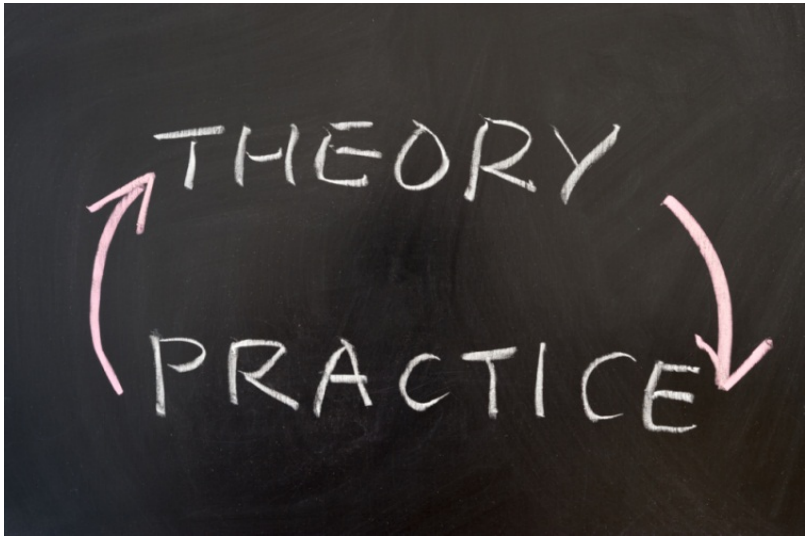


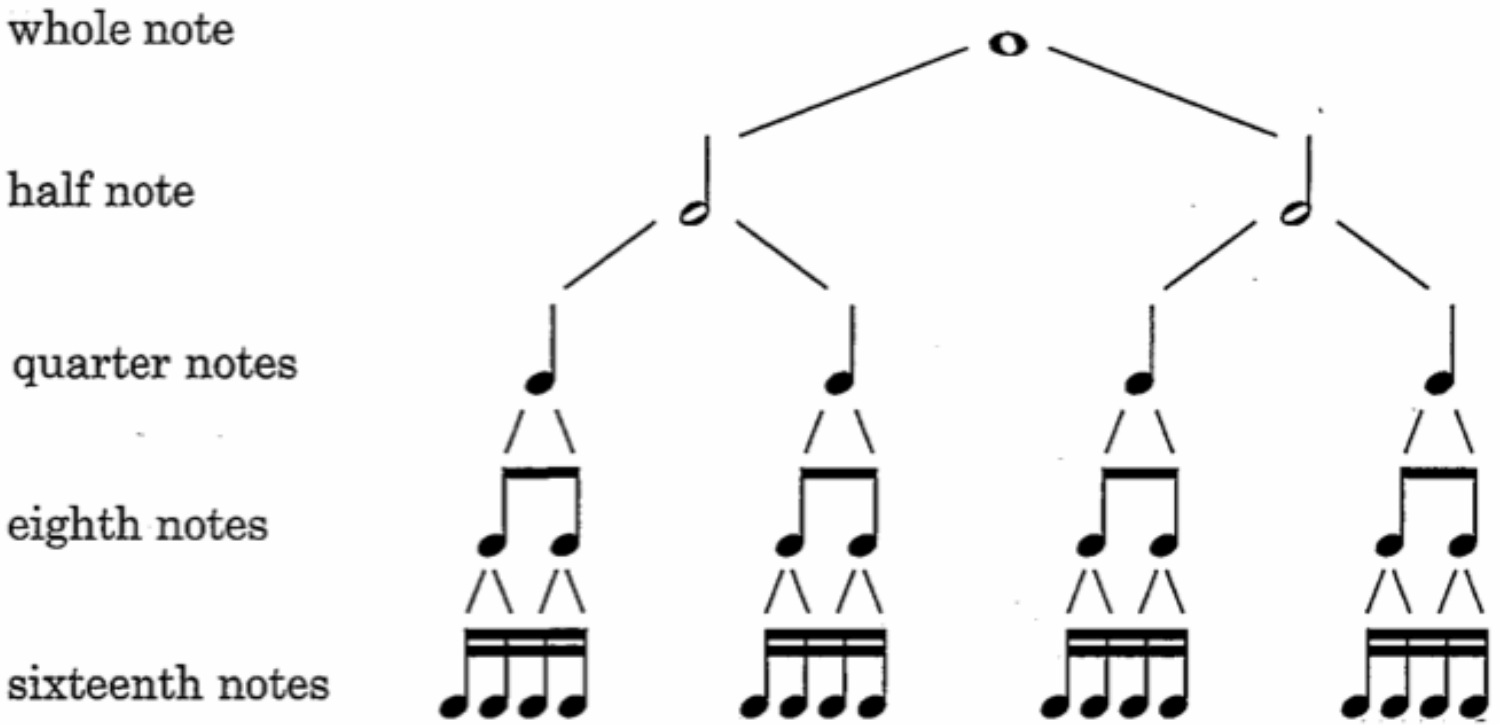
RHYTHM / DURATION

25 Sept 2017

R-H-Y-T-H-M

- Rhythm is the general term used to refer to the time aspect of music, as contrasted with the pitch aspect.
- Rhythm depends on duration: how long each note or rest is

Rhythmic Durations



Chapter Two
Elements of Rhythm

Rhythm

This chapter concerns the time aspect of music—how sounds are notated so that they will occur at a predictable moment and in a predetermined pattern. **Rhythm** is a general term used to refer to the time aspect of music, as contrasted with the pitch aspect.

Durational Symbols

Durations are notated by using symbols that are organized so that each symbol is twice the duration of the next shorter symbol and half the duration of the next longer symbol. The following table lists a number of these symbols.

Value	Note	Rest
Breve		
Whole		
Half		
Quarter		
Eighth		
Sixteenth		

The same series could be continued to thirty-seconds, sixty-fourths, and so on. Durations other than these must be indicated through the use of ties, dots, or other symbols. A **tie** is a curved line that connects two notes of the same pitch, creating a new duration that is equal to their sum. A **dot** following a symbol always adds to the duration one-half the value of the note, rest, or dot that precedes it, for example and . When notated on the staff, a dot is never placed on a staff line. If the notehead itself is on a staff line, the dot is put to the right of the note but in the space *above* it.

Beat and Tempo

The **beat** is the basic pulse of a musical passage. To determine the beat of a passage you are listening to, tap your foot to the music, or try to imagine the way a conductor would conduct the passage—the conductor's arm movement. The resulting steady pulse is called the beat, and the rate at which the beats occur is called the **tempo.**

