Strummer Camp: 2019 (Day 11)

This series is somewhat of a break from the traditional "pure strumming" concept. First, here's what I'd like to do today.

1. You'll be working with 3 exercises based on ¾ time, note value calculation and 8th note triplets.
2. You'll also have another real world exercise explaining quarter note triplets. I think it's better to play something tangible there because those are weird to count.
   - You'll get to work with the first part of "Seven Nation Army" by The White Stripes using the strumming version AND the riff version using quarter note triplets.
3. I'll be giving you an audio track AND video of ¾ time that plays at 80 bpm. It'll help you count. But there's a twist....
   - I'd like you to try to go through ALL 3 exercises using that track just as I did in the demo video.

Additional Point: You won't need to worry about strumming arrows or even any specific strumming pattern in this installment. It's all about the value of the notes.

Exercise 36:

Remember that we're working in ¾ time, so the total value of each measure CANNOT be 1.00 or it would be 4/4 time. We need each measure to equal 0.75 (which is 3 quarters of a whole) like this:

In addition to the value of 0.75, we should also consider counting this ¾ run as this:

D   **Bm**

1   2 & 3   (or)————————→ 1   & 2 3

Either method works, but I wouldn't count this as $1 - 2 - 3 \mid 1 - 2 - 3$ as you would traditional waltz patterns. This is due to the fact that we are using a combination of quarter notes and eighth notes – not just 8th notes.

Exercise 37:

D   **Bm**

You can already tell by the 4-grouped 16th notes that you'll be playing DUDU. That part is easy. The value of each note is where the focus is as well as the counting.

D   (.0625 x4)   **Bm**

.25   .25   .25   = 0.75 (not 1.00)

Here is how I personally recommend counting it:

I like this way of counting (if you need to count it) because it helps remind you that you are ending the overall measure on the "three." While I haven't really explained what the "4" means in ¾ you already know that. That number is merely based on the "type" of note being addressed.

Bottom Number (4) ← based on 4 quarter notes (0.25 x4 = 1.00)
Bottom Number (8) ← based on 8 eighth notes (0.125 x8 = 1.00)
Bottom Number (16) ← based on 16 sixteenth notes (0.0625 x16 = 1.00)

The top number, whatever it may be, indicates the sum of the notes PER measure.

Top Number (2) ← total value will equal 0.50
Top Number (3) ← total value will equal 0.75
Top Number (4) ← total value will equal 1.00

Exercise 38:

You will now see three 8th notes that are attached to each other. In addition, you'll also see the number "3" above them. That tells us we are playing them as triplets.

Eighth notes triplets are slightly easier to understand simply because we can identify them more frequently in songs. Blues (plus any AC/DC or Metallica song) uses 8th note triplets like crazy.

In the example you see above, you have 3 triplets played as 8th notes. You will only count (mathematically) TWO of the three. You'll play all three here, but because a triplet basically *forces* the notes in the bracket to sound as though they take on the space of TWO notes (instead of three) you must hear them as being <u>squished</u> between two eighth notes, not three.

What happens if we count ALL the triplets and the other notes in the first measure?

Problem?

In 3/4 time, we need the total value of a given measure to equal 0.75, which is 3/4 time.

In other words, we have "too many" values.

.25   .375   .25   = 0.875 (not 0.75)

This is what we do instead:

.25   .25   .25   = 0.75 (not 1.00)

What this ultimately means is we are playing THREE 8th note triplets within the span of just 1 quarter note.

This should really help. Take a look at the top staff.

That's our 8th note triplet run. We only count 2, but they ARE played.

The bottom staff (in ¾ time) shows 3 quarter notes, which is 0.75 in total sum.

See how all three 8th note triplets are "squished" within that 1 quarter note? Makes sense, because if you counted 2 (not 3!) eighth notes, your value is that of 0.25 (0.125 x2) and in turn it lines up perfectly with just 1 single quarter note.

In terms of counting THIS run, I would do this:

Interjection:

At this point we are done with our ¾ time signature concept. You can now at least somewhat understand the overall value of ¾ time, so I would like you to use a separate printout to go through ALL THREE of these exercises. The backing track (audio and video) runs for like 10 minutes, and in my demo I separate each passage with a 1-2-3 count.

In other words, let the track beat THREE times and then start. Once you have played each exercise a few times (two or four times would be wise) you then give yourself another 1-2-3 count and move to the next exercise. Again, you have a 10 minute track, so you should have plenty of time. The video version will help you count specifically, but realize it's a template that simply repeats 1-2-3 over and over. However, if you time yourself correctly, it will still work just fine. That's what I did in my demo.

Before we move on, make sure you grab your separate PDF exercise that features JUST the ¾ time series. The strumming isn't all that important – and if you want to use just 1 basic chord or any other chord series that is easier for you, feel free to do so. I just chose D – Bm because they are rather close to each other in proximity and are also chord relatives. Therefore, you can't go wrong with how they sound.

If you would like to check out a slightly different (well, not different, but just trickier) way in which triplets work, scroll on down for the segment on converting quarter note triplets into a manageable counting system – and then how to put them back into place.

A Basic Understanding of Quarter Note Triplets

Now, I should preface this by saying that there is actually NO difference in value of quarter note triplets in terms of the method used earlier. The difficulty in quarter note triplets is more about how it is counted. It gets somewhat confusing.

