

Part 1

The Beginning

*“Lets start at the very beginning, a very good place to start”
Julie Andrews*

Part One of this book covers the first steps involved in learning to play drums and read music. One, two, three and four beat notes are covered, along with rests of the same lengths. We also cover groups of half beat notes, where there are two or four in a row. Other basics of music notation are explained, at the same time as we start to play our first notes on the snare drum.

1.1 Crotchets

Music is placed on a staff, which has five lines. Notes are placed on lines or spaces within the staff. At the start of each line is a clef, which is used to show tuned instruments what pitch each line and space represents. With percussion, there is no pitch, and so each line and space is used to represent different instruments. The bass clef is often used for percussion music.

Following the clef is the time signature, which shows how many beats are in each bar. 4/4 time indicates that there are four one-beat notes in a bar.

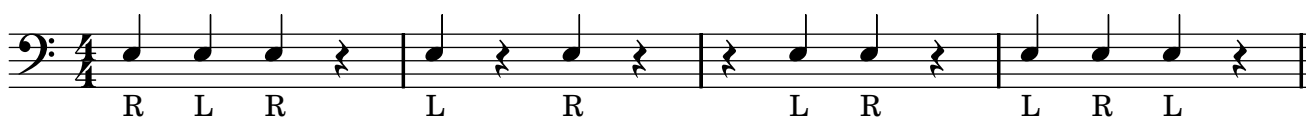
After the clef there are notes, which are separated into bars. Each bar has the right number of beats in to match the time signature. The example below shows crotchets, which are one-beat notes, and crotchet rests, which are the same length as crotchets but are silent. Finally, the end of the piece is marked by a double bar with a thick right hand line.



Notes in the third space up, like the example above, are played on the snare drum.

When playing notes on a drum, alternate between striking the drum with the right and the left stick. So, in the example above, the three notes in the first bar would be played using the right stick for the first, then the left stick for the second, then the right stick again for the third. Start the second bar with the left stick.

This can be shown with the letter L or R below each note.



It is often helpful to count (in your head or out loud) when playing music. This makes it easier to play the notes in the right place. This example shows what you would count.



1.1.1 Exercises

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1.1.2 Exercises

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1.2 Minims & Semibreves

Now we have played one beat notes, we can look at other lengths. This section covers two and four beat notes, and their rests.

In the example below, we again have four beats in a bar. In the first bar there are four crotchets, which each last one beat. In the second bar, there are two minims, each of which lasts two beats. The third bar contains a single semibreve, which lasts four beats.

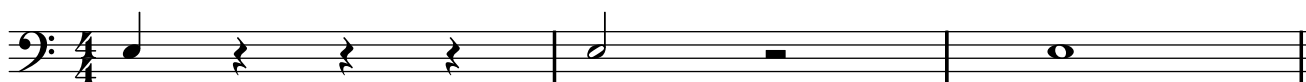


Notice again that there are four beats in every bar. The first bar has four beats ($1+1+1+1 = 4$), as has the second ($2+2 = 4$) as has the last ($4 = 4$).

This second example shows two beat and four beat rests. The second bar has a minim and then a minim rest in it, and the last bar has a semibreve rest which takes up the whole bar.



Some instruments, like wind instruments, can make a difference in the length of notes they play. They can play a note and hold it on for the specified number of beats. When playing a drum, this is not possible (unless you play a drum roll, which we'll come onto later). So, when playing a drum, simply hit it and then count the appropriate number of beats. In the following example, each bar sounds the same.



Here's a tip for remembering the lengths of rests. The two beat rest sits on top of a line, and a four beat rest hangs from the underside. The four beat rest "hangs around" for longer than a two beat rest does.

1.2.1 Exercises

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1.3 Simple Quavers

Next we're going to cover half beat notes, which are called quavers. First of all we're going to look at groups of four and two quavers, as they are the simplest to play. Later we'll move onto single quavers.

