

# 1. Basic Swing



An important characteristic of jazz rhythm is the concept of swing. A simple way of understanding the swing process can be found in the way eighth notes are performed. Instead of eighth note pairs (♩♩) being equally divided, as they usually appear in published music, they are performed as the first and third notes of a triplet (♩♩♩). In this way, unless specifically notated otherwise, the first note is twice as long as the second (♩♩ = ♩♩♩). Other swing rhythms feature this rhythmic idea, such as ♩.♩ = ♩♩♩, and ♩.♩♩ = ♩♩♩♩♩. In the swing style, eighth notes are performed in a legato style unless specifically notated otherwise.

## Performance Suggestions:

- Sing the first note of each eighth note pair twice as long as the second note.
- Keep the melodic line smoothly connected and energized with the breath.
- Clap the rhythm with a metronome — don't rush!
- Piano, bass and drums experiment with different rhythms, voicings and melodic ideas after mastering the written part. Do this throughout all the exercises.

Swing (♩ = 144)  
Unis. *mf*

Soprano Alto

1 Ba ba du wee\_ ba du ba 2 ba du wee\_ bop ba dut dot da dn da du dot! da du dot!

3

Repeat as needed Last time

Tenor Bass

Unis. *mf*

# 2. Tenuto and Staccato #1



The tenuto and staccato are common in jazz. The tenuto means that the note is held for its full value. Staccato means that a note is sung short, not heavy, which separates it from other notes without losing its forward motion. Since melodic lines in swing and rock music are performed in a legato style unless specifically notated otherwise, the tenuto most often serves as a reminder of the basic legato style in passages which have staccato markings. Words or “scat” syllables sung staccato usually end on the consonants “t” or “p” which act as stopping devices to ensure precise articulation.

## Performance Suggestions:

- Make the staccato notes an important part of a forward-moving line.
- Put a crescendo in the second measure of ex. 1.

Swing (♩ = 144)

Soprano Alto

1 *f* Ya dot, 2 *mf* dot dot da dot dot, 3 Ya dot! Ya dot!

Repeat as needed Last time

Tenor Bass

*f* *mf*

# Tenuto and Staccato #2

Swing (♩ = 144)

Soprano Alto

1 Dot! 2 dot dot, 3 dot dot, 4 dot dot dot dot da dot dot!

5

Repeat as needed

Tenor Bass

*f*