length:	1	1/2	1/4	1/8	1/16
note:	𝅝	𝅗𝅥	♩	♪	𝅘𝅥𝅯
relative length:	whole	half	quarter	eighth	sixteenth

For any shape, the same system of **stems** (short vertical lines), **color** [white (open) or **black** (filled) head], and **flags** (hanging from the stem at the end opposite the head) is used to denote relative lengths.

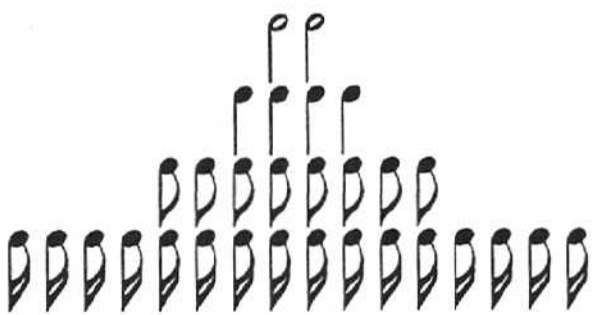
A whole note 𝅝 is equal in length to

Two halves or

Four quarters or

Eight eighths or

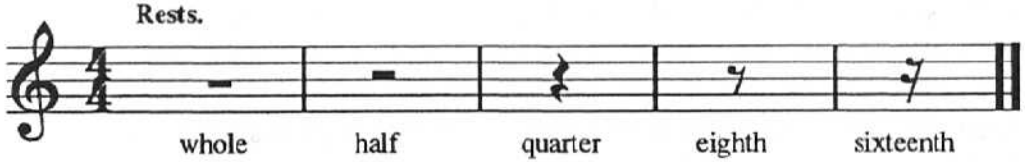
Sixteen sixteenths



The duration of a note (in time) of a given relative length may vary from one piece to another, or even from one performance of the same piece to another, but the durations for the various relative lengths are always proportional as shown above.

8. **Rests** denote silence. **Whole, half, quarter, eighth,** and **sixteenth** rests have the same lengths as the corresponding notes. This figure shows the values of rests and their positions on the staff.

Rests.



whole half quarter eighth sixteenth

9. A **dot** placed immediately to the right of a rest or the head of a note increases its length by half, so that a **dotted** note or rest is 1-1/2 times as long as it would have been without the dot.

A dotted whole note 𝅝 . is equal to 𝅝 𝅗𝅥 or 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 or ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

A dotted half note 𝅗𝅥 . is equal to 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 or 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 or ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

A dotted quarter note ♩ . is equal to ♩ ♪ or ♪ ♪ ♪ or ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

10. A **time signature** denoting the **mode** of time precedes the first note or rest of a piece of music. One whole number is placed over another. Each change in the mode of time is indicated by a time signature at the point of change. In JOY the time signature is $\frac{2}{4}$.

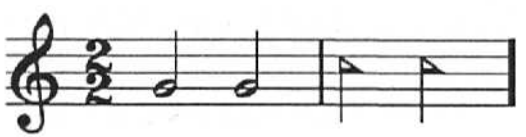
The lower number specifies a note (by length) and the upper one specifies the number of these notes that will fill a measure completely and exactly. Thus, $\frac{2}{4}$ indicates that two (2) quarter notes (1/4) will fill a measure. Any combination of notes and rests with the same total length will also fill a measure.

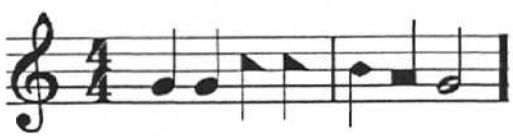
The lengths of notes and rests in beats follow from the number of beats in a measure. In previous editions of the Sacred Harp, the Rudiments state that $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ measures contain two beats, while $\frac{3}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ measures contain three. However, the upper figure of a time signature is often interpreted as the number of beats in a measure, so that $\frac{4}{4}$ has four beats per measure and $\frac{6}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ have six.

11. The modes of time fall into three types: common time, triple time, and compound time.

(a) There are three modes of common time. In each, a measure contains two or four beats. Most notes fall on even divisions of a beat, that is, on the beat, half beat, quarter beat, etc.

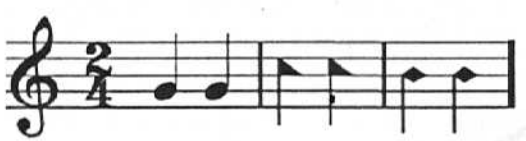
In the first mode $\frac{2}{2}$ of common time, two half notes fill a measure. A half note receives one beat.



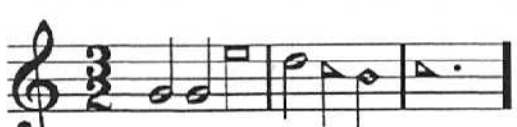


In the second mode $\frac{4}{4}$ of common time, four quarter notes fill a measure. A half note receives one beat if a measure contains two beats, and a quarter note receives one beat if a measure contains four beats.

In the third mode $\frac{2}{4}$ of common time, two quarter notes fill a measure. A quarter note receives one beat.



b) Two modes of triple time are used in the Sacred Harp. In each, a measure contains three beats. Most notes fall on even divisions of a beat.



In the first mode $\frac{3}{2}$ of triple time, three half notes fill a measure. A half note receives one beat.

In the second mode $\frac{3}{4}$ of triple time,