

## Lesson 16

# Pair of 8th Notes

Copyright © 2018 David Dempster. All rights reserved Version 1.0, 1 Aug.  
2018

<b>Course</b>	<b>Read &amp; Play Music</b>
<b>Book 3</b>	<b>Read and Play Tunes with Fascinating Rhythms</b>
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>8th Notes</b>
<b>Lesson 16</b>	<b>Pair of 8th Notes</b>

# CONTENTS

**Music Theory**

**Expanding the Learning Procedure**

**Example 1**

**Example 2**

**Drunken Sailor**

**Example 3**

**Irish Rover**

**Practical**

**Exercise 1: Pair of 8th Notes**

**Exercise 2: Pair of 8th Notes, left hand**

**Exercise 3: Pair of 8th Notes, different pitches**

**Exercise 4: Pairs of 8th Notes, left hand, pickup measure**

**Exercise 5: Pairs of 8th Notes, left hand,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , pickup measure**

**Tune 1: A traditional Scottish song**

**Loch Lomond**

**Tune 2: Patriotic British song**

**Land of Hope and Glory**



## **LESSON 16:**

# **PAIR OF 8TH NOTES**

## **EXPANDING THE LEARNING PROCEDURE**

# **MUSIC THEORY**

## **BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

We played lots of pairs of 8th notes in the last lesson, so you may be wondering why this lesson is titled 'Pair of 8th Notes'. Haven't we covered that already?

Let me explain.

The purpose of the last lesson was to introduce you to my Break-the-Beat practice method, and get you familiar with using it. It's a method for playing subdivided notes accurately.

But it doesn't cover other aspects of learning music, such as Practise-in-Sections and Speed-Up-Slowly. Those are covered by the Learning Procedure.

To get the benefits of *all* of those methods, we need to incorporate the Break-the-Beat method into the Learning Procedure. And we end up with this:

## Expanding the Learning Procedure

We're going to add Break-the-Beat as the new Step 3, like this:

- Step 1:** The Practise-in-Sections practice method
- Step 2:** The Know-Before-You-Go practice method
- Step 3:** The Break-the-Beat practice method
- Step 4:** The Speed-Up-Slowly practice method

**The four steps of the Learning Procedure, expanded.**

This may be looking like a bit of a monster! It's time to tame the monster so it keeps working well for us and doesn't become a burden. And here's how:

**Only use each step of the Learning Procedure where it is actually needed.**

Let me give you a few examples.

## Example 1

Let's say you are going to learn to play this exercise:



**Step 1:** You obviously don't need to use the Practise-in-Sections practice method because the exercise is so short. It doesn't need breaking into sections.

**Step 2:** And you don't need Know-Before-You-Go because there is only one pitch.

**Step 3:** But the Break-the-Beat method could be useful if you're practising playing the subdivision (8th notes) accurately.

**Step 4:** And once they are accurate, how about applying Speed-Up-Slowly to find your top speed?

## Example 2

Now how about this one?

### *Drunken Sailor*



**Step 1:** Practise-in-Sections? **YES**, because it is long.

**Step 2:** Know-Before-You-Go? **YES**, because there are different pitches and some fancy moves to do with your fingers. You have to do a ‘thumb under’ near the end of the first line.

**Step 3:** Break-the-Beat? **NO**, there are no subdivisions. All the notes are a quarter note longer.

**Step 4:** Speed-Up-Slowly? **YES**, especially because this tune is supposed to go pretty fast. It was sung by sailors on tall ships to coordinate their actions as they did tasks such as hauling up a sail. If they sang it slowly, the sail would fall down instead of going up!

### Example 3

One more.

## Irish Rover

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the piece 'Irish Rover'. The music is written in 4/4 time and consists of two lines of four measures each. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1 through 5 above the notes. The first line starts with a 5, followed by 2, 1, 3, 3, 3, 2, and 5. The second line starts with 2, 1, 3, 3, 3, 4, and 2. The piece ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

**Step 1:** Practise-in-Sections? **YES**. It's long.

**Step 2:** Know-Before-You-Go? **YES**. Some tricky fingering.

**Step 3:** Break-the-Beat? **YES.** Lots of subdivisions.

**Step 4:** Speed-Up-Slowly? **YES.** This is a rowdy Irish pub song. You'll want to play it pretty fast!

So this one needs the full power of the Learning Procedure, all 4 steps.

