

The Newsletter of Dalcroze Australia Inc.

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THE DALCROZE 2006 WINTER WORKSHOP JULY 3 – 7 2006

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC WITH TEACHERS
SANDRA NASH, JOAN POPE &
KARIN GREENHEAD.

*Some observations by Nadia Fried –
a Masters of Teaching Student at
Sydney University.*

HAVING been to only one previous Dalcroze workshop in January this year, I was not sure what to expect at the Winter workshop, especially as the teaching staff was to be augmented by a visitor from the UK. Karin Greenhead seemed to be held in very high esteem by those who had previously experienced work with her, so I was certainly looking forward to the Winter workshop with enthusiasm.

A number of factors set this workshop apart from the previous Summer workshop. Having three rather than two lecturers gave more scope for variety of activities, as well as scope for breaking the larger group into more focused groups for level-appropriate activity. Having documentary film makers on board also lent an air of excitement, with the opportunity for participants to be interviewed and share their experience of Dalcroze work on camera. Filming of Dalcroze workshop

classes was conducted very professionally, with minimal sense of intrusion on the part of the film makers.

For those of us who had previously experienced Dalcroze improvisation, we were lucky enough to be placed in the improvisation group directed by Karin Greenhead. I found that my learning curve in improvising music for movement was very steep, guided by Karin's excellent insight and detailed feedback. Not that I have instantly improved my improvisation for movement, rather, I feel that I have been given enormous insight into how I can approach developing these skills. I hope and trust that other participants had similarly rich experiences with Karin.

How to use these improvisation skills in engaging students in a range of contexts was also expertly communicated by Karin. We covered improvising for movement for varied rhythmic activities as well as developing nuanced use of improvised music to cater to social development of students and sensitivity toward group dynamics and classroom culture and moods.

Perhaps the most special aspect of this workshop, apart from having an eminent overseas visitor who shared a great deal of her expertise and energy with us, was the opportunity to observe children's classes being taught by Sandra Nash and Joan Pope. These lesson observations were followed by forum discussions which consolidated and deepened our understanding and appreciation of what we had observed.

Joan gave us an excellent preparation talk on how to observe lessons, which certainly opened my mind on perspectives of observa-

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tion and prepared us to see more and learn more when we observed the children’s lessons. Sandra and Joan’s work with the young students was inspiring. It was also very informative to see lessons taught in such contrasting styles. Sandra and Joan approached their lessons from quite different angles, displaying different perspectives of Dalcroze work in childhood education, as well as drawing on their individual strengths and personalities in the teaching/learning process.

Sandra inspired us with just how much can be achieved educationally and musically with young children. She gave a nuanced lesson which integrated concepts of developing children’s muscular coordination with rhythmic activity, as well as creatively exploring singing activities and aural imagination and awareness. Seeing and hearing Sandra’s piano improvisation for movement skills in action gave a concrete context to the improvisation for movement work undertaken in other sessions. It was also highly motivating, as the benefits in educational terms for students were clearly on display during the lesson.

Joan’s lesson with the children was aimed more at an introductory level, with an emphasis on integrated curriculum ideas. Having studied teaching in the University of Sydney Master of Teaching course over the past 18 months, I have seen holistic, child-centred teaching and cross-curriculum integration emphasized a great deal in theory, with an unfortunate lack of corresponding evidence in practice. It was therefore a pleasure to observe Joan teach children with a deep sense of holistically engaging children’s creativity, imagination, motor skills, and social skills across music, dramatic and movement contexts. Joan’s weaving of narrative and humour in her lesson was also a pleasure to observe.

Other planned special events included Karin Greenhead’s voice workshop and dynamic rehearsal, and Sandra and Joan’s percussion workshop. In her voice workshop, Karin presented many ideas for exploring vocal tone colour and technique in imaginative ways, with an emphasis on visual imagery and characterization.

Karin’s dynamic rehearsal demonstrated a Dalcroze approach applied in a performance practice context. I was lucky enough to be one of the guinea pigs, and gained much from the experience. As I played an improvised jazz standard as a duet with fellow participant Katy Tsai, I gained an increased sense of ensemble and musical dialogue awareness through Karin’s direction. I also gained an

increased aural and internal awareness of my processes of improvisation, with a pointed sense of being able to identify what aural skills I need to work on and improve in this process.