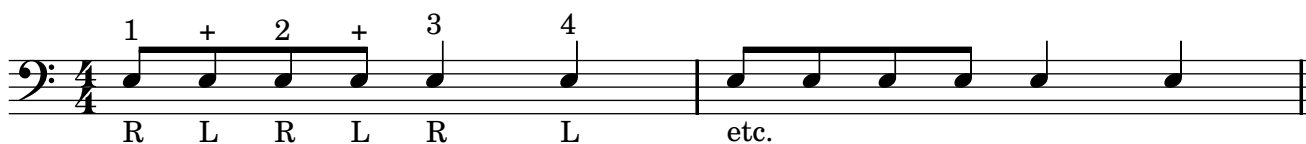
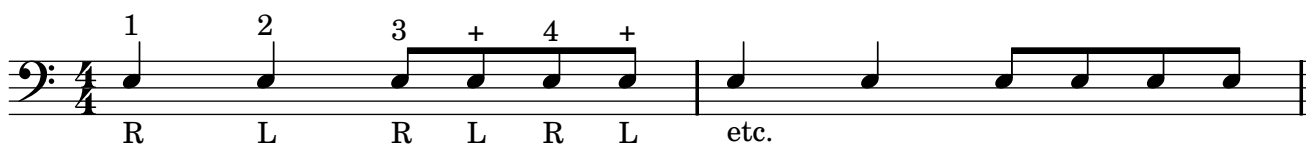
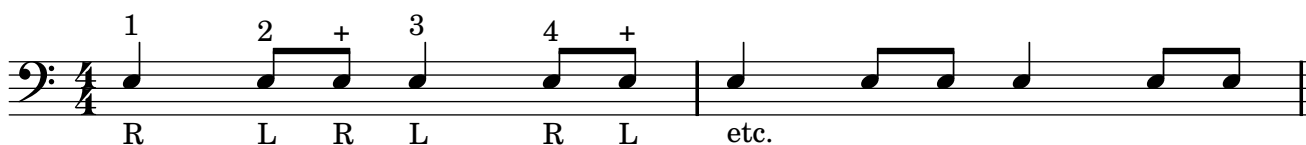
Groups of quavers are written just like crotchets, but are joined together by a beam along the top of the note stem.



Note again that each bar has four beats in it.

It now becomes more important to play notes with alternate sticks. Quavers are often too fast to be played with the same stick.

There are several patterns of notes involving quavers that are used a lot. The exercises on the next page use them, but here is the list of patterns to try first and get used to.



1.3.1 Exercises

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1.3.2 Exercises

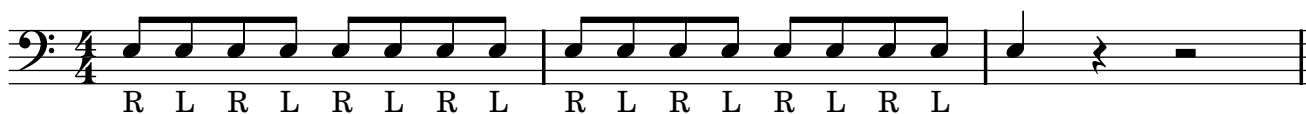
The image contains nine numbered musical exercises, each on a single staff in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The exercises are as follows:

