

The Eastman Counting System¹

adapted by Gary Garner, Professor Emeritus, West Texas A&M University

- 1) A note that comes on a beat is called by the number of that beat in the measure.

1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5

- 2) A note on the second half of a simple beat is called “te” (tay).

te te te te te te te te te

- 3) A note on the second third of a compound beat is called “la.”
 4) A note on the last third of a compound beat is called “li” (lee).

1 la li la li la la li li la li la

- 5) A note that occurs anywhere else is called “ta” (tah).

1 ta te ta 2 te ta 3 ta te 4 ta ta ta ta te ta 3 ta ta ta te ta ta ta 4 ta 1 ta ta te ta ta 2 ta ta 3 ta ta ta ta 4

1 ta la li 2 la ta li 1 la li ta 2 la ta li ta 1 ta la ta li ta 2 ta li 1 ta ta li ta

Special Cases

In asymmetrical meter, all eighth notes not on a beat are called “te.”²

1 te 2 te te 1 te te 2 te 1 te 2 te te 3 te 1 te 2 te te 3 te 4 te

In two-beat triplets, the second note comes on the last third of a beat and is therefore called “li,” while the third note comes on the second third of a beat and is called “la.” In four-beat triplets, the syllables revert to their original order since the second note comes on the second third of a beat and the third note on the last third of a beat.³

1 li la

1 la li

¹ Allen Irvine McHose and Ruth Northup Tibbs, *Sight-Singing Manual*, 2nd ed. (New York: F.S. Crofts & Co, 1945).

² McHose does not address asymmetrical meter. This method is proposed by Garner.

³ McHose, 59. The method presented here by Garner differs from that of McHose, who names this phenomenon “superimposed meter”. McHose employs the syllables associated with the implied meter.