Sandra and Joan’s percussion workshop provided much food for thought for those of us who may be working in classroom music with younger students in particular. One could certainly also apply their ideas across a very broad age range. Sandra’s use of aboriginal legend in the percussion workshop demonstrated interesting use of cross fertilization of literary, musical, and dramatic ideas.

In conclusion, I feel I have attended yet another inspiring Dalcroze workshop. I look forward to the Dalcroze training being offered next year as, I am sure, do many of my colleagues.

SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE WINTER WORKSHOP WERE ALSO RECEIVED FROM JENNY SULLIVAN, A BASSOONIST FROM PERTH.

Here are some excerpts:

I DID not know what to expect from the Dalcroze 2006 Winter Workshop at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. I had observed Joan Pope teach a few Dalcroze classes in Perth over the past 12 months as well as doing some research about the extent to which the Dalcroze method is implemented into Primary School music programs. However, I had never seen or participated in a Plastique, Rhythmics, or Solfege class, so was very excited about doing so.

One important lesson I learnt about Dalcroze teaching is that every activity is musical and requires the student as well as the teacher to use the musical skills of listening, reflecting, responding, evaluating, performing, etc. Whether you are moving to music, performing on your instrument, or listening to a musical example, every part of your body is involved the process...I was fascinated how music comes alive in a Dalcroze lesson. Never before had I felt such exhilaration when performing triplets, semiquavers and other note values through my feet and hands.

I loved how Joan Pope’s rhythmic and improvisation classes had a central theme. Our Lesson today was based on the number 3: the date was the 3rd of July and we looked at

musical groupings of 3, shapes of 3, intervals in 3rds, triads (do-me-so), etc. As Joan helped us discover, the musical possibilities were endless.

One of the highlights was observing Sandra Nash teach a children's class of students aged from 7-10 years old. It was useful and helpful being able to sit back and observe a Dalcroze lesson taking place and witnessing how each age group of student responded to the given tasks. The children had such fast response rates and moved about the room with such expression and emotion. I discovered that movement is such an effective and powerful means for children to express and demonstrate their understanding of music concepts. I learnt that a Dalcroze teacher must be a true musician and have a deep understanding of their art. The teacher has an enormous responsibility of leading and guiding the students ...[and] must at all times be responsive and alert to the way the children respond to the music.

'Dogs' were the central theme of Joan's demonstration lesson [with the children]. Every technical element was taught creatively and was thematically linked: the movement, rhythmic, singing, and listening activities. For example, the students listened to a piece of music by the composer Bach. One thing that I admired about Joan's teaching was that she gave minimal verbal instruction to her students. Instead, the children received their instruction from the music. Another thing that was great was that she related so well to the children and allowed them to be open about themselves and to share their experience in the lesson.

Voice works with Karin was fascinating. She helped us to discover correct vocal technique and uncover the true capabilities of our voices through various activities. After completing a series of movement and vocal exercises, I was able to sing up to a high C above the treble stave, which is something I had never done before!! We composed and performed our own compositions, and worked through a huge variety of vocal warm-ups. My favourite vocal exercise was singing 'Bogapillar' to a descending major scale.

I wasn't too sure what to expect in a solfege class. I had read a bit about it in my studies; however, I had not had the opportunity to see a solfege class in action until now. It was nowhere near as daunting as I thought it would be. Joan helped us to explore intervals, chords in root position and inversions, and Dalcroze scales through movement. It was

amazing how intervals become so alive when you are moving to them. I had never realised how large an octave was until I had to leap an octave!! I also enjoyed solfege as it involves games and solving lots of musical puzzles.

I was sad to be leaving all the wonderful people I had met at the course as well as sad to be leaving a course that I had so thoroughly enjoyed. As I headed back to Perth I was so inspired and excited about incorporating some of the things that I had learnt during this course into my teaching.

One of the most important lessons I learnt ...was that every music lesson should engage the students in your class. Music should be a wholesome, organic and an inclusive experience where every activity should be a pleasurable experience for your students. I would like to thank Sandra, Joan and Karin for putting in such an enormous amount of work into the winter workshop.

