**Example: Van Halen, Running With the Devil**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Lyric* | *run-* | *ning* | *with* | *the* | *de-* | *vil* |
| Note interval | **0** | **0** | **-** | **-** | **+** | **-** |
| Note length[[1]](#footnote-1) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 24(end) |
| Lyrics BRS | 1 – x – | 0 – x – | x – x – | x – | 1 – x – x – | x – x…. |
| Music BRS | 1 – 0 – | 1 – 0 – | 1 – 0 – | 1 – | 0 – 1 – 0 – | 1 – 0 –…. |

Notes on "*ning*": It's okay for unemphasized syllables to be on emphasized beats, so long as the new emphasis pattern doesn't match that of an existing word, and so long as the emphasized syllables in the same word are also on emphasized beats.

Notes on "*de-*": This syllable is emphasized, but the first beat that it falls on is not an emphasized beat. There are a few possible reasons why this might be true:

(1) The note interval of "*de-*" is positive, so the emphasis is positive.

--More correctly, since note intervals refer to the change in pitch between a syllable's note and the preceding note, we'd want to look at "*vil*" to see if the word " de- *vil* " was emphasized correctly. When we do, we find that "*vil*" has a negative note interval, so it's less emphasized than "*de-*", so everything is hunky-dory!

(2) The note that "*de-*" is associated with continues through an emphasized beat, so it's emphasized.

(3) The slightly longer length of the note associated with "*de-*" makes it emphasized.

Since I'm focusing on the effects of note intervals right now, we're going to appoint that as the main cause.

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**Example: The Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Lyric* | *We're* | *Ser-* | *geant* | *Pep-* | *per's* | *Lone-* | *ly* | *Hearts* | *Club* | *Band* |
| Note interval | **0** | **+** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **+** | **0** | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| Note length[[2]](#footnote-2) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Lyrics BRS | x – | 1 – | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – | 1 – x – | 0 – | x – x – | x – x – | x – x – |
| Music BRS | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – | 1 – 0 – | 1 – | 0 – 1 – | 0 – 1 – | 0 – 1 – |

Notes on "*We're*": If you notice, the music BRS value for this is 0, even though it's the first word in the lyric. This is because "*We're*" is on the downbeat, which is the beat that directly precedes the first beat of a measure. It's actually on the end of the previous measure.

Notes on "*ly*": It's okay for unemphasized syllables to be on emphasized beats, so long as the new emphasis pattern doesn't match that of an existing word, and so long as the emphasized syllables in the same word are also on emphasized beats.

Notes on " *Hearts Club Band* ": Though this is outside the scope of what I'm investigating here, it's interesting to see how the obvious-to-the-ear syncopation of this phrase is mirrored in the way the music BRS lines up with the lyrics. I hypothesize that the syncopation is caused by the "backwards" matchup; instead of the music BRS of each word going "1 – 0 –", it goes, " 0 –1 –". Kind of cool.

~~~

**Example: The Beatles, While My Guitar Gently Weeps**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Lyric* | *While* | *my* | *gui-* | *tar* | *gent-* | *ly* | *weeps* |
| Note interval | **0** | **-** | **-** | **+** | **-** | **-** | **+** |
| Note length[[3]](#footnote-3) | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Lyrics BRS | 1 – x – | 1 – x – | 0 – | 1 – x – x – x – | 1 – x – | 1 – x…. | x – x – |
| Music BRS | 1 – 0 – | 1 – 0 – | 1 – | 0 –1 – 0 –1 – | 0 – 1 – | 0 – 1 – | 0 – 1 – |

Notes on " *gui- tar* ": The first syllable of the word "guitar" is emphasized, but the beat that that syllable is on is unemphasized. We overcome this by checking the emphasized syllable, " *tar* ". Since " *tar* " has a positive note interval, the word is still correctly emphasized. Hooray!

Notes on " *gent- ly* ": Again here, the word's emphasis pattern doesn't match the emphasis pattern in the music[[4]](#footnote-4). When we then check the intervals for both syllables, we find they both are negative. This isn't a problem, though. Since a note interval refers to the relationship of a note to the note preceding it, we only have to look at the second syllable of the world, " *ly* ". Since " *ly* " has a negative interval, it's less emphasized then " *gent* " in the song, which is exactly what we want.

~~~

**Example: The Beatles, Strawberry Fields Forever**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Lyric* | *Straw-* | *be-* | *rry* | *Fie-* | *lds* | *For-* | *e-* | *ver* |
| Note interval | **0** | **-** | **-** | **+** | **-** | **-** | **+** | **-** |
| Note length[[5]](#footnote-5) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Lyrics BRS | 1 – | 2 – | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – |
| Music BRS | 1 – | 0 – | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – | 0 – | 1 – | 0 – |

Though most of "Strawberry Fields Forever" is in 4/4 time, the chorus, where this lyric is taken from, is a waltz, in ¾ time. So, the Music BRS is "1 – 0 – 0 –, 1 – 0 – 0 – "

Notes on " *Straw- be- rry* ": The secondary emphasis on "*be-*" slightly complicates this word. Though the primary emphasis on " *Straw-* " matches up with the emphasized beat in the music BRS, the secondary emphasis is on an un-emphasized beat. While it's alright for unemphasized syllables to be on emphasized notes normally, in this situation, since the next syllable " *rry* " is even *less* emphasized than " *be-* ", we shouldn't have them on the same emphasis level if we want to avoid ambiguity. This is where note intervals come in! To compliment the fact both " *be-* " and " *rry* " are less emphasized than the syllables before them, they both have negative note intervals, so it sounds right!

Notes on " *For- e- ver* " : If this wasn't in ¾ time, the Lyric BRS and Music BRS wouldn't match up, but it still would be correct, since the note intervals mirror the syllable emphases.

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1. Measured in the value of the shortest beat in the phrase. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Measured in the value of the shortest beat in the phrase. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Measured in the value of the shortest beat in the phrase. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. or maybe it does. I'm still not sure if having **any** emphasized beat in the Music BRS during a syllable counts as a "fit" for an emphasized syllable. That's why I'm going through these use cases. I'm pretty much convinced, though, that it has more to do with note intervals. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Measured in the value of the shortest beat in the phrase. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)