TEACHING RHYTHM LOGICALLY

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W179

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Stiles MS, Leander ISD, TX – December 14, 2016

Teach Rhythm on Day 2 – supply checks, students being tested on instruments, getting supplies

Turn on metronome & wait for kids to start patting their foot.

"What are we patting our foot with?"
The beat

"What does our foot do for each beat?"
↓↑
Require them to only pat their toe – no hoedowns in the band hall

"We have a special way to show one beat. Does anyone know what this is called?"
Quarter note
Every time I see one of these my foot goes ↓↑

"So now I'm going to draw a bunch of quarter notes." Draw 8.
"How many quarter notes did I draw?"
8

"And how many beats does each quarter note get? And what does my foot do for every beat?"
1, ↓↑

"Cool, let's count them together. Get your foot going. Down up down up ready go!"
Count naturally, not full value, no pulses

"Awesome, so where was our foot when we said the number?" count again if necessary
Down – *draw # sign under down arrow*

"So the down is taken care of, but now we're going to add something to the up. Every time my foot hits the ground I'm going to say a number, and on the up we are going to pulse our air so that it sounds like 'wo-un, two-oo, three-ee, fo-or.' Let's go back and count our 8 quarter notes, and this time we'll pulse every time our foot goes up."
Count, do it again if necessary

"That's great! Now I'm going to add some more beats." Draw 4 more quarter notes. "How many quarter notes did I add?"
Four
"Let's go back and count all 12 of our quarter notes." How many beats does a quarter note get? What does my foot do for every beat? What do we say when our foot is down? What do we do on the up?" write pulse under up arrow
Answer then count

This may seem super obvious or over-kill but it is the kind of script I wanted as a first year teacher

"Let's pretend like these 12 quarter notes make up a song, and I have a question about the 9th note. So I raise my hand and say, 'Ms. Williams, I have a question about the (counting) 9th note.' So then I would look at my music and count up to the ninth note and answer your question. Easy, right? But what if I had a song with 1,732 notes, and I had a question about the 432nd note. And I would have to go (counting)… That would take forever to count and find, right? So we need to do something to break up all those notes into smaller chunks. I'm going to break them up by adding these little lines. Does anyone know what these are called?" break measures into 3 measures

Barlines

"And who knows what this space between each barline is called?" draw a bracket

Measure

"How many measures do we have?"

Three

"Every time we are counting music something magical happens every time we cross a barline. I start out counting 'wo-un, two-oo, three-ee, fo-or' and then I get to the barline and what happens?"

Go back to one

"Exactly!" write in a 1 at the start of every measure "Let's count our 3 measures now. What do we say when our foot is down? What do we do on the up?"

Count

"How many beats do we have in each measure? Let's go ahead and write in the count for all three measures. We already have the 1 written in. What do we need to add? And I'm going to make them all big, legible numbers. Let's count it again."

"So I've purposely left out an important piece of information. We already know that a quarter note gets one beat, but what I left out is that it gets one beat of sound. Does anyone know an 'S' word that is the opposite of sound? Does anyone know what we call silence in music?"

Silence, rest

"For every kind of note we have an accompanying rest. So if we have a note that gets one beat, we'll have a rest that gets one beat. We just learned our quarter note which means we'll also have a quarter rest. A quarter rest looks like this. Now I can go back to our 3 measures and replace one of the quarter notes with a quarter rest. Now, has beat 3 disappeared? No, it's just silent. Since beat 3 is silent, we are going to change the count we wrote to reflect it. I'm going to erase the big 3 we wrote and replace it with a very small 3 with a little line through it. That tells me that beat 3 is silent, and I'm not going to say it. Is there anyone who thinks they can count measure one for us?"

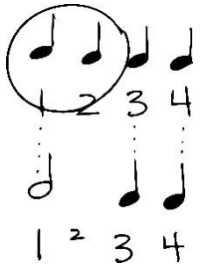
Onslaught of many examples before moving to chart 1, ending with the exact

Chart 1 line 1 example

Day 2 (second day of school) – Chart 1 & 1.5
Day 3 – Chart 2, 2.5, 1.5 with time signatures explained
Day 4 – Chart 3, 2.5, extra practice 1
Day 5 – Review and games
Day 6 – Review, 4, 4.5
Day 7 – Review, 6, 6.5

TEACH THROUGH QUESTIONS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
BUILD NEW CONCEPTS OFF OF OLD, COMFORTABLE RHYTHMS.

