

The Functionality of Rhythmic Ostinato in the Musical Education of Young Children

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Abstract: *This study focuses on the development of rhythmic skills in third-grade students through the use of rhythmic ostinato as an educational tool. In the modern context, children are increasingly distanced from traditional activities such as singing and social games, while the frequent use of electronic devices limits their harmonious development on motor, rhythmic, intellectual, and social levels. Traditional music education systems place significant emphasis on cultivating a sense of rhythm, employing a wide range of strategies, methods, and teaching resources aimed at achieving both individual and group performance in the acquisition of rhythmic and motor competencies. Third-grade music textbooks include exercises that encourage rhythmic improvisation, yet they do not utilize ostinato as a didactic instrument. The ostinato models proposed in this study are closely aligned with the content recommended by the national curriculum and aim to offer an alternative approach to rhythm education for young learners.*

Keywords: *ostinato; rhythm; skills; music education; young schoolchildren;*

Introduction

This research addresses a key aspect of early music education, namely the development of rhythmic abilities and the acquisition of musical skills related to rhythmic organization during the preschool years. This approach highlights the importance of foundational training in rhythmic competencies from an early age, emphasizing the role of music education in shaping and supporting the cognitive and motor development of young children.

The study of rhythm in early childhood is particularly significant from multiple perspectives, which are detailed below:

1. Children of the 21st century are exposed, from birth, to an artificial sound environment generated by increasingly advanced technology. As a result, direct contact with music during the early years of life is often limited or completely absent. This lack of authentic musical experiences, lived within a familial or natural context, adversely affects the development of rhythmic sense and musical sensitivity in children.
2. In the not-so-distant past, traditional families maintained a strong presence of song and musical interaction. Parents and grandparents would sing regularly, and children learned music through imitation and direct engagement from a very young age. This tradition has gradually faded, and many children today are first introduced to music only in kindergarten—a delay that significantly impacts their musical development.
3. Teacher training colleges no longer place significant emphasis on musical preparation for future educators, and music is no longer a required subject for admission. The lack of

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professionally trained educators in music at the preschool and primary levels has serious consequences for children's musical initiation:

- In kindergartens, although the subject *Music and Movement* exists and is often integrated with other educational activities, teachers frequently neglect auditory, interpretative, and motor development. In the final preschool year, emphasis is primarily placed on preparing children for primary school, especially in reading, writing, and mathematics—subjects considered crucial for later academic achievement.
- In primary schools, *Music and Movement* is taught by classroom teachers, but these classes are often replaced with lessons in literature or mathematics, particularly in the context of national assessments in grades two and four. This practice significantly reduces the time allocated to music education, which is vital for a child's holistic development.

These issues underline the need for a more coherent and well-grounded approach to early music education, aimed at counteracting the negative effects of social and educational changes and ensuring the harmonious development of children's rhythmic and musical skills.

Despite rhythm being an essential and ever-present component in daily activities, young children's rhythmic abilities remain underdeveloped. Play—the primary activity of early childhood—has undergone significant transformations. Traditional group play has largely been replaced by gadget-based activities. Even though such games may involve multiple participants, physical movement is almost entirely absent, and communication is reduced to virtual dialogue, which contributes little to cognitive, linguistic, or motor development.

In this context, the role of the music educator becomes essential, as they are responsible not only for establishing musical motor skills but also for fostering the development of basic rhythmic abilities in students. Although music education typically becomes more structured in middle school, our research focuses on third-grade students. At this developmental stage, the foundations of primary communication are already established, and in terms of musical language, there is a transition toward the use of music notation. The national curriculum for primary education clearly outlines the general competencies to be developed, among which rhythmic skills occupy an important place, given that rhythm is an innate and fundamental element of music. Developing rhythmic competencies is essential, as it has a direct impact on subsequent achievements in the field of sound art.

In our study, we explore the importance of rhythmic ostinato in the music education of young learners, offering methodical solutions and practical examples for the effective integration of this didactic tool in classroom activities.

