

Music 11, 6/29/06

Review of meter and time signature:

Simple meters:

In 4/4 time, there are 4 quarter notes per measure and one quarter note has one beat.

In 2/4 time, there are 2 quarter notes per measure and the quarter note has one beat.

In 3/4 time, there are 3 quarter notes per measure and the quarter note has one beat.

Compound meters:

In 6/8 time, there are 2 beats per measure and the dotted quarter note (which = 3 eighth notes) has one beat.

In 9/8 time, there are 3 beats per measure and the dotted quarter note (which = 3 eighth notes) has one beat.

In 12/8 time, there are 4 beats per measure and the dotted quarter note (which = 3 eighth notes) has one beat.

In 6/16 time, there are 2 beats per measure and the dotted eighth note (which = 3 sixteenth notes) has one beat.

If you still struggle with *how* to understand the way meters work, try at least to memorize the above information. It might “click” later (it usually does!).

The DOT!

Even though there is nothing technical or strange about its name, the *dot* is not as simple as it sounds at first. Think of it as a tag-along, or a little brother. It clings to a note, and is exactly half the value of the note to which it clings (like a little brother. Kidding).

1 quarter note = 2 eighth notes.

1 *dotted* eighth note = 3 eighth notes.

1 half note = 2 quarter notes.

1 *dotted* half note = 3 quarter notes.

Etc.

Imagine the usefulness of the dot in compound meters. If one beat in 6/8 time is the combined duration of 3 eighth notes, we can express this as one dotted quarter note. Now we can revisit the way we describe compound meters (compare with yesterday's notes):

In 6/8 time, there are 2 beats per measure, and one dotted quarter note has one beat.

In 9/8 time, there are 3 beats per measure, and one dotted quarter note has one beat.

In 12/8 time, there are 4 beats per measure and one dotted quarter note has one beat.

In 6/16 time, there are 2 beats per measure and one dotted *eighth* note has one beat.

Etc.

Another way to extend the duration of a note is by using the *tie*.

### Tie

Any two (or more) notes can be tied together. When two notes are tied together, their durations combine. This is useful for a bunch of reasons, but here are two big ones:

1. We can express durations that cannot be expressed with dots, such as 1 quarter note + 1 sixteenth note. Or, one whole note + 1 eighth note.
2. The tie can make a duration last *across* bar lines (measure lines). Because the measure line is there to help us, composers customarily do not write note durations that push through the position of the bar line. With a tie, a composer can connect two half notes (for example) in two different measures so as to indicate that a note is held for 4 beats while not disturbing the measure groupings.

### Conducting

Verbalizing the conducting patterns is difficult. Allow the following for review only:

2/4 time and 6/8 time: Down (and out slightly), Up. Think of the shape of the letter “J.”

3/4 time and 9/8 time: Down, Out, Up. Think of the shape of a triangle.

4/4 time and 12/8 time: Down, Over, Out, Up. Think of the shape of a cross, or the funny diagram in the textbook.