



A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

MTO 27.1 Examples: Garza, Transcending Time (Feels)

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.21.27.1/mto.21.27.1.garza.html>

Example 1. Drum set notation key

Drums

Kick	Snare	Snare rim/ cross-stick	Snare rim shot	Snare ghost note	High tom	Mid tom	Floor tom

Cymbals

Hi-hat foot	Hi-hat foot splash	Hi-hat closed	Hi-hat open	Crash 1	Crash 2	Ride	Ride bell	China	Splash

Example 2. Summary of riff types and associated time feels

Riff Type	Description	Associated Time Feel(s)	Representative Musical Examples, Time Feel
Straight, open divisions	Chords or single notes played open (not palm-muted), constantly articulating the beat division	Normal	Ex. 3. Mastodon, "Show Yourself," normal time
Breakdown	Short and/or palm-muted notes on single or barely moving notes or chords; bass does not palm-mute	Quarter, half	Ex. 4. Byzantine, "Justinian Code," half time
Long durations	Incorporation of durations longer than a beat played as single notes or chords	Quarter, half	Ex. 5. Swallow the Sun, "Stone Wings," quarter time Ex. 6. Origin, "Malthusian Collapse," half time
Pedal-tone	Alternation between fretted/unfretted and palm-muted/open notes; bass does not palm-mute	Double/triple, normal	Ex. 7. Power Trip, "If Not Us Then Who," double time
Weak-beat syncopation	Chords or single notes in rhythms syncopated over weak beats by ties or rests	Double	Ex. 8. Enslaved, "One Thousand Years of Rain," double time
Tremolo	Quick alternation of up- and down-picking	Quadruple/sextuple	Ex. 9. Skeletonwitch, "Sacred Soil," quadruple time

Example 3. Straight, open divisions riff in a normal-time passage; Mastodon, "Show Yourself," *Emperor of Sand*, 2017, 0:28 (first guitar as it appears in Billmann and Jacobson [2017, 10])

J = 135

Vocals

E.Gtr 1 and E.B.

Drum Set

You're not as safe — as — far as — I — can tell, And I can tell —

(Bass plays lowest note an octave below)

Example 4. Breakdown riff in a half-time passage; Byzantine, "Justinian Code," *To Release Is to Resolve*, 2015, 7:46

J = 145

E.Gtrs. and E.B.

Drum Set

(Bass plays lowest note an octave below with no palm-muting)

E.Gtrs/ E.B.

D. S.

Example 5. Long durations riff in a quarter-time passage; *Swallow the Sun*, “Stone Wings,” *When a Shadow Is Forced into the Light*, 2019, 2:59

$\text{♩} = 110$

(Bass plays an octave below)

E.Gtr 1 and E.B.

(E.Gtr. 1)

(Bass)

Drum Set

Example 6. Long durations riff in a compound-meter half-time passage; *Origin*, “Malthusian Collapse,” *Omnipresent*, 2014, 1:55

$\text{♩} = 150$

(Bass plays lowest note an octave below)

E.Gtrs. and E.B.

Drum Set

E.Gtrs/ E.B.

D. S.

Example 7. Pedal-tone riff in a normal-time passage; Power Trip, "If Not Us Then Who," *Nightmare Logic*, 2017, 0:10

$\text{♩} = 192$
(Bass plays lowest note an octave below with no palm-muting)

E.Gtrs/
E.B.

D. S.

Example 8. Weak-beat syncopation riff in a double-time passage; Enslaved, "One Thousand Years of Rain," *In Times*, 2015, 1:04

$\text{♩} = 152$

Electric
Guitars

Electric
Bass

Drum
Set

E.Gtrs.

E.B.

D. S.

Example 9. Tremolo riff in a quadruple-time passage; Skeletonwitch, "Sacred Soil," *Devouring Radiant Light*, 2018, 0:25

$\text{♩} = 160$

Electric Gtr 1

(Bass plays roots of chords, also tremolo)