1. Ostinato as an Educational Resource

According to the *Dictionary of Musical Terms*, the concept of *ostinato* receives a comprehensive definition.² In the context of this study, *ostinato* (a term of Italian origin derived from the Latin *obstinatus*, meaning stubborn, persistent, or persevering) refers to the constant repetition of a clearly defined musical pattern—whether rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, or a

² *** 2008. *Dictionary of Musical Terms, 2nd Edition, Revised and Expanded* [Dicționar de termeni muzicali, ediția a II-a, revăzută și adăugită]. București: Editura Enciclopedică, pp. 411-413.

combination thereof. It functions as both a structural and unifying principle within a musical discourse. In this broader sense, it serves as a musical foundation that supports the overall architecture of the piece, allowing for significant freedom in improvisation.

Rhythmic ostinato is, therefore, a short, repeated rhythmic pattern commonly used in music. Within an educational context, it serves as a valuable teaching tool that contributes to the development of students' sense of rhythm, motor coordination, perception of duration, and musical pulse. By incorporating rhythmic ostinatos into classroom activities, students significantly improve their ability to maintain a steady beat and achieve greater rhythmic precision. The use of rhythmic ostinato in various educational settings allows pupils to engage directly in the creative process, while also facilitating the internalization of fundamental musical concepts such as meter, note values, tempo, and more.

1.1. Ostinato in Modern Music Education Approaches

The major pedagogical schools of the 20th century—represented by the contributions of distinguished music educators such as Edgar Willems, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Shinichi Suzuki, Carl Orff, Zoltán Kodály, and George Breazul—are grounded in the theories and research of renowned educational psychologists including Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Édouard Claparède. These methodological approaches consciously and coherently integrate the psycho-physical characteristics of the child, promoting an active pedagogical vision centered on the child's direct participation in the learning process.³

Within this framework, the child is no longer a passive recipient of knowledge but becomes the main agent in the educational act, actively participating in the lesson through exploration, experimentation, and internalization of musical content.⁴

Among the educational systems mentioned, Orff Schulwerk and Zoltán Kodály's pedagogical concept are of particular interest to this study, as both explicitly employ rhythmic ostinato as a core element of instruction.

In the Orff Schulwerk approach, the main instructional tools are music, language, and movement—all of which are integrated into a unified whole that forms the foundation of the educational model.⁵ The repetitive nature of ostinato patterns helps students internalize rhythmic models, thereby facilitating the comprehension and execution of more complex rhythms. Through repeated practice, learners gain confidence in their rhythmic abilities, which supports both their musical and cognitive development. The Orff-Schulwerk method, which integrates music, movement, and speech, creates a dynamic and holistic learning experience. This integrated approach not only cultivates musical skills but also fosters joy and creativity, making the educational process engaging and effective for young children.

Thus, Orff proposes in his work *Music for Children*, Volume I,⁶ a series of ostinato exercises, which may be performed independently or used as accompaniment for rhythmic

³ Gabriela Munteanu. 2008. *Systems of Music Education* [Sisteme de educație muzicală]. București: Editura Fundației România de Măine.

⁴ MTA-SZTE Vocal and Music Pedagogy Research Group. *Rhythmic Development Program. Collection of Games* [Ritmikai fejlesztőprogram. Játékgyűjtemény]. Retrieved March 31, 2025, from Web site http://www2.u-szeged.hu/ezk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Ritmikai-fejleszt%C5%91program_3h%C3%B3napra.pdf.

⁵ Astrid Niedermaier. 1999. *Modern Music Education. The Pedagogical Concept and Instrumentarium of Orff* [Educație muzicală modernă. Concepția pedagogică și instrumentariul Orff]. Sibiu: Editura Hora, p.27.

⁶ Carl Orff, Gunild Keetman. *Orff-Schulwerk. Music for children*, vol.1. Editura Schott, pp. 60-64.

exercises or musical pieces. These patterns make use of body percussion, ranging from the simplest forms—such as clapping—to more complex sequences involving three or four types of body percussion elements.

