

Kentucky Music Educators Association 2017

# Scared of the Piano? Dalcroze Techniques for the Barely Proficient Pianist.

February 9, 2017

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## **Focus activities**

### Option 1:

Diminishing/Adding the beat -

- S stand in a circle
- 1 S claps 6 beats using circular clap then turn towards student on right on beat 6 and passes the beat to that student
- Pass around circle, on person 1 pattern changes to 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, then 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- Students should count inside their heads
- Encourage the students to create a phrase by having the set of claps move in a direction or shape

### Option 2

Disappearing Beat –

- Walk forward 8, Walk back 7 clap on 8, walk forward 6 clap on 7/8, walk back 5 clap on 6/7/8/, etc.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Kq2E4Xas5w>

### Option 3

Sequencing the beat

- S stand in self-space
- S walk to the steady beat of T playing on piano or hand drum
- T calls out a number less than 10 and the S walk for that many counts, and then the S freeze for the same number of counts
- S should count inside their heads
- Resume walking until the T calls out another number
- T adds another action for that number of beats, i.e. “tap your shoulder”
- Continue the process with some actions to be heard and some to be silent
- Ask the S to suggest actions

## **Eurhythmics Activities**

### Option 1:

Harmonic Recognition/Analysis

- T plays I chord in any key and have S walk forward to the beat.
- T plays V7 chord and S walk backwards to the beat.
- T plays IV chord and has S walk sideways.
- T plays vi chord and has S turn in a circle.

## Option 2:

### Rhythmic Dictation

- T instructs students to listen to his/her 4 beat long rhythmic pattern.
- S respond by putting rhythm in their feet.
- This game is varied and can include:
  1. S coming up with their own four beat long patterns and showing in small groups.
  2. T instructing students to dictate rhythm using rhythm words.
  3. S transfer 4 beat patterns to NPP.
  4. T layers S patterns into ostinato to accompany a poem.

## Option 3:

### Tempo Follow:

- S stand in self-space
- T improvise 4 measures in common time at piano, preceded by 4 steady beats so the S know the tempo. After the 4-beat intro, S begin walking to the beat of the given tempo
- T improvises 4-measure phrases at contrasting tempi. S begin walking to the beat of the given tempo after each 4-beat introduction.
- T asks the S to stand still and listen to 4 measures of an improvisation. When the improvisation ends, the S walk in the silence at the tempo. T assists the S when knowing when the four measures end.
- T plays four measures in a new tempo. S stand still during the music and move during the silence.
- (this allows T to see and assess the students, and to not “mess-up” while S are moving the beat)

## **Tools for Improvisation:**

1. Use the black keys to create a pentatonic improvisation
2. Use atonal harmonies that incorporate a series of open fifth intervals
3. Use atonal harmonies where one hand is on the black keys and the other hand is on the white keys
4. Incorporate modes, particularly Aeolian, Dorian, and Mixolydian, to open up the ears of the children.
5. Create chord progressions in a few keys: I-IV-V-I or I-vi-IV-V-I
6. Have a student move and use their tempo
7. Establish when you want students to begin moving. Example: “Move when you hear a long note” – Prepare the tempo prior to the movement.

**Most common movements for children are:**

1. Walking
2. Marching
3. Running
4. Gliding
5. Skipping
6. Jumping
7. Sneaking

**Walking Tempi in Steps Per Minute:**

| <b>Grade</b>    | <b>Walking</b> | <b>Marching</b> |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-K           | 139            | 139             |
| K               | 140            | 139             |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | 149            | 140             |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 148            | 139             |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 141            | 138             |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | 137            | 129             |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | 135            | 126             |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | 133            | 124             |

Source: *Meaningful Movement: A Music Teacher's Guide to Dalcroze Eurhythmics*

**Walking Music - Ostinato**

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. Both systems are in 4/4 time and feature a steady bass line of quarter notes (C4, D4, E4, F4) in the left hand. The right hand is mostly silent, indicated by rests. The first system consists of four measures with chords C, C, F, and F. The second system also consists of four measures with chords C, C, G7, and C. A '5' is written above the first measure of the second system, likely indicating a fingering for the bass line.

### Walking Music - Rocking Movement

Musical notation for "Walking Music - Rocking Movement". The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) has whole rests in all four measures. The left hand (bass clef) plays a sequence of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4 in the first measure; G4, A4, B4, C5 in the second measure; D5, C5, B4, A4 in the third measure; and G4, F4, E4, D4 in the fourth measure. Chord symbols C, F, G7, and C are written above the staff. Fingerings I, IV, V7, and I are written below the staff.

### Running Music - light & slightly detached

Musical notation for "Running Music - light & slightly detached". The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) has whole rests in all four measures. The left hand (bass clef) plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5 in the first measure; D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4 in the second measure; C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4 in the third measure; and B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3 in the fourth measure. Chord symbols C, F, G7, and C are written above the staff. Fingerings I, IV, V7, and I are written below the staff.

### Gliding Music - Slow 2

Musical notation for "Gliding Music - Slow 2". The piece is in 6/8 time. The right hand (treble clef) has whole rests in all four measures. The left hand (bass clef) plays chords: C4 (F2, C3, G2) in the first measure; F4 (C3, F3, C3) in the second measure; G4 (C3, G3, C3) in the third measure; and C4 (F2, C3, G2) in the fourth measure. Chord symbols C, F, G, and C are written above the staff. Fingerings I, IV, V, and I are written below the staff.

### Skipping Music

Musical notation for "Skipping Music". The piece is in 6/8 time. The right hand (treble clef) has whole rests in all four measures. The left hand (bass clef) plays a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4 in the first measure; G4, A4, B4, C5 in the second measure; D5, C5, B4, A4 in the third measure; and G4, F4, E4, D4 in the fourth measure. Chord symbols C, F, G7, and C are written above the staff. Fingerings I, IV, V7, and I are written below the staff.

## Jumping Music - Anacrusis gesture is essential

Chord symbols: C, F, I, IV, F, G<sup>7</sup>, V<sup>7</sup>, I, C, I.

## Solfege Activities

### Option 1:

#### Solfege Ladder

- T asks students to find a spot on the floor with space in front of them to move forward.
- T plays a scale and has S sing the scale moving forward, one step for every tone.
  1. Ideally—the steps between Mi and Fa, and Ti and Do will be shorter to show half-steps.
- T plays scale down and has S sing the scale backwards.
- T can vary the game:
  1. Sing the scale up and down without stopping.
  2. T plays the scale and has S sing it back to them as they move.
  3. T skips notes while playing the scale and S skip notes as they move and sing.
  4. T skips notes and S move, only singing the notes that were skipped.

### Option 2:

#### Magic Pattern Game

- T sings a pattern to students (e.g., sol, la, sol, mi).
- S echo.
- T names the pattern the “magic pattern.” S can only sing the magic pattern back to T.
- T begins to sing a variety of four note combinations, and S are only allowed to sing back the “magic pattern.”
- Once S are used to the “magic pattern,” T begins to improvise on the piano for walking.

- T plays a variety of four note combinations, and when the “magic pattern” is played, S stop walking and sing back the pattern.
- T changes the “magic pattern” and repeats the activity.

**Dalcroze Resources:**

American Eurhythmics Society

- [Americaneurhythmics.org](http://Americaneurhythmics.org)

Kentucky Eurhythmics Society

- Like us on Facebook!
- Chapter Share 2/18

Dalcroze Institute, Levels I—III

- July 10-21 @ UK School of Music
- [Finearts.uky.ed/music/music-education-summer-training](http://Finearts.uky.ed/music/music-education-summer-training)

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