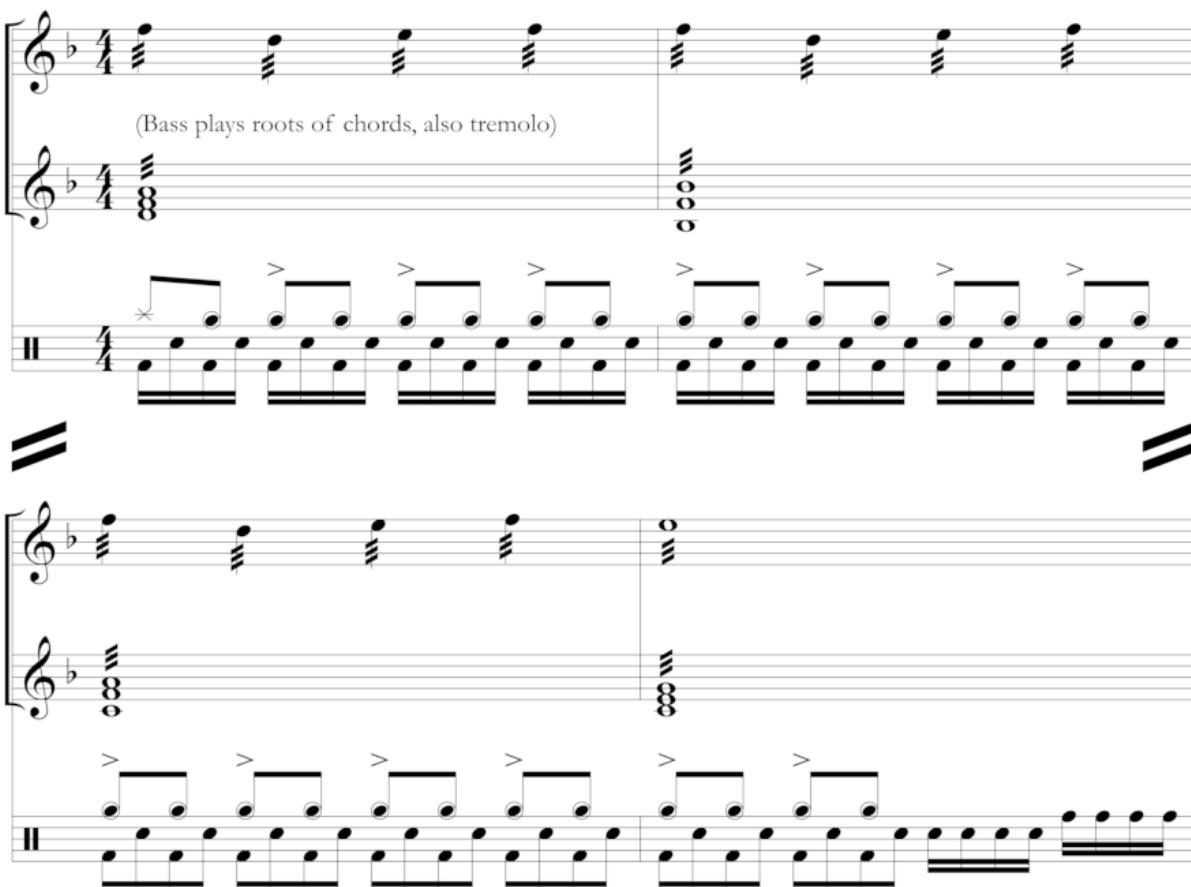
E.Gtr 2 and E.B.

Drum Set

E.Gtr. 1

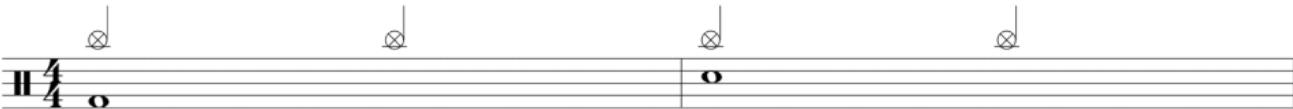
E.Gtr 2/ E.B.

D. S.



This musical score illustrates a tremolo riff in quadruple time (4/4). The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 160$. The instrumentation includes Electric Gtr 1, E.Gtr 2 and E.B. (Electric Bass), and a Drum Set. The score is divided into two sections. In the first section, Electric Gtr 1 and E.Gtr 2/E.B. play eighth-note tremolos, while the Drum Set provides a steady eighth-note pattern. In the second section, the tremolo patterns continue, but the Drum Set's pattern changes to sixteenth-note pairs. The key signature is B-flat major.

