

1 ✧ Getting started with rhythm and meter

Pulse and beat

Most Western tonal music, which includes most classical music and virtually all American popular and folk music, maintains a sense of steady *pulse*. This is why you can clap to it, dance to it, or march to it. It is also why we can have a sense of speeding up or slowing down. Not all music works this way, but most does, and that is where our study begins. The easiest way to understand pulse is to experience it. Sing any familiar song and clap along at a steady rate. You are clapping a pulse. I say *a* pulse because actually there are many levels of pulse in most music. Try clapping a pulse that is faster or slower than the one you started with. Each represents a different level of pulse.

The *beat* is one specific level of the pulse. Usually what we feel as “the beat” falls within the range of about 60 – 180 beats per minute, roughly within the range of the human heart beat. Musicians might sometimes disagree about which level of the pulse is *the beat*, and some-times there is no one right answer.

Meter

Meter is the grouping of beats into patterns of strong and weak accents. In the analysis of meter, a dash indicates a strong beat and a curved line indicates a weak beat, like this:

— ∪ — ∪
strong weak strong weak

There are three common metric groupings:

duple meter (2 beats) — ∪

triple meter (3 beats) — ∪ ∪

quadruple meter (4 beats) — ∪ — ∪

Duple meter groups two beats together in the pattern: “accented — unaccented” or “strong — weak.” Speak this pattern and clap on the word “strong.” The song “Three Blind Mice” is in duple meter. Sing the song and clap on the accented beat.

— ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪
Three blind mice, Three blind mice, see how they run, see how they run . . . etc.

This preview contains only selected pages of each chapter.

2 ✧ Simple meter

Simple meters have beat notes that can be divided into two divisions. Here are some familiar songs in simple meter. Clap the beat, then clap the division. What other familiar songs can you name?

Jingle Bells Auld Lang Syne My Country 'Tis of Thee Yankee Doodle

Takadimi (see preface for more on the history of the system)

Takadimi is a system of syllables used for speaking rhythm. The system is beat oriented. In other words, the beat is always spoken on *ta* regardless of the note value. Remember that the beat is just one level of the pulse. The next faster level of the pulse is called the *first division* of the beat (or sometimes called simply *the division* of the beat). A note on the first division of the beat is always called *di*.

Echo-rhythm: With your study partner or instructor, speak or clap and speak back short rhythms using *ta* and *ta di* rhythms. Speak musically and expressively.

Performance tips

- *Always speak rhythm exercises expressively. Even when phrase marking or dynamics aren't given, perform the rhythm musically.*
- *Always conduct or keep the beat in a way assigned by your instructor.*

Conduct the appropriate pattern as you perform the following rhythms.

2.1

2/4

ta ta ta di ta ta di ta di ...

2.2 Some exercises will include tempo markings. Perform these exercise in the way indicated. Look up any terms you don't know in the appendix.

Moderato

ta ta ta di ta di ...

2.3 *Allegro*

2.4 This is a two part exercise. As you perform it with a partner or in class, listen for the *composite rhythm*, that is, the rhythm produced by combining the two parts.

2.5 *Andante*

2.6 The following three exercises are in triple meter.

2.7 *Flowing*



2.8 *Moderato*



2.9 The next three exercises are in quadruple meter.



2.10 *Quickly*



Other beat notes (simple meter)

Any note value can be the beat note, but the beat is always *ta* and the first division always *di*.

2.16 *Adagio*



2.17 In two-part rhythms always listen for the *composite rhythm* formed from the interaction of the two parts.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. It contains four measures: the first three measures each have three eighth notes, and the fourth measure has a half note followed by a whole rest. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a 3/8 time signature. It contains four measures: the first two measures each have three eighth notes, the third measure has six eighth notes, and the fourth measure has a whole rest followed by three eighth notes. The second system also consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. It contains four measures: the first three measures each have three eighth notes, and the fourth measure has a half note followed by a whole rest. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a 3/8 time signature. It contains four measures: the first three measures each have three eighth notes, and the fourth measure has a half note followed by a whole rest. Both systems end with a double bar line.

2.18 The note in the last measure is called a “breve” or “double whole note.” It is equal in value to two whole notes.

Allegro

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a 4/2 time signature. It contains four measures: the first measure has two quarter notes followed by a whole rest; the second measure has two quarter notes followed by a whole rest; the third measure has four quarter notes; the fourth measure has four quarter notes. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a 4/2 time signature. It contains four measures: the first measure has a whole rest followed by two quarter notes; the second measure has a whole rest followed by two quarter notes; the third measure has two quarter notes followed by two quarter notes; the fourth measure has two quarter notes followed by two quarter notes. The second system consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a 4/2 time signature. It contains four measures: the first three measures each have four quarter notes, and the fourth measure has a half note followed by a whole rest. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a 4/2 time signature. It contains four measures: the first three measures each have two quarter notes followed by two quarter notes, and the fourth measure has a half note followed by a whole rest. Both systems end with a double bar line.

