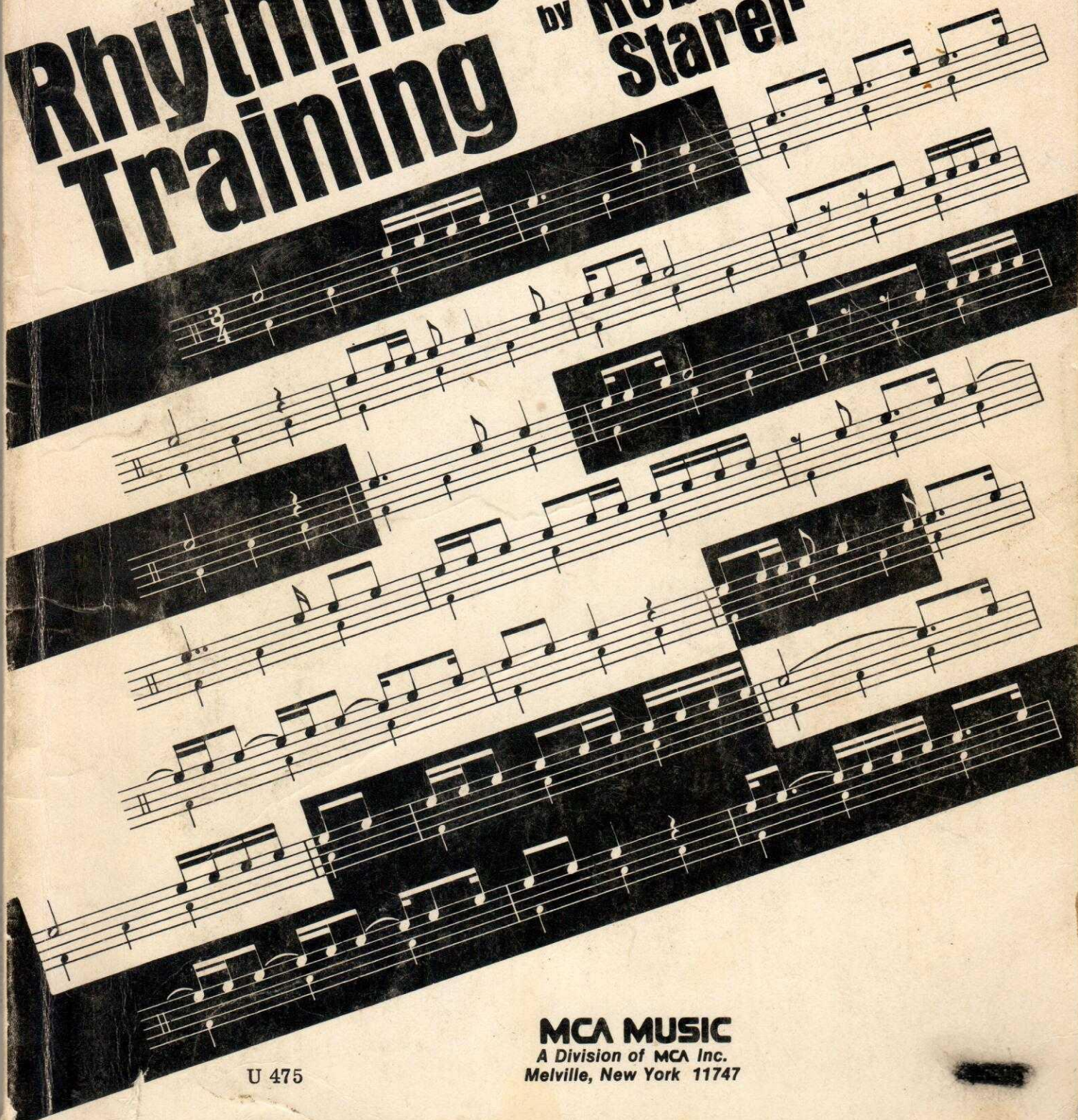


Rhythmic Training

by Robert Starer



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Preface

The ability to transform visual symbols of rhythmic notation into time-dividing sounds is an acquired skill. It involves the coordination of physical, psychological, and musical factors and cannot, therefore, be accomplished by the simple act of comprehension. This book represents an attempt to develop and train the ability to read and perform musical rhythms accurately. It is not tied to any particular system of melodic ear-training and can be used in conjunction with any approach to sight-singing. It is intended for the classroom, for the private studio and for self-training.

