The Newsletter of Dalcroze Australia Inc.

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Travellers' Tales

by Dr Joan Pope. President, Dalcroze Australia.

Report of recent visits to Bangkok, Hong Kong and Singapore.

April 2010, was the time selected to replace the trip to Hong Kong which had been planned for the previous year. Sandra Nash, from Sydney, was joined by Joan Pope, from Perth, for an intensive workshop with a group of very keen people there. Several participants from Singapore were able to attend as it is only a short flight. In all there were nearly 50 attendees, although as several were only present for one-day, not all classes could develop as richly as planned. We conducted simultaneous sessions and the group was divided by the organisers into 'novices' and those with some prior Dalcroze class experience. We called them 'x, for the unknown' and 'Y, for why not go further!' One recognizes there is a world of individual difference to take into account in such decisions and just because a registration form states a certain number of hours has been totted up, may not be indicative of the person's skill and understanding of the concepts involved.

The Hong Kong Dalcroze Society is well-served by its president May Tan and the enthusiastic Committee who arranged for a number of students to act as assistants. It was a treat to have such effort put into floor sweeping and whiteboard cleaning! An impressive participants' notebook had been printed, and everything was attended to with smiles and efficiency. Especially, of course the food breaks. We were joined for lunch one day by Dr Sam Leong which was a delight. Sam has offered his support for the committee and is keen that it develops a fine program.

The course was held at a large 7-storey Community Centre which serves as the home base for a number of cultural organisations and performance companies. It was abuzz with other groups and classes. We realised we had to be strict with our finishing times as one day a large seniors' choir was delayed as their rostra and chairs needed to be arranged, and we were still getting our things together and dealing with people who love to ask questions at the end of a class! With two rooms available (one very large hall, one smaller ballet studio) for movement and ear-training classes, the big drawback was the lack of additional spaces where improvisation could be held. It is almost impossible to give instruction in this subject in large groups with insufficient instruments or practise rooms. However, some brave and valiant efforts kept up the interest and certainly 'opened some windows' for many teachers unaccustomed to this approach. It was a pleasure to present Foundation Awards to Zerlina Wong and to Chui Tan Lee who completed their written work following their successful results last year in July at the Singapore training course. Zerlina attended two Sydney January Summer courses. Lillian

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Chow had also attended the Singapore and Sydney sessions and successfully passed her Foundation ear-training exam in Hong Kong.

Joan presented a demonstration lesson and a group of five and six-year olds from a kindergarten which has an emphasis on Orff approach, proved to be delightful. They listened keenly, were energetic and extremely responsive to Joan's suggestions of 'fat frogs', 'flat frogs' and 'tiny tadpoles' in games of comparative note-values. It was clear from the discussion afterwards that the audience of some 50 teachers detected the in-built music and movement tasks and challenges clearly and appreciated the structure of the class.

We were very happy to meet an old friend in Hong Kong. Sui Ming Chu had visited Sydney for our summer course some 12 years ago. Since then she has attended courses in UK and is in sight of her Certificate, and then spent several years at the Institut in Geneva during its change from a Dalcroze-named award to a Bachelor's Degree. She has returned to Hong Kong with her husband, Tom Hope and their son, and is teaching several classes a week at the Dance Department of the Kong Hong Academy, headed by Dr Anita Donaldson, formerly of Adelaide.

Later, Sandra relayed class and venue information to our colleague, Dr Louise Mathieu from Canada, who is presenting classes for the Hong Kong Dalcroze Society this July, and Sandra has been invited to conduct another course in late April 2011.

BANGKOK
March-April 2010

Flight arrangements allowed Joan and Sandra to meet in Bangkok prior to the Hong Kong workshop and Nillawanna Eungamporn arranged several days of intensive classes. Over twenty people attended and, as nearly all had worked with either Joan or Sandra, or both, on previous occasions, the quality of the group work achieved was rewarding. Two good spaces were available in the mornings at a nearby International kindergarten junior school and in the afternoons we returned to Nillawanna's studio for ear-training and improvisation classes. Both Joan and Sandra continued individual coaching with Nillawanna and the recording of a formal audition DVD for Zoom (Thawan Rongkapan) to send to the Institut. We have since heard that Geneva has accepted him as a student.

Joan also contributed two mornings of Dalcroze work for a special group of 12 Music Education students at the Mahidol University. The quality and engagement

Joan and Ing pointing to an important word! In Bankok

was high and the level of skill in both traditional Thai and Western instruments very pleasing. There was no hesitation in grasping improvisation tasks or presenting results to peers. The new facilities in the Music Department are quite dazzling. One runs out of fingers and toes when counting the number of new practise rooms; the suites for visiting lecturers are nearly finished as is the 2,000 seat Opera auditorium and plans for further development of the Music Museum look enticing. The Staff Restaurant is 'silver service'.

On her return from Hong Kong, Joan again spent some time with Nillawanna clarifying the assignments required for a potential Licentiate 'creative presentation' of an original composition and plastique, and shared sessions with Nillawanna's group of teachers for several days.

SINGAPORE

An invitation from Pat's School House (Google it in lower case) to the group of Victorian-based Orff teachers, Sarah Brooke and Susie and Phil Splitter-Davies to run a four-day Early Childhood conference in Creative Music and Movement in late June, included the wish to have Joan present also. 'Pat' is the lively Patricia Koh who remembers Miss Heather Gell as an inspiring teacher at the Sydney Day Nursery College many years ago. Joan has presented occasional day-workshops for Pat's extensive staff for a number of years. The course named MUSAIC 2010 (google it) was attended by some 100 teachers and was held at the Australian International School. There were numerous halls, gyms, music rooms and classrooms at our disposal and as some of the staff of this large school attended. It was very friendly and convenient and with yummy catering! Several Australians teaching in Darwin and Kuala Lumpur attended. The sessions, with approximately about 20 people in five simultaneous and repeated-rotating sessions were wonderfully diverse with practical music making with drums, marimbas and a splendid assortment of 'made' instruments by Jon Madin (used to be in Shenanigans). Two Americans joined the team. Arthur Hull, the high energy 'drum-circle' leader and Jan Keyser of 'Harmony' music method. Jan was pleased to find a Dalcroze person as she had done a number of sessions in the past with Julia Black in the States and admired the approach.