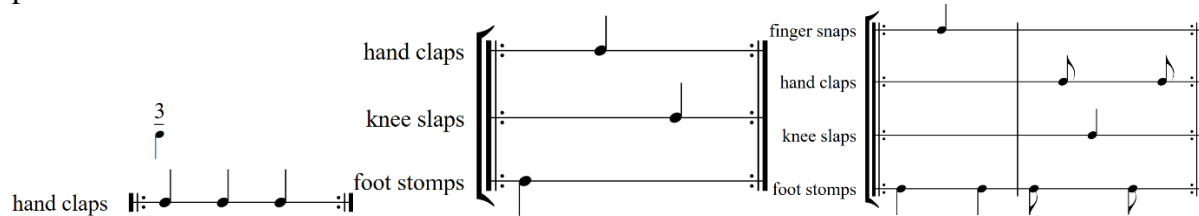


Fig. 1. Ostinato Patterns with Body Percussion

The ostinato accompaniment typically supports an improvised rhythm, with the ostinato serving as the element of rhythmic and metric consistency. The exercises may include an introduction and a coda and can be structured according to various form patterns, ranging from simple bistrophic forms such as AB to more complex tri-penta strophic forms.



Fig. 2. Ostinato Pattern for Rhythmic Accompaniment

In the same volume, Orff also proposes a series of ostinato exercises for tuned percussion instruments, designed to prepare students for instrumental performance:

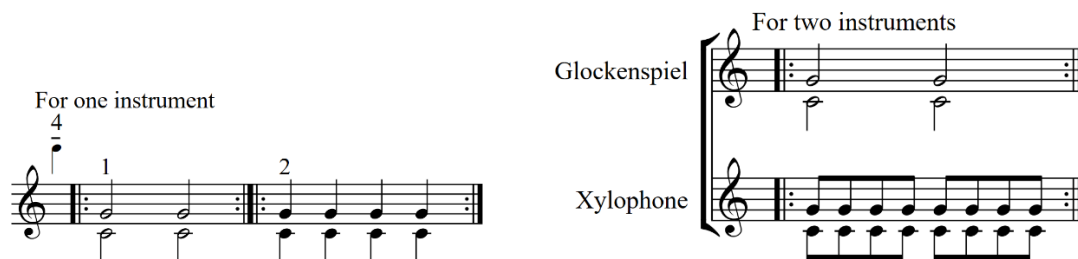


Fig. 3. Ostinato Patterns for Tuned Instruments

These small exercises progressively target the development of motor, auditory, metric, rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic-polyphonic skills in children, providing a solid foundation for further musical education.

Professor Astrid Niedermaier,⁷ a dedicated promoter of Orff's approach in our country, offers several solutions for using both melodic and rhythmic ostinatos in her work. These ostinatos can accompany children's folk songs or children's songs, among which we present the following:

⁷ Astrid Niedermaier, *op.cit.* p. 126.

Regen, Regentropfchen

The image shows a musical score for the song "Regen, Regentropfchen". At the top is a vocal melody in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The lyrics are: "Re- gen, Re- gen- tröpf - chen, fall mir auf mein Köpf chen, fall mir a - ber nicht da - ne - ben, daß ich bleib noch lang am Le - ben". Below the vocal line are seven instrumental parts, each with an ostinato pattern marked "ostin.". These are: Timpani (quarter notes), Metallophones / Glockenspiel alt (quarter notes), Glockenspiel (quarter notes, with the lyric "fall mir a-ber" below), Xylophone (quarter notes, with the lyric "Re-gen, Re-gen" below), Hand drum (quarter notes), Claves (2) (quarter notes), and Woodblock (2) (quarter notes). All instrumental parts are in 2/4 time and end with a double bar line.

Fig. 4. Arrangement with Rhythmic and Melodic Ostinato

The use of musical arrangements based on ostinato by Professor Niedermaier provides students with the opportunity to actively engage in instrumental performance, thereby facilitating the development of technical skills specific to each instrument. At the same time, the simultaneous integration of melodic and rhythmic instruments contributes to the improvement of rhythmic and metric synchronization, playing an important role in refining auditory perception and motor coordination.