ECME CONFERENCE IN TAIPEI

JULY 9-14 2006

THE Early Childhood Commission of ISME (ECME) was held July 9-14 2006 at the Chinese Culture University in Taipei. The Acting Chair, Dr. Lori Custodero led the proceedings assisted by four commissioners one of whom was Dr. Louie Suthers from the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Sydney. Over the week, seventeen papers, seven workshops and twelve posters were presented, and each morning began with an informal song-sharing session. Almost 90 people attended and there were numerous opportunities to meet over morning tea and lunch and at the social events organised by our attentive Taiwanese hosts. Other visitors from Australia included Amanda Niland from Sydney, Beth Rankin from Melbourne, Joan Pope from Perth, and Kathryn Yarrow and Gail Godfrey from Brisbane. There was a most convivial atmosphere throughout the week and when it was time to leave, we had all made many new friends.

Some of the highlights included Elizabeth Achieng'Adang'o's paper on music in Kenya, Beatriz Ilari's paper on singing amongst Brazilian children, and a workshop on a new music program for children coming out of the Conservatory of Music in Puerto Rico by

Marta Hernandez Candeles. Abstracts of presentations connected with Dalcroze themes are reproduced below. These were two posters by Joan Pope and a paper by Sandra Nash.

A DALCROZE INFLUENCE IN AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION FROM 1939 TO 1974

ECME Paper Presentation from Sandra J. Nash, Doctoral Student University of Sydney

ABSTRACT: Heather Doris Gell (1896 -1988), a pioneer in music education in Australia, trained in Adelaide as a kindergarten teacher where she was also introduced to the ideas of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, a Swiss teacher and composer. After qualifying as a Dalcroze teacher in London in 1923, she returned to Australia promoting Dalcroze's ideas through teaching, demonstrations, and staging pageants and theatrical events. Combining aspects of both Montessori and Dalcroze, Gell evolved her way of presenting music to young children through movement, and devoted much of her life to early childhood teacher education.

Gell moved to Sydney (NSW) in 1939 when her radio broadcasts for children for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) commenced. This paper discusses Gell's work from 1939 to 1974 when she retired from her position as director of music at the Nursery School Teachers' College in Newtown, Sydney. Her training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics and Aural Perception as well as her position at the ABC gave her authority in the field of music education that spawned in-service courses and demonstrations for teachers throughout Australia. Gell taught at the former Sydney Kindergarten Teachers' College, in Waverley, and her association with Nursery School Teachers' College in Newtown lasted for almost 30 years. Her book *Music, Movement and the Young Child*, published in 1949 was used as the major text by early childhood teachers in Australia and overseas for more than a generation.

This paper describes the main features of Gell's work and seeks to assess its impact on early childhood teaching practice during the period under study.

LINKING THE THINKING: IN TOUCH WITH OUR SENSES!

ECME poster presentation from Joan Pope OAM, Doctoral student. Monash University, Australia.

THE thinking of young children is portrayed strikingly through body movement and accompanying sound. Teachers, attuned to the associations children construct through physical experience, need to provide a vocabulary of movement techniques and skills, in order that children can confidently 'show what they hear', not merely copy adult gestures.

Have you thought about the musical ways in which we use our sense of sight?

Or how lively our movement gestures can be because of our sense of hearing?

Or how our language can develop by feeling the textures of objects?

These seem like opposites! But, by exploring the qualities of seeming 'opposites', children discover new material. Such questions stimulate practical music-through-movement experiences. When such challenges are presented, connections are invented by transferring the ideas and actions of one sense into another.

Illustrations and objects can be 'translated' as children 'draw in the air', then transform such spontaneous graphics into physical shapes with their bodies. As they watch the contours of clouds moving across the sky, their observations motivate sounds and phrases. When natural objects, such as seed-pods and leaves are touched, an awareness of surface texture is gained. A search for expressive sounds, and descriptive and rhythmic words occurs, and we can move with such rhythms, as well as 'looking like' the object. Encouraging adults can observe these gestures in terms of use of space, speed, dynamics and energy of movement. Reflective guided discussion encourages thoughtful responses. The children are building their vocabulary of movement and revealing their thoughts.

ISME CONFERENCE IN KUALA LUMPUR

JULY 16 -21 2006.

