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Many thanks,

Tim Sawyer

Part 2

The Bit After The Beginning

This section builds on the knowledge gained from part one, and expands it to include more time signatures, and new note groups. New notes covered include single quavers and groups of four semiquavers. We also cover dynamic markings, which indicate how loud the notes of music should be played.

2.1 Single Quavers

Single quavers are written just like crotchets, but there is a little tail hanging off the top of the note stem. Quaver rests are small and look like the number seven.

In this example, the first bar contains crotchets and crotchet rests. The second bar contains four quavers, which are on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the bar, and four quaver rests. The last bar contains four quavers which are not on the beats.



In the last bar of this example, the quavers are said to be on the “off beat” because they are not on beats 1, 2, 3 and 4, but are evenly spaced between them.

When playing off beats, it is useful to count “1 and 2 and 3 and 4”, and to hit the drum when saying the word “and”. It can also help to tap your foot on the beats.



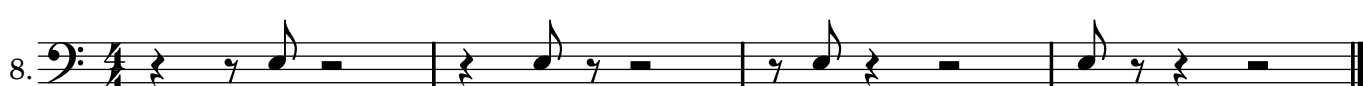
When two or more quavers are written together, they are written with a single beam joining them together, rather than the little tail. We have already seen this in section 1.3.



2.1.1 Exercises



2.1.2 Exercises



2.2 2/4 and 3/4 time

So far, all the exercises we have seen have been written in 4/4 time. This section introduces two further time signatures, 2/4 time and 3/4 time.

The top figure of the time signature indicates how many beats there are in the bar. The bottom number is the length of each beat. So, in 2/4 time, the bars are exactly half the length of those in 4/4 time with two crotchet beats to a bar instead of four. The following two examples would be played exactly the same.



3/4 time has three beats in a bar. This is less common than 2/4 and 4/4, and sounds different. One example of 3/4 time is a Waltz.



The time signature can change in the middle of a piece, simply by putting the new time signature at the start of a bar. The new time signature is often prefixed by a double bar line. If the time is changed, then the new time signature lasts from the bar it was modified in all the way to the end of the piece, unless of course it is changed again.



2.2.1 Exercises

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

2.2.2 Exercises



2.3.1 Exercises

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

2.3.2 Exercises

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

2.4 Double Stroke Roll

Time for another rudiment. This one is very similar to the single stroke roll we covered in part one, but involves using double strokes.

Double strokes are where you play two notes with one stick, followed by two notes with the other stick, and then repeat. Do this slowly at first, and make sure you keep regular time.

Play the pattern R, R, L, L, R, R, L, L and keep going.



As with the single stroke roll, once you have mastered the basics of keeping this going at a steady time, stop. Then start again, playing slightly faster. Keep trying to go faster and faster, but make sure you are still doing proper notes and the sticking is even and regular. Be sure to do this exercise each time you practice.

2.5 Dynamic Markings

Dynamics are an indication of how loud a particular note should be played. Dynamics in music are marked using abbreviations of words in Italian. The following chart shows the basic set of dynamics:

<i>ppp</i>		very very quiet
<i>pp</i>	pianissimo	very quiet
<i>p</i>	piano	quiet
<i>mp</i>	mezzo-piano	medium quiet
<i>mf</i>	mezzo-forte	medium loud
<i>f</i>	forte	loud
<i>ff</i>	fortissimo	very loud
<i>fff</i>		very very loud

Dynamics are shown at the bottom of a line of music, and apply from the note they appear underneath, until they are superceded by another dynamic marking or the end of the piece.



In this example, the first bar is played quite loud, the second bar loud, the third soft, and the final bar quite quiet. Each note in the bar should be the same loudness, as the dynamic only changes at the start of a bar.

Loud notes should be played in the centre of the drum, and soft notes should be played at the edge, in the 12 o'clock position.

You may have come across the word “piano” before, as it is the name of an instrument. In fact, the full name of the piano is “pianoforte”, so called because it can be played loudly or softly. Before the pianoforte existed, keyboard instruments like the harpsichord plucked strings when the keys were pressed, and so were limited to only one volume.

2.5.1 Exercises

1. *f* *p*

2. *f* *p* *f* *p*

3. *f* *p* *f*

4. *mp* *mf* *f*

5. *mf* *mp* *p*

6. *pp* *p* *mp* *mf*

7. *ff* *f* *mf* *mp*

8. *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

9. *mp* *mf* *pp* *p*