Hungarian pedagogue Zoltán Kodály, building on the innovative ideas of Orff and Dalcroze, proposes the accompaniment of songs with rhythmic ostinato from the earliest music lessons. He believes that the sense of rhythm should be cultivated from the earliest age, even before children can perform more sophisticated songs. Polyrhythmic exercises and rhythmic ostinato will help the child skillfully develop their rhythmic abilities through body percussion or small percussion instruments⁸.

In Kodály's concept, rhythmic ostinato can serve multiple functions:

- Reinforcing and solidifying durations, activating auditory and motor memory;
- Maintaining one's own rhythm while listening to another rhythm, facilitating the practice of polyrhythm;
- Improving motor coordination and distributed attention, contributing to group synchronization and active listening;
- Supporting creativity;
- Overlapping melodies with one or more ostinato groups strengthens the sense of form⁹.

Professor Szőnyi Erzsébet, a remarkable disciple of Zoltán Kodály, frequently integrates ostinato-based accompaniment in her lesson books designed for individual study, starting from the early stages of the educational process¹⁰. In the introductory lessons of the first book, rhythmic ostinato is represented through regular tapping on the table or clapping, marking the constant pulse

⁸ Andrea Asztalos. 2023. „The Spread of Zoltán Kodály's Music Education Principles in the World". *Studia UBB Musica*, LXVIII, 1, p. 16.

⁹ Judit Forrai. DOI 10.23716/TTO.23.2020.04. „Rhythm as a Common Element in the Kodály and Pető Methods. [A ritmus, mint a Kodály- és Pető módszer közös alkotóeleme]". Retrieved March 15, 2025, from https://real-eod.mtak.hu/8425/1/35_Ritmus_2018_anket_BELIV_IMPRIMATURA_FINAL_ONLINE.pdf.

¹⁰ Erzsébet Szőnyi. 1956. *Practice Notebooks for Music Reading and Writing [A zenei írás-olvasás gyakorlófüzetei]*. Budapest: Editura Zeneműkiadó.

of the musical beats. These seemingly simple exercises contribute to the foundation of rhythmic sense and the maintenance of a stable tempo. As students progress through the material, the complexity of the ostinatos increases progressively, being adapted to their musical development level. While in the initial stages, the ostinato primarily serves the function of supporting the pulse and tempo, in later lessons, it assumes a much more sophisticated role, being correlated both with the reinforcement of rhythmic-melodic aspects and with facilitating the understanding and assimilation of compound or alternative measures. Below are some examples from the aforementioned workbooks:

In Workbook 1, Lesson 6, the student's task is to choose one of the three proposed ostinato patterns and then perform the rhythm of exercise no. 4 vocally, tapping on the table in the chosen ostinato pattern.

ostinato pattern:

rhythm $\frac{2}{4}$

ostinato

a) $\frac{2}{4}$ quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note :||

b) $\frac{2}{4}$ quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note :||

c) $\frac{2}{4}$ quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note :||

Fig. 5. Szőnyi Erzsébet, Workbook 1, Lesson 6, p. 9

The rhythmic-melodic ostinato is present in Lesson No. 18 of the same workbook. The solfège will begin after a measure of ostinato, and the final measure will serve as the concluding measure, thereby also stimulating the sense of form with an introduction and a coda.

(Kodály)

Solfège

Ostinato

Coda

Fig. 6. Szőnyi Erzsébet, Workbook 1, Lesson 18, p. 31

The rhythmic ostinato in Workbook 4, Lesson 60, is proposed for reinforcing the alternating time signatures of 3/8 and 2/4.



Fig. 7. Szőnyi Erzsébet, Workbook 4, Lesson 60, p. 17

Three variations of ostinato are proposed in Workbook 4, Lesson 62, for reinforcing rhythmic patterns.



Fig. 8. Szőnyi Erzsébet, Workbook 4, Lesson 62, p. 27

In Workbook 7, Lesson 89, the ostinato accompaniment of Bicinia IV aids in the assimilation of the 5/4 time signature, as well as the polyrhythm derived from the overlapping of the two voices.

Adagio (...bánat utca) (Kodály: Bic. IV)

The musical score consists of five systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 5/4.

