



# Music First!

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T H I R D E D I T I O N

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# Preface



***Music First!*** is an introduction to the fundamentals of music for students who are beginning their formal music education. The premise of the book is that intellectual understanding of music should follow direct experience—that **music** should come **first!** Thus, the study of fundamentals is combined with considerable experience in music reading to get the student involved with music through performance. Other forms of musical involvement such as listening, composing, and some formal ear training are suggested in the text and the individual instructor can select from these musical experiences according to the level of the class and his/her own tastes.

The wide range of portable electronic keyboards available, and the widespread use of MIDI keyboards with computers have reinforced the central importance of the keyboard in music instruction. I have included a brief introduction to MIDI keyboards to help the student make sensible choices.

Since a music fundamentals course is often considered to be a part of the “general education” of a student, I have included five “Interludes” that encourage thought and discussion about a broad range of topics and relate music to other areas of study.

Providing a body of suitable music for individual and class study is critical to a broad-based approach to music learning. The songbook includes over seventy songs with guitar chords and popular music chord symbols. These songs represent a cross section of musical styles and, for the most part, are songs that are familiar to students and teachers.

The accompanying **cassettes** provide a complete musical background for the student’s early experiences with rhythm and pitch and recordings of all the songs in the songbook.

Two new features in the third edition of *Music First!* are the *Personal Tutor* computer software that accompanies the computer version of the text and exercises at the end of certain chapters that encourage students to identify the musical elements they are learning in music that is familiar to them. After all, the ultimate goal of the study of fundamentals is the ability to apply the knowledge to music. The music already known to the student is an ideal place to begin this process. For detailed instructions on using the computer software, please consult appendix 3 on page 160, or use the on-screen help in the program itself.

An **Instructor's Manual**, which includes suggestions for using the materials of each chapter, keys for all assignments, sample tests, and a set of overhead projector masters to facilitate class work, is available from the publisher.

The text may be used for a one- or two-semester course. It was developed for a one-semester, two-credit music fundamentals course at Iowa State University where it was extensively class tested. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the users of the first and second editions of this book, who have suggested improvements for this edition. I have incorporated many of your suggestions in this edition and will continue to solicit input for further improvements. Space does not permit the listing of everyone's name, but particular thanks go to Prof. Hubert Beckwith, University of Maryland, University College, Prof. Roger Cichy, Prof. George Work, and Prof. Mahlon Darlington, Iowa State University.

# To the Student

*"The art of music is so deep and profound that to approach it very seriously only, is not enough. One must approach music with a serious vigor and, at the same time, with a great, affectionate joy."—Nadia Boulanger*



You are reading this book because you want to know more about music. Music is an important part of your life, and you may want to increase your enjoyment, improve your performance, or better understand how music is put together. If you will make the effort to do what this book recommends, I feel sure that you can make significant progress toward the following goals:

1. Learn to read, or improve your ability to read music.
2. Broaden your enjoyment of the whole range of music, from the classics and folk music to the latest rock and pop music.
3. Gain an understanding of the structure of music that will lead to an awareness of how music creates the emotional responses that we all feel.
4. Learn to transpose music.
5. Learn how to provide a simple accompaniment to a melody.
6. Compose your own music.

If these goals match your needs, then let's get started.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Rhythm: The Lifeblood of Music

*"Time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once."*—Anonymous

*"In the beginning was rhythm."*—Hans von Bulow

*"Jazz without the beat, most musicians know, is a telephone yanked from the wall; it just can't communicate."*—Leonard Feather



Trying to learn music by reading a book is a little like reading about food when you are hungry — it's interesting, but not satisfying. For this reason it is important that you get involved in music — by singing, clapping, listening, playing, and creating music. If this experience is going to be musically satisfying, you must overcome your inhibitions and join in freely. Relax and enjoy these musical experiences.

Play example 1 on the accompanying cassette if you are working alone. (If you are in a class your instructor may choose to perform at the keyboard.) You will hear a series of chords. Clap along with the chords, trying to stay precisely with them. This will require careful attention, but remain relaxed about it. Relaxed attention promotes a more musical result. Stay with this exercise until you feel comfortable. (Rewind the cassette as needed.) You are experiencing a fundamental element of music: the beat.