Find the beat

- Duration is measured in number of beats
  - Tempo: how fast the beat is
- Practice marching quarter notes
- Beats organized into meters to simplify
  - 4/4 = Count 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
- Every beat has a preparation!
  - Your foot must go up to come down again

A composer commonly specifies the tempo of a passage by one of two methods—sometimes by both. The first method uses words, often in Italian, to describe the tempo—words such as adagio, moderato, and allegro.

The second method is more exact because it shows precisely how many beats are to occur in the space of one minute. For example, if the desired tempo would result in 72 quarter notes in one minute, the tempo indication would be ♩ = 72 or M.M. ♩ = 72. The M.M. stands for Maelzel's metronome, after Johann Maelzel, who widely promoted the device during the early nineteenth century.

Meter

Beats tend to be grouped into patterns that are consistent throughout a passage; the pattern of beats is called the **meter.** Groups of two, three, and four beats are the most common, although other meters occur. Incidentally, a group of four beats could often also be interpreted as two groups of two beats each and vice versa. In any case, the groups of beats are called **measures** (abbreviated m. or mm.), and in notation the end of a measure is always indicated by a vertical line through the staff called a **bar line.** (A bar line also cancels any accidentals that appeared in the measure.) The words **duple, triple,** and **quadruple** are used to refer to the number of beats in each measure, as in **duple meter, triple meter,** and **quadruple meter.** These terms are summarized in the following table, along with the pattern of stresses usually found in each meter (referred to as **metric accent**).

