

Chapter One

Getting Started

This book is based on the assumption that you have no previous experience with reading music. The format will include clapping out and singing rhythms. The objective of this first section is to teach you how to read rhythms.

Rhythm and Beat

Probably the most fundamental component of rhythm is the *beat*, the pulse found in most music. The beat is that to which you dance, clap your hands, or tap your foot. The beat remains basically steady—like a heartbeat. The beat and rhythm are not one and the same. Rhythm is a larger concept, including the beat and everything that happens to sounds in relation to time.

Meter and Tempo

Although beats in music are evenly spaced, some receive special emphasis. In music, some beats receive more emphasis than others. These beats are called *accented beats*. If one beat in every two is accented, the listener feels the rhythm like this: *Beat-beat-Beat-beat*. If the accent is once every three beats, the listener feels: *Beat-beat-beat-Beat-beat-beat*. The beats occur evenly in these cases and have a pattern. The pattern is called *meter*.

The word *tempo* refers to the rate of speed at which the beat occurs; it is the pace of the beat.

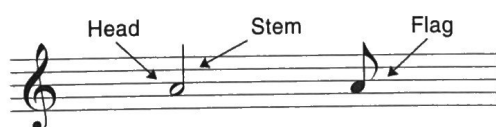
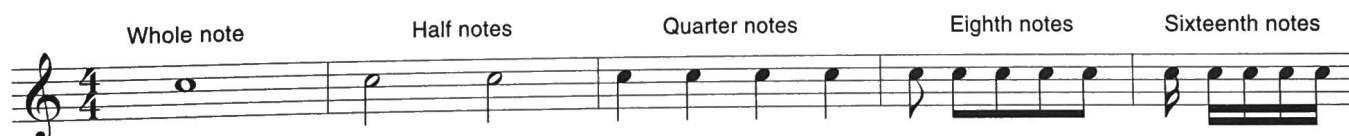
Measures and Bar Lines

The horizontal and divided spaces on the staff are called *measures*; the vertical lines are called *bar lines*.



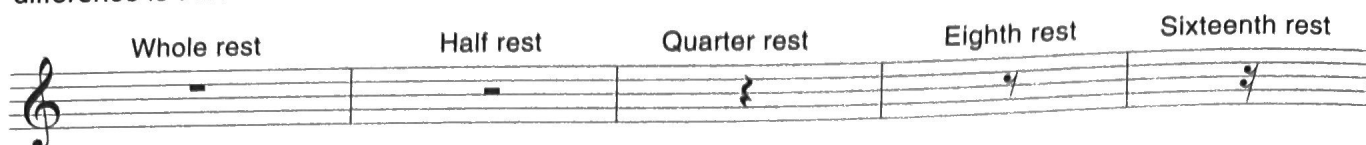
Notes

The *note* is the symbol that is placed on the staff to indicate which musical pitch you are to sing, and how long and when you are to sing it. The position of the note on the staff determines its pitch. The duration is shown by the construction of the note.



Rests

Rests are like notes; they have specific time values and a definite way of being written. The big difference is that rests indicate silence rather than sound.



Time Signatures

Each measure of music has a certain number of beats in it. The number of beats per measure and the kind of note getting one beat is determined by a sign at the beginning of the music called a *time signature*. The time signature is written as one number above another; 4/4 is an example of a time signature. The bottom number tells you what kind of note gets one beat; the top number tells you how many beats there will be in a measure. For instance, the top "4" equals four beats per measure, while the bottom "4" means a quarter note gets one beat.



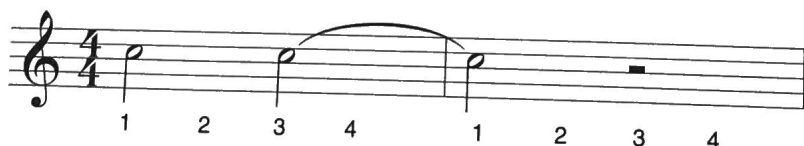
Whatever the time signature says *must be* contained in each measure. The number of beats in a measure can be made up of any combination of notes and rests, as long as there is the correct number of beats.

Since 4/4 is the most common time signature, it is often referred to as *common time*. This is symbolized by a "C" where you would normally see "4/4," though they both mean the same thing. Study this figure carefully!



Ties

A *tie* is a curved line connecting *two notes of the same pitch*. When you see a tie, you play the first note only, and hold the sound for the length of both notes.



Dots

The *dot* is a device used to increase any note by half its own value. For instance, a quarter note is equal to two eighth notes and a quarter note with a dot after it is equal to three eighth notes.

