



CHAPTER 2

TWO-BEAT FIGURES

 **2**  **On this track, the only background music is drums, so you can focus on listening and locking into the swing rhythm.**

THE TOP TEN 2-beat figures: There are only ten different 2-beat figures that combine quarter-notes, swing eighth-notes and rests. *Everything that comes later* is built upon these ten figures. The counting is written below each figure. Even though the counting looks like standard eighth-note counting, remember these figures all use swing eighth-notes. The articulations will guide you in the swing feel. Also notice that since these two-beat figures are written in the first half of the measure, beats three and four are always rests. Use that time to get ready for your turn to perform or listen to the next example on the CD.

Listen to the CD to get an idea how each figure sounds while you count the beats and sub-divisions out loud and in your head. Later on, echo by either saying, singing, or playing. The voice on the CD uses both counting and “Scat” syllables to help you get the feel of the rhythm. The exact syllable you sing does not matter. The **FEEL** is what’s important!

Each measure is played 8 times on the CD: first you listen, then you copy. Listen again, copy again, then you get four repetitions to play with on your own. For beginners, repeat exactly what is on the CD. Later, when you feel more confident about these rhythms, try singing or playing the rhythms on any note you like. Always keep the counting going in your head.

1 **2**

1 2 + 3 4 1 + 2 3 4

You may hear the voice on the track fill in the rest(s) between or before notes with a quiet syllable such as “um” or “uh” below and later on. Try it, it will help you feel the time in the rests. You could also use the number count in your head (you are still doing that, right?) to fill in the feeling of the beats.

Figures Three and Four correspond to Figures One and Two above, the only difference is a rest has been inserted to replace a note.

3 **4**

1 (2) + 3 4 (1) + 2 3 4

Remember, the exact syllable you sing is unimportant – the FEEL is what matters most!

5 **6**

1 + 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 4

Here again, rests or beat shifts make Figures Seven and Eight variations on figures Five and Six. Keep the counting going in your head!

7 **8**

(1+) 2 + 3 4 (1) + 2 + 3 4

These last two use more eighth notes- the second figure replaces the first eighth note with a rest. If we replaced other eighth notes in the figure with rests, the figures would sound just like Figures One, Two and Six above! Now you see why there are only ten different figures!

Figure 9: 1 + 2 + 3 4

Figure 10: (1) + 2 + 3 4

For more practice on these Top Ten Figures, go to **Appendix A** and work through **Practice Grid #1**. There you can count, scat, sing, or play these figures as they are set out in a random order. This will give you more opportunities to read the rhythms and reinforce the counting and feel.

To see the ideas from Chapter 2 in a melody, look at the tune called “**Friff**” in **Appendix B**.

When you’re ready, go on to Chapter 3.