

Lesson 21

Dotted Quarter + 8th: Dotted Rhythm

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LESSON 21:


DOTTED QUARTER + 8TH: DOTTED RHYTHM

MUSIC THEORY

BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

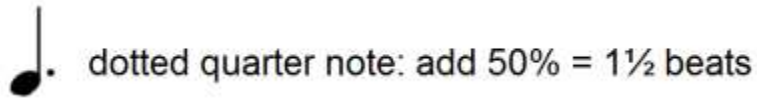
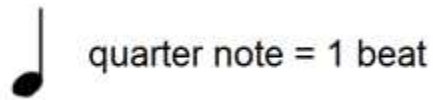
In *Book 1*, we saw how a dot after a half note adds 50% to the duration of the note.

 half note = 2 beats

 dotted half note: add 50% = 3 beats

It turns out that that rule applies to all types of notes.

For now, let's apply it to the quarter note.



Dotted rhythm

Here again is the dotted quarter note:



Since the quarter note usually represents a beat, the dotted quarter note is 1.5 beats.

You'll often find it in company with an 8th note (0.5 beats), because the two of them together make up a total of 2 beats ($1.5 + 0.5 = 2$). It's as if the dotted quarter and the 8th note complete each other nicely.

Here they are together:



Dotted quarter + 8th.

I'm calling this rhythm 'dotted quarter + 8th'.

When you play them rather fast, they produce a jerky sort of sound, very different from a pair of quarter notes. This jerky sound is called a 'dotted rhythm'.

Definition: a **dotted rhythm** is the rhythm created by a dotted note, followed by a short note that has the same duration as the dot. It can also be the other way round, with the short note preceding the dotted note.



Dotted quarter + 8th: an example of a dotted rhythm.

You'll hear the special quality of a dotted rhythm as you work your way through the following exercises.

Learning to play dotted rhythms is a big step forward. Musicians take pride in playing dotted rhythms accurately. It's not enough just to play a long note followed by a short note. They must both have exactly the right duration in order for it to be a true dotted rhythm.

You will develop your skill in reading and playing dotted rhythms as you do the exercises below.

PRACTICAL

BUILD YOUR SKILL

These exercises will help you develop precision and speed in your playing of the dotted rhythm.

Exercise 1:

Dotted quarter + 8th

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-Section.
2. **Step 2:** Know-Before-You-Go.
3. **Step 3:** Break-the-Beat. The whole point of this exercise is to learn to play the subdivisions accurately at speed.
 - 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 8th note as accurate as you can.
- If you find this pretty difficult, well, *maybe that's because it is difficult!* That's why I've given you the Learning Procedure, and in particular this step of the procedure, Break-the-Beat. I've given it to you to help you master these tricky rhythms.

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 note 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 note is 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.

2. Step 4: Speed-Up-Slowly.

- Choose your **starting speed**: a speed at which you can play the music accurately.
- Gradually increase** the metronome speed, being sure to play accurately at each speed before you move up.
- 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.

Exercise 2:

Left hand, 2 measures

Here is the music for this exercise:



Apply the Learning Procedure (only the steps you need). (See Lesson 13)

Step 1: Practise-in-Sections.

Step 2: Know-Before-You-Go.

Step 3: Break-the-Beat. The whole point of this exercise is to learn to play these challenging subdivisions accurately with speed. Break-the-Beat helps you achieve that.

Step 4: Speed-Up-Slowly. Learn to play the 8th notes accurately with speed.

Exercise 3:

Two of 'dotted quarter + 8th'

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)



Exercise 4:

Different pitches

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)



Tune 1:

Patriotic American song

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)

America the Beautiful



Exercise 5:

3/4 time

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)



Tune 2:

A Christmas carol

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)

In the Bleak Midwinter



Tune 3:

A traditional Scottish tune

Prince Charles Edward Stuart, known to us as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', is a romantic figure in Scottish history. He was the grandson of a king of Scotland and England, and so he considered himself to be the rightful king. In 1745, he led the '45 rebellion' to try to take over the throne of the United Kingdom.

He is fondly remembered in this song.

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)

Will Ye No Come Back Again?



Tune 4:

A classical violin tune

For our last tune, let's play the tune I described earlier as having the 'jerky rhythm'. Now you know the proper name of that rhythm: 'dotted quarter + 8th' which is one type of 'dotted rhythm'.

Apply the Learning Procedure. (See Lesson 13)

Humoresque, by Dvorak



Reminder: You should end up feeling relaxed and in control. If you don't, take the speed down a bit lower.