

## **TOPIC 2 - BEATS**

Now let's talk about BEATS. A beat is a sound or motion or flash of light that measures the passage of time. The second hand on a clock that moves each second is said to be beating time at the rate of one beat per second. If you clap along with the second hand, you are beating time at the rate of one beat per second. The beat sound or motion that you make marks the end of one period of time and the beginning of the next period of time.

As I mentioned above, seconds always measure off the same amount of time. There will always be one second of time between beats that are sounding at the beginning of each second. The speed of these beats never changes, because the length of time of each second never changes (it is based on the speed that the earth rotates, which never changes).

**Sample Text – Not For Sale**

## TOPIC 10 - DIVIDING BEATS

Now think about watching the seconds tick off on your clock. Every second is exactly like every other second. Is it exciting to watch the clock tick off seconds? What about minutes? How exciting is it to watch a minute hand move on your clock? Not very exciting, right? Music would be very boring and monotonous if all sounds were exactly one beat in length and all beat were exactly the same length.

Example:



So, the first thing a composer can do to provide variety is to divide the beats into parts. This is like cutting a pie into pieces.

Beats can be divided or cut into halves, thirds, quarters, fifths, sixths, and on rare occasion sevenths or more. Dividing beats into halves and fourths is very common. These divisions are used so often that you will come to easily recognize them with only a little practice. Dividing beats into thirds, fifths, sixths, sevenths, or more is less common. To help you know into how many parts a beats is divided, the composer will usually put a small number above each BEAT BAR, such as a 3, 5, 6, or 7.

When you cut a pie, all the pieces don't have to be the same size. That is the same with cutting up a beat. Some of the pieces can be big and others small; however, the parts all add up to equal one beat. Using BEAT BARS, I will illustrate all of the ways a beat can be divided from two through six divisions. Beats can be divided into more than six parts but such divisions are usually reserved for very fast "runs", trills, or percussion rolls.

A beat that is divided in half can be divided in 1 way.



A beat that is divided into thirds can be divided in 3 ways.



## TOPIC 18 – PLACING NOTES AND RESTS ON DIVIDED BEAT BARS (EXERCISES 11–50)

When BEAT BARS are divided, the NOTE or REST that is equal to ONE beat must also be divided in the same way. The following explanations and examples will tell and show you how to divide Whole, Half, Quarter, and Eighth Notes and Rests when you place them on divided BEAT BARS. As you do the exercises you will see that even though different kinds of NOTES and RESTS are used to equal one beat, the rhythms are exactly the same each time.

### WHOLE NOTES AND WHOLE RESTS EQUAL ONE BEAT

When a Whole Note or Whole Rest is equal to ONE beat, the notes and rests that are placed on the BEAT BAR must add up to a Whole Note or Whole Rest. The various options are shown below. (REMEMBER: Notes and Rests are placed at the beginning of a beat or division of a beat.)

1. **DIVIDING A BEAT BAR IN HALF** - If a BEAT BAR is divided in half, divide the Whole Note or Whole Rest in half and place the resulting Half Note or Half Rest over each half of the BEAT BAR.

Example:

The first diagram shows a horizontal line representing a beat bar, divided by a triangle pointing upwards. Two half notes are placed on the line, one on each side of the triangle. Below the line, the number '1' is under the first half and the ampersand '&' is under the second half. The second diagram shows a similar horizontal line divided by a triangle. Two half rests are represented by black rectangular blocks on the line, one on each side of the triangle. Below the line, the number '1' is under the first half and the ampersand '&' is under the second half.