

Time, Tempo and Tumult: Solutions for Rhythmic Issues in String Playing

**Midwest International Band and Orchestra
Clinic and Conference
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Music creates order out of chaos: for rhythm imposes unanimity upon the divergent, melody imposes continuity upon the disjointed, and harmony imposes compatibility upon the incongruous.

(Yehudi Menuhin)

izquotes.com

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Beat

The beat is a steady pulse that continues throughout a piece of music.

The beat in music is like your heartbeat.

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Rhythm

Rhythm in music refers to the length of the notes.

Rhythm can be very regular and imitate a steady beat, but more often it stops and starts or moves faster or slower than the beat.

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Tempo

Tempo is the speed of music.

It can be fast or slow.

It can be a constant speed.

It can also change within a piece of music.

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Tempo

- Choice of tempo
 - For technical reasons
 - For expressive reasons
- Effects of Physiological or Emotional State
- Perception of tempo
- Execution of tempo
- Concept of “Common tempo”

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Time

- Time can be defined as the aspects of rhythm that depart from a precise or perfect performance.
- It is these departures from “correct mathematical” rhythm that help make music truly expressive.
- An understanding of time makes rhythm more musical.

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Teaching Time

- Action & motion words
- Dance and motion
- Constructions or the “feel” of meter
- Theoretical concepts
- Importance of modeling including listening, speaking, singing and playing.

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Basics for Teaching Rhythm

A student needs to

1. Experience and hear rhythms and meter,
2. Learn to play rhythms through modeling and listening,
3. Learn to sight read the notation.

Separate the skills of playing and reading rhythm

Students should

- Speak and sing
- Move or say action words
- Play the rhythm
- Finally play the music

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Musicians tend to have rhythm issues...

1. when we stop moving during playing,
2. when we lack internalization of subdivision,

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3. when we read or play irregular or uneven patterns,
when we read or play regular or even patterns,

4. when we are faced with certain technical issues,

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5. when we are faced with issues with the music notation system,

6. when we need to multi-process or need to focus on many things at once,

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.....

7. when we lack awareness of ourselves or
our ensemble and
8. when we are either mentally or
physically fatigued.

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Consider a few things ...

- A. Focus on child centered instruction ...
i.e. teach from what a student knows
and has experienced.

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Introducing the dotted rhythm

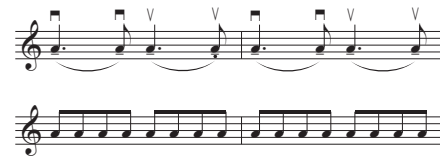


2

Introducing the dotted rhythm



Maintaining Rhythmic Integrity



Consider a few things ...

B. Reading and Sight Reading Rhythm

- Reading rhythm is a separate skill from playing rhythm.
- Pattern recognition and common patterns need to be taught first.
- There are serious issues with the rhythm notation system and the way we teach rhythm.

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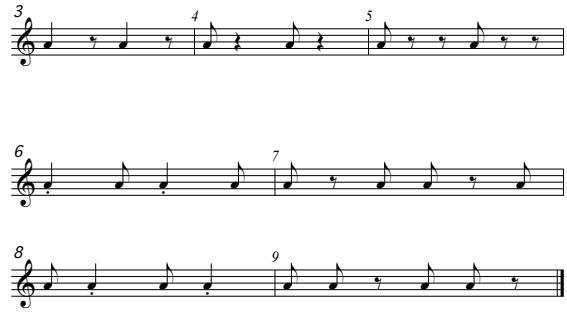
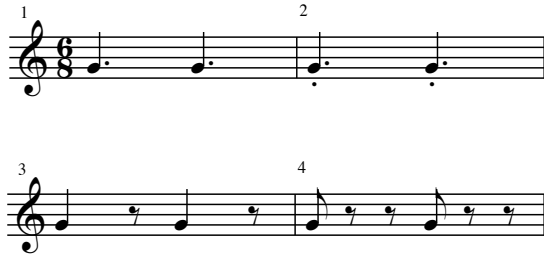
Issues with Music Notation

1. Symbols which look the same, yet result in a different sound or emphasis.
2. Patterns which look similar, yet have a different sound or feel.
3. Patterns which look different, but result in a similar or the same rhythm sound.

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6/8 Meter Rhythm Patterns
Language Counting
WCrock



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Consider a few things first ...