Grouping	Meter type	Metric accent pattern
Two-beat measure	Duple	Strong-weak
Three-beat measure	Triple	Strong-weak-weak
Four-beat measure	Quadruple	Strong-weak-less strong-weak

As you might imagine, most marches are in duple meter because people have two feet, whereas contemporary popular music tends to be in duple or quadruple meter. Waltzes are always in triple meter, as are a number of traditional songs, such as "Amazing Grace" and "Scarborough Fair."

The meter of many passages is clear and easily identified, but in other cases the meter might be ambiguous. For example, sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" quite slowly while you tap you foot or conduct, then decide on the meter type. Now sing it again, but very fast. The first time you probably felt the meter was triple, but at a faster tempo you should have identified the meter as duple (or quadruple). Between those extreme tempos are more moderate tempos, which two listeners might interpret in different ways—one hearing a faster triple meter, the other a slower duple meter. Both listeners would be correct because identifying meter in a case such as this is a matter of interpretation rather than of right and wrong.

We use the term **hypermeter** to refer to a regular grouping of measures that is analogous to meter. Sing through "Amazing Grace," which is in triple meter, and notice how the measures form groups of four, creating a quadruple hypermeter.

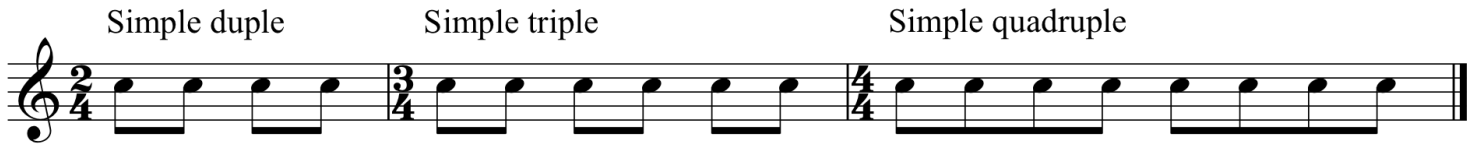
Subdivide!

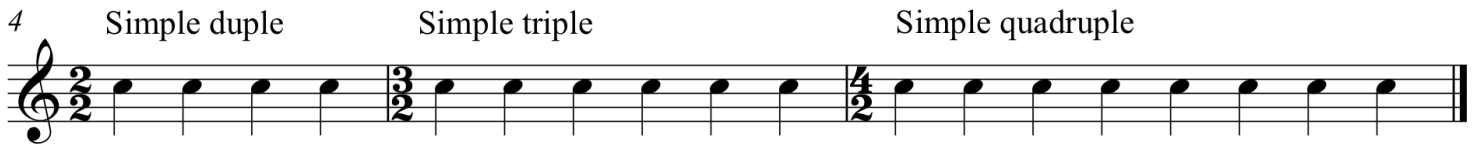
– Tap eighth notes in different tempi
  - You must go up to come down and vice versa
  - Count 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +
  - Numbers land ON the beat, ANDs land off the beat
  - Perform the prep and you'll be in time.

Subdivide!

