

Mastering Mixed Meter Music



We will be ringing from this score, so please print this out and bring it to class!!

Kathleen Wissinger Longwalk3@aol.com HMA National Seminar, Nashville, TN 2022

Rules of the game:





1. Always count individual eighth notes in X/8 - and quarter notes in X/4 - eighth notes are constant (not triplets)

For example: In 7/8 you may count individual beats (123,45,67) or in grouped pulse units (1+a, 2+, 3+)

2. Group eighth notes in "families" of 2's, 3's - Use eighth-note beams and context as a guide.

-Beamed eighth notes and longer notes don't usually cross major pulse divisions unless tied or syncopated.

-Lone 8th notes/rests belong to a family - either before  or after  another note


These are counted: $1 + a \quad 1 + 2 + \quad 1 + a \quad 2 + a$

3. Feel the shifting pulse - count out loud!! Apply stresses in context (look at both staves.)


4. Every measure starts with "1" - Try tapping the rhythms L&R; use LH for underlined pulses

5. Spacing doesn't matter - all eighth note beats are equal (no sped-up triplets) (*Don't need to count the ()'s*)


Counting common time signatures (identify the single beat unit and the major pulse units)

A $\frac{4}{4}$ 


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

B $\frac{3}{4}$ 

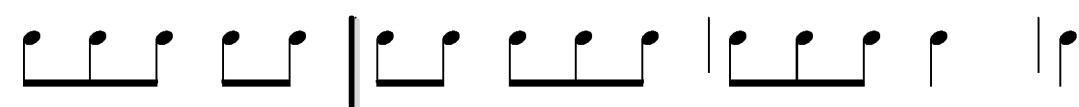
1 2 3 1 + 2 3 + 1 2 + 3

C $\frac{2}{4}$ 


1 2 1 + 2 + 1 + 2 1 2 +

D $\frac{6}{8}$ 


1 + a 2 + a 1 + a 2 (+) a 1 (+ a) 2 + (a)

E $\frac{5}{8}$ 

1 + a 2 + 1 + 2 + a 1 + a 2 (+) 1 (+) 2 + a

F $\frac{7}{8}$ 

1 + a 2 (+) 3 + 1 (+) 2 + a 3 + 1 + a 2 + 3 (+)

G $\frac{10}{8}$ 

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

Some examples of fairly simple Mixed Meter:

The Sower, Wissinger (REG6149)

m. 21 m. 26

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$

1 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 1 2 + 3 4 + 1 2 + 3 4 5 6

(Group into 3 and 2 by context)

Song of Peace, Sherman intro (RRHB0046)

m. 11

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

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

With God All Things Are Possible, Payn m. 76 (MOMSM30823)

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$

1 2 3 + 4 + 1 2 + 3 4 5 + 1 + 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 4 5 +

Fantasy on Kingsfold, Wagner m. 15 (HP2134)

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

(Unusual example with no division of pulse)

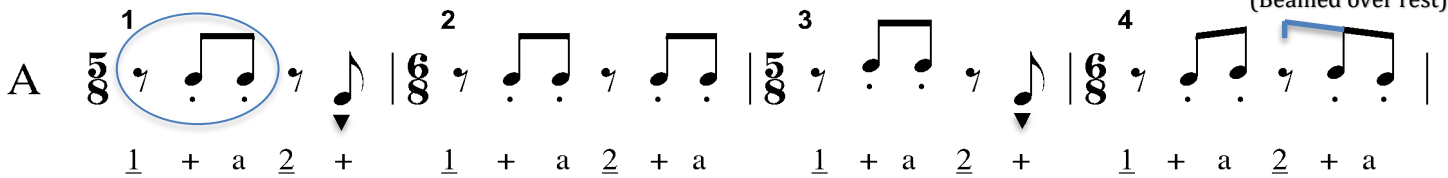
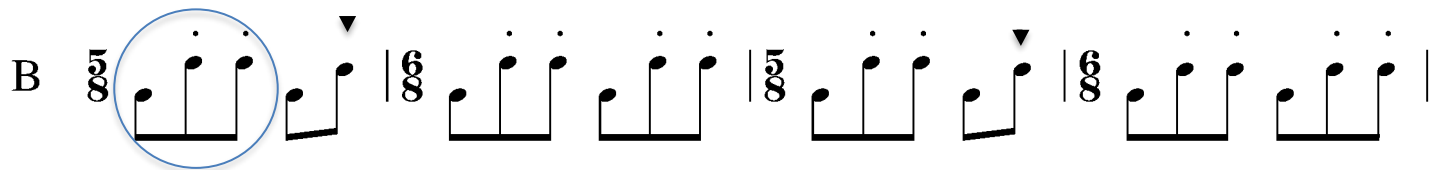
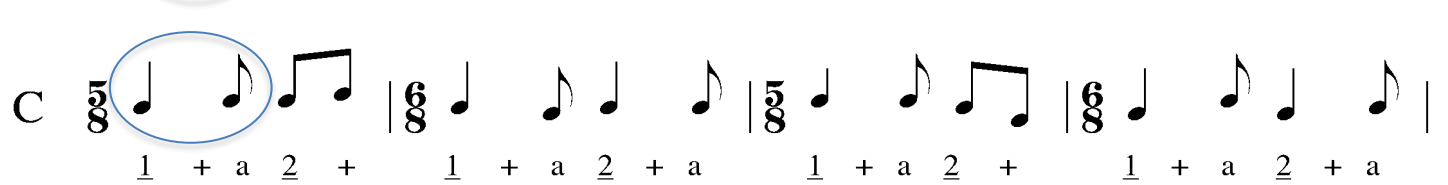
Dance Jubilee, McChesney m. 99 (LC201163L)