Example 10. Timekeeping cymbal categories

Once per beat (OpB)	Timekeeping cymbal struck once per beat, on every beat
	
Beat divisions (BD)	Timekeeping cymbal struck on beat divisions: twice per beat (simple meter) or three times per beat (compound meter)
	
Every other beat (EOB)	Timekeeping cymbal struck every other beat
	
Beat subdivision (BSD)	Timekeeping cymbal struck on some level of beat subdivision: when used, usually four times per beat (simple meter) or six times per beat (compound meter)
	

Example 11. Summary of timekeeping cymbal categories and associated time feels

Timekeeping Cymbal Category	Associated Time Feels	Representative Musical Examples, Time Feel
Once per beat (OpB)	Normal, half	Ex. 12. Periphery, "Blood Eagle," half time
Beat divisions (BD)	Normal, double/triple, quadruple/sextuple	Ex. 13. Watain, "Towards the Sanctuary," normal time Ex. 14. Revocation, "That Which Consumes All Things," triple time Ex. 15. Immortal, "Grim and Dark," sextuple time Ex. 19. Abiotic, "Cast into the Depths," quadruple time
Every other beat (EOB)	Half, quarter	Ex. 16. Un, "Sentiment," quarter time Ex. 17. Unearth, "Survivalist," half time
Beat subdivisions (BSD)	Octuple/duodecuple	Ex. 18. Cattle Decapitation, "Death Atlas," octuple time

Example 12. OpB China cymbal in half time; Periphery, "Blood Eagle," *Hail Stan*, 2019, 4:11

Drum Set

$\text{♩} = 125$

Drum Set

Example 13. BD ride cymbal in compound-meter normal time; Watain, "Towards the Sanctuary," *Trident Wolf Eclipse*, 2018, 2:08

Drum Set

$\text{♩.} = 120$

12/8

Example 14. BD open hi-hat and pedal-tone riff type in triple time; Revocation, "That Which Consumes All Things," *The Outer Ones*, 2018, 3:10

$\text{♩.} = 143$

(Bass plays bottom notes of power chords or D pedal an octave below with no palm-muting)

E.Gtr 2 and E.B.

12/8

Drum Set

12/8

E.Gtr 2/ E.B.

D. S.

Example 15. Wash of sound created by BD open hi-hat and tremolo riff type in sextuple time; Immortal, "Grim and Dark," *Northern Chaos Gods*, 2018, 0:30

$\text{♩.} = 136$

Electric Guitar

Electric Bass

Drum Set

E.Gtr.

E.B.

D. S.

Example 16. EOB open hi-hat and long durations riff type in quarter time; Un, "Sentiment," *Sentiment*, 2018, 2:12

$\text{♩.} = 58$ (Bass plays bottom notes of power chords an octave below)

E.Gtrs. and E.B.

Drum Set

Example 17. Increased heaviness caused by shift from OpB to EOB China cymbal in a half-time breakdown; Unearth, "Survivalist," *Extinctions*, 2018, 0:14

$\text{♩} = 140$
(Bass plays lowest note an octave below with no palm-muting)

E.Gtrs. and E.B.

Drum Set

E.Gtrs/ E.B.

D. S.

Example 18. BSD open hi-hat in octuple time; Cattle Decapitation, "Death Atlas," *Death Atlas*, 2019, 0:00

$\text{♩} = 120$

Drum Set

Example 19. BD open hi-hat in quadruple time at a slow tempo; Abiotic, "Cast into the Depths," *Casuistry*, 2015, 2:20

$\text{♩} = 120$

Drum Set

Example 20. Napalm Death, “Bloodless Coup,” *Apex Predator – Easy Meat*, 2015, 0:08

a. Quadruple-time interpretation with “unknown” riff type and BSD open hi-hat

$\text{♩} = 110$ (Bass plays bottom notes of power chords an octave below)



E.Gtr. and E.B.

Drum Set

b. Double-time interpretation with weak-beat syncopation riff type and BD open hi-hat

$\text{♩} = 220$ (Bass plays bottom notes of power chords an octave below)



E.Gtr. and E.B.

Drum Set

E.Gtr./ E.B.

D. S.

Example 21. August Burns Red, “Hero of the Half Truth,” *Phantom Anthem*, 2017, 0:35

a. Half-time interpretation with breakdown riff type and EOB China cymbal

$\text{♩} = 200$
(Bass plays lowest note an octave below with no palm-muting)

E.Gtr 2 and E.B.

Drum Set

b. Normal-time interpretation with breakdown riff type and OpB China cymbal

$\text{♩} = 100$ (Bass plays lowest note an octave below with no palm-muting)

E.Gtr 2 and E.B.

