

## PERFORMANCE 4

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# BASS PERFORMANCE 4

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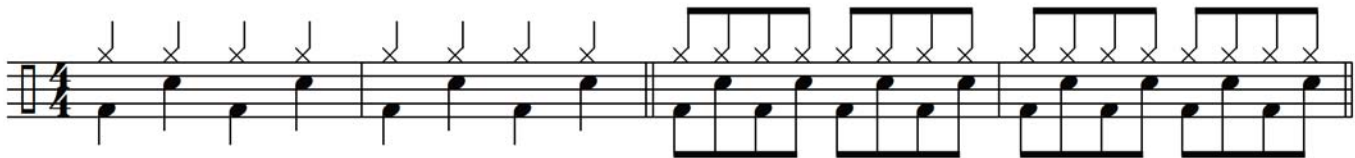
## Chapter 1: Half-Time and Double-Time Feels

One of the more common performance requests that will be asked of a bassist is the ability to play certain passages of music in a half-time or double-time feel. This request can take many different forms and sometimes get confusing (in terms of bar length or song form), but the thing to keep in mind is the use of the word “feel.” Focusing on the word “feel” can help remind us that we are not changing anything about the number of bars or note values, only altering the “feel” over top of the already existing bar length and song form. Nothing changes except what you imply over the already established groove.

*Half-time feels* are common in jazz standards where the bass plays in two (half-time) during the melody, and then switches to 4/4 during solos. A half-time feel essentially means that the song appears to slow down to half its original tempo. *Double-time feels* show up in every style of music and involve the groove doubling in feel (but not actual time) as stated above.

Half and double-time feels are often dictated by the drummer, so it can be helpful to look at a piece of drum notation that shows what a drummer plays when initiating a double-time feel change. In the example below (Ex. 1.1), notice how the drum part doubles in terms of what the drummer is playing (bar 3), but remains consistently rooted in the 4/4 time signature on which it is based (bar 1).

Ex. 1.1



## Chapter 2: Performance Notes and Sound

### Tapping your Foot

When we play a half or double-time groove, often our foot can lead us astray. In switching to double-time, our foot starts tapping twice as fast, counting eighth notes rather than quarter notes. A similar thing happens with half-time: when the pulse suddenly becomes half as slow, our foot wants to start counting half-notes as opposed to quarter notes. In both situations, the form of the song gets lost, because we are no longer counting the correct number of bars.

### Using the Metronome

A helpful way to practice these half- and double-time feel transitions (and not get lost), is to work with your metronome. Place the click of your metronome on different beats to mimic the drummer changing from half and double-time feels. This will help you become more confident and not get lost in the chart and feel transitions.

Take a look at the example below (Ex. 1.2). If we set our metronome at a slow tempo (50 BPM), and think of each click as happening on beats 1 and 3, then we simulate what it's like to keep track of bars in a double-time feel.

Ex. 1.2

Try the same example, but this time, only set your metronome to click at the top of every bar (Ex. 1.3). This not only develops confidence in setting up different half and double-time feels, but also helps develop strong internal time by only giving us one beat per bar as a reference.

Ex. 1.3

Now place your metronome clicks on 2 and 4 (Ex 1.4). You'll notice this hints at a swing feel. It can be tricky to hear clicks on 2 and 4, and even more difficult getting yourself to count along with the metronome when set this way. A simple trick is to count "two" when you hear the first click, then "three" (in the space), "four" (on the next click), "one" (in the space), "two", etc. This will place the metronome click on beats 2 and 4 without you having to think too hard about it.

Ex. 1.4

Musical notation for Ex. 1.4. It shows a bass line in 4/4 time. Above the staff, four vertical lines labeled "Click" are positioned on the second and fourth beats of the first four measures. The first measure is labeled "C7". The bass line consists of eighth and quarter notes.

## Transitions

We've been talking a lot about transitioning between 4/4, half, and double-time feels. Making the transition between the different grooves without losing your place in the music is, as mentioned, one of the hardest aspects of this particular performance technique. The drummer will help set up the transitions, but also, the bass player (and the entire rhythm section), is generally given notice of an impending feel change a bar before it happens. Take a look at the example below (Ex. 1.5). Notice how the second ending is used as a transition to the half-time feel and is noted with the words, "to half x feel..."