THE president of ISME, Dr. Gary McPherson, welcomed almost a thousand delegates to the 27th International Society for Music Education conference. An effort was made to bring together Dalcroze teachers from various countries and in addition to those mentioned in the following abstracts, sessions were also given by Eva Wedin from Sweden, Natalie Ozeas from the USA, and another teacher from Sweden presented ideas for the teaching of mathematics using eurhythmics.

All the Dalcroze presentations listed below were assisted by a grant from the FIER, Geneva and Yuri Ishimaru brought a sample of posters from Japan adapted from the Jaques-Dalcroze Exhibition. These were displayed at the entrance to the workshop and symposium presentations. As was the case with many of the workshops, ours was so crowded that people could not fit into the room. An estimated 140 attended and even though the space was limited, there was lots of good humour and enjoyment. Indeed, there was hunger for this kind of work where people could move musically, interact with others, sing and generally have a good time. We were assisted in preparing the venue for the workshop by Sheau-Fang Low.

Other Australians present at ISME included Diana Blom, Deidre Russell Bowie, Anne Power, Matthew Perry, Louise Barkl, Bradley Merrick, Michael Hannan, David Forrest, Graham Bartle, Sonny Chua, Judy Vasek, Kent Logie and Janet Bagnall.

TAKING DALCROZE TO THE DOMINIONS: DID THEY MISS THE BOAT?

Paper by Joan Pope, Monash University

ABSTRACT: During the inter-war years, 1918-1928, a number of initiatives were taken by the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, to spread information of the rhythmic approaches to musicianship developed by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Associations of teachers and supporters were strengthened, demonstrations and lectures presented by distinguished educators, and news sheets, pamphlets

and journals published and widely distributed. Many schools and academies were encouraged, and in some cases financially subsidized, by the Director of the School, Mr. Percy B. Ingham, to present regular classes conducted by graduates. There soon was such a demand for teachers that it was decided to advertise overseas in English speaking countries to interest potential students. Representatives were sent abroad with the authority to offer scholarship assistance for the three year course conducted in English. This was attractive for those likely to be unable to attend lengthy study sojourn in a foreign language, which furthermore, would not be the language in which they would teach 'back home.' A number of adventurous independent women graduates also travelled to teach in other parts of the British Empire for varying periods of time. The Dominions of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa each have a small, but significant role in this history, and the paper traces some of the people involved with the enterprises and raises questions for further research regarding the results of all this energy, and time, over such vast spaces.

MUSIC THROUGH MOVEMENT OVER THE RADIO: A DILEMMA FOR DALCROZE.

Paper presented by Joan Pope. Monash University, Australia and also presented as a poster at ECME.

ABSTRACT: This narrative historical research paper concerns the early use of the new medium of radio for schools broadcasting. It is known that Ann Driver's pioneering work in the area of music and movement for the British Broadcasting Commission exerted an influence on Australian initiatives in the late 1930s. Two kindergarten-trained Australian graduates of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics were students of Driver in London during the 1920s, and were impressed by her sensitive and skilled musicianship. Heather Gell from Adelaide, South Australia, from 1921-1923, Jean Wilson (later Vincent) from Perth, Western Australia, from 1924-1927. Both returned to their respective cities and became involved with private teaching, and lecturing at Kindergarten Training Colleges in their States, and both became involved with innovative radio sessions. These continued for over twenty years, and their work became well-known to Australian listeners; Gell

from 1938 -1959; Vincent from 1942 -1969. Several provocative questions emerge for discussion; did the names of these series, such as Music and Movement, Music through Movement, All Join In, miss an opportunity to be identified with the principles of the Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze? Did the programmes offer teachers and children a richer and more imaginative experience of developmental and participatory musical and physical education than is currently available in many child-care and early education settings?

THE IDEAS AND PRACTICE OF DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

*Paper presented by Karin Greenhead,
Royal Northern College of Music*

ABSTRACT: Recent years have seen a growth of interest in the work of Emile Jaques Dalcroze and a rediscovery of his ideas. In some countries the training offered may use the appellation 'rhythmics' while others use the name Dalcroze. These trainings have elements in common but interest in the field of study and the current crisis in identity of Eurhythmics has resulted in a need to define the specifically Dalcroze way of teaching, its principles, practices and applications.

The essence of Dalcroze Eurhythmics consists not only in its tripartite content – rhythmics (movement), improvisation and aural training taught in relation to one another – but also in the ways and means by which it is taught and in its objectives.

