

I hope that the material from the previous email is still fresh in your mind ([click here to read/refresh](#)).

A subscriber asked how one could apply the ideas from the accentuation chart into pieces. This is a great question and is something I was going to cover later. But since it was asked, I thought I'd give you all some tips and clues in case you also had this query.

If you did manage to apply the material to some pieces, I'd love to know which ones and share that with the other readers!

First off, I recorded two short videos of two well known Sor Etude excerpts, first played without applying the chart's guidelines and then played with them (this was suggested by the subscriber, great suggestion!). You can watch them below.

Here is a simple tip for applying this concept for yourself in your own pieces.

Tip: Find the note value that functions as the main pulse unit

This is akin to finding the tonic key. Just as the key signature gives us a clear indication of the tonality, so can the time signature give us an indication of the main pulse unit (think of it like the 'tonic' of the rhythm). Compound meters function a little differently to simple meters, as you'll see.

Look carefully at the time signature's *numerator and denominator*

Simple meters: beat divided into two equal parts: 4/4, 3/4, 6/4, 3/2, etc.

The number of the denominator (bottom number) is a clue as to what the main pulse unit is:

If it's a 4, then the crotchet (quarter note) is likely to be the main pulse unit

If it's a 2, then the minim (half note) is likely to be the main pulse unit

So in 4/4 time, we all know that there are four crotchets per measure.

What we might not be aware of is the fact that the crotchet is usually the main pulse unit, no matter what sort of other pulse units are found in the piece.

The chart comes in handy because it shows us how the main unit is organized within each measure. The organization has a lot to do with strong and weak accents that create a clear sense of meter and pulse. This ultimately results in a more speech like, expressive and rhythmic kind of playing.

Compound meters: beat divided into three equal parts: 3/8, 6/8, 9/8,

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12/8, etc.

The main pulse unit for compound meters is usually the dotted crotchet.

The number of the numerator (top number) gives us clues as to how this main pulse unit is organized:

If it's a 3, then the dotted crotchet is grouped one per measure

If it's a 6, then two dotted crotchets are grouped into two beats per measure (hence it is called compound duple)

If it's a 9, then three dotted crotchets are grouped into three beats per measure (hence compound triple)

If it's a 12, then four dotted crotchets are grouped into four beats per measure (hence compound triple)

Another important point:

The note value that dominates the page visually is not always the piece's main pulse unit.

Another difficulty to overcome is that pulse units all look uniform on the page, for example a whole string of quavers or crotchets seem like they should be played equally. But in reality they have different patterns of stress and accentuation.

Time signatures can also be reinterpreted, for example 12/8 can be notated as 4/4 and vice versa.

This is what makes practicing what's on the chart from the last email so valuable. You're practicing the main time signatures and their standard accentuation patterns.

Composers (especially the great ones) were very well aware of these conventions and therefore wrote their music in a way that intentionally adheres to or breaks these rhythmic conventions.

Practicing this basic rhythmic concept is just like how we practice scales to familiarize and internalize different tonalities. This is a fundamental of rhythm that is very crucial and can make a big difference to your playing very quickly.

The next email on dynamics will now be coming to you in two days. That email will conclude your 15-minute time block (for now). That means that for 15 minutes each day you will be covering three of the most fundamental musical elements:

1. Tone
2. Rhythm
3. Dynamics

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The emails following will start covering the 30-minute block for practicing pieces. Topics will include systems and strategies for memorization, developing your legato and guides for musical analysis. If there are any topics you'd like me to cover, please let me know.

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