


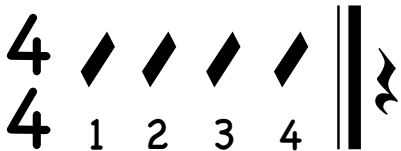
EncycloMedia Man *by Mike Overly*

Harmony Rhythm's Fatal Flaw Part 1

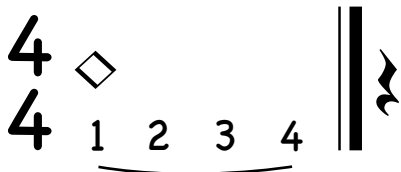
Just as notes are the rhythm symbol of melody, **marks** are the rhythm symbol of **harmony**. Unfortunately, most traditional bass methods use a **meter slash**  as the rhythm symbol of harmony. This is a fatal flaw.

The only purpose of a meter slash is to show the location of a beat within the bar (measure), **not** to tell us what rhythm to play on that beat. The reason traditional bass methods use meter slashes is because they rarely, if ever, use harmony marks.

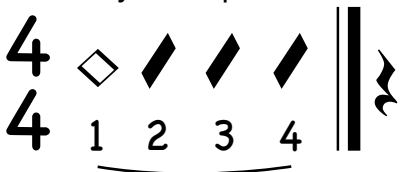
Here is a meter 4, value 4 example using four meter slashes to show the location of beats 1, 2, 3 and 4. **Training wheel** counting numbers have been added. I'm sure we would agree that there are four beats in this measure.



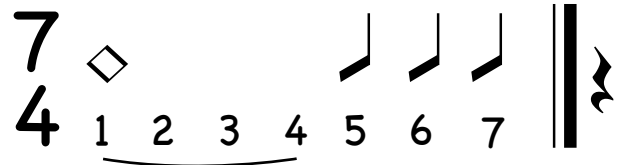
The next example shows four beats using a **whole mark**. The training wheel counting numbers have been **typed** together. Again, I'm sure we would agree, there are four beats in this measure.



The following example could be a little confusing. Are there four beats, or, are there seven beats in the measure? The answer is four beats because the **whole mark** gets four beats. The three meter slashes do **not** add any more beats to the measure because their only purpose is to make beats 2, 3 and 4 visible. Remember, when harmony marks are used, meter slashes are **not** necessary or helpful.



In the next example, there are seven beats in the measure. The **whole mark** gets four beats and the three **quarter marks** add three more beats to the measure. Now, we can clearly understand that a meter slash and a quarter harmony mark are **not** the same.



Most bass players think that the position of the harmony letter within the measure will tell them on which beat the harmony is to be played. But, as the following example shows, this is not always the case.



In the above example, we know that the meter is 4, but we don't know how many beats each harmony letter gets because there are no harmony marks or meter slashes.

In the following example, the harmony letters are still in the same location within the measure, but this time, because a meter slash is used, we can see that the **A minor harmony** gets two beats. Meter slashes are helpful when harmony marks are **not** being used.



Here's the important point. **Meter slashes** make a beat visible and help us know how many beats a harmony letter gets, but, they do **not** tell us what rhythm to play on that beat. For that to be known, we need **harmony marks**.

We'll explore harmony marks next time, but for now, have some meter slash fun... I'm listening.