2.19 *Andante*

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). It contains four measures: the first measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note; the second measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note; the third measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note; the fourth measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a common time signature (C). It contains four measures: the first measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note; the second measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note; the third measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note; the fourth measure has a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note followed by a quarter note. Both systems end with a double bar line.

The next three exercises are “speak and clap” exercises where one performer performs both parts. Speak one part, usually the upper line, and clap or tap the other. Practice till you can perform them comfortably. “Speak and claps” are always written in this way with one meter signature. Compare the notation to the duet above. This will help you tell them apart.

2.25

Musical notation for exercise 2.25 in 2/4 time. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The piece is written in a style where the upper line represents the spoken part and the lower line represents the clapped part. The notation includes eighth and quarter notes, rests, and a double bar line at the end.

2.26

Musical notation for exercise 2.26 in 4/4 time. The notation consists of two staves with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The piece is written in a style where the upper line represents the spoken part and the lower line represents the clapped part. The notation includes quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, rests, and a double bar line at the end.

3 ✧ Pick-up notes

Pick-up notes occur when the phrase begins on a beat other than the strong first beat of the measure. The strong beat or down beat is sometimes called the *crusis*. Pick-up notes or upbeats are then called the *anacrusis*. (*Ana-* is a prefix meaning up or back.) Often subsequent phrases or sub-phrases will also begin on an anacrusis. Be aware of this tendency in the following exercises. Sometimes it is made clear with phrase markings or with rests, but sometimes it is not.

3.1

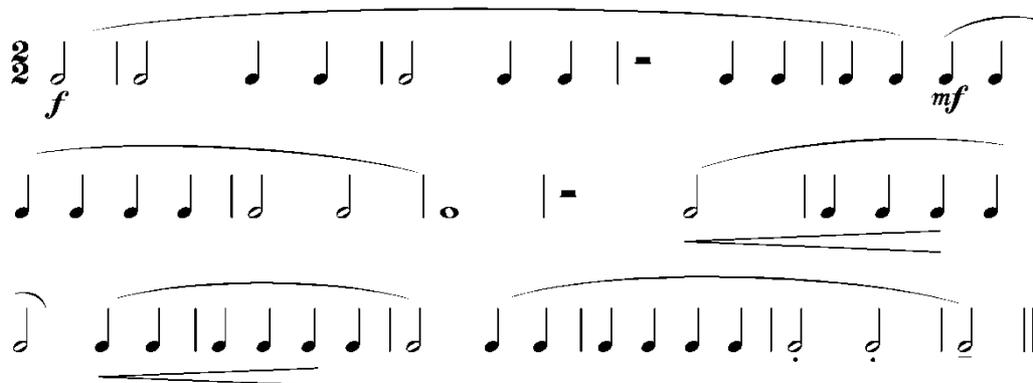


After you have learned the exercise and are comfortable beginning on the up-beat, clap or speak one or more of the following ostinatos to accompany the exercise. Start the ostinato, then begin the exercise on the correct beat. (An ostinato is a repeated pattern.)



The following exercise includes phrase marking or slurs. Sometimes slurs show actual phrases, but often they simply show notes that should be thought of and performed connected as a group.

3.2 *Moderato*



3.3 *Allegro*

3.4 Set the following texts to rhythm in simple meter. Use only the beat and first division. Include measure lines and a meter signature. Be sure to match the accents in the text with the accents in the meter.

- A. “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” (*American proverb*)
- B. “Without a shepherd, sheep are not a flock.” (*Russian proverb*)
- C. “You can’t make an omelet without breaking eggs.” (*French proverb*)
- D. “Whoever really loves you will make you cry.” (*Spanish proverb*)

3.5 *Well marked*

4 ✧ Second division of the beat

The first division of the beat can be divided again by still shorter pulses. This next level is called the *second division* (or *subdivision*) of the beat. Sing a familiar melody in simple meter. Clap on the beat, then the division, then the second division. Have parts of the class clap each level simultaneously. (Dividing the second division produces the *third division*, and so on.)

Here are the syllables for the beat, first, and second division. Three possible beat notes are shown. Others are possible.