## The Beat

Beats are regular pulses that are the basis for measuring time in music. The *beat* is not a specific duration as is the minute or second, but rather a unit established by musicians themselves, who choose the speed based on their understanding of musical style and indications in the printed music. In music notation the beat is indicated by a note, often a quarter note.

figure 1.1



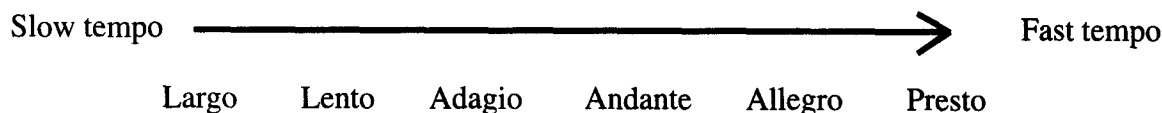
(Notes may be drawn with their stems in an upward or downward direction. This is purely an editorial decision and has no effect on the meaning of the symbol.)

Thus your clapping could be notated as follows:

figure 1.2



The speed of the beat varies from one piece of music to another, and tempo is the term used to describe the various speeds. Tempo can be measured in the number of beats per minute, or described in general terms. The following is a partial list of common terms that refer to tempo:

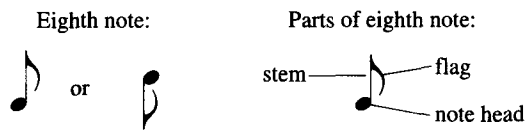


The terms above are Italian terms to indicate tempo, since Italian is considered to be the international language of music. They are generally placed above the music at the beginning of a composition and wherever the tempo changes. (For definitions of these terms see the glossary.)

## Simple Division of the Beat

Play example 1 again. This time clap twice for each chord. At first your clapping may be uneven, but continue to practice until you can clap in a smooth and steady flow of equal time units. You are experiencing the division of the beat. When the beat is divided into two equal parts we call it *simple* (or *binary*) *division*. If the beat is assigned to the quarter note, then the division of the beat will be indicated by eighth notes.

figure 1.3



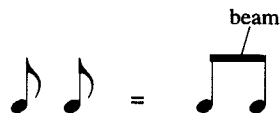
Thus we could indicate your clapping with the chords as follows:

figure 1.4



When a series of eighth notes is written it is common to substitute beams for the flags:

figure 1.5



Beams connect notes that are in the same beat, so figure 1.4 could have been written:

figure 1.6

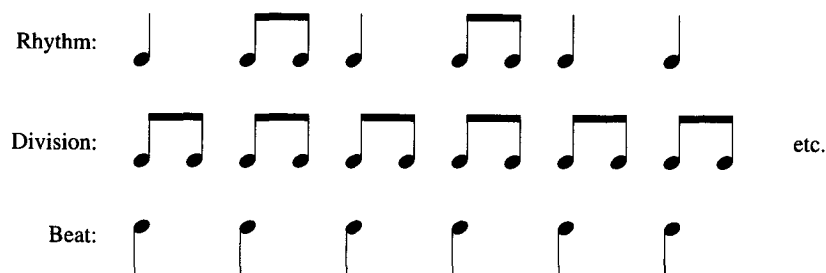


Music for instruments generally uses beams, while vocal music often does not.

## Rhythmic Patterns

The beat and divisions of the beat provide a regular framework that supports the rhythmic life of a piece of music. The patterns of longer and shorter durations are called *rhythmic patterns* or simply *rhythms*. Thus the beat is generally made of regular time units, while rhythms involve irregular units of time with the beat as a background.

figure 1.7



# Repeat Sign

When a section of music is to be repeated it is enclosed in *repeat signs*:

figure 1.8

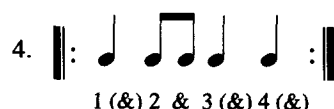
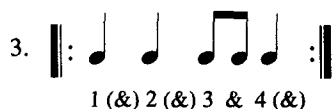


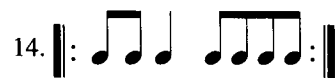
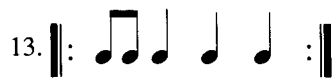
With an understanding of these musical symbols, you are ready to begin reading some rhythmic patterns. Count each quarter note in a pattern using 1, 2, 3, 4. For eighth notes count the first note in the beat as you would a quarter note and say “and” for the second eighth note:

figure 1.9



If you choose to sing, let the chords guide your voice. Concentrate at first on the rhythm and don't be particularly concerned about the melody you sing. Play example 1 again and sing or speak the following rhythms. Now tap the beat as you sing the rhythm.





Select any two of the rhythms above to perform at the same time as a duet with a friend. One part may be clapped while the other is spoken.

---

## Improving Your Ear

While regular practice in reading music will improve your ability to relate music notation to the sound of music, the reverse process—relating sound to music notation—is equally effective. This reverse process is often called ear training. The following three exercises may be used throughout the book to develop your ability to relate the sound of music to its notation.

