



**ELLEN O'REILLY**

## ELLEN TELLS US WE PLAY IT BEST, WHEN WE PLAY NOTHING AT ALL

Last time we had a look at how notes can be divided up and counted. A quick reminder: assuming we are playing in 4/4 time, a whole note lasts for four beats (meaning you play one note to last four beats), a half note lasts for two beats (meaning you play two notes lasting two beats each), a quarter note lasts for one beat (meaning you play four notes per bar) and an eighth note lasts for two halves of a beat (meaning you play eight notes per bar, playing two notes on each beat of the bar). These are also known as the subdivisions of a beat. I include a diagram of how these notes break down, as follows:

These types of subdivisions are what is known as simple meter or simple time, which just means that the notes can be split up in such a way so that they are all divided into equal parts. Think how a cell divides, one divides into two, and then the two both divide into two (resulting in four in total) and so on. There is a new subdivision that I've added to the table above which is called a sixteenth note: here, you play four notes per one beat in a bar, which (in the case of a bar of four

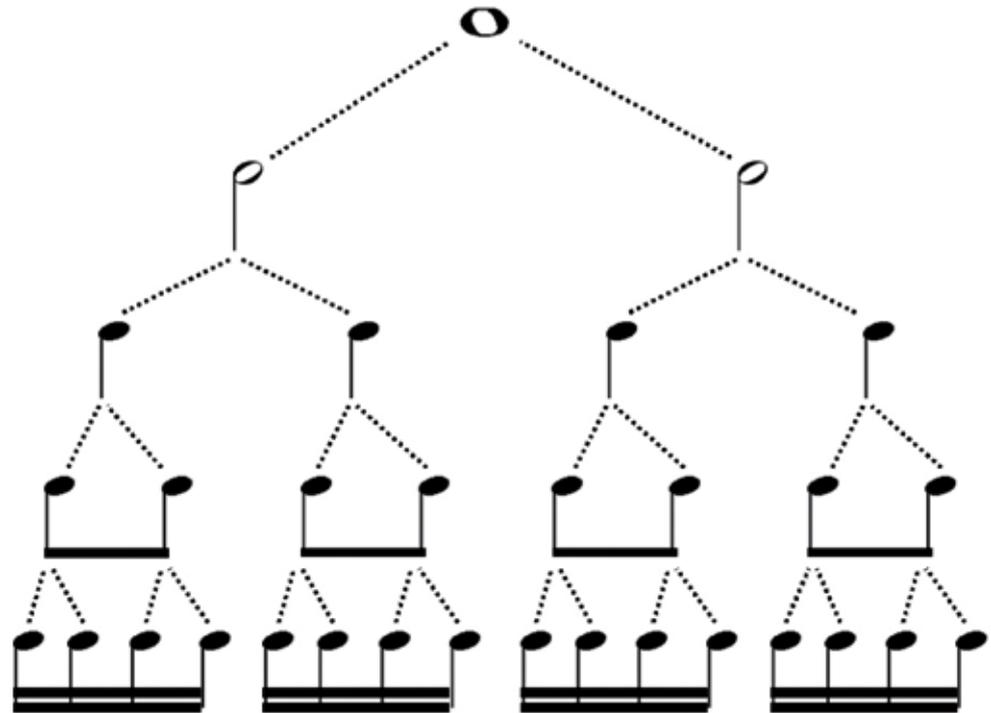
### EXAMPLE 1



### EXAMPLE 2



### EXAMPLE 3



**“A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF MUSIC IS ACTUALLY WHAT YOU DON'T PLAY”**

beats) leaves you with 16 notes, as four beats per bar, with four notes per beat, equals 16 notes per bar. Count sixteenth notes as '1 E & A, 2 E & A, 3 E & A, 4 E & A' and so on.

As you can see in the diagram, each note divides into a smaller and smaller fraction. For every one of these notes that is played, there is also a rest that goes with it. After all, we can't enjoy music properly if the music we're listening to has no chance to breathe. In **Example 1** we have more subdivisions including sixteenth notes, in **Example 2** we see the rest equivalents of these subdivisions.

When you see a rest, don't play for the duration of the value of that rest. This is something that a lot of people don't really consider when it comes to playing music: a very important part of music is actually what you don't play, and the space you leave for the song to breathe. Music needs rests and space as much as it needs notes, after all, because it is most importantly about feel and emotion. **Example 3** mixes up both note values and their rests for you to play and get comfortable with. Enjoy!

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