

# Chapter 1

## *Rhythm, Meter, and Tempo*

### Key Terms

- Rhythm
- Beat
- Accent
- Meter
- Measure (bar)
- Simple meter
- Compound meter
- Syncopation
- Tempo
- Metronome
- Tempo indications

# Rhythm

- Rhythm = The way music unfolds in time
- “A rhythm” = An arrangement of long and short sounds and silences

# Time Concepts in Western Music

- Beat
  - Regular background pulse
- Accent
  - Extra emphasis on a beat
  - Regular, irregular, or no accents
- Meter
  - Regular, recurring pattern of accented and unaccented (strong and weak) beats

# Meters

- Duple meter  
ONE *two* | ONE *two* | ONE *two* |
- Triple meter  
ONE *two three* | ONE *two three* |

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff is in 2/4 time and contains the melody for "Yankee Doodle came to town". The notes are quarter notes, and the lyrics are "Yankee Doodle came to town". Below the staff, the rhythm is written as "ONE two ONE two" and labeled "Duple meter". The second staff is in 3/4 time and contains the melody for "My coun-try 'tis of thee". The notes are quarter notes, and the lyrics are "My coun-try 'tis of thee". Below the staff, the rhythm is written as "ONE two three ONE two three" and labeled "Triple meter".

# Simple and Compound Meter

- Simple meter: main beats divided in twos
- Compound meter: main beats divided in threes

## Compound Meter

- Quick, triple subdivision of beats  
ONE-*and-a* two-*and-a* | ONE-*and-a* two-*and-a* |
- “Row, row, row your boat...”



## Rhythm vs. Meter

- Meter as background; rhythm as foreground
- Meter the yardstick; rhythm the object being measured



## Syncopation

- Displaces accents
  - On weak beats
    - *one TWO | one TWO | one TWO*
  - In between beats
    - *one AND two AND | one AND two AND |*
- Joplin, “Maple Leaf Rag”

## Tempo

- The speed of music
- The rate at which beats follow one another
- Metronome marks: exact
- Tempo indications: approximate; can express mood

## Common Tempo Indications

<i>Adagio</i>	Slow
<i>Andante</i>	Slow, but not too slow
<i>Moderato</i>	Moderate
<i>Allegro</i>	Fast
<i>Presto</i>	Very fast

## Listening Exercises

- Metrical or nonmetrical?
- Duple or triple?
- Simple or compound?
- Syncopation?
- Slow, moderate, or fast tempo?