System 1:

Vocal: Ut - ca, ut - ca mi - ért_ vagy fü - vel bo - rít-va,
Piano: Ut - ca, ut - ca mi - ért is vagy_ fü - vel

System 2:

Vocal: Fü - vel bo - rít - va, Köny - nyel kí - rak - va?
Piano: bo - rít - va, Mi - ért is vagy köny - nyel kí - rak - va?

System 3:

Vocal: Már én töb-bet nem já - rok, nem jár-ha-tok
Piano: Már én töb-bet nem já - rok, nem já - rok te - raj-tad.

System 4:

Vocal: te - raj- tad, Nem jár - ha- tok, hí - rem el- hord- tad.
Piano: Nem jár - ha- tok töb- bé raj- tad, hí - rem el- hord- tad.

ostinato: 5/4 [musical notation]

Fig. 9. Szőnyi Erzsébet, Workbook 7, Lesson 89, p. 27

1.1.2. Possible Functions of Rhythmic Ostinato in Early Music Education

In early music education, the use of rhythmic ostinato represents an effective method for developing the fundamental rhythmic skills of young children. By implementing this technique, a series of essential objectives for forming a solid and coherent sense of rhythm can be achieved. In this context, rhythmic ostinato plays multiple roles, including:¹¹

- **Ensuring Pulse Consistency:** Through the continuous repetition of a rhythmic motif, ostinato helps students internalize and maintain the musical pulse. This consistency is crucial for developing the ability to keep time in a dynamic musical context, both individually and within an ensemble. Thus, students are taught to perceive and sustain a constant tempo throughout the lesson.
- **Assimilating Durations:** Rhythmic ostinato allows children to understand and apply the concepts of note durations (eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, etc.), facilitating the recognition

¹¹ Tamara, Gál Várady. 2021, November 24. „Rhythmic Games for Every Age Group [Ritmusjátékok minden korosztálynak]”. *Cserkész*. Retrieved April 9, 2025, from <https://www.cserkesz.sk/vezeto/nevelesi-modszerek/taps-dobbant-taps-taps-dobbant-ritmusjatekok-minden-korosztalynak>.

and interpretation of rhythmic values. Repeating rhythmic formulas accompanied by movement helps solidify these concepts, making them easier to internalize.

- **Learning Metric Accents:** Another key objective of using rhythmic ostinato is teaching the concept of metric accents, which are essential for structuring music. Children are taught to identify and apply accents on the main beats of the measure, helping them understand the rhythmic structure of musical pieces and improving their coordination within ensembles.
- **Learning Rhythmic Formulas:** Through ostinato exercises, children can learn various rhythmic patterns that are useful both for interpreting musical pieces and creating their own music. These rhythmic formulas serve as landmarks that can be combined and modified as students progress in their rhythmic knowledge.
- **Differentiating Tempos:** Rhythmic ostinato provides an ideal framework for differentiating and applying various tempos, stimulating students' ability to recognize and adapt rhythm according to the speed of the musical piece. This enhances their rhythmic flexibility and their capacity to intentionally adjust the rhythm based on the musical context.
- **Developing Motor Skills:** By integrating physical movement into ostinato activities, children improve their motor coordination, which is essential for their physical and intellectual development. Clapping, rhythmic marching, or using percussion instruments are ways to encourage movement and interaction between the body and musical rhythm.
- **Developing Distributed Attention:** By using ostinato patterns associated with songs, students learn to distribute their attention between multiple sources of stimulation: their own rhythm, coordination with other group members, and the interpretation of musical elements (melody, rhythm). This type of exercise contributes significantly to developing the ability to focus on multiple tasks simultaneously and enhances their response to external stimuli.¹²

Thus, rhythmic ostinato is not only a teaching tool for reinforcing rhythm, but also a complex method that positively influences students' cognitive, motor, and social development, having a profound impact on the formation of fundamental musical skills.

2. Rhythmic Education in Music and Movement Textbooks for Grade 3

For Grade 3, seven alternative textbooks have been developed and are currently in use. These textbooks will be referenced throughout the study using the numbers assigned to each manual at the beginning.