In the early years of the 20th century Dalcroze's work excited the interest of a wide range of artists of all kinds, critics, doctors and educationalists. Soaking up information from all the disciplines with which he came into contact with (neuroscience, psychology, theatre and dance, visual arts and poetry) he integrated his findings into his method in the search of unifying principles of art, life and of learning. He was interested in the development of the human being as an autonomous creative individual. Music through whole-body movement was the means of developing musicality: working on its relationship to movement went beyond musical education to the development of the whole human being, the moving body being the locus of all experience and expression. Many of his ideas were absorbed into general education, therapy,

music, dance and the theatre so that people are no longer aware of their origin.

In the contemporary world, methods and processes for developing both artistic and personal communication skills and exchange are of paramount importance in a world of both globalisation and fractured communities. The Dalcroze work with its broad field of artistic and personal applications fulfils these needs admirably. Learning to teach Dalcroze Eurhythmics requires an extended period of study and practice if the teacher is to gain all the essential skills and knowledge. The necessity of situating training within the framework of current university practice in which the focus is on reading and verbal analysis rather than on the provision of necessary time to acquire physical and practical skills compromises both standards and subject identity.

DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS: THREE IN ONE, A MULTI- SENSORY APPROACH

*Workshop presented by Karin Greenhead,
Sandra Nash & Joan Pope*

ABSTRACT: Dalcroze Eurhythmics consists of three disciplines related to one another: solfège(solfa), improvisation and rhythmics. Solfège(solfa) is the study of musical pitch and harmony and uses movement and improvisation to assist the internalisation of pitch and rhythm. Improvisation is creative music-making vocally, instrumentally, solo and group. The improvisation class develops aural skills on the instrument, the sense of style and structure; the ability to use a variety of musical languages and to play for movement. It develops musical responsiveness, communication and expressivity while enhancing technique and fostering compositional skills. Rhythmics is the unique core of the method in which solfège and improvisation unite with a training in whole-body movement to train the ear, nervous system and muscles in simple but polyvalent exercises that not only deliver basic musical skills and understanding but address the student as a social being, developing the capacity to become a responsive, creative and communicative artist. This work provides both diagnosis and remediation for musical and extra-musical problems and is therapeutic. The resulting ease of expression leads to a sense of freedom and joy in the student.

The workshop will involve active participation. The three presenters will



From left-to-right:
Joan Pope, Yuri
Ishimaru (President
of Dalcroze Society
Japan), Sandra
Nash and Karin
Greenhead outside
the workshop at
ISME

demonstrate through group exercises how these three principal branches of the method combine to and teach the fundamental elements of experience and expression in music and other arts, particularly dance, drama and visual arts. This multi-sensory approach using varied teaching methods can be an ideal foundation course for all musical and artistic activity at every level from the child beginner to professional training. It is adaptable to a wide variety of situations, cultures and needs including therapy and has found its time in the 21st. century

ISME SYMPOSIUM THE
DELIVERY OF PRACTICE-BASED
STUDY, SUCH AS DALCROZE
EURHYTHMICS, WITHIN
SPECIALIZED AND PROFESSIONAL
CONTEXTS TODAY: PROBLEMS
AND ISSUES.

Convenor: Joan Pope, Australia.

ABSTRACT: The approach to musicianship, art and education which is associated with the name of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), has moved into its second century! It is therefore appropriate at this time to gauge the response in various parts of the world to this work emanating from Europe so many decades ago, and to consider some of the issues which produce both problems and, of course optimistically,

the potential for future development.

Generally the national support associations titled Dalcroze Societies are small special interest groups operating with the assistance of volunteer members. There is an increasing demand in many countries for teachers who can provide more than the introductory beginners level of experience. The number of people, world-wide, who hold the Diplome Superieur of the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, Geneva, and who are actively engaged in teaching the method, is approximately one hundred. It is this qualification, a personal level of achievement, which gives the right and responsibility to train other teachers at an advanced level. Clearly this is a problem for the future supply as the necessary qualification cannot be bestowed by an institution which does not have staff members with this imprimatur.

