


America - learning about the use of chords and changing metre in a song

The term metre refers to the number of beats to a bar in a piece of music and their value. This is shown by bar lines drawn down through the staff and also at the beginning by a time signature. All music has a time signature. This is the numbers at the beginning which  show us how many beats are in each bar and what type of beat they are.

For example the time signature shows that there are 4 beats in every bar and that they are crotchets beats.

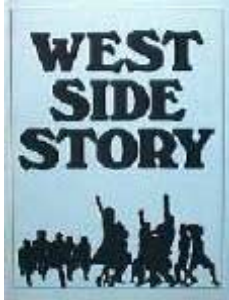
Top number = number of beats in every bar
 Bottom number = type of beat (8 = quaver 4 = crotchet, 2 = minim)

Look at the example to the right.

How many beats are in bar 1? _____

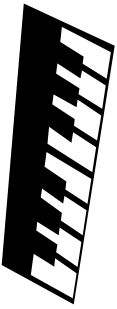
How many beats are in bar 2? _____

How does this change the feel of the music?



Task 1: Learning how to play the chorus

- Play the melody through in your right hand using the correct fingering
- Play the chords through using your left hand - either single fingered chords or full chords
- Play the melody and chords together OR one person play the chords and one play the melody and then swap over.
- AIM FOR A GOOD PERFORMANCE NOT JUST PLAYING THE CORRECT NOTES!



Chords: C, F, C, G, Eb, Bb, Ab, C

Time signatures: 6/8, 3/4, 6/8, 3/4, 6/8, 3/4, 6/8, 3/4

Task 2: Learning to play the whole piece

Now you can play the chorus try the whole piece.

- Remember  means that you repeat the music.



The musical score consists of five staves of music in 6/8 time. The first staff is the melody with chords: C, F, C, G. The second staff continues the melody with chords: C?, Bb, Ab, C. The third staff includes a 'Fine' section and a 'Verse' section with chords: C, E, A, G, E, A, G, E, E, C. The fourth staff continues the melody with chords: E, A, G, C, A, G, B, B, A, A, D, C, A, D, C. The fifth staff concludes the piece with chords: G?, D?, G, A, A, F, A, D, C, F, D, C, B, B, G.

Grade descriptors

- **Working towards expectation-** Able to perform melody line but without sense of rhythm or change in metre. Shows an awareness of how the song was used in West Side Story. Is able to recognise metre changes when listening to music and identify simple time signatures.
- **Working at expectation-** Able to perform the melody line well using right hand and nearly all correct fingering. Produces a confident performance of America adding chord parts with partner and being able to fit them in correctly. Shows a good understanding of metre changes and time signatures through listening and performance. Shows awareness of issues raised in the song and can reflect them to their own lives.
- **Working beyond expectation-** Able to perform melody line and chords at the same time. Gives a confident and fluent performance with a sense of feeling for the music and metre change. Performs at a reasonable tempo. Understand the difference between simple and compound time signatures and their use.
- **Outstanding-** Gives an outstanding performance with real sensitivity for the piece. Adds dynamics. If on keyboard then chooses a voice and style appropriate for the piece when advised to by their teacher. Composes a song in a similar style using metre change and strophic form