Hong Kong Kindergarten children being frogs (who can surely jump!)

No sooner was Joan back in Perth for a few days when she set out again to Thailand in early July to participate in a vast project for Early Childhood teachers. This is under the personal patronage and largely organised by Mom Dusdi, whose eldest son is Governor of Bangkok. There are some 15,000 such teachers in the city, and Mom Dusdi aims to upgrade their skills. Already some 5,000 have participated in series of 'taste and try' practical week-long workshops in the past year or so. More intensive week-long courses are following, with a range of international specialists, which focus on 100 teachers at a time who have been selected as potential key-leaders from various centres who will further encourage their peers. Mom Dusdi (Princess Parabatri ... Google for her also) is now in her mid-eighties and not only attends but participates in various ways at each session. The course ran from 9-4 daily from Monday to Friday. The Formal Welcome was given by the Director of Education with the Director of Teacher Development (preschool-primary) in attendance and Joan was presented with a very practical basket of tropical fruits and fruit juices. The daily temperature was about 37 degrees outside, and it was the season of the South West Monsoon so there innumerable deluges. However, the immense carpeted hall at the Miracle Grande Convention Hotel was set to freezingly cold air-conditioning and everyone wore jackets and scarves! It was

not possible to change it as the rest of the building was occupied by numbers of other Conferees who apparently liked the cool.

Joan taped a ten minute Television interview conducted by an Early Childhood Professor who presents a daily telecast to parents, and once again stayed on to offer some coaching to Nillawanna and run several days of sessions for her group of teachers and former students, and met up with Zukhra Sandre. It was lovely to have Jeng visit one day as she had returned for the holidays from her first year in Geneva. She had a long discussion about the situation in Geneva, not only with Joan but with Zoom who will be joining the course there. Jeng was offered a three year bursary by Dr Sukree of Mahidol University, for her overseas study and credits the interest of 'Dalcroze Australia' in setting her on this path. She admits that Geneva is expensive, cold and the course is hard, especially as she is flautist and has been told she may have to do a whole extra year to get her keyboard skills to a satisfactory level. ('Gulp!' from Joan.)

Dr Somchai Trakarnrung approached Joan about a possible shared-course for several weeks this October at Mahidol University, hoping that Dr Margaret Brink from the USA will also be available. Further-more the suggestion was made that, as unfortunately, our planned Singapore Training Course centre is currently 'on hold', we consider establishing a Regional training centre in Bangkok and endeavour to present at least two courses, of a fortnight or so each, possibly starting next year. If it were possible for several people from nearby countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan and of course Australia to attend it would be magnificent. It is only 6-and-a-half hours from Perth, (quicker than getting to Brisbane from there!

One of the Community Campus's of Mahidol could be made available during school-hours as it is mainly used for general public classes in evenings and weekends. It is relatively close to the airport in a renovated shopping mall, and near a Dusit Hotel. Joan was taken by Ing to inspect it, and feels that the pleasant hall, the several tutorial rooms, two piano labs and some 20 or so practice rooms would be very workable. With this news and the latest exploits of Dr Sukree of Mahidol University who now has a Music Therapy course up and running, and the backing of Mom Dusdi to initiate further developments in the selective intake of Music Education students, it seemed hardly surprising to hear that he has arranged the purchase of an island off the coast as a residential International Youth Music Camp facility, and has been given 33 acres with an old school on it, to re-develop as a residential Music Education Training Centre which could accommodate teachers from rural and regional areas of Thailand for fortnightly courses in the future. It indicates that our Dalcroze work in Thailand has been taken seriously. What luck for us that both Dr Sugree and Dr Somchai attended our workshop presentation at ISME in Kuala Lumpur in 2006 and that they are sympathetic to the Dalcroze work that Nillawanna has been doing over the past decade or so!

On most of these journeys Joan's unusual luggage of very odd musical instruments, childrens' toys, crayons, bits of old ropes and so on causes some amusement for the Customs and Quarantine officials. There is less amusement for Joan as she packs a number of HEAVY Gell books to sell, but as another six hundred dollars worth of sales have thus recently come to the HGD Foundation, that's OK. Fortunately, several people indicated they will consider ordering a parcel from Carol-ann!

Finally a few words from Joan's sessions

The final day at the Hong Kong course in April

'over there', to get you thinking about your own class ideas! Given the tropical fruit, and a sharp knife, Joan used the idea of Divisions of Space and the visual patterns involved, when fruit is cut in half, across; then, after these revelations had inspired some very original movement shapes, gestures, groups and travelling ways, the notion was converted to Divisions of Time, unequal beats and bars in assorted sequences! Imagine or guess for yourself then DO it. The banana produced 3 sections, the apple star gave 5, the rambutan was in 7, the mandarin was in 13 segments, and the mangosteen was almost too amazing to describe!

The second idea was a theme of Shadows: individually copy and trace and use the shape of your own, depending on the light source; work similarly with partners, with one on the floor; re-create extraordinary shapes from photographs of shadows noting lines angles and distortions. Consider how these could be related to practical experiences of music 'subjects' and find new examples for 'theme and variation'; twice as fast /slow; distortion (of a melody perhaps? or of harmonic changes?); crescendo (as shadow shapes increase etc); additive rhythms as the shape 'grows' or 'shrinks' over the hours of sunlight. Consider instrumental and vocal improvisations on topics such as shadows in dappled moonlight; in harsh light; flickering candle-light; scary shadows, and so on. We could have worked for a week on such an idea and not repeated ourselves. Over to YOU!

