

Rhythmic Alteration for Learning Technical Passages

Or,

Practicing in Triplets – “It really, really works!”

The Rules

- This works best with small sections of 16th note passage work, but can be used with any difficult rhythms. Practice no more than 2-4 measures at a time for best effect.
- Each pattern should be performed perfectly 5 times in a row. If a mistake is made, start the count over from 1 again.
- **Stay precisely with the metronome. Getting ahead or behind counts as a mistake even if you play the correct notes.**
- Remember: “practice makes *permanent*.” Don’t practice making mistakes – practice playing correctly. Play slowly and accurately before increasing the tempo even a little.

The Steps

- Set your metronome to 60.
- Rearrange the passage into slurred eighth-note triplets (convert all notes and rhythms to triplets). Tongue the first note of each triplet.
- Play the triplet pattern **perfectly** with the metronome, five times in a row.
- Shift the beat by one triplet eighth note (i.e., play the passage with one pickup note), and play five times.
- Shift the beat by another triplet eighth note (i.e., play the passage with two pickup notes), and play five times.
- Now return to the printed rhythms and articulation. Play the passage as written five times perfectly with the metronome set on 60.
- Begin increasing the tempo by 6-10 clicks, repeating the passage five times at each new tempo.
- Continue speeding up (slowly) until the passage is perfect five times in a row at the performance tempo.
- Don’t hesitate to slow the tempo down again if problems occur. For example, if you can play it at 72 but not at 80, slow down to 76 and try again.

(turn over for example)

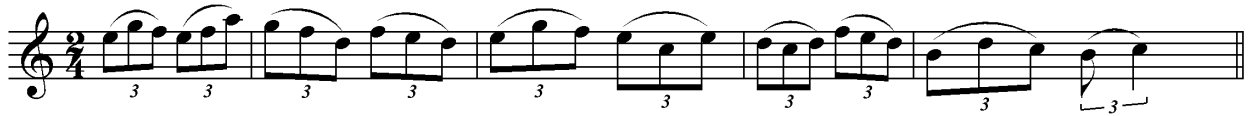
Example

Domenico Cimarosa, Concerto in C Major. 2nd Movement, opening passage.

a. As written:



b. Converted to triplets:



c. With one pickup note (first accent displacement)



d. With two pickup notes (second accent displacement)

