

Week 1

Introduction to Rhythm

Lesson Summary

In the first tutorial, we look at the Beats interface in the YouthBeat app, and while we explore the interface elements, we learn about the basic concepts behind rhythm.

We introduce some important vocabulary around how music is counted and explain why a counting pattern is crucial to be able to follow music, and how the spacing of different musical sounds within that counting pattern is the main thing that defines a rhythm.

We explore how a pattern of alternating musical sounds helps to highlight small differences in spacing in a pattern, intensifying the impact of those changes, and creating surprise. Removing a note from a pattern is another way of highlighting something in a pattern, by drawing listeners' attention to what comes next.

We discuss how repetition helps listeners know where they are starting from, and how contrast helps them notice important changes in the music.

We show how pairs - of notes, of drum sounds, and of patterns - help enhance contrast and make the music memorable.



Glossary

Rhythm	a pattern of sounds that controls how music unfolds in time, and how it moves.
Bar	one turn of a beat circle, the basic unit for building music
Beats	divide a bar of music into four equal parts
Counting pattern	the beats form a regular counting pattern of 1...2...3...4.... that listeners use to follow the music.
Note	a musical sound that has a fixed duration or length
Musical Sound	sound produced by a musical instrument or voice
Contrast	a noticeable difference between two musical events
Bass Drum	the deepest sound on the beat circles
Downbeat	a note that falls on the first beat space, tells listeners 'this is the beginning of the bar' and is usually played on the Bass Drum
Snare	a higher sounding drum that produces a 'jerky' sound that's very different from the bass drum
Beat pattern	a pattern of spacing of notes within one bar or turn of a beat circle

Hi hat	an instrument that briefly hits two cymbals against each other, producing a short, high sound that stands out from the drums in length, in how high the notes sound, and in colour
Spacing of notes	the amount of space between notes in a beat circle
On the beat	a note that falls on a beat marker
Off the beat	a note that falls between beat markers
Pattern of sounds	the order in which different drum sounds are played in a beat pattern
Putting sounds in pairs	using an order where the same sound is used for a pair of notes
Connecting note	a note that forms a link between two pairs of beats
Combining a pair and a trio of sounds	a more complex pattern that involves a contrast between a group of two notes and a group of three
Syncopation	a pattern where a note is heard right before a beat marker that does not have a note on it. The note before the beat marker is heard to continue past the beat marker. This effect is most noticeable in melody where notes are often longer, however it is also easily heard when a bass drum is used.
Missing note/gap/rest	a note in a beat pattern that is removed when the pattern is repeated. This creates a gap where the listener expected to hear a sound. The gap is called a rest in music.
Repetition	repeating a beat pattern twice or more helps listeners memorize the pattern, and makes it seem important. This can set up a contrast when the pattern that has been repeated suddenly changes slightly (contrast).