



# The Beat

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## SUMMER SPECIAL!



Get a cool deal on summer music lessons with us! 20% off your first two months!

This is our lowest price of the year! Tell your friends so they can schedule a trial lesson, today!



### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The new song for Jam Day will be "Zombie" by The Cranberries!
- Tell your friends about our summer special! Referrals will take \$10 off your next month's tuition per sign-up.
- I'm planning to make a video for the YouTube channel with the intent of clarifying details about intervals! Stay tuned!
- Check out the fun puzzles on the last couple of pages!

### BE A MUSIC GENIUS BY... COUNTING?

Yes, counting! I know, I know. It sounds absurd but bear with me. Counting has long been the favorite pastime of accountants, certain vampires, and Star Wars clone troopers (seriously, what is with those guys and all the numbers!), but for a musician it can be kind of a super power. I'm not saying just being able to count is going to give you the edge you need to pack a stadium with your music, but I will go so far as to say it will help! Today, I want to talk about how we count as musicians, why we count, and the subtle nuances of how we process what we count that make it so special.

...Continued on page 2



## COUNTING: PAGE... UH... 2!

So what is so different about how musicians count? Well, consider that the purpose of our count is to keep time rather than quantify objects (most of the time). Also, our count needs to be adjusted on a song-by-song basis, or even multiple times within the same song! The adjustments we make include the speed of our count, the length of our count, the emphasis we put on certain counts, and all kinds of subdivisions of each count using phonetics! While we were counting the number of capri suns left in the box, some awesome person out there was counting the perfect, evolving formula of arrangement of sound to bring an audience to tears! Stick your pointy little yellow straw in that!

Let's calm down. Count out 8 deep breaths. I'll join you...



And that, my friends, is one more reason counting is a super power! Incidentally, deep breathing is something that we visit quite a lot here when frustration runs high during practice, or when we need to relax our bodies again during challenging sections of a song. But I digress...

You may ask the question: "Why not just play by feel? Or just do something like 'short note, long note, extra short note, etc.?'"

First of all, great question! You actually wouldn't be far off from a system of notation used for certain eastern instruments like the Chinese system of Jianpu (jian3 pu3). Numbered notation has been used everywhere but it's common to see it in use today in traditional eastern music. In these systems, a series of dots and dashes are used to denote the duration of notes, while the numbers specify which notes they are within a scale. Still, we have visual representation of duration and use a count with these systems. The closest thing you will find to not using a system of counting (arrhythmic music) as far as I'm aware at this time, is Gregorian chant, which used contextually arranged dots on parchment combined with aural recitation to kind of 'ballpark' it and thus lacked consistency from one recitation to another. Therein lies the proverbial 'rub.' Without a count, consistency is lost and with it, goes rhythm.

Some people may find it very easy to 'feel' the rhythm and may go far in music without need of strict counting practice, myself included. However, it wasn't long into my professional music career that I encountered passages of music where that simply wasn't

## POP QUIZ!

**What symbols do number systems use to represent note duration?**

**What verbal device is used to subdivide beats when counting?**

**Why were Gregorian chants different from one recitation to the next?**





## COUNTING, PAGE 3: THE FINAL COUNTDOWN!

Possible! Let me tell you, the moment you have to play a 13-beat measure where it looks like the composer sneezed on his ink bottle and just left the droplets where they landed, you really can't avoid counting. Look at this bass line I'm working on with a student:



That's not the easiest thing to feel until you've done it many, many times.

But what is the real magic behind counting? It seems to me there are some very important mental processes that happen when we take the time to count. Many forms of repetitive counting exercises like sudoku and meditative breathing have been shown to contribute to improvement in memory and recall. We definitely get a lot of that exercise in when we have to drill emphatic counting of challenging rhythms. Counting, especially out loud, is also an action that requires a level of constant focus. The habit of counting while you play requires much more focus than you might expect. Try counting to 4 out loud, over and over, and clapping on every 3rd number. "One! Four! Three! Two!" You'll see what I mean. Because of this, it's an excellent tool for developing more consistent concentration. Finally, the same parts of the brain that are activated for counting and numerical calculations also fulfill the role of spatial awareness and interpretation, so exercising these parts of the brain might have the added benefit of strengthening our spatial intuition and pattern recognition!

It's hard to convince new students of the importance of keeping count. It seems tedious and I can agree that it's not the most fun part of music. However, remember that it is a super power with benefits reaching far beyond the song!

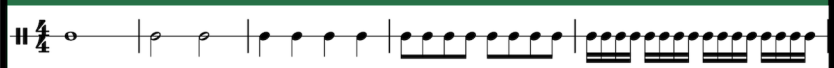
### PRACTICE FOR ANYONE!

Here are some more counting and clapping self-tests to try out, even if you aren't a music student:

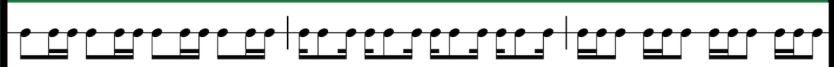
1. Count to 4 on repeat. Clap on 1 and every 5th beat after that.
2. Count to 5 on repeat. Clap on 1 and 5.
3. Count to 6 on repeat. Clap on 1, 3, 4, and 6.
4. Repeat 1-3, gradually speeding up as fast as you can!

