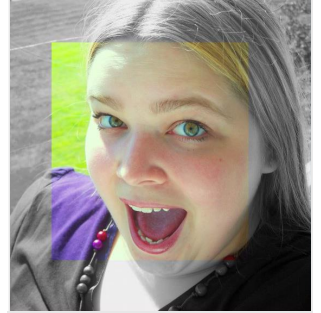


Interval Reference Songs... That You've Actually Heard Of!

I remember the exact moment in my teaching career when I realized that I was old.



This is some feat considering that *I am in my very first year of teaching at the age of 24!*

I was handing out potential pieces for my 6th Grade chorus to learn for their spring “pop” concert, and I had chosen the piece “*Go The Distance*” from the Disney favorite Hercules.

A student asked the fateful question: “**Why do we only perform old music?**”

I protested vehemently that this was not “old music”! I flipped to the front cover and proclaimed that it was from 1997. I did some quick mental math (okay, not so quick... As you know, musicians mainly count to four!) and realized that Hercules was released 16 years ago – several years before my 6th graders were even a gleam in their mama’s eye!

I frequently find that my cultural references fall flat when using them in vocal and choral demonstrations. Thus, the Julia Child impression (which I had thought so nicely encapsulated the open tone I aim for) has had to be replaced by encouraging my students to “sing like a British owl”. I’m not sure why it works, but for young singers, it is much less of a reach than referencing a television cook who was off the air even before I was born.

The fact is that this generation is living in an entirely new

culture, and in order to keep up with this changing culture, we must meet the students where they are and learn their ways.

Pop Culture References

There are few examples of stale cultural references as prevalent and far-reaching as the old chestnuts we voice teachers use to teach **intervals**.

Naturally some melodies are timeless enough that they will likely work forever (“*Here Comes The Bride*”, for instance) but some are so dated that they are not only irrelevant to this generation, but even to the two or three generations before the current one!

So while “*Love Story*” is one of the most famous examples for that dastardly Minor 6th interval, you would be hard pressed to find a student today who has *heard* this song, much less one who can hum it!

I asked three students today about “*Love Story*” and they all referenced the *Taylor Swift* song...

As it turns out, we need some new references to give our students – and maybe for ourselves too!

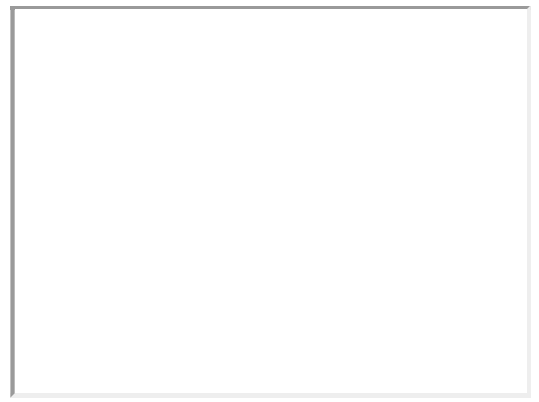
Here’s a suggested list of some new, modern interval reference songs you can use:

Minor 2nd

Ascending, Descending:

“She Will Be Loved” – Maroon 5

*“I don’t mind spending **every** day”*



Major 2nd

Ascending:

“Today was a Fairytale” – Taylor Swift

*“**Time slows** down”*



Descending:

“Friday” by Rebecca Black

Any one of the bazillion times she sings the word “Friday” in the chorus.



Minor 3rd

Ascending, Descending:

Brahms' Lullaby

"Lullaby and good night"



Ascending:

Katniss and Rue's whistle signal in "The Hunger Games"

First two notes of four note pattern

(**G** – **Bb** – A – D)



Descending, Ascending:

"Poker Face" – Lady Gaga

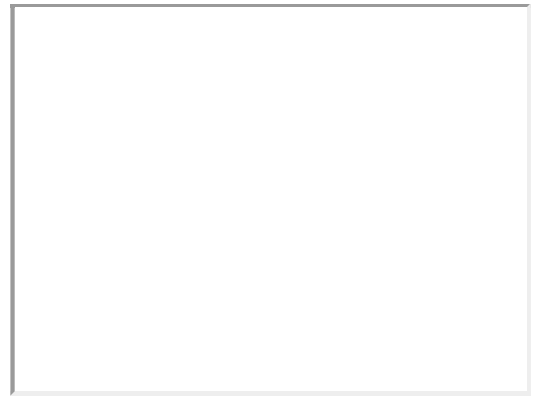
*"Can't read my, can't read **my poker face**"*



Ascending, Descending:

“Firework” – Katy Perry

“**Do you ever** feel like a plastic bag?”



