

# Grouping notes and rests

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 5/1–3)

Simple uses of beams, ties, and dots were covered in Grade 1. Now these will be looked at with the new time signatures:  $\frac{2}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{2}$ ,  $\frac{4}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{8}$ .

## Grouping notes

The main points to remember when you put notes in groups are as follows:

(1) In time signatures with a minim (half-note) beat ( $\frac{2}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{2}$ ,  $\frac{4}{2}$ )

► always use a semibreve (whole note) not two tied minims (half notes) where possible



► beam together a group of four quavers (eighth notes), which could be replaced by a minim (half note)



Similarly, beam together four semiquavers (16th notes), which could be replaced by a crotchet (quarter note)



Do not beam together more than four quavers (eighth notes).

(2) In  $\frac{3}{8}$ , beam together quavers (eighth notes) and/or semiquavers (16th notes) that make a complete bar



(3) Except for in  $\frac{3}{8}$ , do not beam together more than four semiquavers (16th notes).

## Stems

When you want to beam together notes written on a staff, a new problem can arise. Look at:



Here the stems of the first two notes go down, but the stem of the last note goes up. But when you beam notes together, *all* the stems in the group go either up or down – usually according to what suits most of them. The three notes in the example above would be beamed like this:



Similarly,  would normally become  rather than 

– the first note ‘wins’ because it is further from the middle line of the staff.