REPRESENTATION

meter signatures — meter signature designation

DESCRIPTION

The **meter signature** tandem interpretation permits the encoding of meter signatures for a Humdrum representation.

Meter signature tandem interpretations consist of a single asterisk, followed by the upper-case letter `M`, followed by a meter indication. Meter indications consist of a top ("numerator") portion and a bottom ("denominator") portion. These portions are separated by a slash character (/). The numerator portion of the meter signature must be an integer value (greater than zero) — with no fractional part. The numerator may be split into two or more integers separated by the plus sign (+) in order to specify the grouping of beats within the measure. The denominator portion must be conform to `**recip` duration designations (8=eighth, 2.=dotted half, 0=breve, 6=eighth note triplet, etc.). Sample meter signatures are shown in the following table:

`*M2/4`	simple duple (quarter duration)
`*M3/2`	simple triple (half duration)
`*M4/0`	simple quadruple (breve duration)
`*M6/8`	compound duple (six-eight meter)
`*M2/4.`	compound duple (dotted quarter beat)
`*M9/16`	compound triple (nine-sixteen)
`*M12/4`	compound quadruple (twelve-four)
`*M4/2.`	compound quadruple (dotted half beat)
`*M5/4`	irregular quintuple (quarter duration)
`*M3+2/4`	irregular quintuple (three plus two beats)
`*M2+2+3/8`	irregular septuple (two plus two plus three beats)
`*M3+3+2/8`	irregular octuple (three plus three plus two)
`*M19/6`	nineteen eighth-duration triplets per measure
`*M21/8..`	twenty-one doubly-dotted eighths per measure
`*M?`	meter unknown
`*MX`	ametric passage (no meter)

Examples of **meter signature** *interpretations.*

Note that it is possible to represent *ametric* passages (*MX) and passages with *unknown* meters (*M?). These representations are useful, for example, when encoding Gregorian chant or African and other non-western rhythms.

Occasionally, musical scores will contain an alternating pair of meters (such as 3/4, 6/8, 3/4, 6/8, etc.). Such alternating meters are often represented in printed scores by a single meter signature — such as 3/4 (6/8). The meter signature tandem interpretation does

not cater to such shorthands since the representation is intended to be *local* in its effect. This means that each change of meter must be labelled individually.

SIGNIFIERS

The following table summarizes the mappings of signifiers and signifieds for meter signatures.

`0-9`	number signifiers
`.`	augmentation dot
`/`	numerator-denominator delimiter
`M`	meter signature keyword letter
`X`	ametric indicator
`?`	unknown meter indicator
`+`	grouping indicator (numerator only)

Summary of **meter signature** *Signifiers*

SEE ALSO

key signature (3), **metpos** (3), **metpos** (4), **timebase** (3), **timebase** (4)