

Dotted values present a problem where time signatures are concerned. For example, if there are two beats per measure, and the beat note is  $\text{♩}$ , what would the time signature be?  $\frac{2}{4}$ ?  $\frac{2}{8}$ ?  $\frac{2}{16}$ ? There is no easy solution, and the method that survives today is the source of much confusion concerning compound beat. Simply stated, a compound time signature informs the musician of the *number of divisions* of the beat contained in a measure and what the *division duration* is. This means that the top number of a compound time signature will be 6, 9, or 12 because two beats times three divisions equals six, three beats times three divisions equals nine, and four beats times three divisions equals twelve. As a result, you must *divide the top number of a compound time signature by three* to find out how many beats will occur in each measure. Some examples are given in the following table.

Time signature	Beats per measure	Beat note	Division of the beat
$\frac{6}{8}$	2	$\text{♩}$	$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$
$\frac{6}{4}$	2	$\text{♩}$	$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$
$\frac{9}{16}$	3	$\text{♩}$	$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$
$\frac{9}{8}$	3	$\text{♩}$	$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$
$\frac{12}{8}$	4	$\text{♩}$	$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$
$\frac{12}{4}$	4	$\text{♩}$	$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$

Example 2-2 illustrates some familiar tunes that use compound beat. As before, the choice of the actual beat note is an arbitrary one.

### Example 2-2

“Take Me Out to the Ball Game”



“Down in the Valley”







“Pop Goes the Weasel”



You can see from this discussion that compound time signatures do *not* follow the rule, so often learned by the student musician, that “the top number tells how many beats are in a measure, and the bottom number tells what note gets the beat.” Of course, there are some pieces in  $\frac{6}{8}$ , for example, that really do have six beats to the measure, but such a piece is not

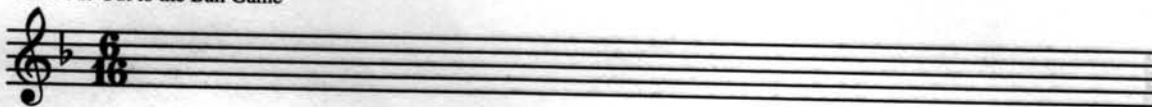
EXERCISE 2-3

A. Fill in the blanks.

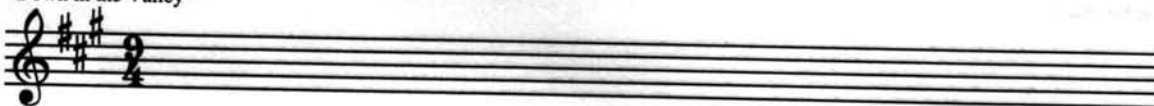
	<i>Beat and Meter Type</i>	<i>Beat Note</i>	<i>Division of the Beat</i>	<i>Time Signature</i>
1.	Compound triple			
2.				6 16 12
3.				
4.	Compound duple			
5.				9

B. Renotate the excerpts from textbook Example 2-2 using the specified time signatures.

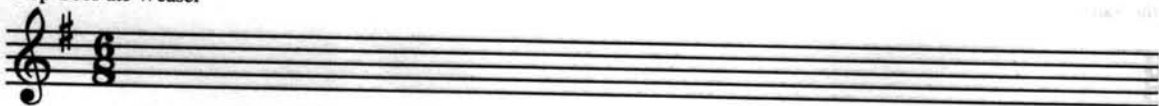
"Take Me Out to the Ball Game"



"Down in the Valley"








"Pop Goes the Weasel"


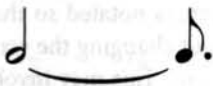



**EXERCISE 2-4**

A. Fill in the blanks.

	<i>Beat and Meter Type</i>	<i>Beat Note</i>	<i>Division of the Beat</i>	<i>Time Signature</i>
1.	Compound quadruple			
2.	Simple triple			
3.				4
4.				6
5.				$\frac{3}{4}$
6.				9



B. Each measure below is incomplete. Add one or more rests to the end of each to complete the measure.


1.  $\frac{6}{4}$   | 7.  $\frac{3}{4}$   |

2.  $C$   | 8.  $\frac{9}{4}$   |

3.  $\frac{2}{16}$   | 9.  $\frac{3}{2}$   |

4.  $\frac{12}{16}$   | 10.  $\frac{12}{8}$   |

5.  $\frac{3}{8}$   | 11.  $\frac{4}{8}$   |

6.  $\frac{9}{8}$   | 12.  $\frac{6}{4}$   |