

MUSIC THEORY.aargh©
Tricky Rhythm Patterns-3 (Session 38) The Duplet
 By Dr. Ona Pinsonneault

Duplet: a pair of equal notes to be performed in the time of three notes.

Triplet: a group of three equal notes to be performed in the time of two notes.

We see the sign for triplet more often than that for duplet. Triplets occur in meter signatures of 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4. Duplets occur in meter signatures of 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8. Why?

In 2/4, 3/4, or 4/4 (*Simple* meters) the regular division of the beat is a group of two notes. What is irregular is to divide the beat into a group of three notes. (triplet)

In 6/8, 9/9, or 12/8 (*Compound* meters) the regular division of the beat is a group of three notes. What is irregular is to divide the beat into a group of two notes.

When the *simple beat* (a note without a dot) is divided irregularly the triplet sign (3) is written above or below the irregular division. When the *compound beat* (a note with a dot) is divided irregularly the duplet sign (2) is written above or below the irregular division.

This is how the duplet works.

The beat division is three eighth notes. A dotted eighth (next measure) equals three sixteenths. A dotted eighth is a duplet. Or written with a "2", the duplet sign.

The beat is a dotted quarter note. A duplet equally divides the beat into two parts.

Flute

Bells

Notice the alignment of the second note of the duplet with the sixteenth below. That is exactly where the second note of the duplet falls.

* "Greensleeves" arr. Brian Seemann, measure 72

Other duplets occur in this score in measures 40, 63, and 65.

Until next time,
 Dr. P
pinsonoj@gmail.com
 February, 2020