UNIT TWO - RHYTHMIC NOTATION

When you listen to music you're often aware of a strong rhythmic feel that we call the beat of the music. Rhythmic notation is a code that lets us write down the beat and all the little tricks that you can do with that beat.

One of the most important concepts in music is the time signature/meter.

Time Signature:

It's made up of two numbers, like this: $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$. The top number tells us how many beats there are in every bar of music. (You should remember what a bar is from unit 1). For example, almost all rock music has four beats in a bar. Think of a rock song and count along with it and you'll find that it's very natural to count 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4 as the song plays. And so most rock songs have a time signature where the top number would be a "4".

Now think of a waltz - OOM pah pah OOM pah pah, right? It feels very natural to count along to a waltz like this: ONE-two-three ONE-two-three. So the time signature for a waltz would have a "3" on top.

The bottom note tells you what kind of note gets counted as a beat. This may sound confusing now, but in another page or two it will make perfect sense.

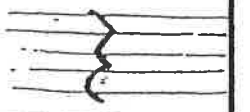
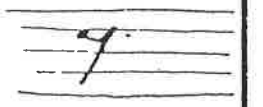
There are different kinds of notes to represent different speeds of rhythms. Think of a drummer in a rock band. The bass drum will often be doing a kind of BOOOM BOOOM thing. Really chunky, you know? But the snare will often be going a little faster: "Chacka - a-chack. Chacka - a-chak." (This is either a snare drum or an angry duck). Meantime, the cymbals are going twice as quickly again. TssTssTssTssTssTssTss. And for every BOOM on the bass drum there might be eight strokes on the cymbal, right? Rhythmic notation is drawn (notated) in such a way that you can tell quickly how a note is supposed to go, so if a drummer looked at a piece of music, he'd know exactly how many TssTss had to go with every BOOOM. All clear?

On the next page there is a chart with the five most important different kinds of rhythmic notes. Notice how they are all based on the simple mathematical procedure of dividing or multiplying by two.

Types of Notes:

Let's say that a whole note is worth four beats. This is a very wise thing to say since, in fact, it IS worth four beats. Half of that whole note will only be worth two beats and that note is called a half note, since it is half of a whole note. If you divide the whole note in fours, then each note will be a quarter of the whole note. And bless my buttons if that note ain't called the quarter note. If a whole note is worth four beats, then a quarter note will be worth one. Think of dividing up a pie!

Have a look at the chart on the next page. If it isn't making sense, don't hesitate to ask a teacher for help right away. In the past, some people have waited until a week before the exam to confess that they never quite got the idea right. Ask us now if there's trouble. We like to answer questions - it makes us feel needed, however illusory that may be!

Symbol	Name	# of Beats	Rests
𝅝 1-2-3-4	Whole Note	4 beats	 whole note rest
𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥 1-2 3-4	Half Note	2 beats	
♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ 1 2 3 4	Quarter Note	1 beat	
♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ + 2 + 3 + 4 +	Eighth Note (♪ on its own)	½ a beat	
𝅘𝅥𝅯 1e+a 2e+a 3e+a 4e+a	Sixteenth Note (𝅘𝅥𝅯 on its own)	¼ of a beat	

You may be asking yourself, "Rests? What are these rests?" Or you may be asking yourself, "Isn't it Christmas YET?" Or how about, "Is that kid staring at me because my hair is as awful as I think it is?" The answers to the last two questions are NO and YES. The answer to the first question is as follows

Rests:

Rests are the symbols that let you know when there is a pause or a silence in one of the parts in the music. If all the instruments played all the time, it would be pretty thick and sludgy, not to mention incredibly boring. So the rests tell you when you are taking a rest and the way the rest is drawn tells you exactly how many beats that rest is lasting.

Okay, flake off and answer the first two questions on the activity sheets. Me, I'm off to get a Minute Maid Lemon Lime.

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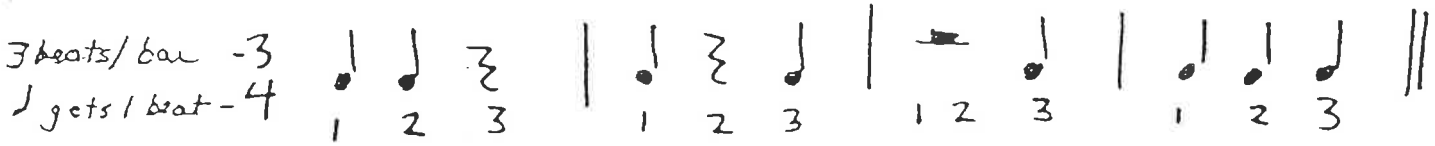
Yum, yum. Dee-licious. Now then, it's time to go back to that time signature business.

