



eLESSONS

Musings on Learning Music

MULTIPLE MEASURE RESTS

No, this is not a time to take a nap, you must COUNT!

Faced with 57 measures rest, how do you keep your place in the music and not miss that two measure soli before letter O?? There are several tricks, beyond the obvious, "You count." Let's take this section of the Cornet 1 part of *The Blue and the Gray* by Clare Grundman.

First, notice that the 57 measures rest are divided up into mostly groups of eight. That is a lot easier than trying to count 57 measures all together (although that happens a lot if you are playing something like a Beethoven Symphony and you are not a string player!). So, in tackling this section, you (of course) count in the usual fashion: 1 2 3 4, 2 2 3 4, 3 2 3 4, 4 2 3 4, 5 2 3 4, etc... (If you can't/don't count rests like this, you really should learn to; it will save you lots of hassles!)

But doing that several times while keeping track of the cues (small notes) and remembering which section you are in, without using your finger to keep your place, can be a challenge. Your mind starts thinking about what you are going to have for

dinner, or what to do about that difficult situation at work, or 20 things other than the music!

To start, as you go through these sections the first time in rehearsal, you listen really carefully to who has the melody, or who makes an entrance, and you write yourself a little note when you hear it. For example, the low woodwinds enter with a pickup to your first measure of rest at M. Mark "Low WW" or, if the instrument you are closest to and you notice most is the tenor sax, you just write "tenor" or "tenor sax". There are already cues written in just before & just after N, so that helps (we'll talk about cues below).

The purpose of these reminders of what you will hear is not so that you don't have to count; they are there so that as you are counting and you hit that spot, if you are also hearing what you wrote as your aural reminder, you know you are on target. If you don't hear it, you jump to that spot when you do hear it (assuming the problem wasn't that the person who was supposed to be playing didn't do so!).

Going on: two measures before your soli at 2 before O, the low woodwinds enter with a bit of the melody, which you then end for them. Notice how that is notated so that you know to count two measures after you hear the horn cues written in your part, then you hear the low winds for two measures, then you play.

Meter changes (time signature changes) are an easy way to check to see if you are in the right place. The conductor changes his/her beat, and if you hit that 2/4 with the conductor you are in the right place! Tempo changes help, too.

The other really helpful thing is if everyone in the section who is counting rests makes a small motion right at beat one of the new section (usually a small downbeat motion with the hand, like patting your leg). Then all around you everyone sees everyone else making that motion, and the section members all know they are together (or if you are lost you jump to that spot and start counting again). There is no percentage in keeping your knowledge to yourself; the team works together and supports each other so that the music is smooth.

At S, the music goes into 6/8 in two; you know it is in two because it says that the quarter note you were just playing now equals the dotted quarter you are about to play. This means that the beat stays the same; however, you will hear the change of sound as the beat is now divided into three parts (triple) rather than two parts (duple).

And in this piece you have an additional bit of information every few rehearsal letters - it tells you the title of the new song on which the section is based!

CUES

Cues are those little tiny notes, often with whole rests in the measure as well – for example, one before N. There is an abbreviation* to indicate what instrument is supposed to be playing what you have written as the cues; for example the measure before N is for trumpet 1, and at N Horns 1 and 3 play.

Cues have two purposes: the measure before N is a good example of one reason for the cues and the horn cue at N is an example of the second purpose. As a cornet player (or a trumpet player playing the cornet part), when you see the trumpet cue before N, you check and see if anyone in the section has the trumpet part. If not, you play the cue; if someone does have it, you just watch it go by and admire how beautifully they play! The horn cues at N are not for you to play, but are telling you what you are going to hear to make sure you are in the right place. Although, if you were playing in a band without horns, or if the horn player was absent, you might be asked to play the cues.

If you have a long section of cues, it can sometimes be annoying to try to keep track of each note. Notice at O the player has written 2 dashes with a 4 in between, to indicate that there is four measures rest and you can just count 4 measures rest in the usual fashion. This particular four measures is pretty easy to see, so you probably wouldn't need to do that, but in a long section of cues it can be helpful.

Remember: RESTS COUNT; COUNT YOUR RESTS!

EXAMPLES OF INSTRUMENT ABBREVIATIONS FOR CUED SECTIONS:

*Fl = flute; Cl = clarinet; Ob = oboe; ASax = alto sax; Bsn = bassoon; Trp = trumpet; Hn = horn; Tbn = trombone; Bar = baritone horn, etc. Not all composers use exactly the same abbreviations, but the above are fairly standard. Be aware of abbreviations in other languages -- ex: Cor. may mean Cornet, but in some orchestral music it means French Horn.