C. Default Mode

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Default Mode

- We have the propensity to default to most experienced action and reaction during times of extended focus.
- Default reaction visual symbol will typically emerge when focus is lost.
- The issue is that same symbols represent different things.

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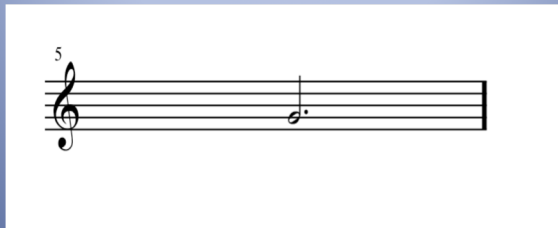
Rhody in Another Time

WCrock



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Consider a few things first

- A. Focus upon Child Centered Instruction
- B. Sequence Reading & Sight Reading Rhythms
- C. Understand and Address Default Mode
- D. Training Multi-processes

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Remember

- Playing rhythms accurately is not the same skill as reading rhythms.
- Reading rhythm training must include different tempi and different meter training and attention to music notation issues.
- Play rhythms musically requires an understanding of time and rhythms relationship to melody, harmony and phrasing.

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Counting Questions

- When do you count?
- How do you count?
- What is the best way to sequentially teach rhythm translation and sight reading?
- How can the visual and teaching techniques assist us with performance issues?

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Counting Systems

#1 Language Based Introductory System

#2 Single Beat/Single Unit Counting System

- Ta system
- Numerical by beat or unit
- (Spot counting)

#3. Meter Based Numerical System

- Traditional numbered counting by measure

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Counting Systems #1

• Language Based

- Words and language that are familiar to student.

- Actions: Walk, jog, running, slide
- Food: Pepperoni Pizza, Chocolate, etc.
- Phrases or Sentences. Hippopotamus
- Reminder words:
 - Words that have connection to symbol. (Name or function)

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6/8 Meter Rhythm Patterns Practice Page

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6/8 Meter Rhythm Patterns Practice Page

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6/8 Rhythm Pattern Practice

Lesson 1 P.1



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Vive la Compagnie
English Ballad
Solo CD # 25 Ensemble CD # 46 Piano CD # 83

Notes used on these pages

Allegro

Melody

mf

f

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Excerpted from Learning Together II
Crock, Dick & Scott

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Counting Systems #2

- Single note or symbol counting systems

Examples....

- Kodaly Ta ta ti-ti ta or Tadi Tadi
- Gordon Du du duday du
- Numbered counting per beat or symbol

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Lullaby
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Solo CD # 15 Ensemble CD # 39 Piano CD # 73

Notes Used in This Piece

Melody

mf

mf

p

mf

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Rocky Mountain
Folk Song
Solo CD # 14 Ensemble CD # 32 Piano CD # 72

Notes Used in This Piece

Melody

mf

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Rhody in Another Time W Crock

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J.S. Bach
Concerto for Violin in A Minor

Violine

Allegro

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Motion & Language in Rhythm

Language first

ti ti ti ti
pat ti ti ti
pat ti pat ti
touch ti ti ti

Add motion command

touch ti ti ti
touch up touch up
V V
V V

From "Rhythmic Play" W. Crock, Forrester Press

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taya taya tayaya ta
ti ti ti ti ti ti ti ti
ti ti yi ti yi ti yi ti

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Rhythm Switch

te ri te ri te ri te ri
pat te ri pat te ri
m re te ri m re te ri

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Introducing & Developing Subdivision

- Rhythm Changes
 - By ear and then by visual cue
- Rhythm Switches
 - By ear and then by visual cue
- Rhythm Canons
 - By visual cue and then by ear

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Use of the Metronome

1. Reference for specific tempo
2. Tool to help develop internal steady pulse and concepts of subdivision.
3. Tool to develop performance ability at increasing and decreasing speeds.

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Basics of Metronome Work

- Metronome use requires multi-processes.
 - Begin with simplest concepts
 - Speak first, sing next and then play with each.
- Do not wait until something is difficult before beginning metronome training.
- Begin with “walking” tempi.
- Begin with music student knows well.
- Work while reading music and from memory.

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Concepts for Metronome Sequence

1. Tempo reference tool
2. Train simple beats and subdivision
3. On and off tempo checks
4. Speed change ... gradual and dramatic

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In conclusion:

- Consider the visual
- Utilize the verbal
- Delay the mathematical
- Engage the musical
- Teach the historical

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