[Readers who have been at our Sydney workshops in the past few years will no doubt recall Ing and Jeng, Zoom and Zukhra, Zerlina and Lillian.]

Lorna Cartwright

A TRIBUTE

Probably the longest serving member of Dalcroze Australia is currently living on the Gold Coast and frequently feeling frustrated by her current inability to don leotard and move. Lorna Cartwright, who was once filmed in the gardens at 'Everglades' in the Blue Mountains dancing to Mussorgsky's "Night on Bare Mountain", used also have as her eurhythmics party piece, "Bach Goes to Town" (and back in those days, dancing to jazz was somewhat risqué).

Lorna was not merely one of Heather Gell's best students, she was also a scientist with a Ph.D. in Clinical Pharmacy. She also wrote *A Commonsense Guide to Medicinal Plants* and was the chief consultant for *The Magic and Medicine of Plants*. However, it was the book she co-authored with Professor Frank Crowley (Professor of History at NSW University) which caused the greatest stir. Their *Citizen's Guide to Marihuana in Australia* (published by Angus & Robertson in 1977) caused controversy because it recommended decriminalization. Lorna had done considerable research for this book and even had to have special permission from the police to grow "the weed" for research purposes. Heather Gell was proud of her student's pharmaceutical achievements but also enjoyed the 'naughtiness' of having a eurhythmics devotee who was an expert in illegal drugs. Years later Lorna recollected Gell at some time back in the 1950s:

I can remember sitting backstage learning for my university exams on the Sunday rehearsal at the [Sydney] Theatre Royal. This rehearsal was for the adults and anyone who did not attend was excommunicated on the spot. Nothing was ever performed to Miss Gell's standard at this rehearsal. Monday was dress rehearsal for the technicians. Tuesday was the first performance and all was forgiven.

Lorna's late husband, Keith, who encouraged her eurhythmic activities (sometimes from the piano), was secretary of the NSW Dalcroze Society for a number of years. At the last AGM in January, Dalcroze Australia conferred life membership on Lorna.

How on earth do you teach 3-year-olds?

by Wendy Gumple

Some people ask me "What on earth can one do with a bunch of 3 year olds, and music???" Sing songs, sure. But they wont sit still for long."

The truth is, the children find many ways to be musically active. And the 'active' is a given with such young children! The teacher's task is to channel this energy into satisfying, memorable learning experiences. A playful attitude, a balance of enquiry and direction, and knowing when to move on quickly and when to linger are essential. A swag of varied activities is prepared, ready to use, if and when they seem appropriate.

Besides sharing singing games and simple percussion, the aim is to motivate the children using various props and situations, and to clarify and develop children's ideas within a musical framework. Improvised accompaniment makes it possible to feed into the activities such music topics as pulse, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics and timbre. Recognition of the basic rhythms – walk, run, gallop, skip and sway – is integral to each session.

As children learn to vocalise their accompaniments, both their perception of movement quality and the link with expressive language may be confirmed.

At the CCC, I come in as the extra in the room.

The staff clear tables and chairs to make a movement space, and have the children sitting ready, with shoes and socks off. They participate along with the children, and may also

- make observations on children
- support any one with difficulties
- learn ways to be musical in their interaction with children.
- give feedback
- Take photos for parent communication, folders & records

The activities described below took place in the group of fifteen 2.5 – 3.5 year olds.

I have included some relevant dialogue - my words appear in italics and the children's words in quotations.

After some greetings and review activities, the big basket of oranges was presented.

I have an orange for everyone. Find your own space. Make a trap so you can stop your orange when it comes. This is ball skills and body work, and various ways are found –using hands, feet, legs, body lying shaped as a crescent.

My *vocal improvisation accompanies the rolling. eg: roly poly here it comes… you've got it! , or "giggley giggley got it.* Some children vocalise - "bumbley bumbley gotcha!", "dooker-dooker-dooker" and some copy mine.

What tricks can your orange do? (remaining seated).

Listed are some of the moves the children found, and some vocalisations.

Rolling – side to side between the knees - "this way – that way", "push, push" "patty-patty". Many children favoured only one hand so "now *this* hand, and *that* hand" was suggested to better manage crossing the mid-line.

- away and back, up & down two legs, under 1 foot, between my two hands, on my belly, over my head, to my friend…

Little toss and catch – two hands! Toss just as high as your nose. - "Huppsah" "woopchah!"

Is it a ball? Does it bounce? No!!! It may split - "sploack!"- and the juice run on the floor - "splu-urchhy" - then you wont have one. Said once, this is usually sufficient to discourage children from throwing oranges on the floor.

Drop - from one hand to the other. "clip-clop"…"bim-bom"

Balance - "Look, I can balance it on my hand!" "It wont sit on my head!" What about your tummy? Lying on your back. – "It's a big orange belly-button!"

Smell - "sniff – aaahh!"

Hug – "mmmm"

Let's go for a lovely gallop. Hold out your orange. Let it be the light to show the way.

Share the singing game - *We'll Gallop Away*. 4 verses.* (footnote ref. to LMC author & appendix to song)

Stopping with the orange in a different place each time requires body awareness. Vocal pitch suits the level at stopping, and promotes pitch awareness.

Attention to direction of travel (spatial awareness) is heightened when the orange is held 'in front'.

Sally showed us how she can balance the orange on her hand. Let's do that and walk very carefully. (accompany children's steps softly on tambour)

Can you go faster? When the oranges are dropped, children use two hands.