### Ear Training Exercise I

A friend, classmate, or your teacher selects one of the patterns in the exercise above, establishes a steady beat, and sings or plays the pattern twice or three times. If sung, choose a neutral syllable like “Ta” and sing on a single pitch. If played on a keyboard, choose a single key to play the pattern. The remaining students look through the patterns and select the one that was played. Your answer will be the number of the pattern.

### Ear Training Exercise II

This is an exercise in echoing a musical pattern. The group establishes a steady beat by tapping a finger or toe. When the beat is clearly established a designated leader (a student or the teacher) sings or plays one of the patterns above and the rest of the group echoes this pattern immediately, without skipping a beat. Repeat this process until the pattern is accurately echoed.

### Ear Training Exercise III

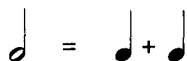
A friend, classmate, or your teacher selects one of the patterns in the exercise above, establishes a steady beat and plays or sings the pattern two or three times, allowing a pause of approximately ten seconds between each playing. Listen to the pattern played and in the pauses, notate the pattern on a piece of blank music paper. (Several sheets of music paper may be found at the end of the book.) The leader then announces the number of the pattern played. Check your work by comparing it with the pattern as printed in the book. (Also be sure to check to see if you have written the symbols properly.)

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## Longer Note Values

The half note is equal to two quarter notes:

figure 1.10



and the whole note is equal to four quarter notes:

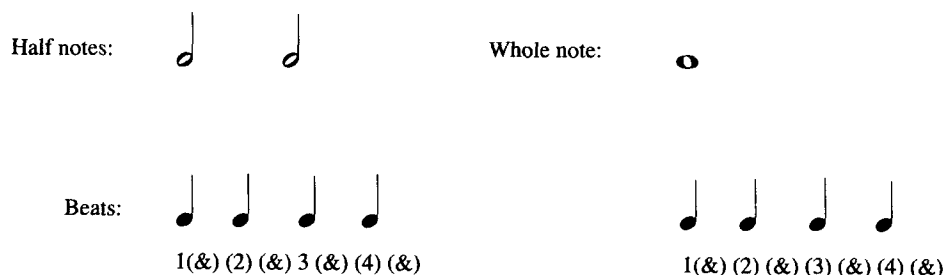
figure 1.11



Thus, when a quarter note indicates the beat, a half note is played or sung on the first beat and sustained through the next beat. A whole note would be played on the first beat and sustained through the next three beats.

In counting these longer notes, whisper the counts through which the note is sustained. (The beats to be whispered are indicated in parentheses.)

figure 1.12



Play example 1 again and sing or speak the following rhythms involving half and whole notes. Tap or conduct the beat as you sing the rhythm.

1. 1(&) (2) (&) 3 (&) (4) (&)
2. 1(&) (2) (&) (3) (&) (4) (&)
3. 1(&) 2 (&) 3 (&) (4) (&)
4. 1(&) 2 & 3 (&) (4) (&)



Clap, tap, or speak pairs of these rhythms as a duet with a friend.

Do Ear Training Exercises I, II, and III (p. 5) using the patterns above.

## Rests

Silence is an important aspect of music. There are complete silences from time to time within compositions, but more often there will be silences in one part while others continue. Silences are indicated by rests. There is a rest symbol for each note value. The chart below shows the whole rest, half rest, quarter rest, and eighth rest.

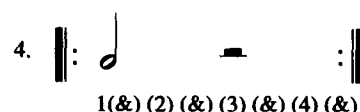
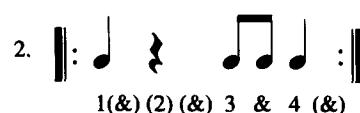
*figure 1.13*

	Rest	Note	Duration (in  note beats)
Whole			4
Half			2
Quarter			1
Eighth			1/2

**Assignment 1, page A-1**



The following patterns are to be spoken or sung with example 1. Try conducting or tapping the beat while you speak the rhythm.



Make duets from pairs of the rhythms above.

Do Ear Training Exercises I, II, and III (p. 5) using the patterns above.

## The Tie

The *tie* is a curved line connecting two notes:

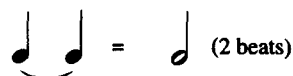
figure 1.14



(A similar appearing symbol, called a *slur*, will be covered in chapter 2, p. 25)

When two notes (of the same pitch) are tied together, they are to be considered as a single note, a single sound. Thus, two quarter notes tied together have the duration of a half note.

figure 1.15



A quarter note tied to an eighth note gives a duration of 1 1/2 beats:

figure 1.16