### TAKADIMI: A DIFFERENT WAY

TaKaDiMi is a phonetic system of rhythmic interpretation. Primarily used in percussion, it's a versatile tool for understanding more complex rhythms in a more accessible way. Longer notes like quarter notes up to whole notes or longer are simply a held "Ta - a -a -a..." but dividing a beat in 4 gets you the syllables Ta Ka Di Mi for their respective 16th notes:



Ta a a a    Ta a Ta a    Ta Ta Ta Ta    Ta Di Ta Di (x4)    TaKaDiMi (x4)



Ta DimiTa Dimi (x2)    TaKa MiTaKa Mi (x2)    TaKaDi TaKaDi (x4)

Another notable form of rhythmic interpretation is the Indian Tala.

The Tala are rhythmic patterns that are recited with physical actions like hand claps and finger tapping to the palm. Skilled percussionists in Indian traditional styles recognize a complex vocabulary of percussive patterns and can perform lengthy and extremely nuanced rhythms on their instruments, on cue, based on a single vocal recitation of the rhythms.



## SUMMER PUZZLES!

### Summer Music Word Search

R N A R P E G G I O Z F O K S  
Q V Q P T Q F R Q G U T H P C  
O V Q Y S B T R S Q Q J H I W  
U S L D Q D R Y C A E C I A Z  
G U I T A R E Z A M Z Z B N M  
K R Q L P W B G L P J M L O G  
S M E C R K L G E L I K F G I  
N G J G L R E K I I D U J V W  
A T J B G P V O V F M N M U N  
R Z P Y I A F D I I B R A M R  
E M S T N U E S E E E O R B Z  
D R U M S F W E B R K B A A V  
S Y N T H E S I Z E R V C S V  
U K U L E L E V F K F I A S W  
J Z W O A J D D Q Z Q S S R L

Synthesizer

Amplifier

Arpeggio

Bass

Ukulele

Treble

Reggae

Guitar

Piano

Drums

Snare

Maracas

Scale

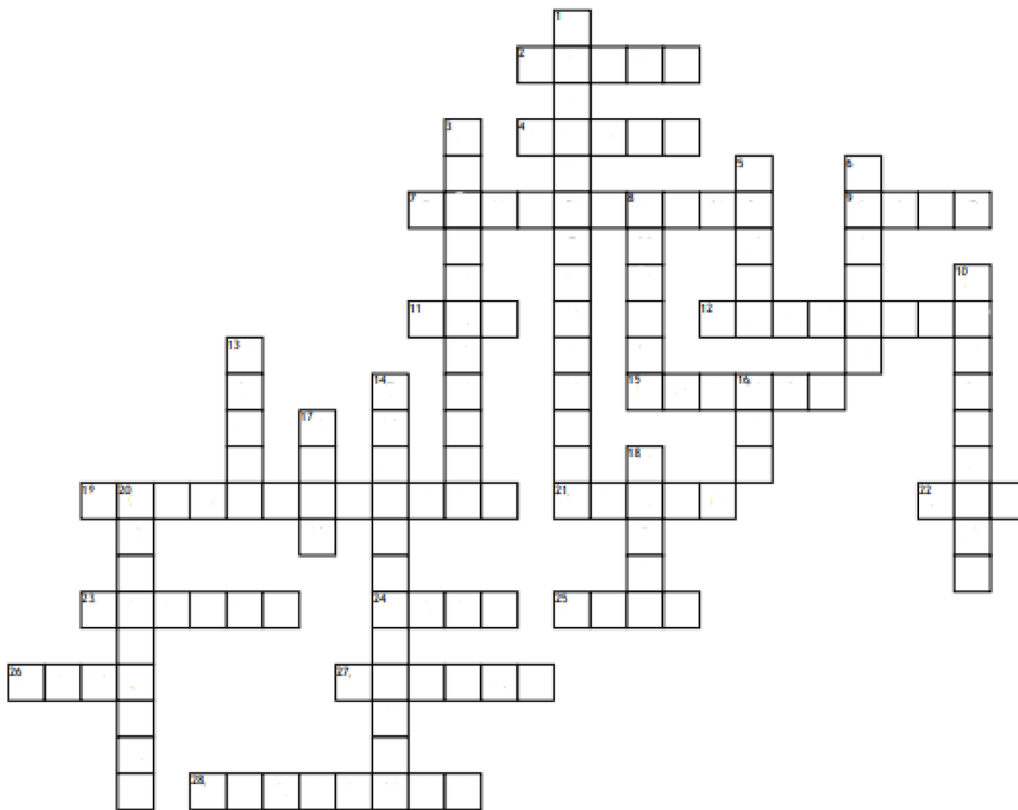






## SUMMER PUZZLES!

### Summer Music Crossword



#### Across

- 2. 88-notes
- 4. 7 notes is typical
- 7. The living is easy
- 9. Quickest way to a shorter guitar
- 11. Play by \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. A particular arrangement of notes, in order
- 15. 6-Strings
- 19. Nobody on the road, nobody on the beach...
- 21. Campfire guitar technique
- 22. The fifth tone. Also, provides vitamin D

- 23. A new student's most dreaded lesson
- 24. Slap and Pop
- 25. The language of digital music
- 26. Are there 24 or 30 of these?
- 27. Also 2 and 4
- 28. 2 and 4

#### Down

- 1. By 5's, clockwise
- 3. 808
- 5. e.g. Rock, Pop, Country, Classical

- 6. The key to a 'balanced' sound
- 8. The culprit of clashing octaves
- 10. Click, Click, Click, Click
- 13. Presto! (descriptor)
- 14. Blowing through the jasmine in my mind
- 16. Guitarists favorite cheat tool
- 17. A not-so-nice pit
- 18. A set of 3, in harmony
- 20. A nice pit