Running is not permitted indoors, but "faster" or "hurry" is OK!

Now find a space to lie down with your big orange belly-button. I'll play some resting music for you. Resting, time for reflection, a contrast to the busy-ness. A chance to hear a lullaby, or some new music.

An ascending glissando is the signal to sit up.

Let your orange be a drum. Tap with me. I sing *I've Got an Orange*.

Who knows another song we can sing?

"Hickory Dickory Dock" hmmm. we'll have to tap quickly.

"Twinkle Twinkle". Can you tap softly this time?

Children return oranges to the basket with the song "Come and put your orange in the basket….ready to sing Goodbye" (sung to the tune of *Paw Paw Patch.*)

Follow-up Session
Oranges - part 2.

Revisit *We'll Gallop Away* with piano accompaniment, emphasising the pitch of the stopping place. Also change 'gallop' to walk, hurry, jump as ways to travel with the orange.

- Revisit some Orange Tricks.

After the doing and vocalising, the children respond well to accompanying motifs given on keyboard to signify the various tricks. Recognition and memory are encouraged in a "follow" game. eg: "*can you remember what this music tells your orange to do?*" or "*What did you do when I played this?…now this?… and this?*" Older children enjoy the 'testing' nature and repetition.

Alternate this with

Creative Play - What can it be?

Lots of funny interaction with each other as the children find ways to manipulate the orange as - a torch …. a phone….a camera….a car….a baby….a pet….

Now, make your orange a pillow and lie down in your own space. Important resting time.

Where do oranges come from? Children gradually sit up at this point.

Did you ever pick an orange from the tree? Let's have a game!

About 8 chairs are grouped at one end of the room. Children sit here, each holding an orange with suggestions about their 'branches' holding the oranges high and low. Remaining children sit at the other end of the room, having returned their oranges to the basket, reluctantly! Each child takes their turn to pick an orange. Piano improvisation accompanies each child to & from the tree in their own style. The music clearly reflects each child's movement and the moment of picking, with a clear perfect cadence as they sit back down in their place.

Children come together for the Goodbye dance.

Each child was instantly drawn to explore and manipulate their orange, manifesting a wide range of dexterity, co-ordination, observation and imagination skills. They also enjoy the sharing (show & copy) aspect. These children are not yet interested in designing pathways to and from the tree. They like the direct route! With practice, they are able to state their preferred locomotor style and realize it.

The enthusiasm of the children suggests this sort of musical play satisfies a deep need for discovery, expression, creative movement, critical thinking, active listening, social engagement, literature, song and dance - couched in a musical framework.

Footnote:

Many jars of "Music and Movement" marmalade finds their way into my pantry after these sessions.

I came to Dalcroze Eurhythmics in 1991, midway though my teaching career. It has been completely transformative in both my professional and personal life.

I want to acknowledge my inspirational teachers, Sandra Nash, Joan Pope, Ruth Alperson, Ma-Lou Hatt-Arnold and Andrew Davidson, for training, challenging and encouraging me to explore the wonderful playful world of Dalcroze Eurhythmics. As a member of the S.A. chapter of Dalcroze Australia, I enjoy involvement in pedagogy development and evaluation. I am grateful to the two childcare centres who welcome me each week to work within their communities, and the children who actively demand my ongoing development!

Oberammergau

By Peter Roberts

During May, Peter Roberts was in Europe. While there he managed to get to Oberammergau to see the Passion Play. *Here is his report, originally printed in the "Jacobean Chronicle", on this once in a decade event which is nearly 400 years old.*

Oberammergau is a small town, south-west of Munich, in the Bavarian Alps, famous for its passion play, usually performed once a decade. In 1633, with the plague raging in Bavaria and closing in on the town, the villagers vowed to portray "the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ" every 10 years if they were spared this scourge. Although some became sick, not one villager succumbed to the Black Death. Since then the town has been redeeming its vow.

The Passion Play is a local event. You have to be born in the town or have resided there for more than 20 years before you can take part. The Director is a local boy -- even if he works as a professional theatre director in Munich. This is an amateur performance, mounted by the village, and any benefits are returned to the village. Local hotels are issued with the best seats in the massive theatre (it seats 4700) and out of town tour companies have to be satisfied with the seats at the back. Originally the play was performed in the cemetery. Popularity in the early years of its existence led to its being moved to a more expansive location. (This was lucky because "enlightened" 18th century monarchs banned graveyard performances and other"Passion Plays" were suppressed, leaving Oberammergau as unique.)

Even the music is written by a local boy, Rochus Dedler (1779-1822), a contemporary of Beethoven and Schubert who had trained in Munich,. Dedler was hardly one of the "great" early Romantics (indeed, he does not rate a mention in 'Grove') but his thorough training gave him a certain competence, evinced in the final fugal chorus (hearable on the internet). His music was revised for the 1950 play and was further revised and expanded by Markus Zwink for this year's performances. It is performed by a chorus of about 50, soloists, and an orchestra "buried" in a pit almost worthy of Bayreuth.

Indeed, the whole performance is of Wagnerian proportions. Performance time is 5 to 6 hours, with an interval of a couple of hours for dinner. Those of us in the audience who were staying at local hotels, went back to the hotel for dinner. The people who were bussed in were presumably treated to a picnic. Oberammergau has many pleasant parks and open spaces suitable for such a repast on a summer's evening. The night I was there was raining and the temperature was well below 10 degrees Celsius. How the out-of-town people coped, I don't know. I was very thankful to undertake a 10 minute brisk walk to a heated hotel and a hot meal.

The play opens with the Prologue and the Chorus. The Prologue speaks, the Chorus sings. The Prologue tells us (of course in German, this English is from the official "textbuch"):-

So take this play as testimony
From us as descendents of those
Who through Him found help in need!