- 1. A sequence of four measures: four quarter notes (G2, A2, B2, C3), two eighth notes (D3, E3) followed by a quarter note (F3), two eighth notes (G3, A3) followed by a quarter note (B3), and two eighth notes (C4, B3) followed by a quarter rest.
- 2. A sequence of four measures: two eighth notes (G2, A2) followed by a quarter note (B2), two eighth notes (C3, D3) followed by a quarter note (E3), a quarter note (F3) followed by a quarter rest, and a quarter note (G3) followed by a quarter rest.
- 3. A sequence of four measures: a beamed eighth-note pair (G2, A2) followed by a quarter note (B2), a beamed eighth-note pair (C3, D3) followed by a quarter note (E3), a beamed eighth-note pair (F3, G3) followed by a quarter note (A3), and a quarter note (B3) followed by a quarter rest.
- 4. A sequence of four measures: four quarter notes (G2, A2, B2, C3), a beamed eighth-note pair (D3, E3) followed by a quarter note (F3), a beamed eighth-note pair (G3, A3) followed by a quarter note (B3), and a quarter note (C4) followed by a quarter rest.
- 5. A sequence of four measures: four quarter notes (G2, A2, B2, C3), two eighth notes (D3, E3) followed by a quarter note (F3), a beamed eighth-note pair (G3, A3) followed by a quarter note (B3), and a quarter note (C4) followed by a quarter rest.
- 6. A sequence of four measures: four quarter notes (G2, A2, B2, C3), two eighth notes (D3, E3) followed by a quarter note (F3), two eighth notes (G3, A3) followed by a quarter note (B3), and a half note (C4).
- 7. A sequence of four measures: two eighth notes (G2, A2) followed by a quarter note (B2), two eighth notes (C3, D3) followed by a quarter note (E3), two eighth notes (F3, G3) followed by a quarter note (A3), and a quarter note (B3) followed by a quarter rest.
- 8. A sequence of four measures: four quarter notes (G2, A2, B2, C3), a beamed eighth-note pair (D3, E3) followed by a quarter note (F3), a beamed eighth-note pair (G3, A3) followed by a quarter note (B3), and two eighth notes (C4, B3) followed by a quarter rest.
- 9. A sequence of four measures: four quarter notes (G2, A2, B2, C3), a beamed eighth-note pair (D3, E3) followed by a quarter note (F3), a beamed eighth-note pair (G3, A3) followed by a quarter note (B3), and a quarter note (C4) followed by a quarter rest.

1.4 Single Stroke Roll

Where tuned instruments learn scales, percussionists have drum rudiments. These are little short figures that are useful for building up technique. Some of them are also used in pieces.

This rudiment is our first stage on the way to being able to play a drum roll. It consists of the same alternate strokes that we have been playing so far, held at a constant tempo.

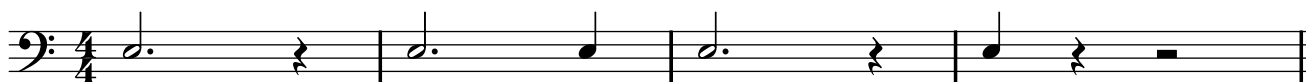


Once you have mastered the basics of keeping this going at a steady time, stop. Then start again, playing slightly faster. Keep trying to go faster and faster, but make sure you are still doing proper notes and the sticking is even and regular. Be sure to do this exercise each time you practice.

1.5 Dotted Minims

You now know the basic half, one, two and four beat notes. We missed out three because three beat notes are written in a special way.

A dot after a note indicates that the note should be lengthened by half of its note value. So, to get a three beat note, we take a minim and put a dot after it. This gives a two beat note, extended by half its length again, to give three. ($2 + 1 = 3$)



This idea of adding a dot after a note applies to other lengths of note too, but we won't meet them for a while yet. For example, a dotted crotchet lasts for one and a half beats ($1 + \text{half} = 1 \text{ and a half}$).

1.5.1 Exercises



1.6 Study

At the end of each part of this book is a study. This is a longer piece of music that draws on all the things that this book has covered to date.

Notice that the bar number is shown at the beginning of each line. This is helpful when your teacher is trying to show which bar is being talked about, or tell you where to start from.

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of five lines of music, each starting with a bar number. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests. The first line starts at bar 4 and ends with a double bar line. The second line starts at bar 5 and ends with a double bar line. The third line starts at bar 10 and ends with a double bar line. The fourth line starts at bar 15 and ends with a double bar line. The fifth line starts at bar 20 and ends with a double bar line.