			
Beat	ta	ta	ta
			
First div.	ta di	ta di	ta di
			
Second div.	ta ka di mi	ta ka di mi	ta ka di mi

There are six new patterns created using the second division (shown below with the quarter note as the beat). Think carefully about how each is constructed and how it relates to the basic “ta-ka-di-mi” pattern. Think too how each would be written with other beat notes.

					
ta ka di mi	ta di mi	ta ka di	ta mi	ta ka	ta ka mi

Echo-rhythm: With your study partner or instructor, speak or clap and speak back on syllables examples using the beat, division, and second division patterns.

The following six exercises introduce the second division patterns (quarter note = beat) in context. Practice these exercises at a variety of tempi and dynamic levels. Conduct, clap the beat, or step to the beat while practicing.

5 ✧ Dots and ties

Dots and ties are used in similar ways to extend the duration of a single note value. A dot adds half the value of the non-dotted note. A tie adds the values of the tied notes together as though they were written as one single note. Sometimes either a tie or a dot could be used to create the same duration. The choice of which is best is based on the musical context or the standards of notation.

We have already encountered the dot within the beat (e.g. the *ta – mi* pattern). New to this chapter are dotted or tied beat notes that extend the note beyond the next beat. It is important to “feel” or be aware of the beat covered by the dot or tie. As you practice, first speak the rhythm without the dot. Then replace the dot, still imagining where the missing syllable (in parentheses) should sound. Your teacher may ask you to make a light accent with your voice, or clap on the beat to show exactly where the beat occurs.

5.1

Common time (C) notation. The first line shows a sequence of notes with syllables: ta ta ta di ta ta (ta) di ta di ta ... The second line continues the sequence with a double bar line at the end.

5.2

2/4 time notation. The notation consists of three lines of music, each ending with a double bar line.

5.3 Repeat several times, changing the improvisation each time.

2/4 time notation. The notation shows a sequence of notes with a double bar line at the end.

5.20 Canon. Decide before you begin how many times you will repeat the exercise. Once your performance is secure, you might try adding an ostinato.

5.21 *Patience*, by Ariel d'Schelle

Blos - som wait-ed - and wait-ed and watched as one by one they flut - tered
down to ga - ther seed. She stared and glared then twitched just a bit.
" Oh," she thought "but for a pane of glass, to - day would be the day."
She turned her head and care - ful - ly licked her paw, then closed her pale green
eyes. "Sweet kit - ty, Blos - som."

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6 ✧ Compound meter

Up to this point we have worked only with simple meters. Simple meters have beat notes that can be divided into two parts (*ta-di*) and have beat notes that are *not* dotted.

Compound meters have beat notes that divide into three parts at the first division. The beat notes in compound meter must therefore be dotted. (Review Chapter 1 for more on the theory of compound meter and meter signatures.)

First division of the beat

Just as in simple meter, the beat in compound meter is always on *ta*. But since we now have *three* equal divisions of the beat, we need new syllables. For this we use *ta-ki-da*.

There are only a few patterns we can make with *ta*, *ki*, and *da*. They are shown below with the dotted quarter as the beat. Write the patterns for the other beat notes. Be sure your notes are properly aligned.

 =beat	 = beat	 =beat	 =beat
ta	ta	ta	ta
ta ki da	 ta ki da	ta ki da	ta ki da
ta da	 ta da	ta da	ta da
ta ki	 ta ki	ta ki	ta ki

Practice echo-rhythms with compound beats and first divisions before moving on to notation. Speak or clap short patterns and have a partner respond on syllables.

6.9

6.10 *Cantabile*

Second Division of the Beat

The compound beat can also be divided a second time.

Beat			
First div.			
Second div.			

Dividing the compound beat a second time allows many more rhythmic possibilities. Following are six of the most common rhythmic patterns used in compound meter (shown with the dotted quarter note as the beat). Repeat each pattern to help you memorize it. Improvise short rhythms, incorporating these patterns gradually into ones you already know.



ta ki di da



ta di da



ta di da ma



ta ki da ma



ta ki di da ma



ta va ki di da

Practice echo-rhythms with these patterns before moving on.

6.11 Write each rhythm above the syllables. Line up each note with the second division of the beat (*ta-va-ki-di-da-ma*) at the top of the column. The first one is done for you.

<p>♩. = beat</p>   <p>ta ki di da</p> <p>ta di da</p> <p>ta di da ma</p>	<p>♩. = beat</p>  <p>ta ki di da</p> <p>ta di da</p> <p>ta di da ma</p>	<p>♩. = beat</p>  <p>ta ki di da</p> <p>ta di da</p> <p>ta di da ma</p>
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6.12 Write a second part to accompany the given rhythm. Include some second division patterns. Make sure the parts align properly. Perform your duet with a partner.

6.13 *Animato e con brio*

6.14 *Allegro ma non troppo*

6.15 *Con mosso*