

INTRODUCTION TO TRIPLETS AND THE SWING RHYTHM

BEN PORTNER

Eighth note triplets are a group of three eighth notes contained in a quarter note. In the previous exercises, 2 eighth notes equal a quarter note. However with eighth note triplets, three eighth notes equal a quarter note. When we move on to our first jazz song that uses swing ("So What" by Miles Davis) We will be using this swing rhythm to play eighth notes, rather than regular straight eighth notes. Let's start with the basic quarter note, then we'll move to triplets

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing four quarter notes. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above each note.

now let's work on the triplet, use the words above to count the triplet, and have your instructor count them with you.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing four eighth note triplets. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above each triplet. The words "IS UH" are written above each triplet. Below each triplet, the number 3 is written.

Let's combine some quarter notes and triplets to help get a better feel for the triplet rhythm.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a quarter note, followed by two eighth note triplets, and a quarter note. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above each note. The words "IS UH" are written above the first triplet, and "IS UH" is written above the second triplet. Below each triplet, the number 3 is written.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing two eighth note triplets, a quarter note, and another eighth note triplet. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above each note. The words "IS UH" are written above the first triplet, "IS UH" is written above the second triplet, and "IS UH" is written above the final triplet. Below each triplet, the number 3 is written.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a quarter note, an eighth note triplet, a quarter note, and another eighth note triplet. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above each note. The words "IS UH" are written above the first triplet, and "IS UH" is written above the second triplet. Below each triplet, the number 3 is written.

2 Now that you have a feel for the triplet rhythm, let's introduce the swing rhythm. The swing rhythm is based off of the triplet. Rather than playing eighth notes straight, the eighth notes are played "swung" where the 1st eighth note is the first note of the triplet, and the last eighth note is the last note of the triplet or "UH." First let's demonstrate straight eighth notes and count out loud.

6 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Now go back to the last page and count the triplets again (1 is uh, 2 is uh, 3 is uh, 4 is uh) After that do the next exercise and count aloud with your instructor. Notice that the second note of the triplet "IS" is a rest or silent.

7 1 IS UH 2 IS UH 3 IS UH 4 IS UH

Now let's take "IS" out and count just using the number and "UH"

8 1 UH 2 UH 3 UH 4 UH

Congratulations, you've now learned the basic swing rhythm. When a song is indicated that it should be swung, rather than writing out the full triplet, the composer will only write 2 eighth notes, and the performer is expected to know that that means to play them with a triplet feel. To get a feel for this, first we are going to try some rhythms containing the full triplet. After that we will simply use eighth notes to indicate the swing rhythm

9 1 UH 2 3 UH 4 UH

10 1 IS UH 2 UH 3 4 UH

11 1 2 IS UH 3 UH 4 UH

THE BASIC RIDE CYMBAL PATTERN FOR SWING

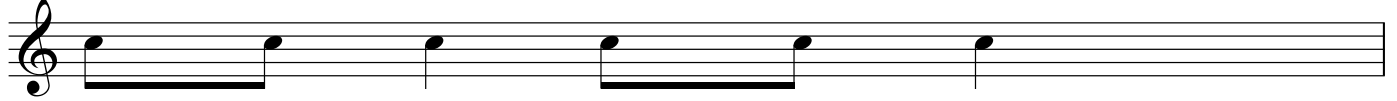
LANG SHPANG UH LANG SHPANG UH

12 1 2 UH 3 4 UH

Now we are just going to use regular eighth notes to indicate the swing rhythm.
Remember it is assumed that the performer knows the eighth notes should be swung based off the triplet and not just played as a straight eighth note


13 1 2 uh 3 4 uh

14 1 uh 2 3 uh 4



A musical staff in treble clef containing six eighth notes. The notes are grouped into three pairs, each pair connected by a horizontal line. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, and 3 are positioned above the first, second, and third notes respectively. Above the fourth, fifth, and sixth notes, the letters 'uh' are written.

15 1 2 uh 3 uh 4



A musical staff in treble clef containing six eighth notes. The notes are grouped into three pairs, each pair connected by a horizontal line. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, and 3 are positioned above the first, second, and third notes respectively. Above the fourth, fifth, and sixth notes, the letters 'uh' are written.

16 1 uh 2 uh 3 4 uh



A musical staff in treble clef containing six eighth notes. The notes are grouped into three pairs, each pair connected by a horizontal line. Above the staff, the numbers 1, 2, and 3 are positioned above the first, second, and third notes respectively. Above the fourth, fifth, and sixth notes, the letters 'uh' are written.

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Now that you have a basic feel for the swing rhythm, let's go over a few word patterns that will help you internalize the beat

17

uh
ain't

18

1 2 uh 3 4 uh
not thin shake en but the

19

uh 2 uh uh 1 uh 2 3 uh 4 uh
peas in the pot woul dn't be shake en less the

21

1 uh 2 uh uh 4 uh
wa ter was hot I said aint

24

1 uh uh 3 uh uh

bee bop boo dee bop boo

25

 uh uh

1 uh 3 uh uh

dee bop boo dee bop boo

26

1 2 uh 3 4 uh

lang shpang uh lang shpang uh

27

1 uh 2 3 4 uh

ba buh dit daht doo way

28

aayyyyy 1 uh 2 uh 3 4 uh

 ba buh doo dahhh ahhh bah buh

30

1 uh 2

doo dahh ahhh

31 1 uh 2 3 uh 4 1 uh 2 uh
 ba buh dit bah buh dit bah buh doo daht

33 1 is uh 2 3
 doo duh lee oop bop

34 1 is uh 2 4 is uh
 doo duh lee ooh bop doo duh lee

35 1 uh 3 1 2
 oo bop bop mop mop

37 uh uh uh uh 1 is uh 2 uh
 bah dit dat dat shu hoo de la doo dow

39 123 4 uh 1 uh 2 uh
 hey ba buh ray bah