– Sixteenth notes are counted **1** E + A **2** E + A…

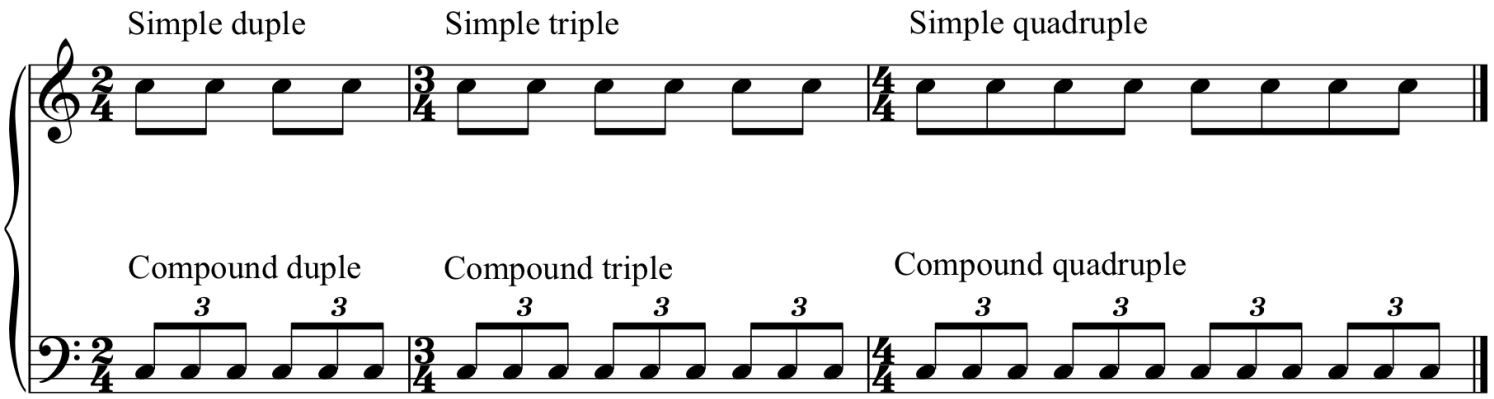
Simple subdivision of the beat (split in 2)

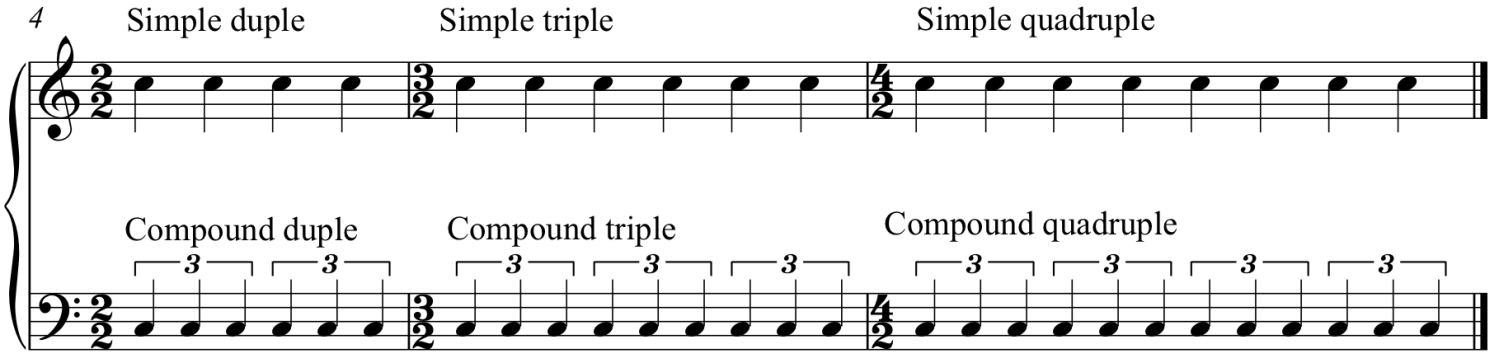




Duple = 2 big beats per measure
Triple = 3 big beats per measure
Quadruple = 4 big beats per measure

Compound subdivision of the beat (split in 3)





Dotted Rhythms

- 1.5x duration of original note
  - Dotted whole = 4 + (½ of 4 = 2) = 6
  - Dotted half = 2 + (½ of 2 = 1) = 3
  - Dotted quarter = 1 + (½ of 1 = ½) = 1.5
    - quarter + eighth or 3 eighth notes total
  - Dotted eighth = ½ + (½ of ½ = ¼) = ¾
    - eighth + sixteenth or 3 sixteenth notes total

TERMS FOR REVIEW

- Rhythm
- Tie
- Dot
- Beat
- Tempo
- Meter
- Measures
- Bar line
- Duple / Triple / Quadruple (meter)
- Metric accent (strong vs. weak beats)
- Hypermeter (feeling a bigger beat despite subdivision)