1. Chifu, F. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura Litera
2. Pauliuc, L. A., Diaconescu, C. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura CD Press
3. Radu, D., Perțea, A., Radu, M. A. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura Aramis
4. Pițilă, T., Mihăilescu, C., Coman, C. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura ArtKlett
5. Roșeț, Gh. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura Booklet

¹² Borbála, Szirányi. 2021. *Creative Singing Games with Rhythmic Movement. Active Music Learning through Singing and Movement - Model 1* [Kreatív énekes-játékok ritmikus mozgással. Aktiv zenetanulás énekléssel és mozgással 1. Modell]. ISBN 978-615-6316-09-7. Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem.

6. Rizea Marinescu, M., Predoiu, M., Matora-Ionescu, A. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura Intuitext

7. Pantelimon, E. 2021. *Music and Movement: Manual for 3rd Grade*, [Muzică și mișcare, Manual pentru clasa a III-a], Editura Corint Logistic

In Grade 3, students learn rhythmic durations of quarter notes, eighth notes, and half notes, which are integrated into various learning units. The mentioned durations are associated with movement terms, musical nuances, and the fundamental elements of musical language. After reviewing the seven alternative textbooks for Grade 3, we observed that all of them encourage rhythmic improvisation, carried out through body percussion or with various pseudo-instruments and small percussion instruments. Rhythmic improvisation is often used alongside songs or music listening activities. However, we did not find any rhythmic ostinato exercises or rhythmic accompaniments with ostinato in any of the textbooks reviewed.

We believe that rhythmic ostinato, through its simplicity and repetitiveness, can have an immediate impact on the assimilation of concepts related to rhythm, tempo, and even dynamics.

Therefore, in the following section, we will propose a few ostinato accompaniment models, detailing both the objectives to be achieved and the methods for their implementation.

2.1. Ostinato for Ensuring a Steady Pulse

The simplest example of a rhythmic ostinato consists of clapping quarter-note beats to accompany a given song. The primary objective of this exercise is to standardize the sense of pulse across the entire class and to ensure that all students maintain a consistent beat. At the same time, this activity also aims to develop motor coordination, as not all students are initially capable of clapping in a regular and uniform manner. By performing this type of ostinato with various songs, students will become accustomed to maintaining an even pulse without accelerating or slowing down the tempo.

To illustrate this exercise, we propose the song *The Upset Snail (Melcul supărat)*, from *Manual No. 1*, page 47.

Melcul supărat
(după auz) din folclorul copiilor

Potrivit

1. Vi - ne mel - cul su - pă - rat, O fur - ni - că l-a piș - cat,
2. Și din gu - ră el stri - ga: Fugi de-a - i - cea, nu mai sta!

Și cum vi - ne pâș, pâș, pâș, În - tâl - ne - ste-un că - ră - buș.
Dă - te-n - co - lo, nu sta-n drum, Că te iau în coar - ne-a - cum.

The students will learn the song by ear, and to reinforce the sense of pulse, they will clap quarter-note beats.

ostinato hand claps ||: ♩ ♩ :||

2.2. Ostinato for Learning Note Durations

To support the learning of note durations, we will use the song *The Singing Friends* (*Prietenii cântăreți*) from *Manual No. 6*, page 48, as it includes all the note values introduced in the third grade curriculum.

Prietenii cântăreți

- după auz -

Muzica și versurile: Ana Motora-Ionescu

Sus, pe ră-mu - re - le, Cip, ci - rip, ci - rip, Că - n - tă pă - să - re - le:
Cip, ci - rip, ci - rip. Jos, în co - drul ver - de, Ur - șii - n gla - sul lor
Mor - mă - ie în - tru - na: Mor, mor, mor. Cu - cu, cu - cu,
Cip, ci - rip, ci - rip, Cu - cu, cu - cu, Mor, mor, mor.