I have chosen a very simple passage to help explain HOW quarter note triplets actually work. This passage from "Seven Nation Army" by The White Stripes isn't actually the way it is played, but it's been formulated in this way for correlation. I'll show you the ACTUAL way it is played in tab form – and it doesn't even use triplets. But, you'll also see why I converted this passage to triplets.

So, to start with – here's the tab in 4/4 time using quarter note triplets:

Quick Math Rundown:

THIS IS INCORRECT! Why? Because we have a value of 1.25, not 1.00 – and thus, this song would not work as a 4/4 time signature based on the FIRST measure.

The last measure, however; is perfect.

It is incorrect because I have labeled each of the quarter note triplets with their "normal" value. This forces us to get 0.75 where it should be 0.50, like this:

E5   (.25 x2) G5   C5   B5

(.25 +.125)   (.50   +   .25   +   .25 = 1.00)

.375   .125   .50   = 1.00

So, as long as you can hear, see, and COUNT this correctly, there's nothing more to do. Here's how you would count it:

E5   G5   C5   B5

1   &   2   &   3   &   a   1   &   2   &   3   &   4   &

One-and-Two-and-Three-and-UH | One-and-Two-and-Three-and-Four-and

This is PRECISE, unlike the original arrow diagrams you had previously. Those were all based on a template of 16th notes, which is about as far as most strummers will take things.

The precise beat in the first measure is:

the 2 on the (1) | the 2 on the (&) | the 0 on the (3) | the 2 on the (&) | the 0 on the (a/uh)

The precise beat in the second measure is:

the 3 on the (1) | the 2 on the (3) | rest [quarter] on the (4)

We can also create a basic chord run using this otherwise riffy approach to help you see what is really taking place.

I should mention that I am ONLY showing tied notes in the rhythm part to help you see the relation between the riff that is using quarter note triplets and the rhythm that would "fill in" the spot of the quarter note triplets. I DO NOT recommend tryinig to play this even though I did in the demonstration – it's hard.

How would this be counted?

It's pretty darn challenging. The way I did it was to THINK in triplets while pretending to strum the tied notes. In other words, I thought "trip-uh-let" and only strummed the "let" part.

In numerical counting, it would be "3 - & - a/uh" with the "a/uh" being the ONLY strum.

Now, if this is difficult to SEE and understand, you can actually break this 4/4 time signature down to 2/4 time, which is just cut time.

When you convert this passage to 2/4, you are literally CUTTING each and every note. You can already assume that 2/4 would be a value of 0.50 in each measure, because we are cutting the 1.00 in half. Here's how this same tab would look using 2/4 time:

Remember: The value is cut in half, so here's the CORRECT version:

With me? Here's the INCORRECT version:

It don't a be workin' right? (ha ha)

Now, the actual song is NOT in 2/4 time, but it might be easier to count, like this:

That being said, if the "riff" isn't as easy to play, the rhythm part might be easier now because you aren't worried about tied notes.

Here's an example of that:

Here's the same concept in 4/4 time:

Now, could the 4/4 time rhythm part be played without worrying about the tied notes? Yes.

It would LOOK just like the one in 2/4 time. The only reason I am showing the 2/4 time version is because of the value of the quarter notes in the 4/4 time. Remember, since the bottom number is a "4" - we must assume that we are working around the quarter note beat concept. Thus, we would THINK more along the lines of 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 without any shortened note values. When we use 2/4 we immediately know that the passage is going to feel a bit more brisk because we must cut the values down in half. We have to squeeze more playing time in between using a value of 0.50 per measure instead of 1.00 per measure.

Long story short – we are all so accustomed to using 4/4 time that we would likely play those triplets as pure quarter notes, not triplets.

"Yeah, Nate – but we SEE the triplets."

You won't always see them. This is especially true if you are getting a cheat sheet from an instructor that lacks note values. I do this for courses like my EZ Guitar Practice Package.

There aren't note values there because my students create passages that work in different jams.

Simply stated, I can't give note values there. Otherwise it would force the student to play the passage as instructed.

As promised, here is the ACTUAL tab that Jack White uses to play this passage:

E   G   E   D   C   B

```
7        7 10    7    5    3         2
sl.
```

There isn't really a single triplet in it. Well, not technically.

However, notice that 7/10 slide. That's a shift slide.

A shift slide is performed by [1] striking the first note (7) and then [2] striking the same string WHILE [3] sliding to the (10) on the same string.

Go back and look at the numbers in brackets such as [1] [2] [3]

That's ultimately THREE "struck" notes. You only see two. Notation won't allow that 7/10 slide to show that middle note because it's not a true tone. It's a technique or better yet – a guitar expression. That 7/10 is going to SOUND much like a triplet!

Try it. You'll totally hear it.

Your goal for THIS particular exercise is two-fold.

Goal #1: Try the riff. They will both SOUND the same, but the counting is slightly different. You'll have an audio snippet to play along with and there is a bass guitar duplicated to help you.

E5   G5   C5   B5

```
                    0
     2        2      2   0
                              3              2
```

1 & 2 & 3 & a   1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Goal #2: Try the rhythm. You CAN try both rhythm versions, but I would just stick to the one that isn't tied if you can. The tied one would be a great intermediate exercise.

You don't need a separate PDF for this one.