

In this piece, the rhythmic pattern is clearly iambic, or short-long, with a crusic emphasis on the "short." (Consider the time from the ictus of one duration to the next. Whether the second duration is quarter note-quarter rest or a half note, the Greek rhythmic pattern is considered the same.)

The iambic rhythm presents a challenge, as it tends to flip itself in our perception and performance, and morph into an anacrusic trochaic rhythm (short/long, with a barline between the two durations and a crusic emphasis on the "long"). In part, it's because the physical nature of longer durations tend naturally to be crusic; short durations tend to want to move ahead toward something longer than themselves.

This is easily affected by the harmony, as well. For example, the first and fourth measures have the tonic going to the dominant, which helps; but in the second measure, the dominant goes to the tonic, which doesn't! Similarly, the third measure has the subdominant going to the tonic, in the fourth a secondary dominant resolves to the dominant, etc. Because we naturally gravitate toward the harmonic resolution, it's comfortable to emphasize the tonic as a crusic sensation, further pulling us toward an anacrusic trochaic rhythm rather than the crusic iambic pattern Jaques-Dalcroze wrote.

How do we sense it physically? What's the kinesthetic key to this piece? Well, we could always stomp heavily on the first beat of each measure, but that's hardly a musical solution! The key isn't in the first beat, but the third: that rest needs to feel like an anacrusis, not a metacrusis.

To find the difference, move the "wrong" way first. Imagine the first beat as an anacrusis. Sing, step the beats, and clap on the rests, continuing this pattern ("and one..."). (You'll may find you want to add a consonant on the crusic pitch -- a new "la" perhaps -- or sing on the solfege syllables.) Then perform as written -- the clap is now on the third beat. What happens in your legs? How does the clap move through space? How does gravity effect the levels in space?

Ideally, we've applied Eurhythmics experience to this exercise, with two important principles:

- 1) the crusic lifts; and
- 2) durations move through space.

With that, the two exercises should feel very different from each other. Thus, in my experience, the first ("wrong") way creates two steps with a distinct change of direction: the anacrusis begins on a high level and falls to the crusic, which begins at the lowest point and then rises. The clap on the metacrusis continues the crusic sensation and bridges to the next anacrusis. In its correct version, however, it's the clap itself, as the anacrusis, that falls toward the crusic -- the arms move in an arc, and the legs bend as we lower toward the gravity of the crusic' ictus. From the lowest point, the crusic lifts toward the second step, which continues that sensation on a high plane.

Consider why Jaques-Dalcroze wrote one syllable for each measure, rather than one for each note. Try singing it as written but with a "la" on each note (or sing the solfege syllables) and notice the difference. It's all too easy to make it anacrusic that way!

(One more challenge to try: Shift again so the rest on the crusic!)