, sometimes we do just that. It's easy for singers to get so caught up in the song that they lose sight of the Giver of Song. The more Scriptural imagery we see in music, the more we see Him.

Even on Israel's map God speaks in numbers. Not only is His Holy City of Jerusalem 777 meters above sea level, so also is Bethlehem. Since melody and harmony are God's idea (*Job 38 tells us "the morning stars sang together" when the foundations of Earth were laid*), it follows that the Creator might use numbers in music to speak, too.

What if the 12 Pitches and 12 Patterns were hidden in the scale's design to underscore God's instruction to Israel concerning the dedication of the tabernacle? For the anointing of the Altar, leaders brought offerings of 12 silver plates, 12 silver bowls, and 12 gold vessels; and the burnt offerings consisted of 12 bulls, 12 rams, and 12 lambs.

What if the 7 tones of the scale picture the 7 lights of the lamp inside the tabernacle? "*It was made of **hammered gold** from its base to its blossoms – precisely to the design God had shown Moses*" (Numbers 8:3). Jesus said: "*I am the **Light** of the World...*" (John 8:12). The imagery of *hammered gold Light* perfectly describes the cross.

The Bible mentions the word "ladder" only once (Genesis 28:12). In Jacob's dream he saw one reaching from Earth to Heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending. The scale – derived from the Latin "scala" which means, "ladder" – follows the same design. Hidden in its blueprint are truths as glorious as those in the parables.

In Luke 10:21 Jesus praised the Father because He had hidden things from the learned and revealed them to little children. Typically, "**5 - 3**" is the child's first musical utterance. It is called the "Ur Song" – a reference to the ancient city from which God called Abraham. Heard in every tongue and tribe, it's the universal call for Mom-my.

Children intuitively know they have to depend on "someone big" to meet their needs. How beautiful is the thought that the One who fashioned us in our mother's womb would simultaneously imprint His call to repentance in our aural DNA. If you doubt this is true, consider *Just As I Am*, which ends not on **1** or **8**, but on "**5 - 3**".

**From the smallest country church, to Billy Graham crusades,  
God has used this hymn more than any other to touch hearts.**

The musical essence of "**5 - 3**" is: "*Holy Spirit – woo them to Jesus!*"

## Connecting the 12 Pitches to Imagery

The 12 commonly used pitches are best understood by envisioning a swimming pool. The big ladder, **1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7**, takes you to a diving board, **8**, and your bounce is **9**. The small ladder going into the water, **(7) - (6) - (5)**, isn't a reflection of what's above, but rather it's the top of a different ladder. This image is key to hearing **(6)** descend to **(5)**.

If a song's **1** sits low on the staff, you might see a **10** [ *i.e.*, "America, the Beautiful" ] or even an **11** and **12** [ *i.e.*, "The Star-Spangled Banner" ]. By the same token – if **1** sits high on the staff, you might come across a **(4)** and **(3)** [ *i.e.*, "Battle Hymn of the Republic" ]. Don't worry. These outside-the-box pitches are readily recognized and sung in context.

## Connecting the 12 Patterns to Imagery

The patterns of **(7) - 1** and **2 - 1** are seen in the open and close of a butterfly's wings. Put palms together to picture **1**, the butterfly's body. Turn left hand to palm up for **(7)** and right hand to palm up for **2**. Choose a pitch for **1** then sing: "**(7) - 1 - 2 - 1 // (7) - 1 - 2 - 1**". The caterpillar-to-butterfly imagery reminds us of John 3:3 – "*You must be born again!*"

Besides the rainbow we see on Earth, Revelation 4:3 talks about a rainbow in Heaven. This paints a picture of the distance between Earth's **(7) - 1 - 2 - 1** and Heaven's **7 - 8 - 9 - 8**. Switching from waist-level to eye-level will help your inner ear to hear the octave difference: "**(7) - 1 - 2 - 1 // 7 - 8 - 9 - 8**". *Those born again on Earth are taken to Heaven.*

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The story of the Prodigal is perfect imagery for the Holy Spirit roles of **(5)** and **5**. The straight-and-narrow has two ditches: "*I've sinned*" - and - "*I'm proud I haven't sinned.*" Just as people leave home and return, so melodies leave the Home Tone – **1** or **8** – and return. Practice this pattern "**1 - (5) - 1 - 5 - 1 - 5 - 8**" until it is etched in your aural memory.

In addition to seeing and hearing the difference in distance between **(5) - 1** and **5 - 1**, you can experience their dissimilarity. When you stand up and put your hands at your waist, you feel the rock-solid stability of the Father. Now, bounce your hands from the sides of your legs back to your waist. This is how far away the heart of the Younger Brother is.

To contrast, bounce your hands from your head's "antenna spots" back to your waist. This is how far away the heart of the Elder Brother is. Theory's name for **5** is the *Dominant*. Doing the hand motions as you sing "**(5) - 1**" and "**5 - 1**" will lock in their *dominant* sounds. The lesson – no matter where we wander, the Spirit is there to redirect us to the Father.