What if I combined these 2 quarter notes into one note? Use questions to guide kids to understand combined beats.



DOTS IN GENERAL **"**A dot adds ½ the value of the note it is dotting."
Teach <u>the concept</u> (not just the note) using algebra and number notes instead of pictorial notes

4.
4 + 2 = 6 beats
12 pulses

10.
10 + 5 = 15 beats
30 pulses

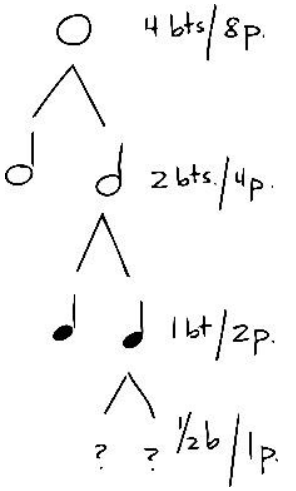
80.
80 + 40 = 120 beats
240 pulses

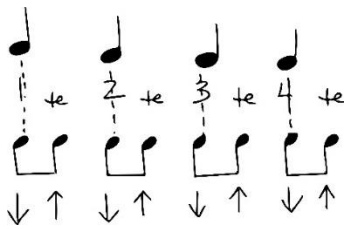
2.
2 + 1 = 3 beats
6 pulses

→

d.
2 + 1 = 3 beats
p + p = p.

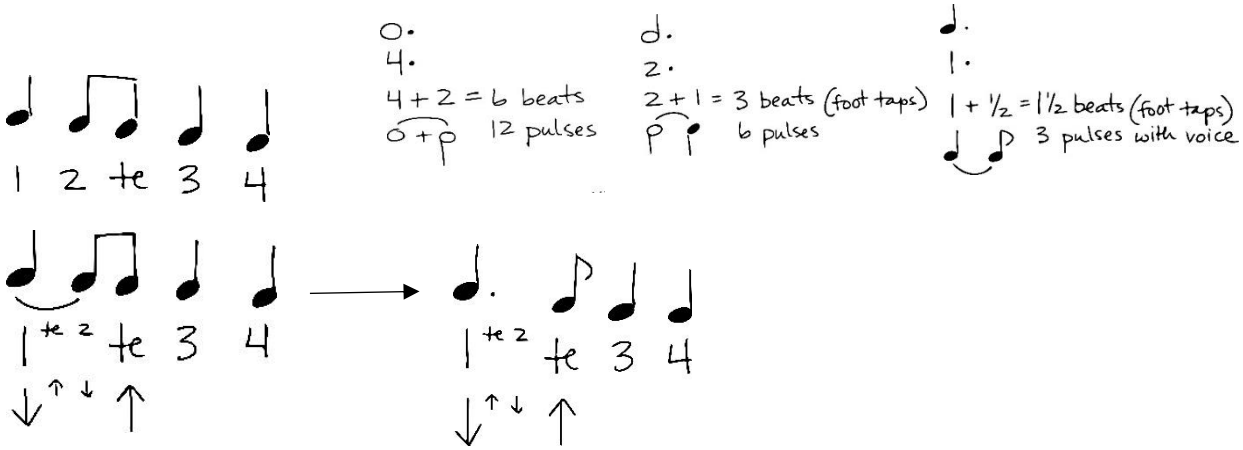
Teach with Review Tree (and chart)
"How many beats is our new note going to get? Pulses?" Require kids to draw conclusions.





Taught with ties on Chart 8 first
Start with base rhythm on the board. Require kids to draw conclusions about count, beats, pulses, and feet.

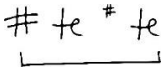
- Review for at least another day with ties before doing Chart 9. Review what dots do (number math and music math). "Where have we seen a quarter tied to an eighth? Turn to Chart 9. Compare lines 1a and 1b."