Drum Set

Example 22. OpB crash cymbal and straight, open divisions riff type in normal time; “Hero of the Half Truth,” 0:55

$\text{♩} = 200$
(Bass plays lowest note an octave below)

E.Gtr 2 and E.B.

Drum Set

Example 23. Long durations riff type clarifying half time with altered drum pattern; Slugdge, "The Spectral Burrows," *Esoteric Malacology*, 2018, 3:06

Musical score for Example 23. The score consists of two staves. The top staff is for the Electric Guitar, which is in 4/4 time and has a tempo of 140. The guitar part features a sustained note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff is for the Drum Set, also in 4/4 time. The drum part includes a bass drum and snare drum, with specific notes marked by 'x' and asterisks (*). The score includes markings such as 'Loco.' and '8vb loco' above the guitar staff, and '8vb' above the drum staff.

Example 24. Straight, open divisions riff type and OpB crash cymbal contributing normal-time rhetoric in a passage with a four-on-the-snare drum pattern; Converge, "Wildlife," *The Dusk in Us*, 2017, 0:30

Musical score for Example 24. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is for the E.Gtrs. and E.B. (Electric Guitars and Bass), in 8/8 time with a tempo of 157. The bass part is noted as playing the lowest note an octave below. The middle staff is for the Drum Set, in 12/8 time. The bottom staff is for the E.Gtrs./E.B. (Electric Guitars and Bass), also in 8/8 time. The fourth staff is for the D.S. (Drum Set). The drum part features a four-on-the-snare pattern. The score includes a note "(Bass plays lowest note an octave below)" and "Gtr. divisi with overdub" above the top staff. The drum part has 'x.' markings above the notes. The guitar parts have 'x.' markings above the notes. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Example 25. Contradiction between quarter-time and fast time-feel characteristics; Psycroptic, "Deadlands," *As the Kingdom Drowns*, 2018, 2:31

(Bass plays lowest note an octave below [except fourth measure] with no palm-muting)

$\text{♩} = 188$

E.Gtr 2 and E.B.

Drum Set

Example 26. Contradiction between quadruple time and slow time-feel characteristics; Inter Arma, "Sulphur English," *Sulphur English*, 2019, 10:03

$\text{♩} = 160$

(Bass plays B an octave below in same rhythm in all measures)

E.Gtrs. and E.B.

Drum Set

E.Gtrs/ E.B.

D. S.

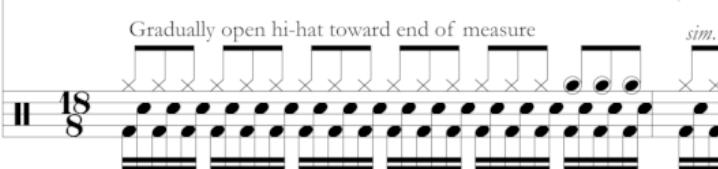
Example 27. Sextuple time with tremolo riff type and BD hi-hat, fast time feel traits that represent action; "Sulphur English," 1:03

$\text{♩} = \text{about 104}$

Vocals $\boxed{18}$ 

Electric Guitars $\boxed{18}$ 

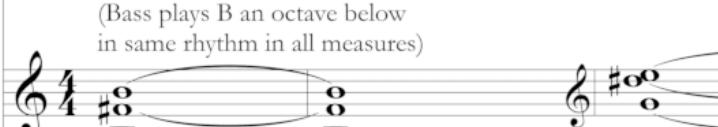
Electric Bass $\boxed{18}$ 

Drum Set $\boxed{18}$ 

Example 28. Quarter time at 4:45 with long durations riff type and EOB open hi-hat, slow time feel traits that represent a call to action; "Sulphur English," 4:45

$\text{♩} = \text{about 150}$

Vocals $\boxed{4}$ 

E.Gtrs. and E.B. $\boxed{4}$ 

Drum Set $\boxed{4}$ 

Vox. $\boxed{4}$ 

E.Gtrs/ E.B. $\boxed{4}$ 

D. S. $\boxed{4}$ 

Example 29. Contradiction between normal-time and sextuple-time characteristics; Myrkur, "Elleskudt," *Mareridt* 2017, 0:01

$\text{♩.} = 100$

Electric Guitar

Electric Bass

Drum Set

Example 30. Example of a compound riff type; Archspire, "Human Murmuration," *Relentless Mutation*, 2017, 0:26

$\text{♩.} = 146$

Electric Guitars

Drum Set

E.Gtrs.

D. S.

(E.Gtr. 1)

(Both)

(E.Gtr. 2)