It stands to reason that the distance from **5** to **8** should look, sound, and feel parallel to the distance from **(5)** to **1**. To prove this is so, touch your head then extend your arms and "touch" the sky. This distance feels identical to the bounce of the hands from legs to waist. The Spirit's role now is **(5) - 1** and **5 - 1**. The Spirit's drawing us to Heaven is **5 - 8**.

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If your hands are on your waist for **1** and on your head for **5** , then **3** fits in between. If you imagine **1** as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, **5** is His crown, and **3** is His heart. Woven into the Tonic Triad's sound is **1** - *His Authority*, **5** - *His Majesty*, and **3** - *His Love*. To feel **3** , stand beneath the horizontal beam of the cross – submissive hands palms-up.

***“Oh! precious flow that makes us white as snow;  
No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.”***

The best way to pinpoint the sound of **3** is to imagine the Savior, flattening His hands to receive the blows of the hammer that would nail Him to the cross. This pitch is so special that one of the first rules you learn in theory is never to double it, a perfect portrayal of Jesus, the *only* begotten Son of God, who said: *“The only way to the Father is through Me.”*

Just as Jesus was suspended, so **3** feels suspended. More than any other tone, it must be approached with a sensitive ear and a soft voice – with the trust and tenderness of a child. When you think of the Son of God... as the Lamb of God... you know how to sing this pitch. He is now *Mediator* between Heaven and Earth. Theory's name for **3** is the *Mediant*.

For **4** , touch your upper arms then roll your fingers along the top of the cross's beam until they open beneath it for **3** . Is it any wonder that God inspired the sound of **4** going to **3** for praise and worship's *“A - men!”* The very shape of the cross pictures **4** . As you sing it, take care not to bruise again the shoulders of the Savior. Always hear **4** as weightless.

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The patterns **6 - 5** and **(6) - (5)** are saturated with truth that six is the number of man. It was on the sixth day that God made Adam, blowing His own life-breath into his nostrils – the very breath with which we sing. Don't assume **6 - 5** and **(6) - (5)** are alike. They're not. In fact, they're as opposite as Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom and the Rich Man in Hell.

To feel **6 - 5** , trace “golden arches” from the center of your head to the antenna spots. To feel **(6) - (5)** , push turned-out hands as far down as they'll go, hold a bit, then touch legs. The longer you keep your hands horizontal after your elbows lock, the more pain you'll feel. The “**6**” motion is the *joy* of Lazarus – the “**(6)**” motion, the *torment* of the Rich Man.

The *indigo* “Star of David” pictures God's rule over the universe in all six directions: up / down / north / south / east / west. Each six-sided snowflake that falls is silent evidence of the thoughts God has for His chosen people. The recapture of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War said to the world: *“As indigo is like no other hue, so Israel is like no other nation!”*

***“For whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye.” – Zechariah 2:8***

The reason **(6)** is tricky to hear is because **1** wrestles against its tendency to descend. God doesn't want anyone to perish – especially the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That's why during the Tribulation He'll send two witnesses *“...so all Israel will be saved.”* *“Hallelujah!”* for the persistent pull of **1** on **(6)**. It's God's covenant love behaving.

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## “WINDSHIELD WIPER” RHYTHMS

Just because singers know what is supposed to happen rhythmically, it doesn't mean they can actually do it. That's because rhythm isn't left-brain math. It's right-brain muscle. The ability to recognize quarter-notes, eighth-notes, and sixteenth-notes is nice, but far more critical is the ability to start – and sustain – the beat, divided beat, and sub-divided beat.

Many can explain Time Signatures – “*In 3/4 there are three beats per measure, and the quarter-note gets one beat*” – but exact explanation doesn't guarantee exact enactment. Singers must have the 12 pitch patterns instilled before adding the “timed tests” of rhythm. “A” singers can get rhythm through noisemaking. “B” singers get it best through silence.

### *An Interesting Historical Note*

Leaders in the Early Church had deeply-held convictions about music. They believed “movement in 3” was spiritually superior to “movement in 2” because it was a natural portrait of The Trinity – “God in Three Persons” – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. In fact, a *circle* was used for beats grouped in 3 and a *half-circle* for beats grouped in 2. These were the scientific symbols for the *perfect* metal, gold, and the *near-perfect* metal, silver. In time, the half-circle mutated into a “C” for *Common Time* - and - a divided “C” for *Cut Time*.

Once the rhythms of a song are mastered, tapping the toes to keep the beat works fine. During the learning stage, however, “B” singers need to feel a physical, silent, divided beat. This can be done – in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 – with an arm-hand, out-and-in, windshield-wiper motion. It will keep the pulse feeling steady and concrete as you chant the “*Tick-Tock*” rhythm.

The windshield-wiper motion starts from a “praying hands” position below your chin. For “*Tick*” – bounce hands to the outside. For “*Tock*” – let the energy of the bounce return hands to a touch of the fingertips. The goal is to experience the feeling of action *vs.* reaction. Avoid rigid wrists. They must stay relaxed to sense the all-important weight of the beat.