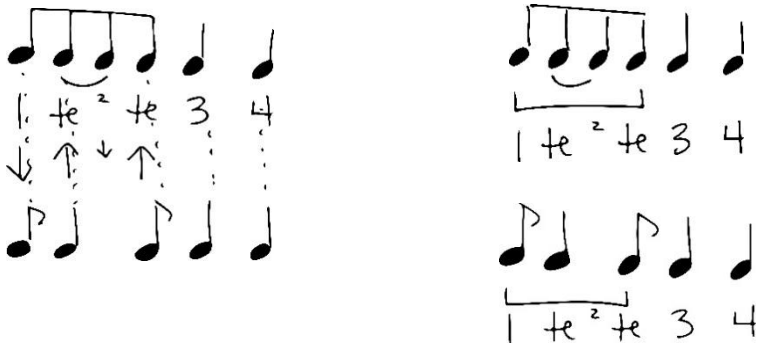


We don't play dotted quarters until we get to 112 in the book. Most success with:

1. Count and finger
2. ½ class count while ½ ta's without pulses
3. Count with "Down-up-down UP down down" and finger

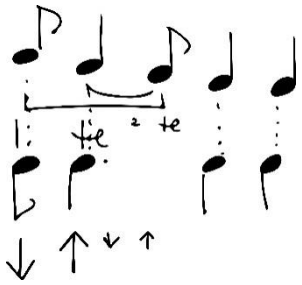
Taught with ties on Chart 10 first
Bracket to teach kids to see as a rhythmic unit – eye grouping of patterns
"A strong note on a weak beat" – downbeats vs. upbeats





Teach on board with a tie
Work measure backwards

Played first with 117 in book. Approached just like like 112 above.

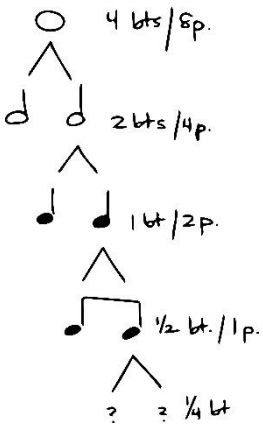


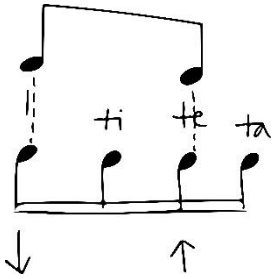
10.75 – compare individual measures with 10.5 and 10.75, then add brackets

Teach with Review Tree
Separate syllables for each 16th, reinforces articulation (especially Eastman)

*One plug for Eastman – "1-e-&-a" is easier to say

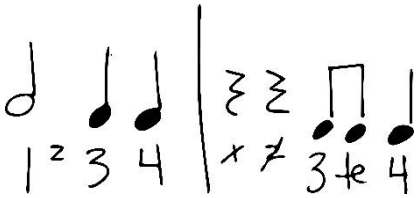
- easier because you can say it with less tongue strength
- 't' syllables help build that tongue strength
- "Tiny Tootsie…" Betty Pierce





Writing in Count:

* BIG NUMBERS – numbers that you say
* little numbers – numbers inside a larger note
* ~~little numbers~~ – rests



RHYTHM AS A FUNDAMENTAL

HOW TO USE COUNTING CHARTS

- Count ☺
  - 4-8 measures at a time
  - In columns
  - Crisscross
  - Only odd measures
  - "Duet" counting (girls vs. boys, trumpets vs. clarinets, Jan-June vs. July-Dec)
  - Pass around counting (group 1 counts line 1 then group 2 counts line 2)
  - Scream counting, whisper counting

- Write in count
  - For every new rhythm and/or trouble measures
  - 1 or 2 measures every day (for a while)
  - Note break-down on top of each new chart
  - Index card chart of note breakdown

- Ta or Ti them
  - This is how we introduce articulation with all classes.
    - *By week 2, not on instrument*
  - No pulsing – teacher demonstrates first
  - Wait until at least through chart 3
  - "How do we know when to say ta?" (make kids answer listening to foot)
  - Must extend all the way to the rest/cut-off

