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TRACK 1

A compact disc is included with this book. This disc can make learning with the book easier and more enjoyable. The symbol shown at the left appears next to every example that is on the CD. Use the CD to help ensure that you're capturing the feel of the examples, interpreting the rhythms correctly, and so on. The track number below the symbol corresponds directly to the example you want to hear. Track 1 will help you tune your guitar to the CD.

LESSON 1.2—CHOOSING A GUITAR

As with any other important purchase, it is worth giving some serious thought to buying a guitar. Take into account how serious you are about playing guitar long-term, as this will determine whether you pay less or more for it. My first guitar, acquired when I was six years old, was a very, very cheap kid-size model. This is a wise choice, especially when buying an instrument for a child, as their interests change with the seasons and latest computer trends. In my case, I finally passed the test when my mother, to her utter relief, assured herself that I would never be the next great hockey talent to emerge from inner Detroit, as I had hoped, because I was terrible at it. So I got my next new guitar: a big, red, electric Gibson.

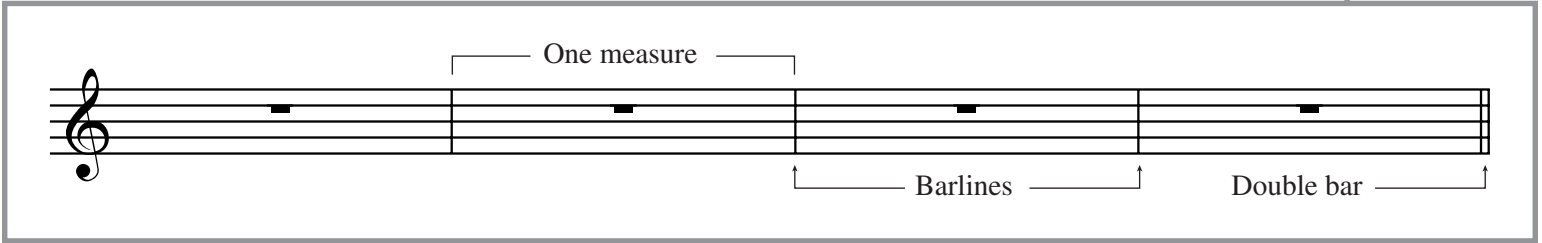


Things to look for while shopping for your guitar:

1. Make sure it is a true classical guitar, one made for use with nylon treble strings. Ask the music store sales clerk. They can be of great help to you.
2. The body of the guitar should be made of wood. Usually, a fine concert model guitar is made with Brazilian or Indian rosewood back and sides, and the top is made of spruce or cedar. These could cost several thousand dollars. If you're just a beginner, however, expect to pay from \$400 to \$1000 for your first classical guitar. Anything below that will probably be really hard to play, and make your practice sessions miserable.
3. Shop around! Even if you live in a remote location, far away from any music store, there are many on-line companies that can answer your questions and sell you a fine, reasonably priced guitar right over the Internet. Just do a Web search for "classical guitars." Many dealers will ship you a guitar to try for a brief period of time before you make a decision. If you can make it into a guitar store, that's even better. It's good to get a feel for different guitars before you buy one.

THE TIME SIGNATURE

Music is divided into groups of beats called *measures* that are indicated with *bar lines*. A *double bar* is used to show the end of a section or short example.



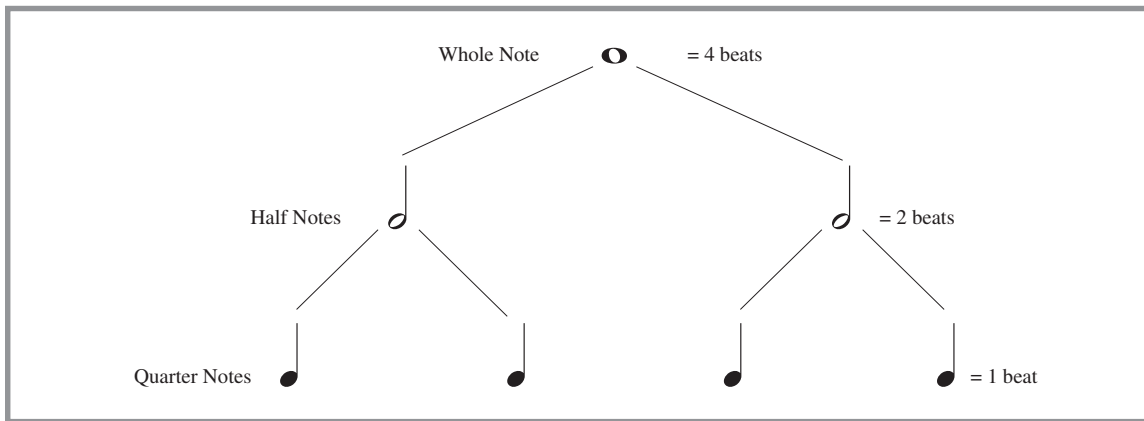
At the beginning of the first staff of a piece of music, we find the *time signature*. This tells us how many *beats* are in a measure, and what kind of note gets the *beat*. Beats are equal units of musical time. They are the basic unit of musical time. When you tap your foot as you listen to music, you are tapping the beats.

4
4 4 beats per measure
Quarter note ♩ = one beat

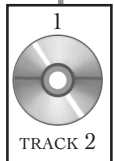
3
4 3 beats per measure
Quarter note ♩ = one beat

The top number in a time signature tells us how many beats are in each measure. The bottom number tells us which type of note gets one beat.

When there is a 4 in the bottom position of a time signature, as in all of the music in this book, the note values are as follows:



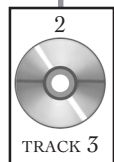
The best way to get to know these rhythmic values is to sing them, even before you play them on the guitar. So try singing the following examples using the syllable "tah." Make sure you hold the "tah" for the full length of the note. Then play them as written on the open 1st string by plucking it with your right-hand *i* or *p* finger.



tah — tah — tah — tah — tah — tah — tah —

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

The staff shows a sequence of notes: four quarter notes, two half notes, and one whole note, each with a "tah" syllable above it. The count "1 2 3 4" is written below each measure.



tah — tah — tah — tah — tah — tah — tah — tah — tah —

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

5

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

The first staff shows a sequence of notes: four quarter notes, two half notes, and one whole note, each with a "tah" syllable above it. The count "1 2 3 4" is written below each measure. The second staff shows a sequence of notes: four quarter notes, two half notes, and one whole note, each with a "tah" syllable above it. The count "1 2 3 4" is written below each measure. A box with the number "5" is at the start of the second staff.