

Pulse and Meter

MUS 102 Music Fundamentals
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- I. The difference between Pulse and Meter:
 - A. Meter has to do with time signature – how many beats per measure and what kind of note equals one beat.
Example: 4/4 - four beats per measure, quarter note equals one beat.
 - B. Pulse has to do with the feeling of the music in “macro” beats. For example, in 6/8, there are six beats per measure with the eighth note equaling one beat. However, 6/8 is also broken up into 2 pulses of three eighth note equivalents each. The pulse is actually one dotted quarter note long.

- II. How the terminology for pulse fits into meter:
 - A. Pulses are broken up into two kinds: simple and compound. Simple is the pulse able to be divided by two. Compound is the pulse being able to be divided by three. For example, dotted note pulses are always compound.
 - B. How many pulses per measure is expressed by duple (2), triple (3), or quadruple (4). Other amounts of pulses are possible but not part of our course.

- III. A table of common pulses in time signatures and the translation:

SIMPLE	COMPOUND
2/4: simple duple	3/8: compound single
3/4: simple triple	6/8: compound duple
4/4: simple quadruple	9/8: compound triple
2/8: simple duple	12/8: compound quadruple
3/8: simple triple	3/16: compound single
4/8: simple quadruple	6/16: compound duple
2/2: simple duple	9/16: compound triple
3/2: simple triple	12/16: compound quadruple