

FOUNDATIONS OF RHYTHM

Exercises in Rhythm for The Elementary to Advanced Student

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Introduction

During my tenure as an instrumental music teacher, I noticed that many of my students, who experienced difficulty learning new works, were commonly deficient in their understanding of how to count and perform rhythms. This deficiency not only impacted the speed in which they progressed in their studies, but also their ability to perform with an ensemble. Hence, the objective of this book is to present an educational resource aimed to improve this student's ability to count and perform rhythms.

After experimenting with the concepts of such renown music educators as Zoltan Kodaly and Edwin E. Gordon, I found that a tiered approach including rhythmic solfeggio to be invaluable when teaching this subject. Thus, I begin with the student counting aloud while clapping the exercise*. Moreover, while performing this technique, I have the student subdivide as soon as possible. In so doing, the student begins to develop strong cognitive skills as it pertains to timing, rhythmic feel and the relationship between up and down beats. Next, I have the student clap on every down beat, even if it is a rest, while simultaneously singing each note of the exercise. In turn, singing the exercise compels the student to count in his/her head, while correlating the correct sustain of each note in the exercise.

Below is an example of the aforementioned technique singing on “Taah”.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4 + 1 2 3 4

Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap Clap

Taah Taah Taah Taah Taaaaaaaaah Taah Taah Taah Taaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah

And for my advanced students, I have them perform the exercise in the same manner, but instead of clapping on the downbeats, I have them conduct to the corresponding time signature. Thus, students can now connect how the pattern, and the ictus of said pattern, define where the down beats lie. Thereby, aiding the student's understanding of how to follow a conductor.

In closing, it is understood by this author that no student or teacher is alike. Thus, this method is designed to easily be integrated with students of varying levels; while granting the instructor the flexibility to incorporate it as he/she deems best. Therefore, regardless of student ability, or instructional approach, this method should serve to be a source of learning throughout a student's course of study.

* I'd like to note that based upon my experience, I have found that counting in a particular manner aids students in their understanding and correlation of certain rhythms. For example, I indicate in this method that four sixteenth notes be counted as *1 e + ta*, which corresponds to the dotted eighth and sixteenth pattern of *1 ta*; and I present Indian tabla syllables as a means of counting quintuplets and septuplets. Again, all of which are suggestions that I have found to be most effective for my students. Therefore, the instructor should feel free to alter these indications if he/she deems best.

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Introduction to Beamed Eighth Notes

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

2 Eighth Notes Are 1 Beat

1 + 2 3 4 | 1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4 | 1 2 3 4 +

2. 1 + 2 3 4 | 1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4 | 1 2 3 4 +

3. 1 + 2 3 4 | 1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4 | 1 2 3 4 +

4. 1 + 2 3 4 | 1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4 | 1 2 3 4 +

5. 1 + 2 3 4 | 1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4 | 1 2 3 4 +

6. 1 + 2 3 4 | 1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4 | 1 2 3 4 +

Sixteenth Note Exercises

1. $\frac{4}{4}$

2. $\frac{2}{4}$

3. $\frac{3}{4}$

Odd Time Signature Exercises

1. $\frac{5}{4}$

2. $\frac{7}{4}$

3. $\frac{3}{8}$

The image displays three sets of musical exercises, each consisting of four staves. Exercise 1 is in 5/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and several triplet markings. Exercise 2 is in 7/4 time and includes similar rhythmic structures with triplet markings. Exercise 3 is in 3/8 time and consists of two staves with rhythmic patterns and triplet markings. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'SAMPLE' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page.