

Creative Composition Toolbox

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR
LEARNING TO COMPOSE

by Wynn-Anne Rossi

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Alfred Music
P.O. Box 10003
Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003
alfred.com

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Rhythm choices continue to grow as you become more advanced in your musical studies. A *triplet* is a group of three eighth notes with an italic 3 written above or below it. Three triplet eighth notes equal one quarter note.

Triplets are not to be confused with compound meter. However, they are both divided into groups of three.

Triplets: $\frac{2}{4}$  Compound Meter: $\frac{6}{8}$ 

Triplets can add a new character to a composition. Divisions of three create swirling, dance-like movements that help to break up the expectations of the more common rhythms.

Japanese Watercolor

Flowing

5

9

13

p

mp

rit.

p

rit.

8va

Compose Your Own Piece Compose a piece that includes triplets and a 4-measure introduction. Consider the use of strong rhythmic patterns that will bring unity to the composition. What kind of mood do these triplets create?

1. Create a title.
2. Choose a tempo.
3. Add dynamics.

Toolbox Tip

Your compositions in this book will be 16 measures long. There may be times when you want to make your pieces longer. If so, your additional measures can be written on staff paper.

Composer Connection

Isaac Albeniz (1860-1909) was a Spanish composer best known for his music based on regional folk tunes. His compositions sometimes feature triplets and compound meters, depicting a particular character of the Spanish people.



Spanish

Tempo:

5

9

13



Some compositions are very fast or have sections that have a burst of speed. *Sixteenth notes* are often used in runs (rapid scale passages) or trill-like figures. Four sixteenth notes are equal to two eighth notes or one quarter note.

Run:  Trill-like: 

Sixteenth notes are common in music that highlights finger speed and virtuosity. A toccata is a fast-moving, exciting piece that shows off the prowess of a performer. A toccatina is a short toccata.

Egyptian Toccatina

Fast!



The score consists of four systems of music, each with a measure number in a box at the beginning of the first measure: 5, 9, and 13. The music is written in 2/4 time and features sixteenth-note runs and trill-like figures. Dynamics include *f*, *mp*, *mf*, and *ff*. Fingerings (1-5) and slurs are indicated throughout.

Compose Your Own Piece Compose a toccatina that includes sixteenth notes. Consider using ⁷ runs, arpeggios and trill-like figures as they are most practical for the fingers at faster tempos. Have fun creating a great show piece!

1. Create a title.
2. Choose a tempo.
3. Add dynamics.

Toolbox Tip

ARPEGGIOS are broken chords where the notes are played one after another. They can be played from bottom to top or top to bottom.

Composer Connection

An all-time favorite show piece is the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor written for organ by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Sixteenth and triplet runs, dynamic contrast, and crashing chords all comprise this stunning performance piece!



Toccatina

Tempo:

5

9

13