

Monteverdi's Gloria for 8 voices M 18

Learn what the tonic and dominant are, how they are important and why it's useful to know about them You need to refer to Activity Sheets 9, 10 and 12.

1. Remember that there is a hierarchy of notes in any key

In Activity 10 you did note counts for three tunes. These were the results:

Scarborough Fair

D	E	F	G	A	B	C
10	4	3	3	9	1	5

I will give my Love an Apple

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
12	4	7	8	15	1	5

Water of Tyne

C	D	E	F	G	A	B
13	5	9	2	10	5	1

In each case, the first note gets the highest or the second highest score. The other note to do well is the fifth – coming second twice and first once.

This isn't just chance. It's how lots of music works. Whatever the key, the first note is always the most important and the fifth is the second most important.

2. Tonic and dominant

Musicians have names for all the notes in a scale. At the moment it's useful to know the ones for the first and fifth notes – because you're going to be dealing with them quite a bit in the Gloria. The 1st note in any scale is the Tonic. The 5th note is the Dominant. Tonic just means "Note". Dominant – you know what that means.

You already know that tunes nearly always end on the tonic, and often start on it. Look again at the tunes in Activity 9. Two of them don't start on the tonic. Which note do they start on?

Take a quick look at "Patapan" in Activity 12. A is the tonic which means E is the dominant. E is the highest note in the tune and you jump up to it to it twice. These are not unusual examples, they are normal tunes. The tonic and dominant are important landmarks in any tune, and the notes gravitate around them.

3. Check you can work out the tonic and dominant

check box 1 to remind you how to count

i	D is the tonic, what's the dominant?		iv	What's the dominant of E minor?	
ii	D is the dominant, what's the tonic?		v	The dominant is C. What's the key?	
iii	What's the tonic of A minor?		vi	What's the dominant of A major?	

4. How does knowing about tonic and dominant help you to sing better?

Since these two notes are so important, your voice is likely to gravitate to them You can use them to help you navigate the notes with. "Yes, that's the dominant – let my voice sing the note it feels it wants to" "Hmm, that note's one below the dominant – think the dominant and reach down a bit further".

5. Answers to box 3: i A, ii G, iii A, iv B, v F, vi E