Major 3rd

Ascending:

“Some Nights” – fun

“Some nights **I stay** up” (also in the “Whoa – oh”)



Ascending:

“Today Was A Fairytale” – Taylor Swift

“**Today** was a fairy tale”

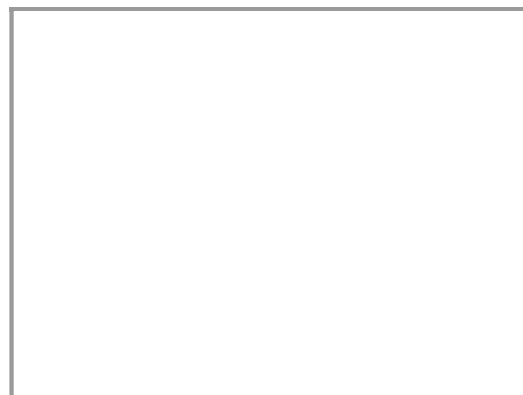


Perfect 4th

Ascending:

“Rolling in the Deep” – Adele

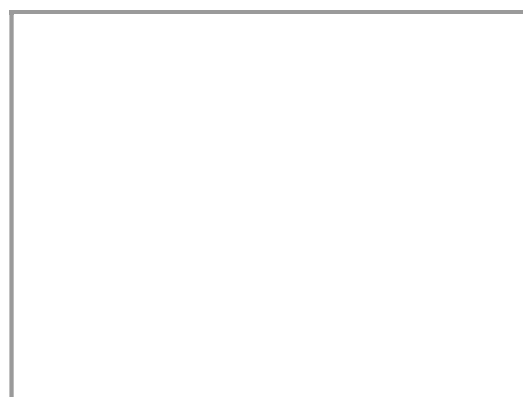
*“I could have had **it all**”*



Ascending:

Bridal March

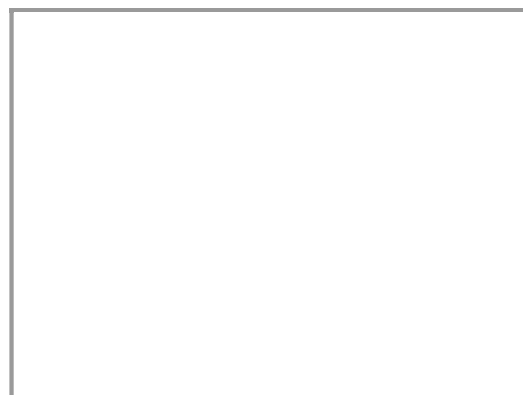
*“**Here comes the bride**”*



Ascending:

Amazing Grace

*“**Amazing grace**”*



Tritone

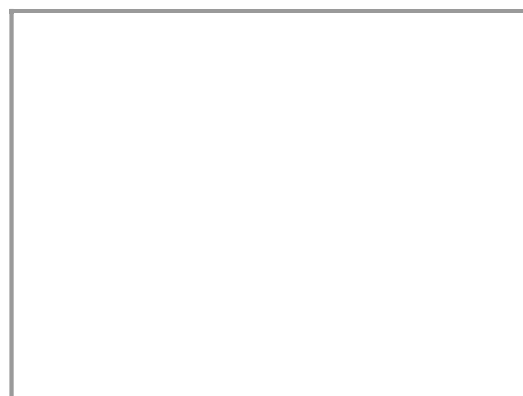
Ascending:

The Simpson's Theme
"The Simpsons"



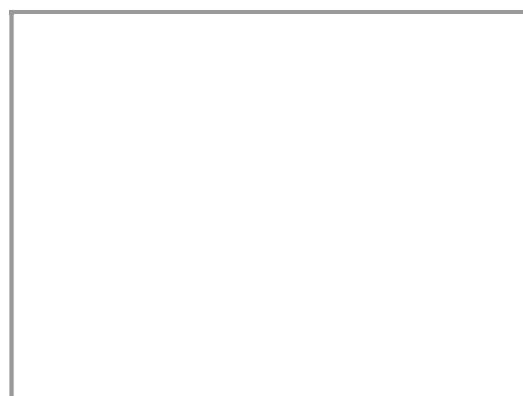
Ascending:

"Cool" – Gwen Stefani
"It's hard to remember how..."