## **PRACTICAL**

### **BUILD YOUR SKILL**

Now let's get practice applying the Learning Procedure, in its new expanded form.

Here are the 4 steps:

**Step 1:** The Practise-in-Sections practice method

**Step 2:** The Know-Before-You-Go practice method

**Step 3:** The Break-the-Beat practice method

**Step 4:** The Speed-Up-Slowly practice method

**The four steps of the Learning Procedure.**

And here is the golden rule that makes it work well, so it is not a burden:

**Only use each step of the Learning Procedure where it is actually needed.**

I'll walk you through the Learning Procedure step by step.

## Exercise 1:

### Pairs of 8th notes

Here is the music for this exercise:



Let's see which of the 4 steps of the Learning Procedure are needed:

1. **Step 1:** Practise-in-Sections. **NO.** The music is short; no need to break it into sections.
2. **Step 2:** Know-Before-You-Go. **NO.** There is only one pitch.
3. **Step 3:** Break-the-Beat. **YES.**
  - a. Set metronome to 50 BPM to tick the beat:

- i. Play the music, making the subdivided 8ths as accurate as you can.
  - b. Set metronome to 100 BPM to tick the half beats:

metronome speed  
**100 BPM**



ticks: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

the beats: 1 2 3 4

- i. Play the music, repeating as needed until you're playing the 8th notes exactly with the ticks.

- c. Set metronome back to 50 BPM to tick the beat:

metronome speed  
**50 BPM**



ticks: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

the beats: 1 2 3 4

- Play the music, repeating as needed until your 8th notes are as accurate as they were when the metronome was ticking the half beats.
- If necessary, you can go back and forth with the metronome ticking the beats and then ticking the half beats, until your playing sounds the same either way.

#### 4. **Step 4:** Speed-Up-Slowly. **YES.**

- a. Choose your **starting speed:** a speed at which you can play the music accurately.

- b. **Gradually increase** the metronome speed, being sure to play accurately at each speed before you move up.
- c. When you simply cannot play accurately at a speed no matter what you do, turn the speed down several notches and play the music accurately. That is your **top speed** for now.

Phew! There it is: the Learning Procedure in full applied to learning an extremely simple piece of music. But you know, it worked pretty well. You ignored the first 2 steps, and then you got something useful out of steps 3 and 4: accurate subdivisions (8th notes), and then pushing your speed up to find your top speed. Do you see how that helped develop your accuracy and speed, two of the hallmarks of the professional?

As you progress to more and more complex subdivisions, you'll find the Learning Procedure to be a trusty companion.

## Exercise 2:

### Pairs of 8th notes, left hand

Here is the music for this exercise:



Let's see which of the 4 steps of the Learning Procedure are needed:

1. **Step 1:** Practise-in-Sections. **MAYBE.** The music is short, but even so you can break it into 2 sections if you find that useful. Let's assume you decide to do so.

2. Here is the first section:



3. **Step 2:** Know-Before-You-Go. **NO.** There is only one pitch.

4. **Step 3:** Break-the-Beat. **YES.** (Unless by now you are so good at playing 8th notes accurately that you don't need this step.) Let's assume you do decide to apply this step.

a. Set metronome to 50 BPM to tick the beat:

metronome speed  
50 BPM

ticks: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

the beats: 1 2 3 4

- Play the music, making the subdivided 8ths as accurate as you can.

b. Set metronome to 100 BPM to tick the half beats:

metronome speed  
100 BPM

ticks: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

the beats: 1 2 3 4

- Play the music, repeating as needed until you're playing the 8th notes exactly with the ticks.

c. Set metronome back to 50 BPM to tick the beat:

metronome speed  
50 BPM

ticks: ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

the beats: 1 2 3 4

- Play the music, repeating as needed until your 8th notes are as accurate as they were when the metronome was ticking the half beats.
- If necessary, you can go back and forth with the metronome ticking the beats and then ticking the half beats, until your playing sounds the same either way.

