

Triplets (and a bit about Semi-quavers)

You think that you've cracked it; you understand how different note lengths fit into various Time Signatures. Then, unexpectedly, things can appear to get complex all over again... However, there's no need to worry – the explanation is pretty simple, and quite a lot of fun to play...

Starting with the Triplets...

SO – you know that 4/4 means that there are FOUR CROTCHETS in every Bar



AND, you know that four crotchets could be split into EIGHT QUAVERS

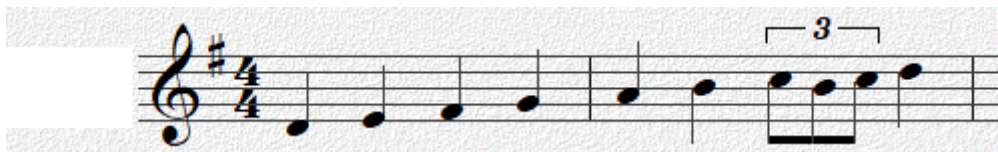


OR (say) TWO crotchets and FOUR quavers; or THREE crotchets and TWO quavers



(Does anyone know why that last crotchet is BLUE?) No, neither do I...

Anyway, then some clown of a composer does this...



OBVIOUSLY, (s)he doesn't know what the rules are! How can you have THREE crotchets and THREE quavers in a 4/4 bar? **Three** crotchets and **Three** quavers must surely add up to Four and a Half beats...

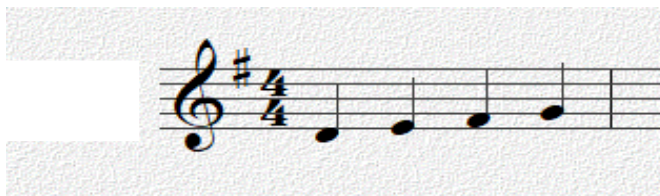
NOT IN THIS CASE... Can you see the Bracket, and the Number "3" above the notes?

If THREE children are born at the same time, they're called "Triplets". Triplets in music are when you get THREE notes, played in the same time that TWO notes would normally take. So they must be faster, right? Right!!

The bit about Semi-quavers... (and More!)

Easy!

You know that 4/4 means that there are FOUR CROTCHETS in every Bar



AND, you know that four crotchets can be split into EIGHT QUAVERS.

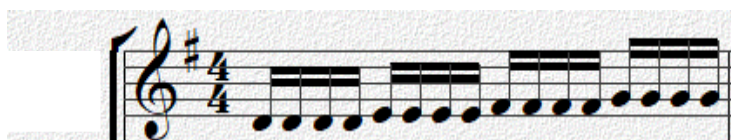


Look carefully, and there's not much difference between the look of the notes. The **Head** of the note (the blobby bit) and the **Tail** are the same; the **only difference** is that there's a line (called a **Beam**), drawn between each pair of quavers. The Beam means that the notes are played twice as quickly.



There's a lot of logic in the way that music is written – so if adding **One Beam** means the notes are played twice as fast, then **adding a Second Beam**

must mean that the



notes go twice as fast again. Not 2

notes per Crotchet, but 4. That gets you from quavers, to **SEMI-quavers**. Which is sensible, 'cos "Semi" means half. Semi-circle. Semi-detached.

As an aside, **another** word for half, is "DEMI" (i.e. Demi-God"). Applying a small additional piece of logic,

make those



it would seem to make complete sense that adding **another** beam would make the notes twice as fast again; **8 notes** per crotchet. But you'd have to call something odd. Like **Demi-Semi Quavers**. So we do.



(p.s. There are also **Hemi-Demi-Semi-quavers**, but they're strictly for show-offs. Plus, trying to play them has a nasty side-effect. Your bowing arm falls off...)

Putting all that learning into one place, you get something like this. Have a Go!!