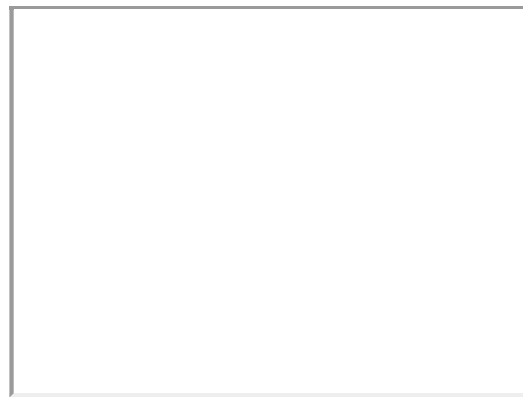
Ascending, Descending:

"Purple Haze" – Jimi Hendrix
Opening guitar riff



Ascending, Descending:

“YYZ” – Rush
Opening guitar riff



Perfect 5th

Ascending:

Star Wars Theme
Opening melody, first two notes



Ascending:

“Bad Romance” – Lady Gaga
“*Ra ra ro ma ma*”



Ascending:

A-B-C-D / Twinkle Twinkle / Baa Baa Black
Sheep

*“A **B C D E F G**”*



Minor 6th

Ascending:

“Johanna” – from Sweeney Todd

*“**I feel** you Johanna”*



Ascending:

“We Are Young” by fun

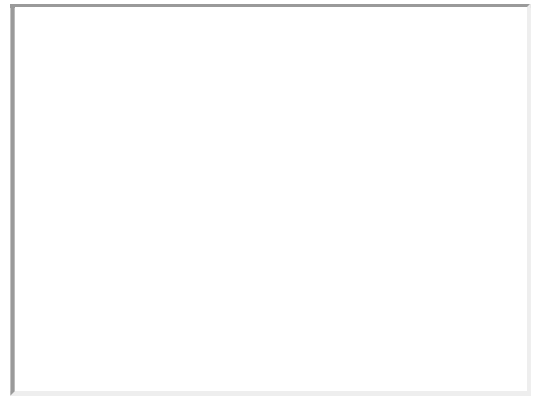
*“So lets set the world on **fire**”*



Ascending:

“Yeah” – Usher

In repetitive synthesizer tune, it is the second wide interval. It goes perfect 5th, then minor 6th.



Major 6th

Ascending:

“Call Me Maybe” – Carly Rae Jepsen

*“Hey I just met you and this **is crazy**”*



Descending:

“Man in the Mirror” – Michael Jackson

*“**I’m starting with the man in the mirror**”*



Minor 7th

Ascending:

This may seem like a cop out, but your students may simply have to learn “**Somewhere**” from **Westside Story**...! It is the most modern prominent example of the minor 7th that I have been able to find in my travels.

*“**There’s a place for us**”*

Ascending:

*“**Away in a Manger**”*

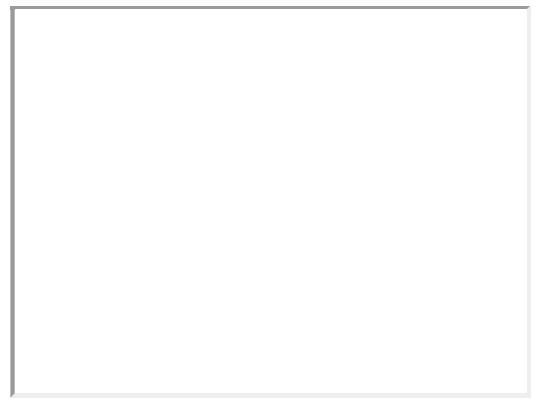
*“**The little lord Jesus asleep on the hay**”*

Major 7th

Ascending:

“Don’t Know Why” – Norah Jones

“I waited ’till I saw the sun”



Ascending:

“Pure Imagination” from Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory

*“Come with me and you’ll be in **a world** of pure imagination.”*

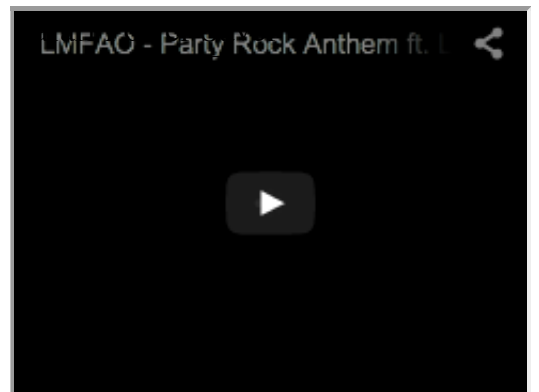


Octave

Ascending:

Party Rock Anthem – LMFAO

*“Party rock is in **the house** tonight”*



Of course this list is by no means complete, but hopefully a few of these will come in handy for you – or inspire you to start

collecting your own set of reference songs!

We'd love to hear about your own reference songs – please share them in the comments section below.