5. **Step 4:** Speed-Up-Slowly. **YES.**

a. Apply Speed-Up-Slowly to find your top speed for playing this music accurately.

6. **Step 1:** Then go back to **Step 1** of the Learning Procedure (Practise-in-Sections), to pick the next section to work on, and so on.

Do you see how you are developing your skill in playing accurate 8th note pairs at speed?

## Exercise 3:

### Pairs of 8th notes, different pitches

Here is the music for this exercise:



Apply the needed steps of the Learning Procedure:

**Step 1:** The Practise-in-Sections practice method. **YES.** (My suggestion.)

**Step 2:** The Know-Before-You-Go practice method. **YES.**

**Step 3:** The Break-the-Beat practice method. **YES.**

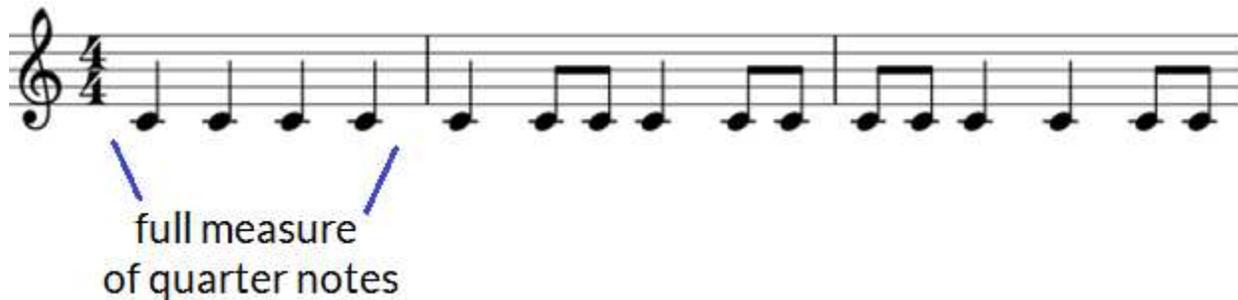
**Step 4:** The Speed-Up-Slowly practice method. **YES.**

**Tip:** Sometimes you can help yourself establish the subdivided beat by playing a full measure of quarter notes, followed by the exercise you're doing. The 4 quarter notes establish the timing firmly, and then it's easier to break the beats into the subdivided notes. This can apply particularly when starting out some measures of subdivided notes at a metronome speed of 50.

Here's an example. Let's say you're practising this exercise:



Try playing the exercise preceded by a full measure of quarter notes:



You'll find that the quarter notes help you get the beat firmly, and the beat carries forward into the following measures. Once you're doing that well, drop the measure of quarter notes and just play the exercise:



Give it a try.

## Exercise 4:

### **Pairs of 8th notes, left hand, pickup measure**

Here is the music for this exercise:



Apply the steps of the Learning Procedure you decide are useful.

## Exercise 5:

### Pairs of 8th notes, left hand, 3/4, pickup measure

Here is the music for this exercise:



Apply the Learning Procedure. (That really means 'Apply the steps of the Learning Procedure you decide are useful.')

**Tip:** Any time you want to check the accuracy of your 8th notes, you can double the metronome speed to tick the half beats, play a bit, and then turn the speed back down to tick the beats.

## Tune 1:

### A traditional Scottish song

One of the best known and best loved of Scottish songs.

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)

### *Loch Lomond*



## Tune 2:

### Patriotic British song

Have you ever felt mixed up between the words 'British' and 'English'.

The largest of our islands is called 'Britain'. England is the country making up the southern part of Britain.

It's been that way since 1707, the year when Scotland united with England and Wales.

This tune dates from 1902, so this patriotic song is British (not English) since it was written long after the formation of Britain.

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)

## *Land of Hope and Glory*