The bottom line – when you say “*Tick*” your hands should bounce, and when you say “*Tock*” your fingertips should touch. Saying the “y” in between these two points of contact is easy to do. This strategy works better than clapping because that activity focuses only on the first half of the beat. For faster tempos keep the arms still and move only the hands.

**Note:** For triplets change “*Tick-Tock*” to “*Tick-o-ry*” and the windshield-wiper movement to an outside-to-inside “air drawing” of jumbo raindrops. This motion also works for 6/8 and other Time Signatures, where the beat is represented by a dotted quarter-note.



## “A” DIRECTORS vs. “B” SINGERS

While “A” singers have an innate ability to hear a melody or harmony part and store it forever, “B” singers don’t. They must be taught their pitches in visual and aural context. If the altos have a **C**, they must see and hear the conflicting **D** that the tenors will be singing behind them. If sopranos need to sing the same **C** as the starting pitch of the previous phrase, they need to see and hear that the piano is changing from the expected **C** chord to an **F** chord. Likewise, basses have to see and hear that their weird note is a *pedal tone* that repeats while everybody else moves to something different. “B” singers expect sounds to be harmonious. When discord happens, it never occurs to them that it could be the music itself that’s the rub. When this is the case, hearing a part played in isolation is futile.

One common practice of “A” directors is to say to their choir, “*OK, any questions?*” When the 12 Pitches and 12 Patterns are fixed in “B” singers’ ears, they feel empowered – not only with the ability to approach music with a plan – but also with the ability to interact with their director in a productive way. While “A” singers intuitively *hear-sing*, “B” singers must genuinely *sight-sing*. If some note is giving them fits, instead of frowning and fretting, they need to circle where they last sang it correctly and draw an arrow to the problem note. There’s nothing wrong with singing that first note, then dropping out to hold it in the mind. Before “B” singers can master a tricky pitch, their *eyes* must see how it relates to the whole. Joyfully meeting this need makes them feel valued (*i.e.*, loved).

Among “B” singers there is usually a self-appointed spokesperson whose call in life is to inform “A” directors that people are missing notes. If the truth were known, however, they are surprised that they need to speak up. Surely the “leader of the pack” can hear it, too. Most of the time that isn’t the case, however. While “A” directors hear the composite sound, most don’t listen for individual parts. If they’re a cut above and do listen for individual parts, most don’t think to scan the accompaniment to see if what’s happening there is problematic. Also, many composer-arrangers are oblivious to the limitations of “B” singers. Their focus is the power-packed orchestration, not whether a garden-variety singer can hear his or her pitch in some chord cluster. The question is... “What’s the answer?”

First, directors can be wiser about the music they buy. Just because the newest track “sounds awesome” when the Christian recording artist sings it solo or with backup ensemble, it doesn’t mean a choral remake will work. There is a profound difference between a song crafted for vocalist and a song crafted for voices. Don’t assume they are mutually exclusive. Be especially wary of numbers that feature soloist and ask for “*oo*” and “*ah*” from the choir. “B” singers find this style of writing almost impossible to learn.

Second, “B” singers need explanation, not redundancy:

*“Sopranos, the melody ends on 5 - (7) - 1, but this repeat of the last phrase ends 5 - 7 - 8.”*

*“Altos, I know your ears expect 4 - 3, but in this case 4 stays in the air and you sing 2 - 1.”*

*“Tenors, while everyone else is singing 1 - 3 - 5, the music is asking you to sing 2 for color.”*

*“Basses, when the Tonic Triad is sung you usually have 1, but here you double tenors on 5.”*

Most directors of church choirs are natural singers, and natural singers look at music horizontally rather than vertically. Even if they've had conducting in college, their solo bent is to see and hear only one vocal line at a time. But... the more they help "B" eyes search out what musical element is hindering their success, the better score readers they will become. The knee-jerk reaction is to think rhythm is the culprit, but what directors need to know is: *Confusion and hesitation about what pitch to sing is the primary cause of rhythm mistakes.* The 12 Pitches and 12 Patterns address this head on. When consistently applied in rehearsal, "A" leaders and "B" followers learn how to learn, making choral part tracks more beneficial. Process is just as important as product... and people just as important as performance.

***To learn the 12 pitches and 12 patterns more quickly – and indelibly – stand up and add the following gestures to the "1-Minute Warm-Up".***

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### **Exercise # 1**

- 1** – Hands at waist - fingers forward / thumbs back.
  - 2** – Go up on toes - cross index fingers at waistline.
  - (7)** – Go back on heels - low vertical hands push out.
  - 5** – Hands on head - fingertips touch antenna spots.
  - (5)** – Arms extend down - hands touch sides of legs.
  - 8** – Arms raised upward - vertical hands touch sky.
  - 9** – Go up on toes - cross index fingers high above.
- 

### **Exercise # 2**

- 3** – Arms turned out - hands are flat with palms up.
- 

### **Exercise # 3**

- (6)** – Turned-out hands push down - relaxing to legs.
- 

### **Exercise # 4**

- 4** – Fingertips touch upper arms - roll to horizontal.
  - 6** – Golden arches - head's center to antenna spots.
  - 7** – Quickly lift horizontal hands - snap wrists back.
-