

Learning rhythm with the Takadimi system of rhythm solfege

Simple Meter

The beat is always voiced with *ta*. The division and subdivision are always *ta-di* and *ta-ka-di-mi*. Any note value can be the beat. Three common beat values are shown.

Time Sig.	Beat	Division	Subdivision
	 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi
	 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi
	 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi

Common Patterns

 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi	 ta di mi	 ta ka di	 ta mi	 ta ka	 ta ka mi
 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi	 ta di mi	 ta ka di	 ta mi	 ta ka	 ta ka mi
 ta	 ta di	 ta ka di mi	 ta di mi	 ta ka di	 ta mi	 ta ka	 ta ka mi

Examples (a *ta* in parentheses is not voiced but may be thought or "felt")

	ta ta ta di ta di ta ka di mi ta di ta di mi ta di ta mi ta di ta di mi ta di ta ta
	ta ta di ta di ta ta mi ta mi ta ka di mi ta di ta di mi ta ta di ta di (ta) di ta
	ta ta ta di ta ta di ta (ta) di mi ta ta di ta di mi ta ka di (ta) di mi ta
	ta ta ta ta di ta ta (ta) di ta ta mi ta mi ta ta ta ta di ta mi ta ta di (ta) di ta ta

Compound Meter
























Compound meters have dotted beat notes and the beat is always voiced with *ta*.

The division is *ta-ki-da* and the subdivision is *ta-va-ki-di-da-ma*.

Any dotted note value can be the beat. Three common beat values are shown.

Time Sig.	Beat	Division	Subdivision
$\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{9}{4}$ $\frac{12}{4}$	 ta	 ta ki da	 ta va ki di da ma
$\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{12}{8}$	 ta	 ta ki da	 ta va ki di da ma
$\frac{6}{16}$ $\frac{9}{16}$ $\frac{12}{16}$	 ta	 ta ki da	 ta va ki di da ma

Common Patterns

$\frac{6}{4}$								
ta	ta ki da	ta	da ta ki	ta va ki di da ma	ta	di da	ta ki di da	ta ki da ma
$\frac{6}{8}$								
ta	ta ki da	ta	da ta ki	ta va ki di da ma	ta	di da	ta ki di da	ta ki da ma
$\frac{6}{16}$								
ta	ta ki da	ta	da ta ki	ta va ki di da ma	ta	di da	ta ki di da	ta ki da ma

Examples

$\frac{6}{8}$								
ta	ta	ta da ta	ta	da ta di da	ta	ta ki da ta ki da	(ta) da ta ki di	ta ki di da ta va ki di da ma
$\frac{9}{8}$								
ta	ki da ta ki da ta ki da	ta	ta da ta ki	ta di ta di ta di	ta	dida ta ki dida ta ki di ma	ta	ta
$\frac{6}{8}$								
ta	di da ta	di da ma	ta	ki da ta vaki di da	ta	ki da (ta) di da	ta di da ta va di ma	ta
$\frac{6}{4}$								
(ta) ki	da ta (ki) da	ta	di da ta	da	ta	ki da ta	di da ta	ta

Advanced Applications

Duplets and Triplets

Use the same syllables for any of the division of the beat into two or three.



The duplets in measure 3 (below) are performed just like the duplets in measures 2 and 4. The syllable *di* falls at the midpoint of the beat in both simple and compound meter. A duplet can therefore be written either way.



Two against Three

Ta and *di* align at the beginning and midpoint of the beat in both simple and compound meter. Rhythms that involve both meters will share this attack point.



Two-against-Three rhythms will produce the composite rhythm *ta-ki-di-da*. Work with the composite rhythm first then emphasize the *ta-da* and *ta-ki-da* separately. Listening for the *ta-ki-di-da* composite will help accuracy.



Changing Meter

This can involve either the beat staying the same or the division staying the same. In this example the beat stays the same. Syllables can help make the distinction plain. The *ta-ki-da* triplet in measure 2 and the regular division of the beat in measure 3 will sound exactly alike.



Irregular Divisions – To perform irregular divisions of the beat, add a syllable to a common pattern.



Asymmetric Meters – Asymmetric meters combine simple and compound divisions.

Keeping the division equal will produce beats of varied length.



Takadimi is helpful in teaching other advanced techniques including super-tuplets (triplets and duplets over more than one beat), 4:3 relationships, syncopations and metric modulation.

Teaching with Takadimi

Takadimi is beat-oriented and pattern based. The beat is always *ta* regardless of the notation; the syllables help students learn common beat-length patterns. It can be used pre-notationally with pre-school children and can help in learning highly complex rhythm throughout the college curriculum and beyond.

Takadimi is great for reading rhythm but it can also be used apart from notation. Try translating the rhythm of popular song and jingles into Takadimi syllables. "Call and response" games are a fun way to practise rhythm patterns and learn important musical skills at the same time. Improvising on syllables is a valuable learning tool. Improvise a short pattern – one or two measures, or even a phrase – then have a student improve a response. Takadimi syllables encourage play; and play is a powerful learning tool.

The Rhythm Book, a comprehensive college-level rhythm textbook based on Takadimi is available.

Contact Richard Hoffman at info@takadimi.net for more information. For an excellent guide to using Takadimi in the elementary classroom, see Michael Houlahan and Philip Tacka, *Kodaly Today: A Cognitive Approach to Elementary Music Education*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2008.

About Takadimi

The *Takadimi system* of rhythm pedagogy was developed by Richard Hoffman, William Pelto and John W. White, along with a number of colleagues at Ithaca College in the 1990s. More information on the system, its origins and pedagogical rationale can be found in Hoffman, Pelto and White, "Takadimi: a Beat-Oriented System of Rhythm Pedagogy," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, 1996.

Takadimi Basics

Takadimi can help most anyone learn to understand and perform rhythm better.

Takadimi works like solfege, but for rhythm.

It assigns a distinct syllable for each attack point within a beat.

The beat is always spoken on *ta*.

The division of the beat is always spoken on *ta - di* in simple meter and *ta - ki - da* in compound meter.

The subdivision is always spoken with *ta - ka - di - mi* in simple meter and *ta - va - ki - di - da - ma* in compound.

Each attack point, then, has a distinct syllable.

From these syllables, we create patterns based on where within the beat each note occurs.

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