

Compound Time

Lesson by Enrique Molina

Review of Simple Time Signatures

Top number indicates how many beats they are in a measure →
Bottom number indicates what note value gets the beat →

The '4' indicates that the ♩ (quarter note) gets the beat

The '2' indicates that the ♪ (half note) gets the beat

The '1' indicates that the ♩ (whole note) gets the beat

The Conductor will generally conduct the number of beats in a given measure in simple time, for example in the 3/2 measure, the conductor will show a three pattern just like 3/4.

Compound Time Signatures

Top # indicates how many of the bottom value each measure has →
Bottom # indicates what note value is being used to break down the bar →

The '8' indicates that the ♩ (eighth note) is the note value used to break down the bar

The above measure will be conducted like the bottom measure

Unlike simple meter, in compound meter the time signatures tells us how many units they are in a particular measure *but not* what gets the beat.

The Conductor will generally conduct a compound meter in which the dotted quarter note gets the beat not the eighth note.
The 9/8 measure will be conducted like a 3/4 measure or a 3/2 measure.

Exercises in Compound Time

How many eighth notes are implied in this 15/8 measure? Answer _____

Using the example to the left write two 9/8 measures using only notes in the staff and only dotted quarter notes and eighths notes

Extra Credit: Only using QUARTER NOTES write two measures of 6/8

In this 12/8 measure would a quarter note or a dotted quarter note fill in the last conducted beat? Answer _____