

Black Hearted Woman

There are eight 8th notes in a bar of 4/4. We can also think of this meter as 8/8. The time signature of 7/8 is like 4/4 with an 8th note shaved off.

There are two different ways to count this time signature. Our initial thought would be to count numerically. Since 'seven' is the first number that has two syllables, let's shave off the end - just like we shave off the last 8th note of 4/4 to create 7/8 - and call it 'sev.'

[a]

One Two Three Four Five Six Sev One Two Three Four Five Six Sev

[b]

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Two musical staves in 7/8 time. Staff [a] shows a four-measure phrase with eighth notes. Above the staff, the counts 'One Two Three Four Five Six Sev' are written, with 'Sev' being a shortened 'seven'. Staff [b] shows the same phrase with numerical counts '1 2 3 4 5 6 7' above the notes.

We see that our snare backbeats are now on 3 and 7, which is rather awkward since we're so used to our backbeats falling on 2 and 4. Relating 7/8 to 4/4 in regards to 8th notes should allow us to count this odd time signature in a similar fashion. Simply skip the '&' of 4 and go directly into '1' of the next bar. You'll notice the backbeats fall on the more familiar counts of 2 and 4!

[c]

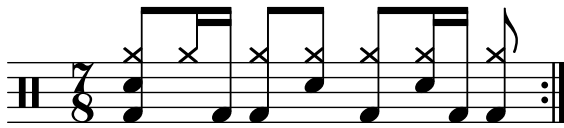
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4

A musical staff in 7/8 time showing a four-measure phrase. Above the staff, the counts '1 & 2 & 3 & 4' are written for the first two measures, and '1 & 2 & 3 & 4' for the last two measures. The backbeats (marked with 'x') fall on the 2nd and 4th eighth notes of each measure.

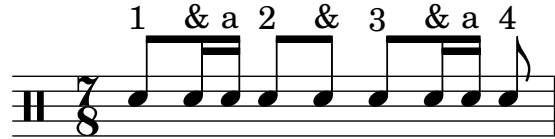
Either counting method is fine. I suggest being comfortable with both. Tempo, feel, and complexity are three aspects that will dictate which one is the most musical for you to use.

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Full Groove



Composite Rhythm



Snare Only



Bass Alone



Bass and Snare

