

Freestyles
By
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Introduction

A musical freestyle, also known as a musical kur, is a creative interpretation of a piece of music. It combines the visual power and beauty of the horse with music. Musical freestyles can be performed under any riding discipline. For example, the American Driving Society provides musical freestyle competitions at their shows.

Musical freestyles for dressage have done a great deal to increase the general public's attention and appreciation of the sport.

To be successful, a freestyle must incorporate all of the technical requirements of the level being performed.

Selecting the Level

When putting together a freestyle you first have to decide the level you are going to do and the requirements for that level. How much walk, trot and so forth. It is important to know the time limits. They are written right on the front of the test. Get a copy of the test before you start to work.

You can do it two ways get your ride and then find music, or find the music then make the ride. I suggest the latter. It is easier to adjust the ride to the music. Unless you have a studio in your home, you may want to keep the editing to a minimum.

Selecting the Music

Sit down with your child and try to determine the type of music he or she would like to use. Music from a favorite movie or a favorite song is a good beginning point. It is best to stick to a particular theme such as a show tune or Broadway or a particular genre such as a pop, rock or classical. This makes it easier to maintain continuity. If you can not see the connection in your choice, then you should continue to look.

Try to remind them that the freestyle has to be enjoyable for the judge and the audience as well. Heavy metal or rap music may not work. Remember words are discouraged, a few are ok but it is better to find music without. Guideline: Place music with words in your introductory music.

Once you have an idea of the type of music then you can go out and find it. The internet has a lot of examples and of course you can go to a music store as well. If you don't have the name of the CD you are looking for the internet maybe a big help to narrow down your options. Movie sound tracks are really good way to get music. The problem with them are that the music maybe cut in such a way that is hard to get enough of one piece without a lot of editing. The ideal is to find one piece for the walk and one for the trot and another that represents the canter. That is very hard to do.

When picking your music it is important to remember that the ride should go with the music. It should be an interpretation of the music you selected. It must match the gaits and rhythm of the horse that the ride is for. For instance the trot is a two beat gait. Some horses have slow long trots and others fast and short. The music should match as closely as possible. If it is a small pony, a cute lively selection would fit nicely. If it is a large elegant horse, more dramatic music may fit better. Fit the music to the horse.

A good way to see the movement of the horse and hear the music is to video the horse at all gaits and then you can watch the horse and hear the music. Remember that you must watch the Rhythm and tempo.

Rhythm is the repeatable pattern, such as the one-two of the trot. The tempo is the rate of the action. Small pony vs. large horse. A metronome maybe very helpful to determine the tempo. Set your metronome for the average horse's gaits. Trot would be 152 bpm, canter 96 bpm and the walk 108 bpm. A digital instrument works best then you can adjust the rate by increments and be very accurate. The judges have been instructed to watch the front foot falls for this.

Also take into account the strengths of the horse. Does he canter or trot better. You can divide the test anyway you want as long as you have all the required movements covered. Also take into consideration the rider. If you have a very young rider on a horse that is experienced you may want to have the ride closer to the minimum time. If you are doing first level or more you may want to get it right up to the max.

When I find a piece of music that seems to fit, I then go to my computer. I play the music and write down the start and end time of each of the segments of music I want to work with. This makes it easy for me and the editor to locate. It is important to have the beginning and the end numbers. When you transfer it to your working tape this will make it a lot easier. Do this for each piece.

Work on these sections. Next month we will move on to the next steps. Remember that putting a freestyle together is a process and it will take a little time to put together. So start early and have fun.