

Discussion: Uneven Quadruplets

If we wish to divide one dotted quarter note beat into four equal parts, but to indicate attacks on only some of those parts, then we modify the eighth note quadruplet by: (1) substituting eighth rests for eighth notes ($\overbrace{\text{rest eighth note eighth note eighth note}}^4$ or $\overbrace{\text{eighth note eighth note eighth note eighth note}}^4$, for example), (2) using a tie ($\overbrace{\text{eighth note eighth note eighth note eighth note}}^4$), or (3) substituting one larger note for several smaller ones ($\overbrace{\text{quarter note eighth note eighth note eighth note}}^4$ or $\overbrace{\text{quarter note eighth note eighth note eighth note}}^4$, for example). The various resultant sounds correspond to the sounds you learned in Chapter 4. For example, the figure $\overbrace{\text{quarter note eighth note eighth note eighth note}}^4$ in 6/8 time sounds the same as the figure $\overbrace{\text{quarter note eighth note eighth note}}^3$ in 2/4 time (in each, the beat is divided into four equal parts with attacks on the second, third, and fourth parts).

Exercises:

I. Playing Uneven Quadruplets

Again, in the following examples, you don't need to learn any new sounds—you need only recognize alternate notations for sounds you already know.

I-1 

I-2 

Note: Ex. I-2 contains so many beats that are divided into four parts instead of the normal three, that it could just as easily have been notated in simple time, as below. Tap the following:



Discussion: A Matter of the Notator's Convenience

Is there any difference between the two examples above? Since the actual division of the beat alternates so often between one of four parts and one of three parts, the implied, natural subdivision of the beat is ambiguous. Therefore, the two examples are virtually the same. The choice of notation becomes a matter of the notator's convenience.