The Chorus sings as a tableau is presented of Adam and Eve and the expulsion from Eden (there will be many Old Testament tableaux presented during the performance), but the play proper opens with the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey. The play utilizes a number of animals. I am happy to announce that the donkey -- presumably conscious of the dignity of his rider -- was well behaved (as was Herod's camel, later on). Not so the sheep who left considerable offerings centre stage. One admired the fortitude of the actor who, barefoot, had to walk through these without flinching. The town's children helped enlarge many of the crowd scenes but they did not upstage any of the principal actors. That old adage that you never share a stage with children or animals proved only partly true.

While the Chorus is a choir, it operates dramatically as a chorus does in the plays of the ancient Greeks -- commenting on the action of the drama and keeping the audience's attention focused on the important issues. For instance, it compares the "tortured conscience" of Peter after he denies knowing Christ with the black despair

of Judas. Peter repents and hopes for mercy and salvation. Judas, "despised by all the world", ends his life on a tree.

Singing of Mary at the foot of the cross, the Chorus tells us:

All of you, who pass this way,
Stand still, pay attention, and see!
Where can one find the kind of love,
That can compare to this?

No doubt the plays of previous centuries blamed the Jews for Christ's death. Adolf Hitler attended a 1930 performance and expressed himself happy with the anti-Semitic sentiments expressed. After the Nazis came to power, the town resisted attempts to make this anti-Semiticism more direct. Since World War II, the town has attempted to re-write the role of the Jews in the death of Jesus.(which is quite in line with Vatican teaching -- and one must not forget the Catholicism of Bavaria). To an outsider, at some levels, this seems quite trivial (e.g. changing the names of priests and Levites to Greek rather than Hebrew).. At other times it seems to involve a major change in the emphasis of the Biblical story. Pontius Pilate is no longer a Roman governor who finds it all too difficult and "washes his hands" of the problem. Pontius Pilate -- who is dressed in a Roman military uniform (not a toga) which is very suggestive of the SS -- becomes involved in underhand "plotting" which leads to Jesus's downfall. All this makes for good drama but one questions its authenticity in relation to the gospels. One also wonders at the pressure placed on the Passion Play authorities. While acknowledging the right of the Jews to rectify the horrific attitudes of the past, one questions that it goes so far as to re-write the gospel story.

Of course, the Passion Play has always had a political element. It was established at the time of the German wars of religion -- and performances of Passion Plays were never Protestant. It managed to survive (only just) the "reforms" of the Enlightenment and the racial enthusiasms of the Nazis. In 1950 it was touch and go as to whether the American Occupation forces would allow the play to go ahead.. The profits of the plays benefit the town -- but local government has to decide how they are spent. Wars stopped the play going ahead in 1810 and 1940. The aftermath of war and the influenza epidemic postponed the 1920 performances until 1922. Special productions were mounted to celebrate the 300th and the 350th anniversaries of the first play. Still, the town keeps redeeming a vow made nearly 400 years ago.

The sonorous four-part harmonies of the chorus (frequently being sung while an Old Testament tableau is being enacted) emphasise the moral seriousness of this play. I felt that the baritone and soprano soloists, on the night I attended, had received some vocal training. The young man singing tenor had obviously had no training. It was a brilliant natural voice, which, during only a couple of particularly florid passages, failed to remain on pitch. One wonders if talent scouts from the Bavarian State Opera come to Oberammergau. I cannot name this young man because the play is double cast (no doubt a very necessary precaution against sickness) and the printed program lists both singers. Whom did I see?

It can be funny whilst driving around the town in the free bus, to be told by the bus driver that "last night's Jesus lives in that house and tomorrow's Judas lives over the road from him. And that man on the bicycle is last night's high priest." The Passion Play may be an international event but it remains very local to the town and its people.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Passion Play is the mere fact that it continues. Bavarians are very conservative and seriously retain many of their traditions. Nonetheless, 300 years ago there were many such plays in Catholic Germany. The others have, for various reasons, failed to survive. Oberammergau's has managed to adapt to the times, over time. With over 100 performances this year, it will reach an enormous number of people. It is a testament to Christian faith.

History Feature:

A Dalcroze teacher in Melbourne in the 1920s and 30s.

Thelma Constance St John George (1899 – 1970)

Thelma St John George was born on 29 June 1899, in St Leonards, a suburb of Sydney in New South Wales. Her father, St John George, a maritime Captain, was based in Sydney and the last record of his captaincy, which had been mainly on the Japan-South East Asia-Australia route, is in 1912. No record of his death has been found in Australia, but by 1905 Thelma and her mother, Constance, had moved to Melbourne in the State of Victoria. There, Thelma attended the Teachers' College in Carlton in 1916 and 1917, pursuing the Training Course for Infants' Teachers, which included both kindergarten and Junior Primary work. Her main teacher was the renowned Emmeline Pye whose Valedictory in *The Argus*, noted that 'Miss Pye is a firm believer in the possibilities of eurhythmics'. Thelma gained the Trained Infants Teachers Certificate (TITC) at First Class level and was registered in the State of Victoria in February 1918. She taught Kindergarten during 1918-1920 in Melbourne, and taught in Private Schools with children aged from 6-9 years, between 1920 and 1923.

In 1924 she attended a two-week January Summer School in Melbourne conducted by Ethel Driver from the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics (LSDE), with the assistance of the two recent Australian graduates Cecilia John, and Heather Gell. The key speaker was Professor [Mr.] Meredith Atkinson who was appointed that week as the President of the newly formed Dalcroze Society of Victoria. Atkinson, as Editor of *Stead's Review* provided promotional support. Following its success, a group of Melbourne people planned more classes, a childrens' demonstration, and public recital for March, when Driver and John would return from New Zealand. It was presented at the Playhouse Theatre, and enthusiastically received by a capacity audience, which no doubt pleased the Honorary Secretary-organisers, Thelma St John George and Kathleen Lascelles.

