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Pizzicato

Pizzicato on D

INTRODUCTION TO BEATS AND PRACTICE FUNDAMENTALS

Students are introduced to the concepts of beats as the steady pulse in music, with quarter notes and quarter rests acting as steady audible and silent heartbeats.

Begin by having students feel this pulse in their bodies, placing the beat in their heels through a call-and-response plucking exercise: "I play, you play," repeated with quarter notes and quarter rests. This exercise strengthens their internal sense of pulse and sets the foundation for understanding rhythm.

Next, the practice routine introduces three progressive steps:

1. **Sizzle and tap:** students tap the beat with their heels and make a "tsss" sound (sizzle) in four-beat rhythms, matching quarter notes and rests. This grounding technique builds posture and pulse awareness.
2. **Sing and tap:** students sing note names while tapping the beat. This is a good extension opportunity to connect singing and playing to strengthen intonation and musical expression.
3. **Sing and pluck:** students sing while plucking, incorporating strict posture checks from the start. It is encouraged to do peer assessment throughout these exercises to normalize. Have students check their partner's thumb placement for plucking to ensure proper set up and hand position.

This sequence, and variations of it, will be seen throughout the book to introduce new concepts and set a strong foundation for independent practice and collaboration.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Students perform the full exercise with the soundtrack. No "tapping" should happen, but encourage students to feel the internal beat.



HOUSE SELECTION

(from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*)

by
JOHN WILLIAMS
Exercise by
BRIAN BALMAGES

PIZZICATO ON D

Count the piece aloud before you pluck it on the D string.

Learning G

INTRODUCING FINGER PLACEMENT AND THE NOTE G

Emphasize slow, intentional movement and proper setup to avoid bad habits from the start. Reinforce correct posture and hand position:

- **Violin/Viola:** check for relaxed hands, rounded fingers, and fingertips landing cleanly on the string
- **Cello:** remind them to avoid craning their heads to look at their fingers. Keep the bottom peg behind the ear and upper body open with elbows like "chicken wings"

While setting up hand positions, give sections waiting their turn a task like memorizing where D and A live on the staff, reviewing note reading, or improvising a short D and A composition to maximize instructional time and supervised practice.

Conduct a learning check for cello left-hand shape:

- All four fingers engaged
- Rounded knuckles
- Weight transferring through the arm (not squeezing the neck)



PLATFORM NINE AND THREE QUARTERS

(from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*)

by
JOHN WILLIAMS
Exercise by
BRIAN BALMAGES

LEARNING G

Make sure your left wrist is straight and relaxed!