The chapters are arranged in a sequence of increasing difficulty. Each chapter deals with a specific rhythmic situation. The problem is stated; a way to surmount it is proposed, and exercises are provided for practice purposes. The number of exercises in each chapter is designed to meet the needs of the average student. The brilliant student may need fewer. On the other hand it may be necessary to invent additional examples, modeled after those provided, for the less adept student. In some instances it may be advisable to divide the exercises into shorter segments. The student with previous experience will find his place in the book when he encounters his first difficulty.

No attempt has been made to shape these exercises into musical phrases or to give them form by repetition and development of rhythmic motives, since either procedure would tend to make the exercises memorizable by rote upon repetition in practicing.

In my experience as composer, performer and teacher I have come to the conclusion that inadequate grasp of rhythmic patterns is often the cause of poor sight-reading. It has also become increasingly apparent that lack of familiarity with 5 and 7 time and changing meters, particularly in the early stages of musical training, has contributed much to the unjustified fears of performing 20th-century music. This book was written in the hope of alleviating both of these situations.

Robert Starer

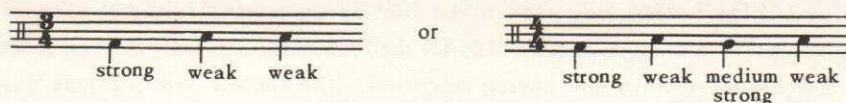
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Suzanne Bloch, Dorothy Klotzman and Emile Serposs for their many helpful suggestions and to Lewis Roth and Bruce Howden for their editorial advice.

How to Use This Book

Throughout the first ten chapters of this book the upper line represents the rhythm the student should perform, the lower line is the pulse. The upper line may be sung, hummed or spoken on a neutral syllable; the lower line should be tapped by hand or foot, or it may be conducted. It is strongly recommended that the methods of execution be changed frequently, so that none becomes an exclusive habit. A metronome may be used for the lower line in the early chapters, but it is preferable for the student to produce the pulse himself. Eventually the lower line should only be "felt," that is, it should be done in silence.

While the upper line is always printed on a single note, a distinction between strong, medium strong, and weak beats in the pulse is indicated by placing the notes on different lines or spaces.



It is imperative that the student always differentiate clearly between strong and weak beats and not perform the pulse line as a sequence of identical beats.

The aim should be to execute the exercises at the fastest possible speed. To accomplish this, they should first be performed slowly, then repeated with gradually increased velocity until the individual's limit of capability is reached.

All students should be encouraged to invent their own examples, dealing with the specific problems set in the various chapters. This will strengthen the imprint of the rhythmic patterns involved on the student's mind. In class and in private instruction the exercises can also be used for dictation. Examples invented by the students often provide additional material for dictation. In classroom use it is also helpful to let individual students perform shorter segments, taking over from each other at predetermined intervals such as every three or four bars or every line. Another suggested teaching technique is for the teacher to insert deliberate errors into the examples he performs, challenging the student to find the mistakes and to correct them.

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PRELIMINARY EXERCISES

Rhythmic Notation:

○ = whole note, ♩ = half-note, ♪ = quarter-note, ♪. = dotted half-note
(The dot placed after any note adds to it one-half of its value.)

The Quarter-Note as pulse
Each unit of the pulse is called a beat.

Basic Notation:

♪ = 1 beat, ♩ = 2 beats, ♪. = 3 beats, ○ = 4 beats.

1

Compound Notation:

When two notes are tied, the second is treated as an addition to the first.




$\text{♩} = 5$ beats, $\text{♩}.$ or $\text{♩} = 6$ beats, $\text{♩}.$ or $\text{♩} = 7$ beats, * $\text{♩}.$ or $\text{♩} = 8$ beats.

* A second dot adds half the value of the first dot to the note. In this case the first dot added a half-note; the second, an additional quarter-note.

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

The image displays eight staves of musical notation, each illustrating a different compound notation example. The notation is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are mostly quarter notes, with some tied notes and dotted notes. The first staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The second staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The third staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The fourth staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The fifth staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The sixth staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The seventh staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note. The eighth staff shows a dotted quarter note tied to a quarter note, followed by a quarter note, a dotted quarter note, and a quarter note.