In the May school holidays in 1924 a week-long course for adults, was presented by Heather Gell from Adelaide accompanied by a small group of her students. George participated, together with her friend Lizzy Demaine, who had also trained at the Carlton Teachers' College as an infants' school and kindergarten teacher Later that year George and Demaine paid their own way to London to undertake the full three-year course at the LSDE which commenced in early October. They joined Dorothea Michel, a physical education teacher from New South Wales, who had been awarded a Full Scholarship by Ethel Driver, and Jean Wilson, a West Australian final-year Kindergarten College student who received a Half-Scholarship from Driver. Michel travelled on the JERVIS BAY from Sydney and Wilson joined it at Fremantle in late July. The two friends from Melbourne, Thelma St John George and Elizabeth Demaine, booked on the MEDIC, a one-class ship White Star Line ship, in early August and disembarked at Southampton nearly five weeks later.

Colourful insights into the Dalcroze students' life in London between 1924 and 1927, have been gained from Wilson's photo album, class notebooks and her letter-précis books. George's address in London was 8b Bickenhall Mansions, Gloucester Place, W1, and apparently a small flat or bed-sitter. Several snapshots from Wilson's photograph album show a short, rather plump and friendly-looking woman identified as "George". A welcome party for them was arranged by the London Dalcroze Society committee. The students were soon to find that the work was challenging and the demands on their energies considerable, but the compensations included being 'in the thick of it.' There were temptations to shingle their hair, learn rag-time piano and to dance the Tango and the Charleston. London Society was abuzz with the Russian Ballet, and the staff of the Dalcroze School encouraged students to make good use of concerts, theatres, museums and art gallery opportunities in Central London. Wilson comments in her letter books of going to the ballet with George and tellingly, mentions that the English seemed to rather

'look down on the colonials' and that it was 'a relief to get away from them sometimes!'

Demaine did not complete her studies at the LSDE, having met a charming Irishman and the Victorian Register of Marriage shows that Demaine married Jonathan Ronald Howard Greeves in Melbourne in 1926. Shortly after, they travelled back to England and called in to the LSDE to greet their friends before making their home in Ireland.

An article and group photo in *The Australian Woman's Mirror* of May 1925 mentions Demaine, along with Helen [sic] George and Jean Wilson as 'three Australian girls taking part in the display by Jaques-Dalcroze at the Prince's Theatre' in London. Michel was in the audience as she was recovering from an appendectomy. George spent a lot of time with Wilson. They went on inexpensive weekend excursions to nearby places, such as Ely or Cambridge, and attended weekly French classes together in preparation for the Geneva Summer School and the Congress of Rhythm in the northern summer of 1926. They helped each other with preparation for plastique exercise ideas and lesson-plans, and they worried about harmony tasks and the written subject papers. They attended concerts and ballet, noting that there was a real cult of Russia, from red boots to ballet, Tchekov books and plays, and enjoying 'poking around at the street markets.' By 1927, when they were in Third Year, they had to prepare and present their own demonstrations for assessment. George and Wilson were assigned classes at Bowden House School for their demonstration. It appears that this was a shared task providing mutual support.

George's mother was a welcome visitor in March 1927, several months before Final Exams. She accompanied them to various concerts, outings and meals; highlights included Beethoven Centenary concerts, a theatre night for The Constant Nymph and an opera night for Siegfried and visits to the Rambert ballet at the Mercury theatre. Perhaps due to the generosity of Mrs. St John George, there were several visits to the Russian Ballet, shortly after Wilson had noted 'Russian ballet back; but prohibitive prices!'

George completed her course successfully and plans for the Northern summer were made. She and her mother decided to travel in England before returning to Melbourne on the COMORIN in October. Both George and Wilson wanted to attend the August Summer Course for Graduates, which Jaques-Dalcroze would be directing. The report of the Summer School in the Geneva publication Le Rythme, is full of praise for the site, the content and his leadership.This Summer School at Brighton made a splendid finale for George and Wilson who tells of the 'glorious' demonstration that concluded the course.

By late August 1927, the final parties, and visits to the tennis, the cricket and the Tattoo were over for Wilson and she departed for Australia. She wrote to George from Marseilles on 2 September, thanking her for the card of good wishes, saying that she is on a 'ripping boat'. A fortnight later she wrote again to George wishing her Bon Voyage, and described

Thelma St John George is at the front right in this photo taken at the LSDE in Store Street, London, 1925.

Wilson is front left. English friend Morwenna Ward is above her and Dorothea Michel is top right. Jean Vincent, 1904-1992: A Life in Music and Movement. Family monograph, 1992.

the heat of the passage through the Red Sea. The social page of the London paper, the *British-Australian*, announced the 'departure of Mrs. and Miss St John George by the COMORIN in the first week of October' stating that she was said to be the first Victorian to gain a Dalcrosse [sic] certificate. It listed the guests who were entertained at a farewell function at the 'Mary Elizabeth' in Regent Street.

Wilson later wrote to Olga Roncoroni, one of their mutual Dalcroze graduate friends in London, and concluded the letter with, 'GEORGE CAME THROUGH!' We may assume that Wilson had met up with George while the ship was in port at Fremantle for the day in early November. Roncoroni, had another Australian friend, Ethel Florence Lindsay Richardson the writer, who assumed the name Henry Handel Richardson. They had shared a house together in England following the death of Ethel's husband. Roncoroni kept in touch with George and Wilson over the next decades through occasional correspondence.

