

6.9 Rhythm and Meter 2: Ametric Techniques

Ametric = Music whose rhythmic content *doesn't* depend on metric structure for its organization.

Some music is notated with a time signature, but the organization of the rhythm may be ametric.

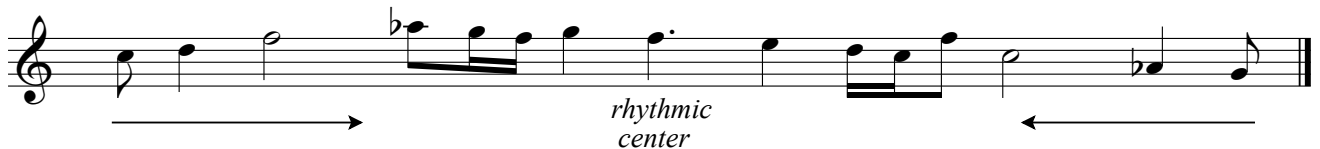
1. **Additive Rhythm** = The rhythm is "built up" from a short rhythmic value (below, the eighth note) through integer groupings (1, 2, 3, 4, etc. of the base value tied together).



2. **Added Value** = Adding a short rhythmic value to an otherwise straightforward rhythm to give it interest; The composer Messiaen was fond of this technique.



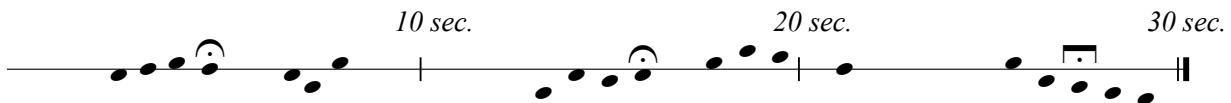
3. **Nonretrogradable Rhythm** = Rhythm that sounds the same forwards and backwards. In other words, a rhythmic palindrome. There will always be a "center point" where the pattern reverses. The pitch pattern may or may not be the same forwards and backwards.



4. **Serialized Rhythm** = Music using a predetermined, repeating series of durations, similar to twelve-tone music's use of tone rows. *Total serialism*, the serialization of all musical elements, includes serial rhythm.



5. **Time-line notation or graphic notation** = Rhythm is notated graphically along a timeline marked with seconds or minutes. Pitch may be notated approximately (as below) or using traditional pitch notation.



6. **Text notation** = Rhythmic instructions are given using words. For example, "Play as fast as possible."

7. **Fibonacci series** = Some composers have organized rhythms (or even the lengths of sections in the piece) using the Fibonacci series, in which each number is the sum of the previous two numbers: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13...

8. **Golden ratio or golden section** = A ratio of sections of a whole in which section *a* is to section *b* as section *b* is to the whole; in other words, *a* is to *b* as *b* is to (*a*+*b*). The golden section of a movement is about 0.618 of the way through, or a little less than two-thirds of the way through. Some composers used this ratio to determine climax points or other important aspects of their organization of time.