- Count in arrows (down-down-down-up-down)

- Air blow
  - Air and articulation through proper embouchure
  - Very quickly after introducing Ta

- Sizzle
- Play them!
  - Unison – LOTS OF NOTES, not just concert F… maybe concert B natural ☺
  - Chords
    - Tuning
    - Allows you to hear which groups make mistakes
  - BACKWARDS! (ta or play... don't count… trust me)
  - Like mini sight reading

- Articulation
  - Accents
  - Legato
  - Double tonguing

- Speed counting
- Cut time

BEGINNER CLASSES – Incorporate Daily

- Teach counting from Day 1
- Use rhythm as a "brain reset" for band at the beginning of class
    - Engages all of the kids immediately
    - Focuses them on something comfortable and easy
    - Reinforces rhythm reading every day
    - Makes rhythm important
    - Some kids rock at counting even if they stink at playing

- Some of our earliest chair tests
- Require kids to start and end notes on time

    ******from day 1******

- Make counting the first step in learning any new song
    - Write in count for one or two measures every week to keep it fresh
    - Write in count for trouble measures

- Counting Games
    - Mess Up Drop Out
    - Don't Break the Chain – *teaches following along during rests & internalizing*

- Brass classes and flute class
    - "melodic" playing of charts
    - Half note = high, quarter note = low (or whatever)
        - Closed headjoint for flutes
        - BERPed and played for brass
    - Use this to teach "The Steps"
        - 1. Count it 2. Ta it 3. Note Name it (or high/low it) 4. Air Blow it (direction) 5. Play
    - Do different lines every time so they are required to READ not memorize

BAND CLASSES – Incorporate as much as possible!

Counting is not a baby step; understanding rhythm is the foundation for being a fluent *musician.*

- Worried about sight reading? You probably don't address rhythm enough because the notes used aren't the surprise! ☺
- Did you talk about tone and articulation today? Is rhythm any less important?

- Summer Band/First few weeks
    - Start summer band with charts
    - Go back to basics with ALL bands – including RHYTHM
        - Count it
        - Ta or Ti it (play with articulation and note length)
        - Air blow and/or sizzle it
    - You can address so many issues *while* addressing rhythm
    - Unison keeps it simple

- Mix in chart counting or playing as part of warm up
- Count new pieces as a group the first time and often
    - Every new piece is counted with numbers before we play it
    - Often count and finger when we switch pieces – refocuses their brain
    - Count and finger as we up tempos and work tempo changes
    - Background plays while melody counts, brass counts while woodwinds play, etc…

- Spring semester – use charts as sight reading warm up
- Sectionals – listen to one student play while the others count or sizzle

For more information visit
www.teachingrhythmlogically.com
www.stilesmsband.org

CHART 1
Quarter Notes and Rests

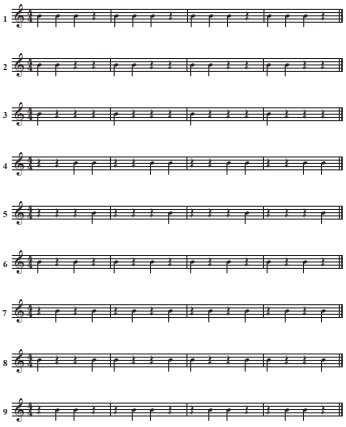
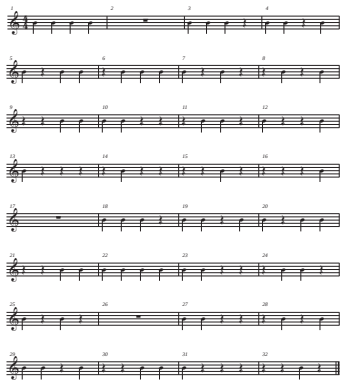


CHART 1.5
Quarter Notes and Rests

? Ask your teacher where all the time signatures went!