The CORMORIN arrived at Melbourne on 14 November and Thelma gave a substantial interview in the *Argus*. The alliterative headline, 'A Disciple of Dalcroze' is followed by the statement that, 'If enthusiasm be the hallmark of the disciple, Miss Thelma St John George is one indeed.' The journalist remarks on the distinction between different versions of 'eurhythmics' in Melbourne associated with physical education and Grecian-style dancing, and the musical form which George had spent three years studying, noting that 'enthusiasm seems to be part and parcel of the study of eurhythmics or rather, eurhythmics as they are understood by Dalcroze students.' When St John George was asked to describe the man and the work, said succinctly, 'He is sixty two years of age now, very short, with twinkly eyes, a keen sense of humour and a genius in the field of musical pedagogy.' She stressed the educational aspects particularly, and remarked she had seen some wonderful work with deaf mutes in Glasgow and had been amazed at the success in working with the mentally deficient. She continued:

Many people regard eurhythmics as a form of posing, or fancy dancing or associated with folk dance. They do not understand that the exercise of rhythmical gymnastics are merely the outward show, and visible expression of the principles of the method which is intellectual. It gives a new meaning to the joy of life, but it is difficult to explain its working unless one can watch a class in demonstration.

George declared she looked forward to convincing people of the positive values of the Dalcroze system.

She explained to the journalist that although the three-year course had been intense, she had squeezed in a lot of travelling in England and Europe. She referred to a visit to Geneva for the Congress of Rhythm which was attended by professors, doctors and educationists from all over Europe, Great Britain and America. This was followed by a ten-day eurhythmics course which provided her with a host of ideas for the future and many memories. One was the banquet which was brought to a close by the representatives of the different nations singing national songs. Apart from 'God Save The King' the only characteristic contribution to the program she and the other few Australians present could think of was a rousing 'Coo-EE!'

Several weeks later, an excellent article was published under her name in the *Sun* entitled 'Dalcroze Eurhythmics train body and mind.' The emphasis is on aspects of concentration, self-control and lack of self-consciousness leading to self-development. She makes it clear that it is part of musical education that trains the body and the mind side-by-side, creating the balance so essential in an individual. Her clear description of music as a medium which lends itself so ideally to movement is thoughtful, and she emphasises that a greater understanding of movement, and of breathing, leads to the ability to make quick responses, thus seeking a harmony between mind and body.

Arriving home only a few weeks before schools closed for the summer vacation, meant she must have moved quickly to arrange some teaching for the following year. With her interest evinced in attending ballet performances in London, it is not surprising that she began a working relationship with a well-qualified ballet teacher recently arrived from England, Eunice Weston. A serendipitous find in a history of ballet in Australia confirmed this. 'At the end of 1927, I went south again to Melbourne and made two great discoveries;

Miss Eunice Weston and Miss Thelma St George.' The writer was former Brisbane dance teacher, Marjorie Hollinshed, who noted that:

Miss St George [sic] was a talented woman who had just returned from England where she had received the full and correct training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics. This system teaches the exact interpretation into movement of the time intervals of music. Pavlova had visited Dalcroze and was deeply impressed by the work she saw. But when told the course was up to five years she concluded it would be impossible to include the full training in the training of ballet students.

Displaying considerable insight, Hollinshed remarks that after meeting Miss St George and learning something of the method, she shuddered when hearing people talk about displays of eurhythmics, which were 'all the rage and generally meant a sort of "pipes of pan" dance in bare feet and a Grecian costume. I suppose one would have had to have lived in my generation to know what I mean by that!'

In 1928 George was a piano studio teacher living with her mother in High Street, Glen Iris. She documented her endeavours to colleagues in London, as well as writing regularly to Percy Ingham, the Hon. Director of the LSDE. Several such news article were printed in the Dalcroze Society *Journal* in 1928 and 1929. Describing her local Saturday morning classes for children, and the coaching of several piano teachers, she related that one music teacher, 'who had read everything she could find about Monsieur Jaques', told her she had been searching for years for work of this kind because she 'found her pupil's musical ideas were so one-sided.' George added, 'I find it intensely interesting to work with her'. She also taught in several schools, including the Church of England Girls' Grammar School at Geelong, some forty-five miles away by rail which almost certainly would have meant an overnight stay at the school each week. George sounded positive and fulfilled.

The Principal's *Annual Reports*, and the student magazine, *Coo-ee*, mention George and Eurhythmics, regularly and favourably during the next several years. A demonstration she presented in 1929 is described in detail by one of the senior girls, outlining the processes undertaken, firstly listening to the music, then feeling and devising original gestures, then expressing the note values, the time and phrasing, until the spirit and the form of the music was evident. The work in the Junior School was highly regarded by the Head, who noted the interpretative aspects shown in the Dalcroze, Quilter and Schumann compositions chosen. She publicly commended George for the high standard of her work. A particular highlight was in 1930 when the annual demonstration showed the value of Eurhythmics in quite a different aspect, namely the interpretation of verse. The extensive programme included John Masefield's *Esther*, where the slow motion gestures and groupings were most effective, and Swinburne's *Atalanta*¸ whichcaptured a different atmosphere. The choice of colours and costuming was regarded as striking, and was said to have brought out the poet's meaning to the audience as well as those taking part. Several years later, the visit of the British Poet Laureate and Mrs. Masefield to the school was an occasion for a re-emphasis on rhythm and meaning in literature, poetry and movement. The influence of the Choral speech and 'Language Eurhythmics' lessons by Mona Swann, on the staff at the LSDE and closely associated with the Moira House School in Eastbourne is quite clear in this aspect of St John George's work

George was soon invited to become associated with a new Speech-Training and Dramatic studio opened in Melbourne by Eileen O'Keefe. Called 'The Standard School', this was a project O'Keefe had planned since she too had returned from an overseas study visit. She invited George to teach Eurhythmics at her Studio. Their association continued at least until 1931, and possibly longer, because a men's verse-speaking choir subsequently presented scenes from Hippolytus 'incorporating Dalcroze Eurhythmics' at the School. O'Keefe's regular small advertisements in the *Australian Musical News* for the Standard School continued to list Dalcroze Eurhythmics for several years.