Ex. 1.5

Musical notation for Ex. 1.5. The top staff shows a bass line in 4/4 time with two endings. The first ending is marked "1." and the second ending is marked "2." and "To half X feel...". The bottom staff shows the bass line in half-time feel, starting with a "D m" chord and followed by "F" and "G" chords. The time signature changes from 4/4 to 2/4.

# Chapter 3: Half-Time Play-Along

The half-time feel example below (Ex. 1.6) is an AABA form in the key of A at 120 BPM. The A section is a fairly active riff over A7, and comes in with an anticipation on the “and” of beat 4. After the two eight-bar A sections, we go into a half-time feel. The quarter-note pulse and tempo stay the same, but we “feel” the backbeat on beat 3 of every bar, instead of on 2 and 4. In the last bar of the 16-bar B section, the drummer would play a setup to get us back to the original feel.

Ex. 1.6

♩ = 120

♩ A7

4

8

1. 2. To half X feel...

Half X feel:

11 Dm F G

15 Dm F C C#

19 Dm F G

23 Dm F E 7(#9) To original feel...

D.S. al Coda

⊕ Coda

Half X feel: Unison riff (original feel):

27

# Chapter 4: Double-Time Play-Along

The double-time feel example (Ex. 1.7) is a basic 12-bar blues in the key of C. After playing through one chorus at 116 BPM, we then transition to a double time feel, where the backbeat would be felt on every “and” instead of on 2 and 4. In this case, we make the eighth notes feel like quarter notes, but the length of the chorus (and entire form) is the same. This essentially makes the 12-bar blues chorus feel like a 24-bar blues instead.

At the end of bar 24, follow the D.C. al Coda back to the top of the piece and play to the end of bar 12. At that point, follow the “to coda” directive and jump to the one-bar coda at the bottom of the piece to end it.

Ex. 1.7

**Shuffle** ♩ = ♩<sup>3</sup> ♩<sub>2</sub>  
♩ = 116

C7

5 F7 C7

9 G7 F7 C7 G7 Double X feel... (Straight 8ths) ⊕

Double X feel... C7

13

17 F7 C7

21 G7 F7 C7 G7 To original feel... D.C. al Coda

⊕ Coda

25



## Chapter 5: Half- and Double-Time Performance Piece

The performance piece in this unit is a combination half and double-time transitions within the same piece of music. In some spots, the chart switches from double-time directly to half-time without referencing the piece's standard 4/4 time feel. Be sure to work on making these transitions smooth and confident.

The style of music presented in this performance piece could be considered "contemporary instrumental." Generally, this style includes elements of rock, jazz, pop, and other influences mixed together to create an instrumental song that does not feature an obvious vocal part (the melody is often played by another instrument such as a saxophone or guitar).

You will notice that this piece is notated using multiple staves (piano and the bass part). You will be presented with this scenario often (reading from scores that contain more than just the bass line). It can sometimes be difficult to jump from line to line and follow the bass part correctly, so be sure to pay attention as to where the bass part is written so you don't jump the wrong line and accidentally start reading the piano part. In the example below (Ex. 1.8), notice how your eye needs to skip the piano staves. Music written in this fashion will also require more page turns in longer charts, so your ability to read ahead in the music is important.

Ex. 1.8

♩ = 80

Bass Solo Intro

C aug7

The musical score for Ex. 1.8, titled "Bass Solo Intro," is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 80. It is written for Piano and Bass. The score consists of three systems. The first system includes a Piano part (treble and bass clefs) and a Bass part (bass clef). The second system includes a Piano part (treble and bass clefs). The third system includes a Bass part (bass clef). A blue arrow points from the Bass part of the first system down to the Bass part of the third system, indicating a jump in the reading direction.

As players, we must sometimes keep a lot of different chart direction in mind during the same song. Be aware of the specific notated direction in this chart, and be able to transition and cue where directed.

This performance piece starts with a written bass intro (Ex. 1.9). Take note of the phrasing and how the written line works inside the harmony. The phrases start and stop in unique places, giving the part a very soloistic feel.

Ex. 1.9

♩ = 80

**Bass Solo Intro**

C aug7

Piano

Bass