Notation of Silence:

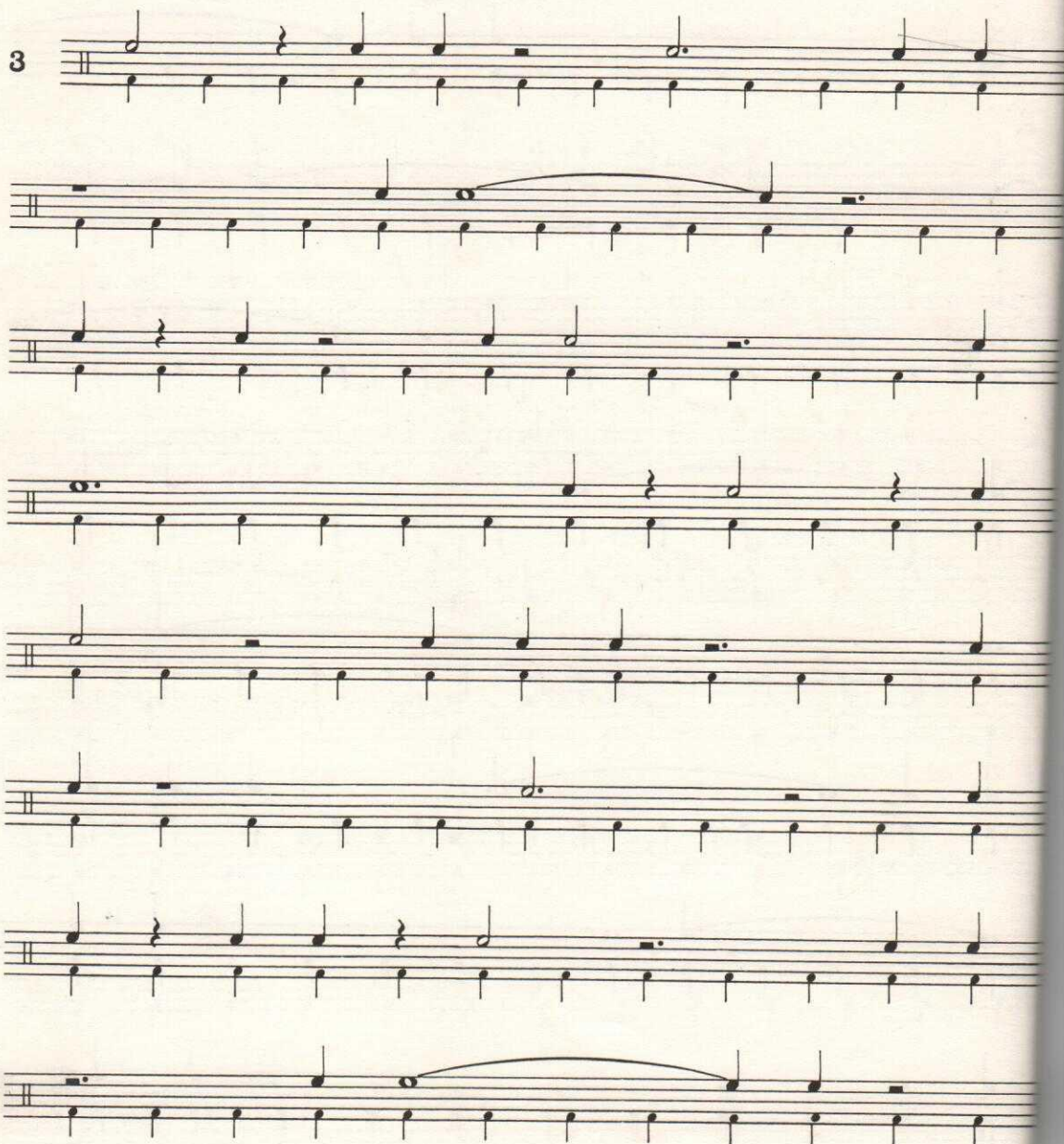
Rests:  = whole-rest  = half-rest  = quarter-rest

 = 1 beat  = 2 beats  * = 3 beats  = 4 beats

*The dot after a rest functions identically with the dot after a note.

Rests must be performed with the same precision as notes; otherwise there would be no difference between  and .

3

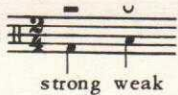


The musical notation consists of eight staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The notation includes various rests and notes, demonstrating the concepts discussed in the text. The rests are shown in different durations (whole, half, quarter, eighth) and are often followed by a dot, indicating a dotted rest. Slurs are used to group notes and rests together. The number '3' is written to the left of the first staff.