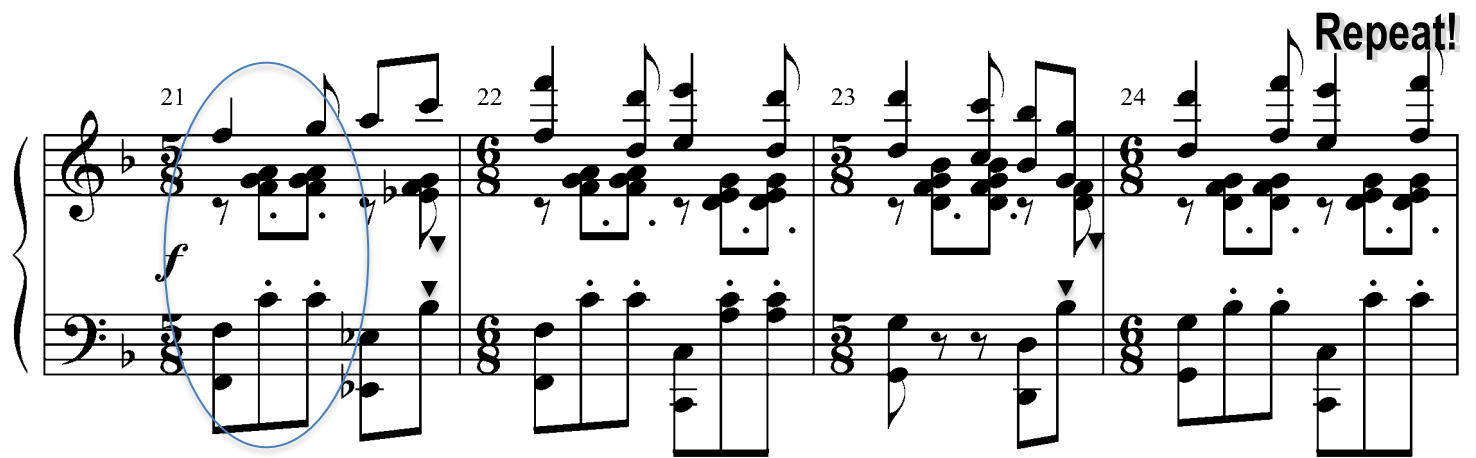
$\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

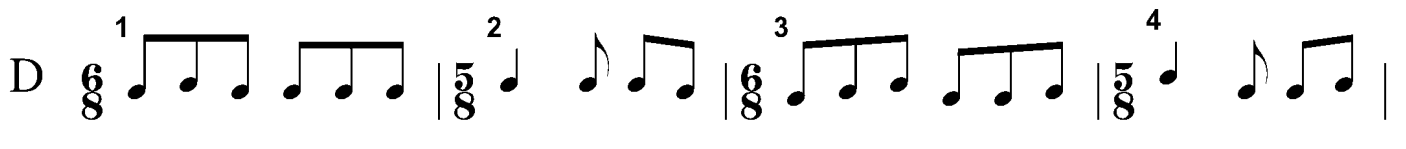
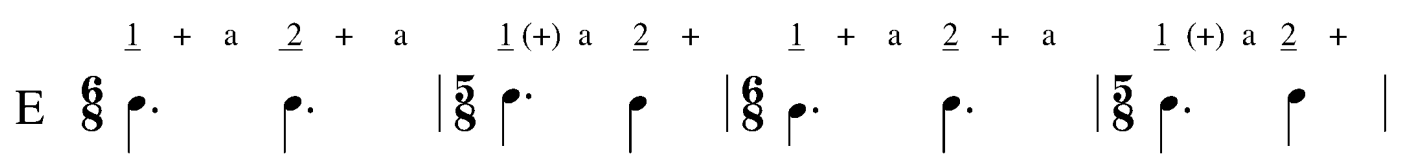
1 + a 2 + a 1 (+) 2 (+) 3 (+) 1 + a 2 + a