Remember how the top number of $\frac{4}{4}$ told us that there were four beats in a bar. The bottom number tells us what kind of note gets one beat. A "4" means a quarter note, so a quarter note gets one beat. If the time signature said $\frac{6}{8}$ it would mean that there are six beats in a bar and that an eighth note counts for one beat. "My Bonnie Lice Soda Devotion" is an example of a piece in $\frac{6}{8}$. Hum it and count the beats. See how it works? Time for question 3 on the activity sheets. This time I'm having a Pepsi Free.

Rests: **********

Let's review the whole fascinating area of rests. (To the drip in the third row who muttered, "Let's not," may I remind you that we have your fingerprints in the office and the secret police should be visiting your family very soon).

Rests kinda sorta take the place of regular notes. Like this:



You'd never have a half note rest replacing a quarter note - the rest you use has to last for the same number of beats as the note that would ordinarily be there. Isn't that special?

Okay, now do question 4 on the activity sheets, lickety split. Or your name will be doodley-squat.

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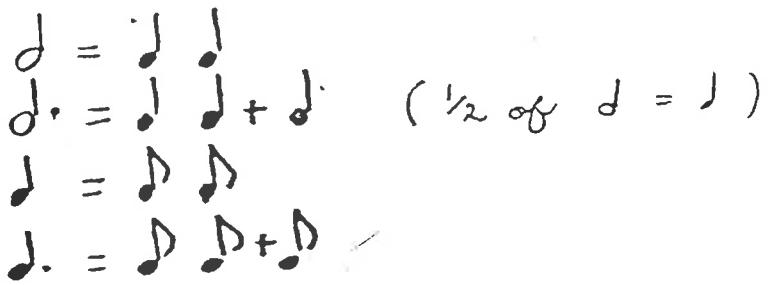
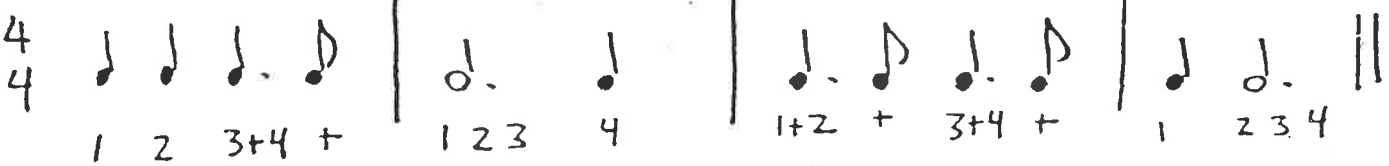
Dots:

Now then, welcome to the wonderful world of DOTS. Dots operate on the same simple mathematical formula as the other notes - you are always dividing or multiplying by two - as in, one half of a whole note is a half note.

Here's how dots work. When you put a dot beside a note, that smart little dot will increase the value of the note by one half. Since a whole note is worth four beats, putting a dote beside it would make it six beats because half of four is two and four plus two equals six. Have a look at the glop I've written below, then do the next activity question. Remember, ask a teacher if you're confused.





note how we use a "+" sign to show how there is a hidden ♪ note in the dotted quarter note. (♩. = 1+ or 2+ etc.)

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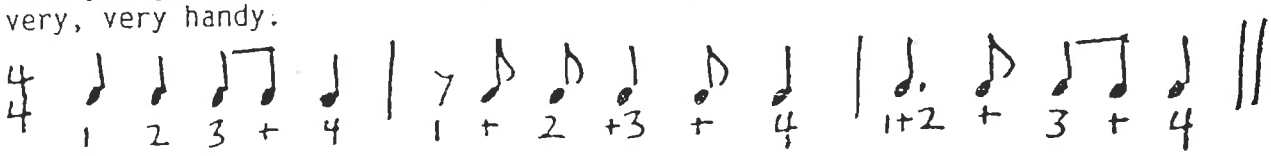
There's just one more thing you need to deal with before you are a sure nuff ex-pert on rhythm

Counting:

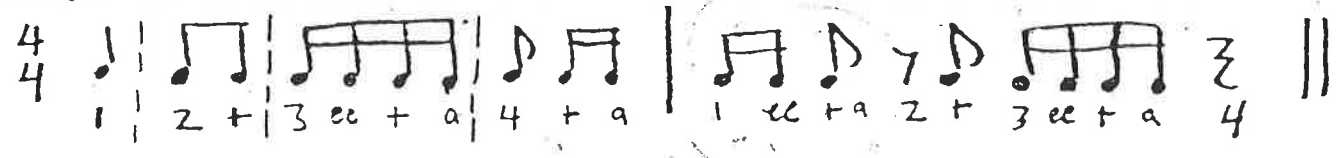
Remember when we were working with the dots in the previous section we used a little + sign to fill in the counting under the eighth notes. Well, when you get lots of those eighth notes together that little sign comes in very, very handy.



