



# Drumming and Dancing

**An International and Multi-Cultural  
Approach for Elementary Students**



**19 High-Quality Tracks**

**MUSIK  
GARTEN**  
*Teaching Music, Understanding Children*



# Drumming and Dancing

**An International and Multi-Cultural  
Approach for Elementary Students**

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**MENC National Standards for Music Education**

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, along and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

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## Introduction

Welcome to Musikgarten's exciting new publication *Drumming and Dancing*. In this collection you will find a wide variety of multi-cultural music including selections such as a Cossack folk tune, an Amerindian dance, and an Irish Jig. This new CD and guidebook companion set provides a much-needed resource for the music specialist as well as the classroom teacher.

Drums hold a unique attraction for children. Around the world, drums are beloved instruments for young and old. Playing the drum with the hand directly engages the child's kinesthetic-tactile sense by providing a steady flow of information about how the body feels as it moves. The muscular memory of these sensations helps children adjust and improve their technique and skills. Drumming also reinforces the idea that the sound produced is directly related to the quality of the touch.

Dancing, based on careful listening and full-body response, allows children a much needed and loved means of expression. Through dance, children are given the opportunity to internalize & express their understanding of musical concepts, such as form, phrase length, meter, beat, and style, in a kinesthetic way. Basic components of movement — pattern, line, form, shape, time, rhythm, & energy—are also integrated into this art form. Children joyfully learn to coordinate with others, especially partners, and pursue communal relationships in lines, circles, or other well-ordered patterns.

Drumming and dancing give children opportunities to experience rather sophisticated concepts, which can then be transferred to an instrument. These activities allow children to develop their bodies into musical instruments through which they can express music. Success is made possible because the children have been physically prepared. With both drumming and dancing, those involved experience the sheer joy of being part of an ensemble or community.

Exposure to music of various ethnic groups through drumming and dancing helps children understand and appreciate their own culture as well as the cultures of others. Children learn about the history and life of people around the world through these enjoyable cognitive/motor activities. What children **do** is remembered more easily than what is told or read to them.

### Using this Collection

Children love to drum and dance. Our challenge is to help them build skills while they take part in these enjoyable activities. This collection is designed to address a range of ability levels. The key is to be aware of your students' abilities and give them a variety of opportunities to develop their skills, at times allowing them to participate in activities they have mastered and at other times, challenging them by adding a more difficult element.

## Drumming Procedures

Take time to set up a routine for getting and putting away the drums. Establishing this ritual will be time well spent, for it facilitates orderly conduct and contributes to the success of the drumming activities. Depending on the age of your students, consider introducing the drums in the following way.

- Have the drums set up on a table or shelf convenient to the drumming area.
- Ask the children to watch you as you quietly go to the drums, pick one up with two hands, carefully walk back to your spot, and gently place it on the floor at your spot. Ask the children to describe what you just did, coaching them as necessary to have the children recall the sequence of events. (“First you walked over to the table and picked up a drum. Then you carried it back, holding it with both hands.” etc.) Additionally, ask questions that result in the children describing how you performed the task, such as “How did I place the drum on the floor?”, to which the children should respond “Gently” or “Carefully”.
- Ask who thinks they can do it just like you did. Pick a student and sit quietly, carefully watching as s/he does it. If the student is successful, choose another student to try. If the first student forgets and begins to run or carry it inappropriately, intervene immediately, and suggest that s/he is not quite ready, and you’ll let him/her try again in a few minutes.
- Soon you will be able to invite two or three students to get their drums at the same time, always being ready to intervene before things get out of control. When everyone has their drums, explore different ways of playing the drum, such as those discussed below. It is helpful to establish a procedure for stopping once you have explored playing a particular way, such as saying, “Ready and Stop” with everyone placing their hands on the floor on the word “stop”. With everyone stopping together, the children will be able to hear the next suggestion of how to play.
- At the conclusion of the drumming activity, follow the procedure established in getting the drums out: first, model for the children how to put the drum away, then ask the children to describe what you did, and then challenge them to do it exactly as you did.

Although this takes time in the beginning, it sets up the activity for success. The children learn the proper way to handle the instrument, and they have the opportunity for exploring various sounds that are produced as a result of their touch.

## Getting Started

- Explore a variety of sounds such as the following: (say the word as you play?)  
(maybe underline these verbs)
  - Tap – play with a relaxed hand position, similar to a pianist’s hand position
  - Knock – play with a closed fist
  - Rub – with a flat hand
  - Scratch – with your fingertips
  - Flick – hold your hand above the drum and make a staccato sound by forming a circle between your thumb and finger, releasing your finger from your thumb, and allowing your finger nail to strike the drum head.
- Learn the following songs. Use them to establish good technique, procedures, and control.

## Preparatory Activities

### Come On, Everyone

Come on, ev - ery - one, come on, ev - ery - one,  
Come on, ev - ery - one, sing with me.

- Sing the song tapping the beat.
- Insert the children’s favorite drumming ideas into the song by changing the words, “Sing with me” to reflect their choices; e.g: “Tap with me,” “Rub with me,” Etc.. In the case of tapping, knocking, and other similar choices, lead the children in keeping the beat.

### That’s Mighty Pretty Motion

African American Game Song

That's a might-y pret - ty mo - tion, Dee - di - dee, That's a might-y pret - ty mo - tion,  
Dee - di - dee, That's a might-y pret - ty mo - tion, Dee - di - dee. Rise, Su - gar, rise!