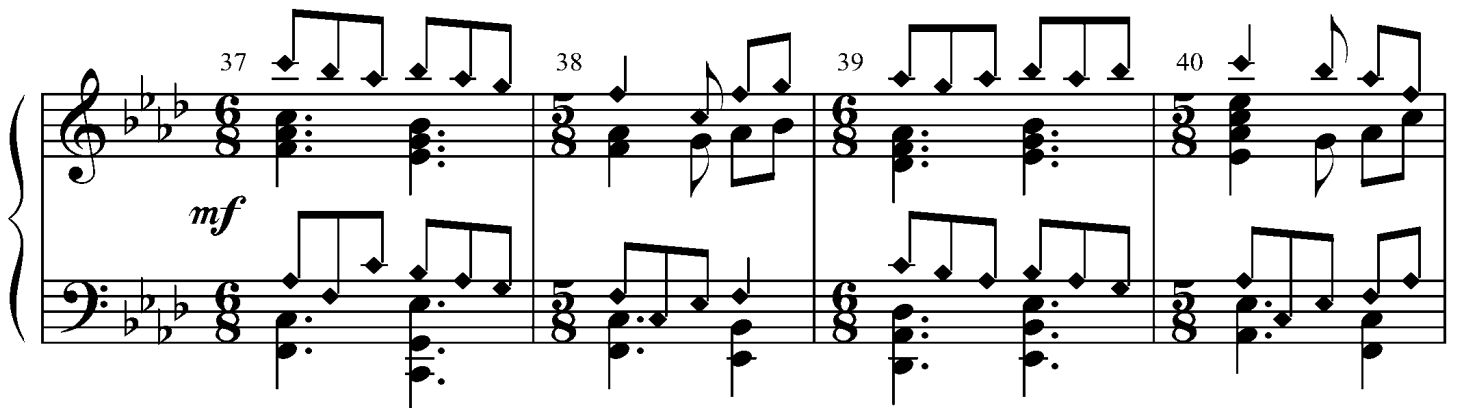
Repertoire: "Sunflower Dance" from "Prairie Suite" by Kathleen Wissinger, 3-6 oct. Level 4 AG36043

(Beamed over rest)

A 
 B 
 C 

 **Repeat!**

D 
 E 



Repertoire: "Dorian Dance" by Michael Joy, 3-5 oct. L4+ JHS9365 Try LH stem down and RH stem up

A

1 + a 2 + a | 1 2 3 | 1 + a 2 (+) a | 1 2 3

B.5 Not necessary to count the "+" for quarter notes

B

1 a 2 a 3+ | 1 2 3 4 | 1 a 2 a 3+ | 1+ 2+ 3+ 4+ | 1 2

C

C.5 You may count the dot "." as "a"

C.8 Syncopated note continues 8/8 feel in bass

D

1 + a 2 a 3 + | 1 + a 2 a 3 + | 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + | 1 2 + 3 + 4 +

D.12 Always count the major pulses, even for rests (m12 b3), but you may skip the off-beat eighths (m13 b1.5)

E. Now to follow mixed-meter rhythms across staves – always keep the eighth note families in mind. Cross staff beaming keeps "pulse families" together.

E

1 + a 2 + a 3 + | 1 + a 2 + a 3 + | 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Additional Repertoire:

Canticle for a New Day, Derek Hakes – GIG9206

Crosswind, Sondra Tucker – AU0800659880

Twos in the Moon of Wintertime, William Gross – SPHP5454

See more detailed class notes in "Building Blocks" from ringTrue – Spring 2023

HMA Seminar, Nashville, TN USA - Mastering Mixed Meter - Entire Handout - Copyright © 2022 Kathleen Wissinger