Chapter I

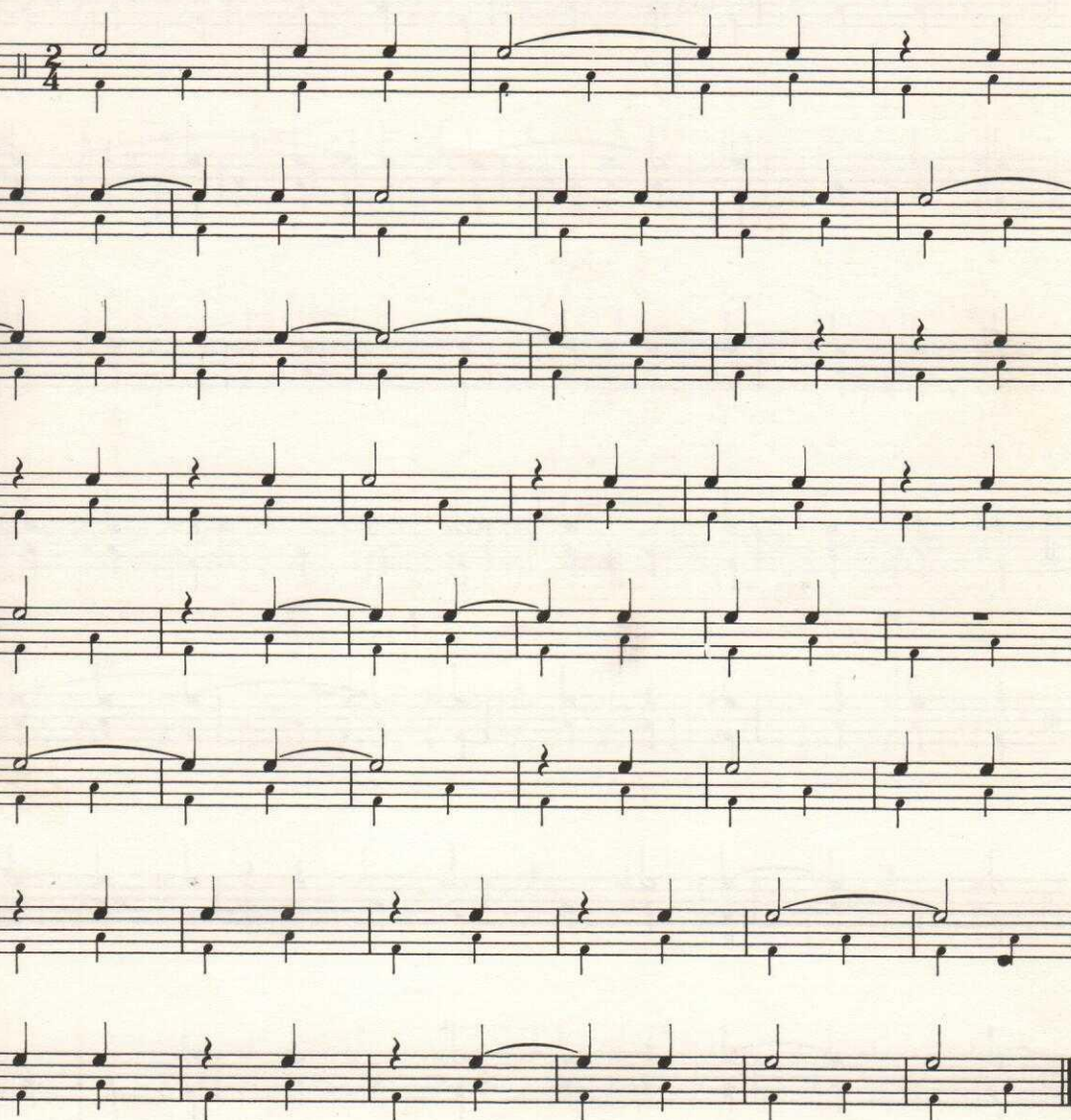
Rhythmic Organization, the Bar-line and Meter.

A vertical line divides the pulse into bars or measures. The first beat after each bar-line is always the downbeat (strong).

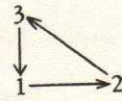
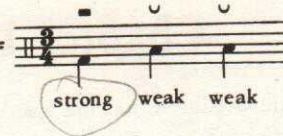
Two quarter-note beats per bar: $\frac{2}{4}$ meter = 

Conductor's symbol: 1 ↓ downbeat 2 ↑ upbeat

(A tie connecting two notes may go across the bar-line.)

4 

Three quarter-note beats per bar: $\frac{3}{4}$ meter =



5

A series of eight musical staves in 3/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes and rests, illustrating the 3/4 meter. The notes are primarily quarter notes, with some half notes and eighth notes. The rests are primarily quarter rests. The staves are numbered 5 through 12.