

GETTING RHYTHM

Rhythm makes up a 3rd of the three most important elements in music. The other two are melody and harmony. It's important to talk a little about what rhythm actually means. There are many different definitions of what rhythm is. Rhythm can often be recognized as the beat of a song.

Some people when listening to music will listen to different aspects of the song.

For example someone might hear the bass in a song, or someone might only hear the guitar. If there is a singer, then that's usually what most people hear first. When I listen to music I hear the guitar, if there is one. Quite often you will be listening to the beat of a song.

If you're dancing to music you'll be dancing to the beat of the song. So what happens is you're listening to the rhythm of the song as you dance. Without knowing it you're concentrating on the rhythm of the song. Rhythm is the beat behind the music that you might not always immediately notice.

The instruments that are used to make the beat and create rhythm are called percussion instruments. There is actually a huge variety of these instruments but the most common of all percussion instruments is the drum kit. The drum kit is used most often in popular music and you can see it everywhere. When someone is studying rhythm they usually start on a drum kit and then from there they might specialize.

There are all different kinds of rhythm. You sometimes might here someone talking about western rhythms and eastern rhythms. What they are basically talking about has a lot to do with what kind of percussion instruments that are being used and the kinds of rhythmical patterns. Rhythmical patterns refer to the way the beat is played and what kind of variation might occur in the beat. When referring to western or eastern rhythms it's also referring to where the type of instrument and rhythmical pattern originate from. So western rhythms are usually American or European, eastern rhythms are usually Middle Eastern and Asian based. African rhythms are often talked about also and like the others has unique aspects to it. Each different area has a specific rhythmical identity to it.

Learning rhythm is very important when it comes to playing in a band situation or anytime you're playing with other musicians. This is because when everyone's playing together if there is no agreed upon speed and beat at which to play at, the instruments don't match up and the music won't sound good. So as guitarists it's important to learn some of the principles of rhythm and learn to play in time and play along to a beat. Guitar is an instrument which uses rhythm as well as harmony and melody. Lots of instruments are usually confined to only one of these aspects.

So learning the guitar is not a small undertaking. When thinking about rhythm in regards to your practice think of it as the how a beat would go behind you're playing. So imagine a drummer playing along with you keeping time and helping with the rhythm of the song.

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