- Sing the song, tapping the beat. Lift both hands slowly upward on the phrase “Rise, sugar, rise!”
- Add drums. Ask the children for a drumming idea. Insert the text into the song to reflect the choice, e.g. “That’s a mighty pretty rubbing”. Model returning the hands quietly back to the drum after the special motion for “Rise, sugar, rise.”

## Teaching a Drumming Activity

When teaching a drumming sequence to a song, read through the suggestions and decide what you expect of the students. If there is a particular rhythmic ostinato or motif, or if there is a pattern that requires specific directions, such as what hand to use, or how to play an accent, isolate that element and practice it before inserting it into the whole piece. Be sure to give the students the necessary preparation just before the accent or rudiment appears in the music, so they have the chance to succeed.

### \*Teaching Strategy

You will find helpful ideas under this title in the text of the more complex activities.



## Dancing Guidelines

A formal background in dance is not necessary. A music teacher or classroom teacher who understands the nature of children and has a basic sense of rhythm can easily integrate these dances into the music program or the elementary curriculum.

- Always listen to the music, visualize the movements, and practice the dance steps before introducing the steps to the students.
- Avoid chaos by having clear goals, guidelines, and procedures and imparting these to the students. The teacher should also have a general organizational scheme, without too rigid of a structure.
- Provide ample space for movement. Children cannot move expressively and with confidence if they are constricted or in a confined space. In a classroom, consider moving the desks and chairs for optimum space. The time spent in doing so is well-worth the effort.
- Remember that the spirit of the performer is at the heart of the dance. The movements must communicate that spirit. These are not just gymnastic movements and learned combinations of memorized steps performed to music. Expression of feelings is integral to the process.
- Take into consideration the age and developmental skill level of the children. If the dance is too complicated, the children will not enjoy the rigorous effort it takes in mastering the numerous steps. See suggestions below for simplifying the dance.

## Dancing Procedures

- Have the children listen to the selection for dancing before teaching the steps. Consider using the music beforehand for children to accompany with rhythm instruments or body percussion.
- Give a brief background history of the style, or the country of origin, or the composer, or the instrumentation. Keep the information in proportion to the age and background of the children.
- Do not feel obligated to teach the entire dance in one class setting. The more complex dances may take several sessions, again depending on the age and prior movement experiences of the students.
- For the longer dances, consider teaching 2 or 3 of the sections and repeat those throughout the entire piece. In subsequent lessons you can add more of the steps. It is possible to teach a few of the steps and practice those with the recording, pausing at the appropriate place. But there is something aesthetically pleasing and rewarding about dancing to the entire piece before changing activities, even if you are repeating 2 or 3 of the same steps in order to meet this goal.

## Teaching a Dance

Many teachers have their own strategies and formulas for introducing movement activities and teaching a dance. Consider these suggestions:

- Tell the children, using the proper movement term or dance vocabulary, what you will demonstrate.
- Show the dance step as the children watch.
- Show it again, and if appropriate, add a word chant as you move. Example: “step-hop” or “left slide”
- Invite the children to imitate your movement or movement sequence.
- Assess their movements, and repeat the procedure above it necessary.
- Give the children time to rehearse the step.
- Depending on the length and complexity of the first pattern, add a second step or sequence in the same manner.
- Add the recording to the dance steps as they are acquired in manageable parts.

## Simplifying Dances

Children’s motor abilities vary greatly. Time devoted to dancing during the class can vary. The dancing directions included are intended to be used as suggestions to accommodate the needs of your class and those of the students. Some of the easy dances can be quickly learned by the older students; for the younger students, it will take longer. All of the steps do not have to be mastered at once.

Using the strategy above for repeating sections will often help in the simplification process. Consider the following examples:

- In *Country Gardens* (track 7), there are 8 equal sections. To simplify, teach only the first 4 and repeat the sequence.
- *Cathrineta* (track 8) also has 9 equal sections which could be taught in the same manner. Another way to simplify is to double the amount of time for each dance step in the 1<sup>st</sup> 8 sections. Instead of rocking from side to side for 8 bars, rock side to side for 16 bars. Turn on the spot for the next 8 bars, instead of 4 bars, and continue the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 sections this way. Dance to section 9 as written. For younger children, this formula works very well, because you are not changing the dance steps quickly.
- The *Mozart Country Dance* (track 17) is a rondo, with equal-length sections B C D and E. Teach the dance steps for the recurring A theme and as many of the other sections in one class as you feel the children can perform comfortably. Add another section the following class period.

If you find that some of the dance step suggestions are much too complicated and difficult, give yourself the joy of simplicity and use easier steps from another dance in a similar style. Some older children may even want to make suggestions or feel comfortable improvising movements.

**CD Track List**

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Drum Song          | Palestine          |
| 2. Renaissance Dance  | France             |
| 3. Bella Bimba        | Italy              |
| 4. Kwaheri            | Kenya              |
| 5. Horsey, Horsey     | Holland            |
| 6. Balaio             | South America      |
| 7. Country Gardens    | England            |
| 8. Cathrineta         | German Heritage    |
| 9. Rondo              | Kabalevsky, Russia |
| 10. Toumba            | Israel             |
| 11. Sunflower Dance   | Baer, Canada       |
| 12. Rain Dance: Iona  | Amerindian         |
| 13. Five O'Clock Talk | American Jazz      |
| 14. Kolomeyka         | Cossack Tune       |
| 15. Hey, Mister       | French Canada      |
| 16. Brîu              | Romania            |
| 17. Country Dance     | Mozart, Austria    |
| 18. Marche Militaire  | Schubert, Germany  |
| 19. Blarney Boys' Jig | Ireland            |