We have invited two Directors of Studies for the Dalcroze associations in their respective countries to present personal views on the current situation. Both are recently appointed international members to the College of the Foundation of the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, and are also representatives to FIER, the International Federation of teachers of rhythemics. Their concerns for the future were reflected in their work to form an international committee (ICCEPT) to ascertain comparative levels of certification obtaining in the various countries offering Dalcroze training.

Sandra Nash from Australia will open the proceedings, and Karin Greenhead from the United Kingdom will be the final speaker. In

between these presentations there will be two speakers putting views from Japan and from Singapore. Yuri Ishimaru is the President of the Dalcroze Society of Japan, and Julie Tan is the President of the Music Teachers Association of Singapore, and both have been extremely active in recent years in the promotion of Dalcroze activities on behalf of their members. Following the four presentations there will be opportunity to hear from invited discussants from other countries, and then the symposium will be open for general comments and questions.

DALCROZE ARTICLE APPEARS IN 'BROLGA'

BROLGA is an Australian journal about dance published by the Australian Dance Council - Ausdance Inc. Michelle Potter, editor since 1994 when the first issue appeared, is about to leave Australia to take up a post as the curator of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at the Lincoln Center. In the most recent issue June 2006 she published a peer reviewed paper by Joan Pope entitled *Mary Whidborne: first teacher of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in New South Wales?*

Potter had written an article for the *National Library of Australia News* in February 2004 and included a photograph taken by Harold Cazneaux of a group of women posed in a woodland setting. Potter referred to the movement style shown as 'decorative dancing' and noted that 'Grecian-style dancing and eurhythmics were popular recreational activities for young ladies in the 1920s and 1930s'. This photo inspired Pope to find out more about where it was taken. It had originally appeared some 80 years earlier, as a frontispiece in the stylish Australian arts journal of the day *The Home* where it is captioned 'Mary Whidborne's eurhythmics students.' It was sourced to Sydney in 1924, in the gardens of the Sydney Conservatorium. The photograph, filed under the title of 'Grecian Dance' can also be seen on the Picture Australia website.

Joan's paper (Brolga, pages 7 - 18) also includes mention of Ella Gormley, a senior physical education and swimming instructor with the NSW Public Instruction Board, as the Education department was then called, and associated with the Sydney Teachers College. Gormley was granted permission to study at Columbia University in New York

where she discovered the New York School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, attended many short courses and went to England to further pursue her studies.

Mary Whidborne's story has been uncovered and it is a fascinating one. Born in England, she saw a public demonstration given by Dalcroze in Berlin in 1910 and resolved to go to Hellerau near Dresden to work with him. With the outbreak of war in 1914 she had to forego Hellerau and return to England. Whidborne made two journeys to Australia, the first in 1920 for five years and the second between 1937 and 1948. She taught at Frensham school in Mittagong where one of her demonstrations was seen by Lindley Evans, a pianist on the staff the Sydney Conservatorium. His account is full of praise for the musical qualities he observed in the students. She was a close friend of the art historian, Bernard Smith and his wife and Smith's autobiography *A Pavane for another time*, tells us much about Whidborne and includes some excellent photos. Whidborne, an accomplished pianist, was a dynamic and dedicated 'Dalcroziennne' and her omission from the history of Dalcroze in Australia still holds some mystery. Pope has drawn on a wide range of source material from archives, libraries, newspapers, interviews and photographs and has gone a long way to setting the record straight.

SN.

BOOK REVIEW

**RHYTHM: ONE ON ONE.
DALCROZE ACTIVITIES IN THE
PRIVATE MUSIC LESSON.**

*Julia Schnebly-Black & Stephen F. Moore.
ISBN 0-7390-3544-4 Alfred Publishing
Company, 2005.*

By Sandra Nash

The following review was published in the November 2006 issue of The Studio, journal of the Music Teachers Association of NSW. It is printed here with kind permission of the Editor.

BLACK and Moore have produced a practical book in response to requests from studio teachers who have attended Dalcroze workshops over the years and asked, "How can I take these wonderful

[eurhythmics] experiences back to my private students when I don't have enough room in my studio to move around?" This occurs all over the world, and at present there is enormous interest Dalcroze eurhythmics amongst music teachers in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore as well as in the USA, Europe and Australia. The authors who are outstanding musicians, engage in studio teaching as well as classes and workshops. Both hold doctorates, and they are qualified Dalcroze teachers. Julia conducts an annual Dalcroze Summer School at the University of Washington in Seattle and Stephen, now based at Oberlin Conservatory of Music USA, has been a regular associate in this enterprise over many years.