An initial rhythmic ostinato exercise involves accompanying the song with foot stomps on quarter-note beats, simultaneously with hand claps on eighth-note beats. The students' task is to perform both the quarter notes and eighth notes at the same time, synchronizing the movements of their hands and feet. This activity supports the development of both motor coordination and rhythmic awareness.

ostinato 1. hand claps
foot stomps

Once students are able to successfully synchronize their hand claps with their foot stomps, a third note value—the half note—can be introduced into the ostinato exercise. In this version, the ostinato will span two measures: in the first measure, finger snaps on eighth-note beats will be layered over the pulse maintained by foot stomps; in the second measure, hand claps will be performed on half-note beats. In this way, all note values used in the song are synthesized, allowing students to clearly perceive the relationship between them. The quasi-mechanical repetition of the ostinato will help consolidate the three note values in the child's rhythmic and auditory memory.

ostinato 2.

finger snaps

hand claps

foot stomps

2.3. Ostinato for Learning Rhythmic Patterns

The objective of these exercises is the assimilation and automation of specific rhythmic patterns. To illustrate this type of exercise, we propose the songs *I am romanian (Sunt român)*, from *Manual No. 7*, page 51, and *Little Bear Mărtinică (Ursulețul Mărtinică)*, from *Manual No. 6*, page 69.

For these two songs, we will use four elements of body percussion: foot stomps on steady quarter-note beats, finger snaps on eighth notes, hand claps on quarter notes, and thigh pats on half-note durations. In the case of the first song, the ostinato will reinforce the rhythmic pattern of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes, which appears in the refrain. In the second song, using the same body percussion elements, the focus will be on reinforcing the rhythmic pattern of two eighth notes followed by a quarter note, as illustrated in measures 2, 4, 6, and 8 of the song.

Sunt român

G. Breazul și N. Saxu

1. Sunt ro - mân, ro - mân voi - nic, Tra, la, la, la,

5 2. Măi duș - ma - ne, te pă - zeș - te, Tra, la, la, la,

9 Si n-am fri - că de ni - mic Tra, la, la, la.

13 Că ro - mâ - nul nu glu - meș - te Tra, la, la, la.

Ro - mâ - ni - a-i ța - ra mea, Tra, la, la, la,

Nu te-a - tin - ge de ho - ta - re, Tra, la, la, la,

Drag mi-e să tră - iesc în ea, Tra, la, la, la.

Că să - rim cu mic, cu ma - re, Tra, la, la, la.

ostinato

finger snaps

hand claps

thigh slaps

foot stomps

Ursulețul Martinică

Muzica și versurile: Ana Matora - Ionescu

1. Mar-ti - ni - că-i bu - cu - ros Că ști - e cân - ta fru-mos. Toa - tă zi - ua

2. A-n-vă - țat și no - te - le, Ști - e și du - ra - te - le, Ba - te tac - tul,

îi dă zor, Că e ma - re di - ri - jor: Mor, mor, mor, mor, mor, mor.

u - nu, doi Și pe no - te cân-t-a-poi: Do, re, do, do, re, do.

ostinato

finger snaps

hand claps

thigh slaps

foot stomps

2.4. Ostinato for Identifying Metric Accents

In third grade, the school curriculum does not require the acquisition of the concept of musical meter, and most of the musical pieces included in the textbooks are written in 2/4 time. However, we have identified a few musical examples in 3/4 and 4/4 time, which has allowed for the introduction of the ostinato technique in this context. We believe that early familiarization with the succession of metric accents is essential, playing a significant role in the subsequent development of musical perception.

The proposed ostinatos aim to facilitate the assimilation of various time signatures by highlighting the regular succession of metric accents. To emphasize the accents, we suggest alternating hand claps on the accented beats with foot stomps or thigh pats on the unaccented beats. Each time signature will be illustrated with an appropriate song to provide concrete and applicable examples for classroom practice.

For the 2/4 time signature, we will use the song *The Fox (Vulpea)* from *Manual No. 4*, page 29.

