

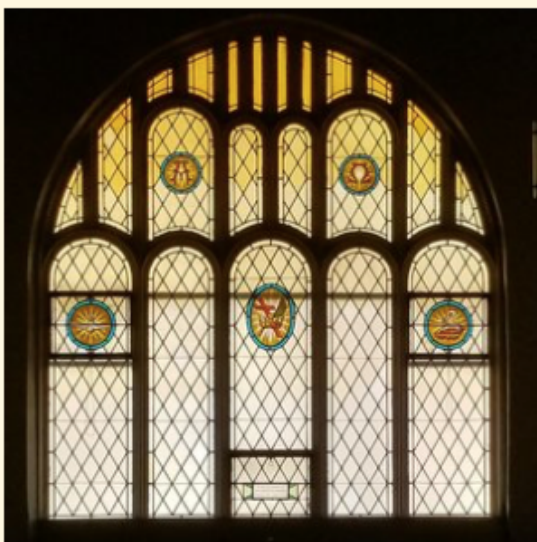
JOHN BUCCHERI TEACHING MUSIC THEORY

This site offers perspectives on three areas of the college music theory curriculum:

- 1) introducing rhythm, meter, and form
- 2) teaching rhythmic analysis
- 3) teaching skills that lead to rapid recognition of tonal operations in score

[EXPLORE](#)

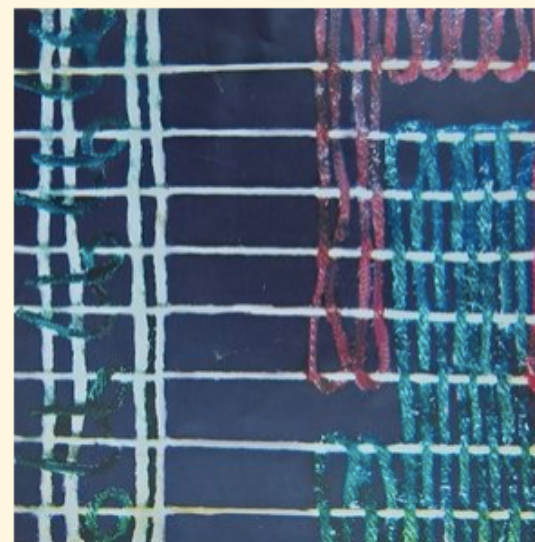
RHYTHM, METER, AND FORM



RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS



SCORE ANALYSIS SKILLS



INTRODUCTION TO RHYTHM, METER, AND FORM

PREFACE

I. A WORKING DEFINITION OF RHYTHM

II. MEASURED AND UNMEASURED MUSIC

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- INTRODUCTION -

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- INTRODUCTION -

A. PHRASE RHYTHM

B. INTERACTION OF PHRASE RHYTHM AND HYPERMETER

EXAMPLE 1. UNMEASURED AND MEASURED PLAYLIST

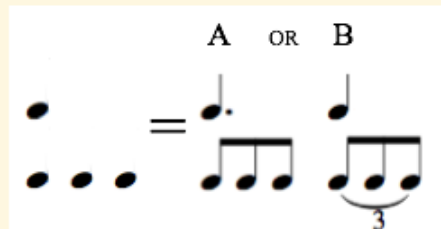
1. *El Capitan* John Philip Sousa
2. *Bhimpalasi* Ravi Shankar
3. Symphony no.1, i, Intro. Ludwig van Beethoven
4. *Georgia on My Mind* Hoagy Carmichael
5. *Dilmano, Dilbero* Bulgarian Women's Chorus
6. Prelude in C Major J. S. Bach, Well Tempered Clavier, bk. I
7. Nocturne, Op.55 no. Frederic Chopin
8. *Jeux des Vagues* Claude Debussy, La Mer
9. *Megamix* Steve Reich/Tranquility Bass
10. *O mio bambino caro* Giacomo Puccini, Gianni Scicchi
11. *Chemutengere* voice and mbira, (Zimbabwe) B. Michael Williams
12. *Money* Pink Floyd, Dark Side of the Moon
13. *La Suerte de los Tontos* Stan Kenton, Cuban Fire

EXAMPLE 2. UNMEASURED/MEASURED SPECTRUM



When we look at a score using traditional notation, it may seem like the music is quite strictly measured, with little variation from the established beat. Such indications as *ritardando*, *accelerando*, *meno mosso*, or *ad libitum*, however, can be used by the composer to suggest deviations from absolute regularity. In fact, in performance, rigid adherence to the proportions of notation is rare, and would be described as mechanical and unmusical. Even when terms to vary the tempo (speed of the beat) are absent, we introduce both subtle and not so subtle variations to perform convincingly. We call the process of applying these variations, whether conscious or not, *rubato* or *tempo rubato*. The application of *rubato* in performance lends a desirable flexibility and expressiveness to music which may otherwise sound too rigidly measured. You will have heard *rubato* in several of the