We pronounce the + sign as "and". Recite the notes I wrote above with the "and's and you'll see how nicely it works out. One full quarter note is counted as 1:

♩ - but it really receives one full beat (1+)

Anyway, THE "and's" work very well for eighth notes. When you have sixteenth notes, then you need something extra fancy. We do it the following way: one-ee-and-a-two-ee-and-a and on and on until your face turns purple and you fall over backward.



These two examples are vitally important. Look at them closely and if there's anything you don't understand, get help now! We're willing to help you. We're wanting to help you. We're waiting to help you.

Right. Finish the activity sheets (#5-8) and then you'll be ready for the exam. Once again, don't be afraid to ask questions. (Just as long as they aren't questions like, "Where do babies come from," because I'm not too sure either.

Unit 2 = ____/30

TO PASS THIS UNIT YOU MUST:

1. (a) Hand in Unit 2 - Activity Sheets
   (b) Perform for teacher rhythmic duet with a friend. (#8)

2. Write, with over 70%, Unit 2 Test

UNIT-TWO - ACTIVITY SHEETS

~~50~~ = ~~30~~

(1) Identify the kind of notes in the following examples and tell how many beats the notes **would** make if a quarter note got one beat. The first is done for you.

a)  2 eighth notes - one beat

b)  _____

c)  _____

d)  _____

e)  _____

f)  _____

g)  _____

h)  _____

(2) Fill in the blanks so that the two sides of the equation match. The first is done for you.

a)  = 3 

b)  = _____ 

c)  = _____ 

d)  = _____ 

e)  = _____ 

f)  = _____

g)  = _____ 

h)  = _____ 

i)  = _____

j)  = _____ 

(3) What do each of the **numbers** in the following time signatures mean?
What do each of the **numbers** in the following time signatures mean?

a) $\frac{3}{4}$

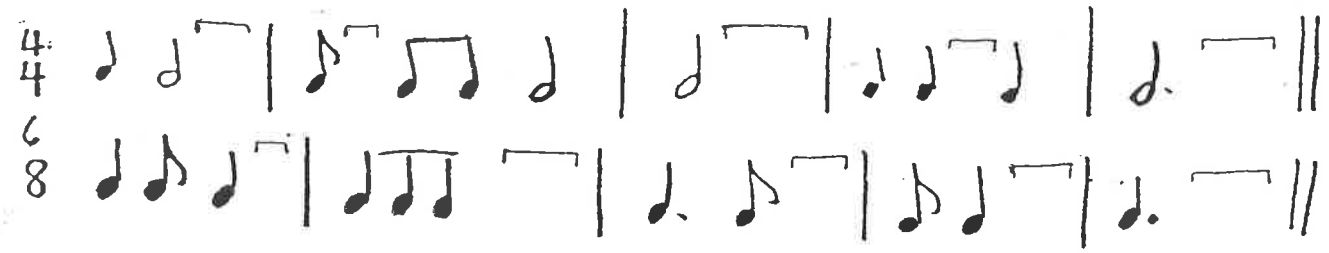
b) $\frac{6}{8}$

c) $\frac{2}{4}$

d) $\frac{2}{2}$

e) $\frac{9}{8}$

(4) There is at least one missing rest in every bar of these examples. Put the appropriate rests in so that there is the right number of beats in each bar.



(5) Each of the following configurations of notes can be represented by a single dotted note. Find that note for each example. The first is done for you.