For those readers who may not know, Dalcroze eurhythmics is an approach to learning about and experiencing music which relies on listening and moving. Classes are usually given to a group in a large space so that people can move freely and interact. Dalcroze devised certain types of exercises to speed up the connection between what the ear hears, what the mind perceives and what the body can do, and thereby elevate the levels of attention concentration and memory. Chapter 3 describes these 'games' in the form of 'Follow', 'Quick Reaction', 'Replacement' and 'Canon' and any readers who have attended a Dalcroze class will have done these. The lesson involves the teacher giving out a musical idea, and setting up a musical dialogue with the class as they move and listen. This is done through the teacher's improvisation, usually from the piano, but it can be also be done through the voice or other instrument. By calling for changes and adaptation in the students' response either by words or music, the listening is active at all times. The movements, both on the spot and locomotor, are based on everyday actions. Gestures for conducting are based on the orchestral conductor's gestures, and by developing a vocabulary of movement the students are enabled to respond not only formally, that is by stepping and conducting, but also freely and expressively. Having experienced musical rhythm in this way, the student's ears are awakened and performance is guided by the memory of physical sensations.

The authors draw on references from the writings of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze¹, Abby Whiteside² and Russell Sherman³ to draw attention to the role of the whole body in musical expression and the release of the imagination. They have adopted the term 'Fundamental gesture', or what Whiteside calls the 'basic

rhythm', to refer to the underlying movement that is the key to a flowing, thrilling performance. This is followed by a description of the associative, subsidiary, subordinate and suprafacial gestures. It should be made clear that these classifications are all identified by Black and Moore and you will not find these terms in the writings of Jaques-Dalcroze, who wrote very generally about the application of his work to piano performance. At the end of his second volume of *La Rythmique* published in 1917⁴ he gave some guidelines and exercises for articulation, use of the pedal, and metrics which are dry and lacking in harmonic interest. He expected this to be understood and hoped that in the future some 'enterprising and curious spirits' would carry this work further. Some unpublished essays have been written by diploma candidates in Geneva but these are not readily available to the public. These authors have done an admirable job in coming to grips with many of the real problems of piano performance, and their own experience as performers and teachers has shaped their approach to organising the material in a way which has appeal to those interested in artistry.

The first chapter, *Making the Body Rhythmic*, includes a case study of a student working on a Brahms Intermezzo and we are taken through the process of using movement away from the piano to clarify the artistic image. Teachers such as Heinrich Neuhaus⁵ in *The Art of Piano Playing* have written about the importance of this but the question often remains, 'How do you work at this?' Dalcroze eurhythmics is a vibrant way in which people can develop this.

Chapter 2 sets out the equipment needed in the studio in order to use the Dalcroze listening and coordination games along with examples of how to use it. Props include small untuned percussion instruments, balls, a trampoline, chime bars, a three-dimensional grand staff, scarves and pillows.

In Chapter 3, *Fundamentals of Rhythm in Movement* presents activities that focus on successively smaller and smaller parts of the musical scheme. From the Fundamental Gesture to suprafacial gesture, the exercises explore all the levels of awareness, understanding and control which must be developed on the way to expressive musical performance.

Chapter 4, *Applications in the Studio* gives examples of how Eurhythmics can play a key role in an actual studio lesson. These lessons are organised under separate headings for teaching rhythm, technique, music reading,

ear training, and how to memorize.

Chapter 5 *Explorations of compositions*, gives teachers further examples to show the application of Dalcroze principles in both easy and advanced pieces, such as a Bach Invention, a Chopin Study Op. 10 No. 1, Debussy's first *Arabesque*, and Creole Dance No. 3 by Ginastera. In the final paragraph, the authors exhort teachers to be bold: 'Leap into the unpredictable and explore the possibilities. When done in a spirit of exploration – "Let's see what will happen if we try it this way!" – your creative physical activities will expand the number of avenues of learning and will stimulate excitement, pleasure and learning on a profound, unforgettable level.' (p.147). These 'enterprising and creative spirits,' Black and Moore have made valuable contribution to the literature on Dalcroze in today's teaching environment. It should be remembered that the Dalcroze approach is open-ended and not fixed. It relies on observation and the ability of the teacher to respond to what is before him or her and to be able to find solutions in the form of experiments, explorations and activities, which enlighten the student and lead to musical understanding. If after reading this book, a studio teacher is able to try out ideas and be led by his/her own musical instinct, the reviewer would love to hear from you.