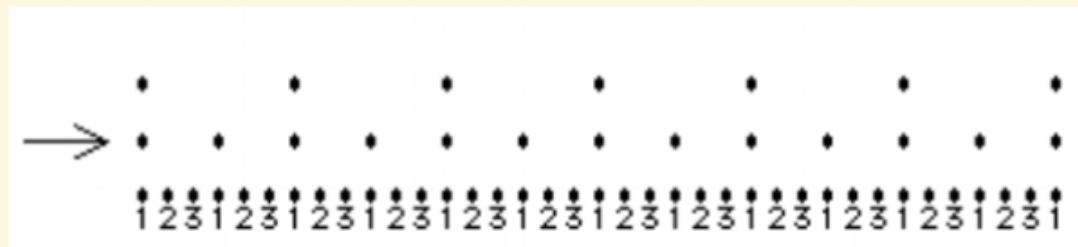
EXAMPLE 2. A TRIPLE PULSE EXPRESSED WITH A DOTTED NOTE OR AS A TRIPLET



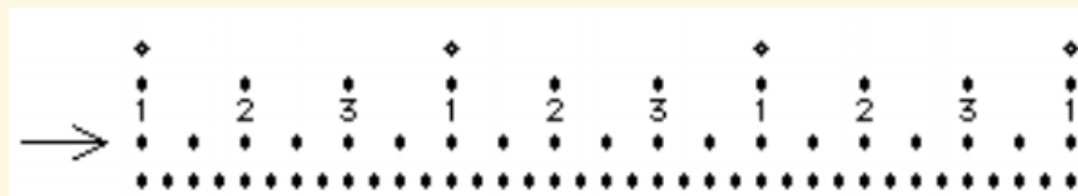
EXAMPLE 3. THE EFFECTS OF TEMPO ON THE TRIPLE PULSE; TRIPLE PULSE AS THE BEAT



EXAMPLE 4. THE EFFECTS OF TEMPO ON THE TRIPLE PULSE; TRIPLE PULSE AS FASTER THAN THE BEAT



EXAMPLE 5. THE EFFECTS OF TEMPO ON THE TRIPLE PULSE; TRIPLE PULSE AS SLOWER THAN THE BEAT



EXAMPLE 6. A SIMPLER TAXONOMY OF METERS

Our discussion of metric structures leads to an easily understood and heard taxonomy of two common meters: **duple** and **triple**. Tempo and the number of heard pulse streams will be a significant determinant of notation. Regarding notation: if we recognize that triplet notation is coequal to the dotted note to show triple meter, we find that a triple metric structure can be notated in several ways.

Concerning the 9/8 type: In the whole population of time signatures used in the 18th to 21st centuries, the triple meter with two triple pulse streams occurs infrequently. We have recognized that a measure of 9/8 can't be expressed by a single note value, as with duple and triple measures, and also that it is the only common (?) metric structure with two triple streams. In these three respects, 9/8 lies outside our system. However, we can accommodate 9/8 as a component of our organization the same way we accommodate the letter 'y' when reciting our vowels: "a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes y." Thus our taxonomy is complete—it's:

DUPLE, TRIPLE, AND SOMETIMES 9/8.

[OR "THE 9/8 TYPE"]

[OR "THE 9/X TYPE"]

**EXAMPLE 7 MOZART, SYMPHONY IN D MAJOR, K385 ("HAFFNER"), I.
MEASURES 1-15**

Allegro con spirito

full orchestra in octaves

f

p strs and bsns

tr

7

8

9

10

D: V

V

11

12

13

14

15

vi I⁶ ii⁶ V I *f* full orch etc.

Elision ↑

The dynamics, forte (mm. 1-5), piano (mm. 6-9) and forte at the elision (m. 13ff), support the beginning of the acceleration process by the contrasting dynamic in bar 6. Notice there is no crescendo here, which heightens the dramatic return to forte in bar 13.

The piece begins with the full orchestra playing in stark octaves and covering a range of more than two octaves. There are an unusually large number of unfilled leaps, three upward and one

EXAMPLE 8. MOZART, SYMPHONY IN D MAJOR, K385 ("HAFFNER"), I,
RECOMPOSITION

The first 4 measures may be broken down into the expected 2-measure ideas, separated by rests in measure 2. Phrase two takes the durational pattern of bar 3, motive x:

and repeats it in bars 5 and 6. The durational pattern of the last three notes of this motive, motive y:

EXAMPLE 9. METRIC STRUCTURE OF HAFFNER SYMPHONY, FIRST MOVEMENT



The TEMPO of the all-duple structure allows us to choose the half note as a comfortable beat value. Our hyperbeat is the typical one: the whole note represents a full measure. For analytical purposes, we would now have a choice of a four-bar or two-bar hypermeasure; the two-bar will be chosen as it makes the interaction between phrase rhythm and hypermeter easier to comprehend. The two-bar hypermeasure is expressed in the metric structure by the double whole note.

EXAMPLE 10. MOZART, SYMPHONY IN D MAJOR, K385 ("HAFFNER"), I.
MEASURES 1-15, WITH HYPERBEATS

Allegro con spirito

full orchestra **1** **1** **2** **1** **2** **1**

f

2 3 4 5 6 strings & bassoons

7 **2** **1** **2** **1**

p

8 9 10

11 **2** **1** **1** **1**

12 13 14 15

full orchestra *f*

Conduct the hypermeter, either with a recording, or better, with a mental performance. Use a large and decisive motion for the first five bars, a much smaller beat for bars 6-12. The last downbeat at the elision should once again be emphatic.

A way to characterize the interaction of phrase rhythm and hypermeter is that phrase rhythm provides the music's architecture, and hypermeter, when conducted, provides a dance through that architecture.