a)  =

b)  =

c)  =

d)  =

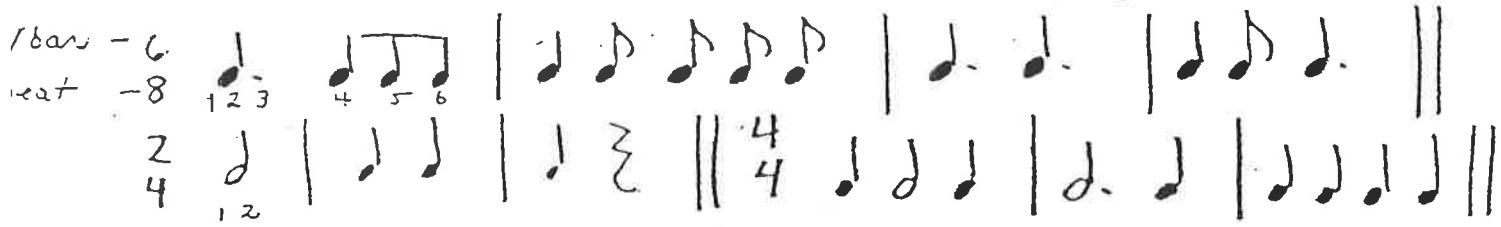
e)  =

f)  =

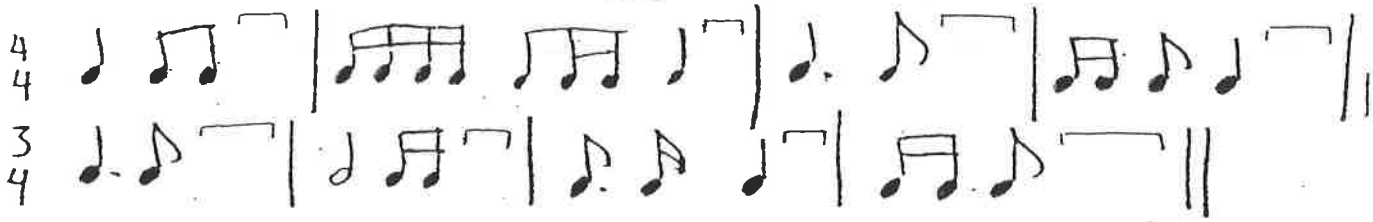
g)  =

h)  =

(6) Put the counting under the bars. The first bar is done for you.



(7) Add rests to make the bars complete, and put the counting in.



(8) COMPOSERS' WORKSHOP:

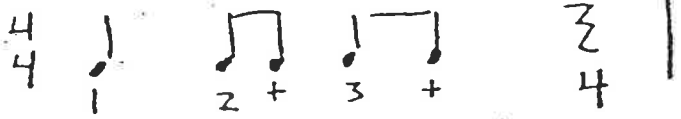
Create an 8-bar rhythmic duet in 4/4 for any kind of sound. Write in counting under each line.

For example ...

PART I
Hitting drum sticks together

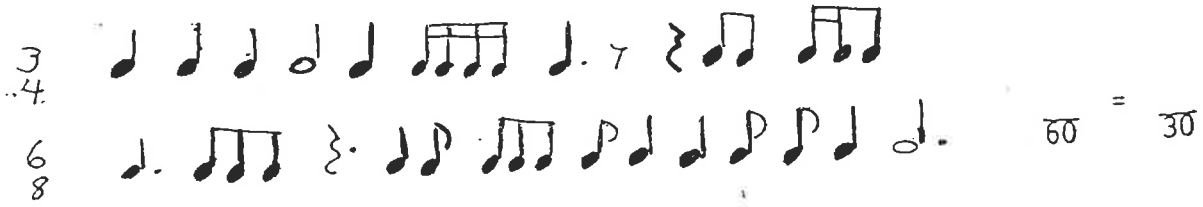
etc.

Part II
Stamping feet



Notice how the two parts are linked up right over each other, so that whenever it's the second beat in the first part, it's the second beat in the second part too. The duet will be performed as part of your test.

(9) Fill in the missing bar lines in the examples below.



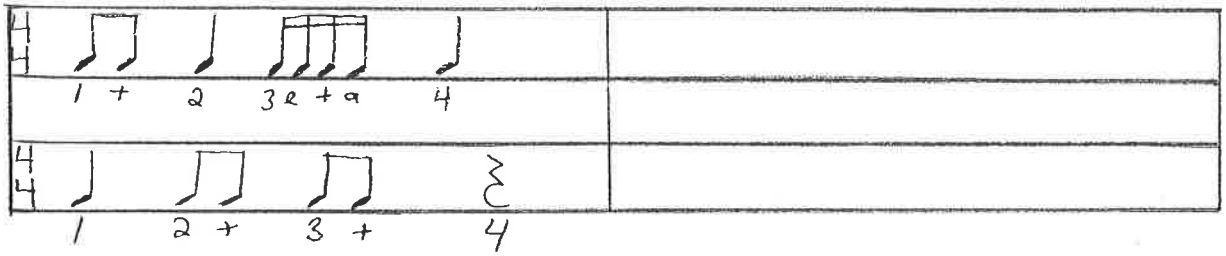
Composer's Workshop

Create an 8-bar rhythmic duet in $\frac{4}{4}$ for any kind of sound. Write in counting under each line.

For example:

Part I

Part II



$\frac{4}{4}$	
$\frac{4}{4}$	

$\frac{4}{4}$	
$\frac{4}{4}$	

$\frac{4}{4}$	
$\frac{4}{4}$	

*Notice how the two parts are lined up right over each other, so that whenever it's the second beat in the first part, it's the second beat in the second part etc. The duet will be performed as part of your test.