This is not the end of the matter. There are many Dalcroze teachers who adopt other strategies in the studio and also in the eurhythmics lesson. Karin Greenhead from London, for example, has evolved what she calls 'Dynamic Rehearsal' where the student plays a piece and then is invited to move about the space while thinking the piece silently, and through experimenting, discovering how the music travels and where the weight is in the phrases.⁶ As in the book under review, the props used may include a trampoline, ball and scarf, depending on the expressive aspect to be uncovered. Once again the purpose is to clarify the artistic image of the piece and to use the body's muscular memory to build up motor images of what it felt like in movement. On returning to perform the piece, aspects of rhythmic flow and the shaping of phrases usually become noticeably clearer and more refined.

Many people think of Dalcroze Eurhythmics as concerned principally with the metric aspect of music, such as the realisation of bartime, unequal beats, syncopation etc. This is just one part of eurhythmics and elements such as these can be taught more easily. What is often not understood is the role of movement in teaching about the expressive

elements such as phrasing, nuances of tempo and dynamics, form and structure because generally speaking, these are more difficult to teach. It is to their credit that Black and Moore, through the use of clear language have effectively communicated these aspects of the work in their book. I commend it to all studio teachers for its practical value of informing the reader and stimulating ideas. Indeed, it should be noted that in order for readers to take full advantage, they need to actually do the activities described. They will also need to be familiar with the pieces which are used and have the scores to hand. To understand the role of musical improvisation, the reader should go to their earlier book, *The Rhythm Inside*⁷ which has an accompanying CD. Both books are available from leading music bookstores.

Space is necessary for the true experience of Dalcroze eurhythmics. This book uses movements which can be done in the smaller space of the studio, on the spot or perhaps some walking, swaying, conducting and gestures of the upper body. The interaction away from the instrument is between the teacher and the student. In order to show studio teachers what the Dalcroze approach has to offer, workshops have been held over the last two years at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music through the Open Academy, with positive feedback coming from piano, string, wind and voice teachers, as well as classroom teachers. As a result an intensive Dalcroze Teachers' Course will be run in Sydney from 2007 - 2008 to produce a new cohort of qualified Dalcroze teachers. Further information about Dalcroze in Australia may be found on the website: www.dalcroze.org.au

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, E. (1930). *Eurhythmics, Art and Education*. Translated from the French by Frederick Rothwell. Edited by Cynthia Fox. Reprint Edition 1985. Salem New Hampshire: Ayer Company Inc.

² Abby Whiteside, (1997). *Indispensables of piano playing and mastering the Chopin Etudes and other essays*. Portland Amadeus Press.

³ Russell Sherman, (1997). *Piano Pieces*, New York: North Point Press.

⁴ Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, (1917). *La rythmique : enseignement pour le développement de l'instinct rythmique et metrique, du sens de l'harmonie plastique et de l'équilibre des mouvements, et pour la régularisation des habitudes motrices*. 2, Lausanne: Jobin et Cie.

⁵ Neuhaus, H. (1973). *The Art of Piano Playing*. London: Barrie & Jenkins. Chapter 1

⁶ <http://www.themovementofmusic.com/>

⁷ Julia Schnebly-Black and Stephen Moore, (2003). *The Rhythm Inside: connecting body, mind and spirit*. Alfred Publishing.

NEW RELEASE

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By Doreen Bridges

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Dalcroze followers in Australia may be interested to know that EHD was a strong supporter of the work and Heather Gell in the early days, and became the first president of the Dalcroze Society of South Australia, formed in 1925. He also wrote the foreword to Gell's book, *Music Movement and the Young Child* published in the 1940s.

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What's hipp

MEMBERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT.

All current members of Dalcroze Australia will have their membership extended to June 30th 2007 while the new organisation changes over to a financial year July 1 - June 30. This means those who renewed or joined by January 1 2006 will get 18 months membership.

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