Vulpea
(după auz)

Muzica: Nicolae Bucliu

Vul - pea că - tre sat por - neș - te la vâ - nat,
La co - teț Gri - vei pân - deș - te ne-n - ce - tat.
Vul - pe, mai mâ - nă-ți pa - șii că - tre co - dru,
Să nu ră - mâ - nă bla - na ta prin sat.

ostinato hand claps

thigh slaps

For the 3/4 time signature, we suggest several ostinato variations using the song *Wedding in the Meadow (Nunta-n luncă)*, found in *Manual No. 2*, page 65.

Nunta-n luncă

1. Oas - peți vin din de - păr - ta - re, Oas - peți dragi ră - sar.
Sto - luri, sto - luri de co - coa - re Vin în ța - ră iar.

ostinato

Var.1 Var.2 Var.3

hand claps

thigh slaps

foot stomps

For the 4/4 time signature, we propose *Winter Song (Cântec de iarnă)* by Aurel Ivășcanu, found in *Manual No. 3*, page 83.

Cântec de iarnă
(după auz)

Versuri: Teofil Dumbrăveanu Muzică: Aurel Ivășcanu

Cu voioșie

1. Cling, cling, cling, ____ cling, cling, cling, No - rii sus pe
2. Cling, cling, cling, ____ cling, cling, cling, No - rii și-n li -
3. Cling, cling, cling, ____ cling, cling, cling, No - rii și-n o -

dea - luri ning ____ Și se dau de-a du - ra-n - coa - ce,
va - dă ning, ____ Ful - gii nu mai stau în pa - ce
gra - dă ning, ____ Hai, co - pii, să scoa - tem ia - ră

În su - ma - ne și co - joa - ce, cling, cling, cling, ____ cling, cling, cling.
Și pă-mân-tul alb se fa - ce, cling, cling, cling, ____ cling, cling, cling.
Să - ni - u - țe - le pe-a-fa - ră, cling, cling, cling, ____ cling, cling, cling.

Var.1 Var.2 Var.3

ostinato

finger snaps

hand claps

thigh slaps

foot stomps

In the proposed ostinato examples, body percussion was chosen due to its immediate accessibility for both the teacher and the students. However, these structures can easily be adapted by replacing body percussion with pseudo-instruments or small percussion instruments, depending on the material resources available in each educational institution.

In the construction of the ostinato patterns, particular attention was given to hand claps, as they serve to highlight the main rhythmic element. Thus, when body percussion is replaced by instruments, it is crucial to carefully select the instrument that substitutes the hand claps to avoid altering the expressive and structural function of the proposed pattern.

Another significant aspect that requires attention when transposing the ostinato onto instruments is the distribution of students in the activity. While body percussion allows the entire class to participate simultaneously, the use of instruments involves a smaller number of students,

limited by the availability of equipment. In this context, there is a risk of unequal development of rhythmic skills and competencies, which is why student rotation and ensuring balanced participation in practical activities are recommended.

3. Conclusions

The objective of this study was to investigate the possibilities of integrating the ostinato technique into the teaching of rhythmic concepts in the third grade. Starting from the definition of the concept and its various meanings, the research was based on the perspectives offered by two of the most influential pedagogical schools—Orff and Kodály—through both theoretical and practical analysis of the contributions of their founders, as well as their successors, Astrid Niedermaier and Szőnyi Erzsébet.

By outlining the main pedagogical functions of the ostinato, four concrete methods for applying this technique were proposed, using the repertoire found in current school textbooks and selecting musical examples suitable for each type of approach.

As a repetitive musical element, the ostinato proves to be a valuable teaching tool in the context of modern music pedagogy. In the Orff method, it is actively integrated into rhythmic and instrumental exercises, encouraging creativity, improvisation, and bodily expression. In contrast, in the Kodály approach, the ostinato serves a more structured function, contributing to the development of rhythmic awareness, the reinforcement of musical values, and the promotion of active listening through vocal singing and rhythmic-melodic exercises.

In the current educational context in Romania, the ostinato can be successfully utilized in the teaching-learning process in primary schools, especially in the third grade. It serves as an effective pedagogical tool for stimulating active learning, developing rhythmic and auditory skills, and supporting motor coordination and teamwork through accessible and engaging activities tailored to the developmental level of the students.

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