

The Nutcracker Suite

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES FOR EXPLORING TCHAIKOVSKY'S BALLET

By David Bretzius

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Russian Dance

Objective:

Students will explore the form of "Russian Dance" using body percussion and movement.

Materials:

- CD player
- Form map (on the enclosed CD)

Procedure:

1. Listen to the recording while patsching the steady beat.
2. Determine the meter (duple or triple) by patsching on the strong beats and snapping on the weak beats: patsch, snap, patsch, snap, etc.
3. Group students into a double circle, with the outer circle and inner circle facing one another.
4. Teach the body percussion patterns for the A section:

PATTERN 1

P = Patsch C = Clap

PATTERN 2

ASF = Alternating slap five

5. Combine Pattern 1 and Pattern 2. The entire sequence repeats four times. When comfortable, perform the A section with the recording.
6. Introduce the movement and body percussion patterns for the B section:

PATTERN 3

Cross arms and walk R

Cross arms and walk L

PATTERN 4

S = Snap (alternating)

- 7. Combine Pattern 3 and Pattern 4. When comfortable, perform the B section with the recording.
- 8. Display the form map (also included in large form on the enclosed CD) to perform the entire piece with the recording.

A	Patsch and clap	Alternating slap five
	Patsch and clap	Alternating slap five
A	Patsch and clap	Alternating slap five
	Patsch and clap	Alternating slap five
B	Cross arms and walk right	
	Cross arms and walk left	
	Snap	
A	Patsch and clap	Alternating slap five
	Patsch and clap	Alternating slap five
CODA	Alternating slap five	Alternating slap five
	Alternating slap five	



Russian Dance

2/4

P P C C C P P C C C

ASF ASF ASF ASF ASF ASF ASF ASF

Repeat four times

9 Cross arms and walk R

17 Cross arms and walk L

25

33

Repeat three times



Waltz of the Flowers

Objective:

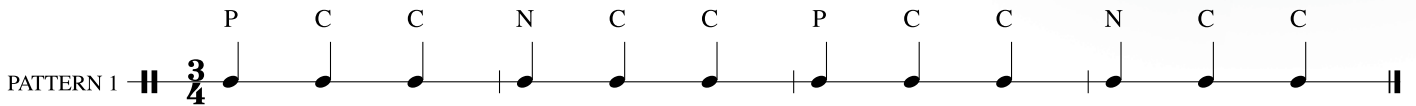
Students will explore the concept of triple meter through body percussion and movement.

Materials:

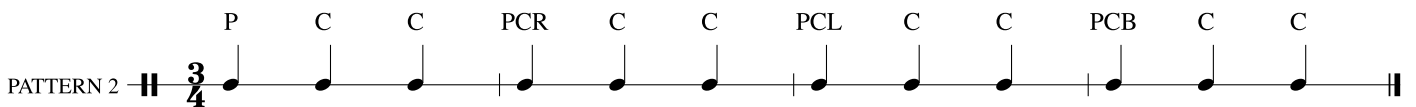
- CD player

Procedure:

1. Group students into a double circle, with the outer circle and the inner circle facing one another. Each student should have a pair of rhythm sticks.
2. Listen to the recording and discuss how this movement fits the story of the ballet.
3. Listen again, starting after the harp introduction (thirty-three measures in length). Determine the meter (duple or triple) by patsching on strong beats and snapping on weak beats: patsch, snap, snap, etc.
4. Reinforce the triple meter by performing the following body percussion patterns:



P = Patsch **C** = Clap **N** = Push both hands out to the side to clap your neighbors' hands



P = Patsch **C** = Clap **PCR** = Partners clap right hands **PCL** = Partners clap left hands **PCB** = Partners clap both hands

Note that Pattern 1 is performed with neighbors in the same circle, while Pattern 2 is performed with the partner across from you in the other circle.

5. Combine Pattern 1 and Pattern 2 as follows to accompany the A section in the recording.
 - Pattern 1—two times.
 - Pattern 2—two times.
 - Repeat the entire sequence.