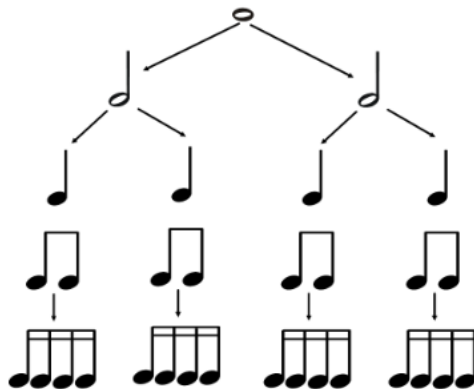


NOTE VALUE PYRAMID (and reading in 2, in 4, in 8)

This pyramid shows the relationship of the basic four types of notes (it does not include 32nd, 64th, or 128th notes). The relationship (and this is the key word) between the notes NEVER changes, no matter what the time signature, tempo, style of music, etc. is. Ex: four quarter notes are ALWAYS equivalent to one whole note; two eighth notes are always equivalent to one quarter note.



Use this relationship chart to figure out how to decipher what it means when someone says to you, "Play this in 2" (See example #1 below)

Example #1



This example is in 4/4, so there are four beats in a measure. What does it mean to "Play it in 2"? You are going to play it so that there are only two beats per measure. Huh? In our example, we'll pretend that the conductor is taking the music at a very fast tempo, so you would end up with shin splints if you tap your foot at that tempo, (which is why the conductor says to play it in 2).

OK – so here is your thought process:

- ♪ The relationship of the notes (pyramid) stays the same.
- ♪ I can't move the bar lines to make there be only two beats in a measure.
- ♪ In 4/4, four quarter notes make up one measure because a quarter note equals one beat and there have to be four beats in the measure.
- ♪ So, the question becomes, what kind of note would equal one beat if there were the same arrangements of notes as above, but I can only have two beats in the measure? Look at the pyramid and see what kind of note would put two beats in the same space as four quarter notes. (Answer: a half note will equal one beat, because two half notes are equivalent in time to four quarter notes)
- ♪ If you are mathematically inclined, you can also simply manipulate the fraction of the time signature: instead of 4 beats per measure, you want 2 beats per measure, so the fraction becomes 2/2 (2 beats per measure & a half note gets the beat).

Example #2

Let's say we have the same music, but it is very slow and the conductor says to "Play it in 8"



Thought process:

- ♪ The relationship of the notes (pyramid) stays the same.
- ♪ I can't move the bar lines to make there be 8 beats in a measure.
- ♪ In 4/4, four quarter notes make up one measure because a quarter note equals one beat and there have to be four beats in the measure.
- ♪ So, the question becomes, what kind of note would equal one beat if there were the same arrangements of notes as above, but I need to have eight beats in the measure? Look at the pyramid and see what kind of note would put eight beats in the same space as four quarter notes. (Answer: an eighth note will get one beat, because eight eighth notes are equivalent in time to four quarter notes)
- ♪ If you are mathematically inclined, you can also simply manipulate the fraction of the time signature: instead of 4 beats per measure, you want 8 beats per measure, so the fraction becomes 8/8 (8 beats per measure & an eighth note gets the beat).

So, see how each of these examples would be counted ...

In four:

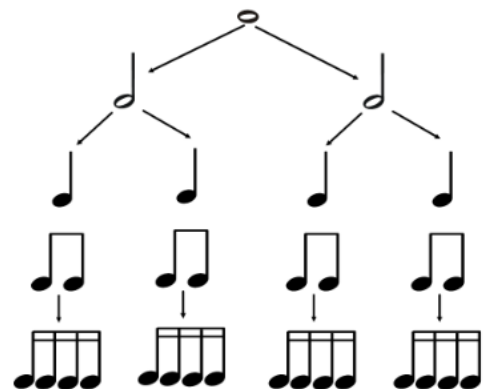


1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

In two:



1 + 2 + 1 e + a 2 +



In eight:



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

NOTE VALUE PYRAMID FOR 6/8 time

Below is the relationship of the basic notes in 6/8 (or 3/8, 9/8, 12/8). As with the whole note, half note, quarter note, etc. pyramid, the relationship (and this is the key word) between the notes NEVER changes, no matter what the time signature, tempo, style of music, etc. is. Ex: two dotted quarter notes are ALWAYS equivalent to one dotted half note; three eighth notes are always equivalent to one dotted quarter note.

These relationships are the same between the two charts, as well - that is to say, three eighth notes are always equivalent to one dotted quarter note whether you are looking at this chart or the one based on the whole note. The difference is that on this chart, the dotted quarter note often gets one beat rather than the quarter note getting one beat on the other pyramid chart. The relationships are the same!

6/8 "in 6" would mean that the eighth note gets one beat

6/8 "in 2" would mean that the dotted quarter note gets one beat

6/8 "in 1" (Holst 2nd Suite "Dargason" section with the Greensleeves melody) means the dotted half note gets one beat; conductor beats 1. (I know, "YIKES!" But it makes sense in trying to play the two melodies together. The Clarinets are in 6/8 and the euph solo is in 3/4 and they don't line up! Everyone else can think/count in either 6/8 or 3/4!