EXTRA PRACTICE 1
Lots of Rests

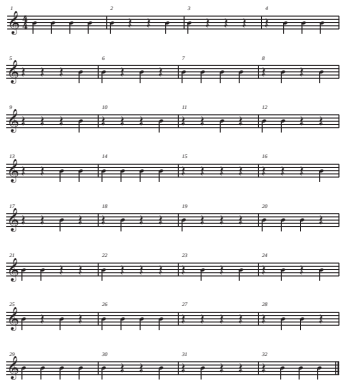


CHART 2
Quarter and Half Notes with Rests

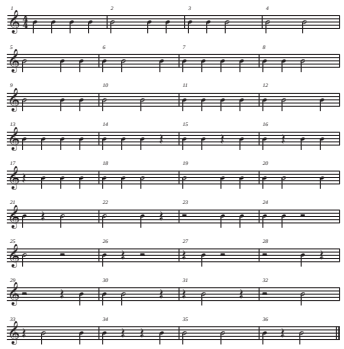


CHART 2.5
More Quarter and Half Notes with Rests

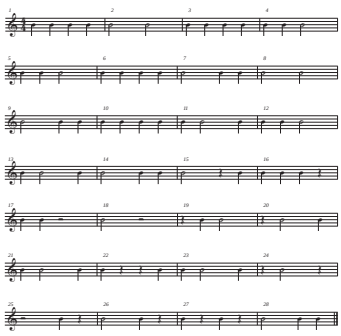


CHART 3
Quarter, Half, and Whole Notes

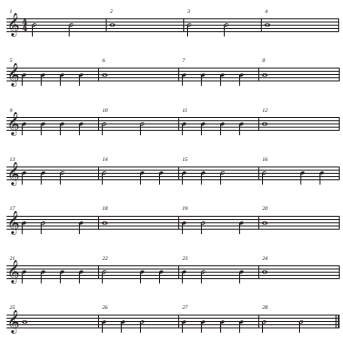


CHART 3.5
Quarter, Half, and Whole Notes with Rests

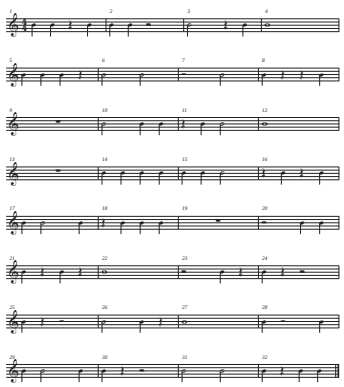
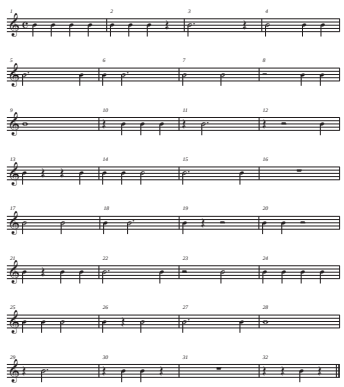


CHART 4
Dotted Half Notes

? Ask your teacher what the letter 'C' in measure one means!



** A dot adds 1/2 the value of the note it is dotting. **

CHART 4.5
More Dotted Half Notes

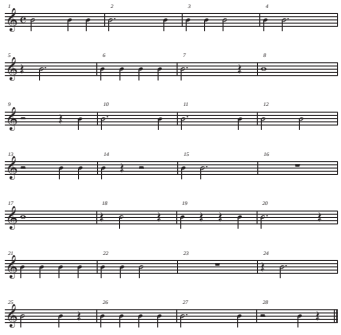


CHART 5
Time Signatures

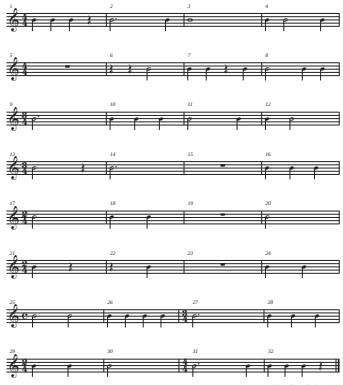


CHART 6
Eighth Notes

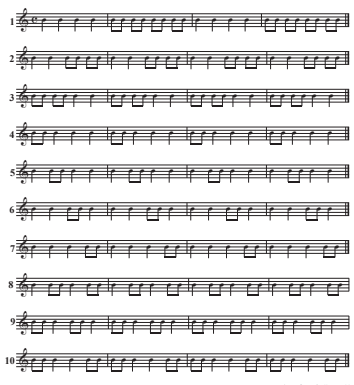


CHART 6.5
Eighth, Quarter, Half, and Whole Notes with Rests

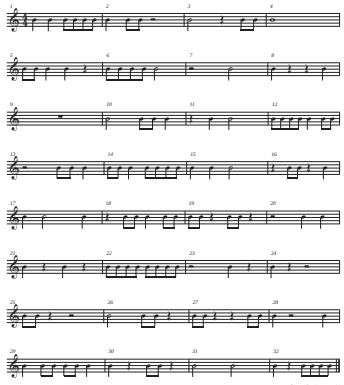


CHART 7
Eighth Notes and Eighth Rests

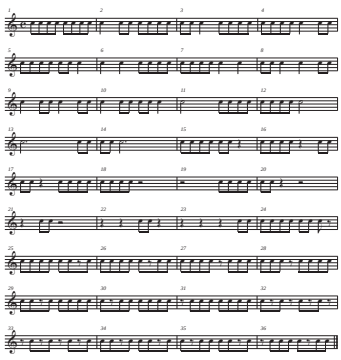


CHART 7.5
Eighth Notes and Rests with Time Change

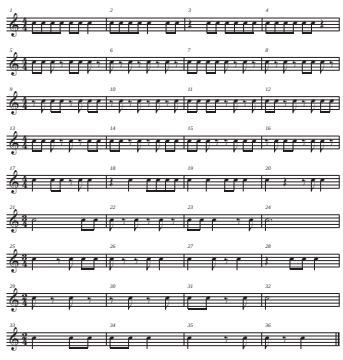


CHART 8
Ties

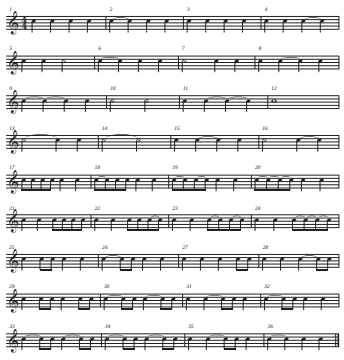


CHART 9
Dotted Quarter Notes

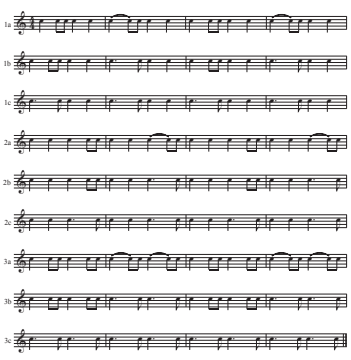


CHART 9.5
Dotted Quarter Notes

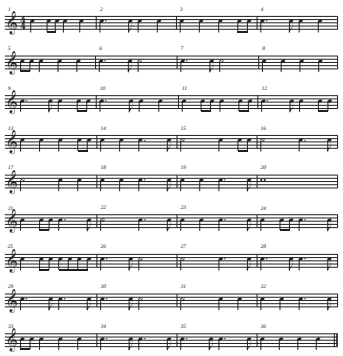


CHART 10
Syncopation

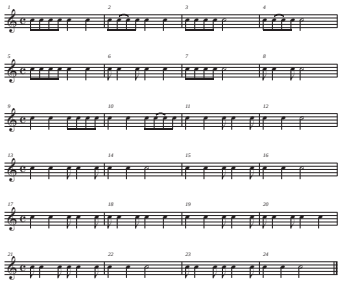


CHART 10.5
Mixed Syncopation

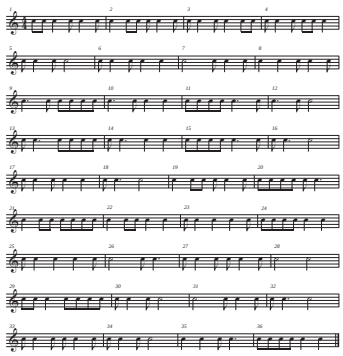


CHART 10.75
Syncopation with Rests

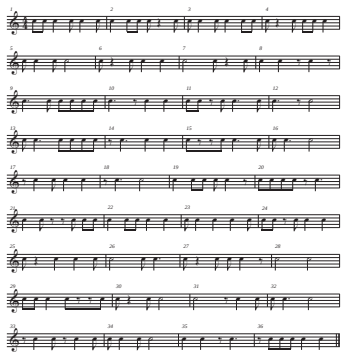


CHART 11
Sixteenth Notes

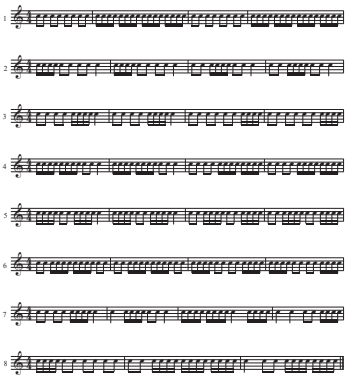


CHART 11.5
Mixed Sixteenths

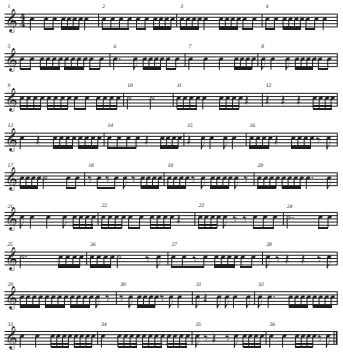


CHART 12
Sixteenth Rhythms 1

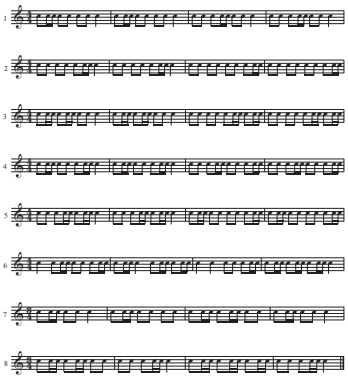


CHART 12.5
Sixteenth Rhythms 2

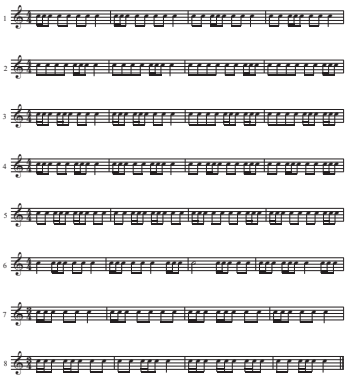


CHART 12.75
Mixed Sixteenth Rhythms

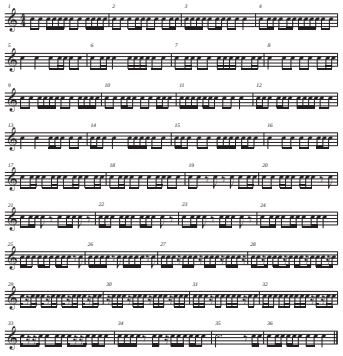


Chart 13
Dotted-Eighth Sixteenths

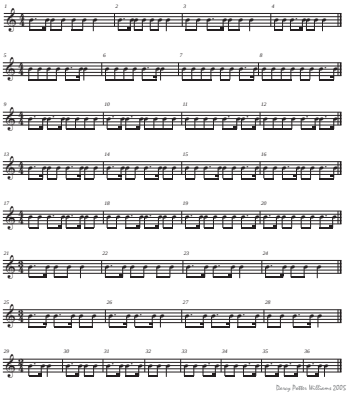
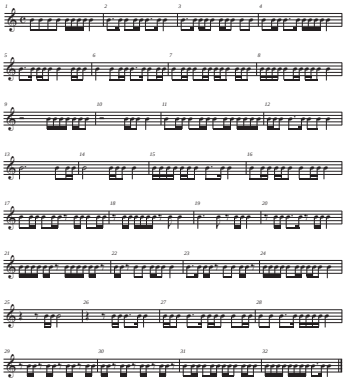


Chart 13.5
Crazy Sixteenth Rhythms



6/8 Counting
Mixed Triplet Rhythms

In 6/8 time, the dotted-quarter note gets the beat. There are only 2 beats per measure that are divided into triplets.