Links with the dance world continued for George through Weston's ballet studio. Once more there is a reference to her by Marjorie Hollinshed in Brisbane, who recalled she went to Melbourne again, in the summer of 1928, and wrote down everything she learned from George in her

notebooks. This activity bore fruit when, in September 1928, Hollinshed presented her annual *Operatic Dancing Display* at the All Saints Hall in Brisbane. First in the programme came 'Mushrooms and Fairies' which was described as 'Eurhythmics and Ear training.' Then followed a series of presentations showing stretching exercises, some 'in the Russian Ballet style', and excerpts from the new Elementary Operatic Dance Syllabus. The second half of the display consisted of individual presentations created by the students using their own choice of music. Hollinshed said that one of them called *The Oscillated Kink*, was a complete surprise in arrangement and presentation. As well it might with such a title. The London Dalcroze School staff was keen on aspects of syncopation, as was M'sieur Jaques, and it certainly seems to have rubbed off on George.

Hollinshed describes another of George's items which was performed as a finale. The title was *Inhibition* and it was presented by several girls who walked around the stage and then, at a given signal from the piano, 'contracted' very slowly all over, before very suddenly, became relaxed again. This is a typical Dalcroze *technique corporelle* exercise of listening, muscle isolation, tension and release. A press report of Hollinshed's recital noted that an extraordinary amount of individuality, self-confidence and appreciation of rhythm was shown by the students who presented their own pieces. Hollinshed further notes that ballet teacher Eunice Weston herself came up to Queensland in 1929, to conduct a Summer School of Dance in bay-side Scarborough, near Brisbane. It is not clear if George was there, but certainly her eurhythmic exercises were included. This is confirmed by an interview, in Melbourne (2005), with distinguished former ballerina, Laurel Martyn (then Gill), who recollected doing eurhythmics when she was a student that summer, and improvising movements on the beach.

A small private school, St Andrews College in Kew, Melbourne, is mentioned as 'having eurythmics' (sic) in 1926 and, following this lead, it appears that the music teacher involved, Sylvia McConkey, was a Theosophist, who had recently returned from several years in Tasmania. She had been at St Margaret's in Devonport, where Margaret Wallace had 'introduced eurythmics and Grecian dance in 1910-11.' Further investigation revealed that the 'eurythmics' taught in this school, run by Lillian Outhwaite, derived from the work and style of Isadora Duncan, rather than that of Jaques-Dalcroze. Although done in bare-feet, 'the floating draperies and natural and spontaneous dancing' were aimed at self-expression, not Dalcroze-style musical study. However one of the key St Andrews staff members, Margaret Lyttle, soon broke away and began an innovative progressive school called Preshil, also in Kew. Dalcroze Eurhythmics would be featured in the not too distant future as George took classes there for a number of years.

George wrote in some concern to Ingham in 1929 about the financial difficulties being generally experienced in Australia, but when newcomer Dalcroze colleague, Nancy Rosenhain arrived in Melbourne in 1929 she was very willing to assist her. English-born Rosenhain, whose parents were both Australian, was the niece of General Sir John Monash and resided with him for some eighteen months in Toorak. She had been in the class two years below Thelma at the LSDE in 1926 and 1927. They were both involved in a combined evening of 'physical work' was presented at Wirth's Olympia in Melbourne, under Vice-Regal patronage, on 1 October 1930. Part of the programme was given by gymnastic students of the YWCA under the direction of Norah Parkes Jervis, who had recently trained at the renowned Oesterberg College in Kent. It is interesting to note that Edith Clarke, one of the first three English graduates of the LSDE in 1914, was the lecturer in dance and physical education at the Oesterburg College. Pupils of George presented much of the rest of the programme which comprised an impressively wide variety of examples from the Dalcroze Eurhythmics repertoire of exercises, plus some prepared studies. Rosenhain's name is listed as one of the participants. They received sad news from London at this time of the death of Ingham, the Director. He was the key financial supporter of the LSDE, and its outreach projects of assisting new teachers, one of whom was Rosenhain. It was necessary for her to return to London as the contract could no longer continue. She negotiated with George to take on the

students she had begun to teach so they could continue with their Dalcroze classes.

George collaborated with Heather Gell and Marjorie Bonnin, both from Adelaide, to present a week-long vacation course in May 1933 at Merton Hall in Melbourne, now the Melbourne Girls Grammar School. One young woman who had lessons with her in Melbourne during the mid-1930s was Elizabeth Wade, who proceeded enthusiastically to the Paris Dalcroze School in 1937, and then to the LSDE to pursue the full course. Wade was in the war-time evacuation of the LSDE in 1940-41 first to Glassenbury in Kent and then to Kibblestone Hall, Staffordshire. A future article in this series will deal at greater length with the careers of both Elizabeth Wade and Nancy Kirsner (nee Rosenhain).

Records indicate that Mrs. St John George died in 1938 and correspondence reveals that a colleague in Melbourne believed Thelma had moved to a country district of Victoria around that time as the colleague was asked to replace her for the Dalcroze Eurhythmics at Preshil School in Kew. That colleague was Nancy Rosenhain, who had married in Melbourne and was now Mrs. Marcus Kirsner. The Melbourne telephone directory has entries from 1939 to 1947 for Miss St John George at the same address as previously, but no further information has been found of any teaching there. Searches of the Public Records Office in Victoria revealed that Thelma Constance St John George married Claude Lawrence Lacey at St. Arnaud, Victoria, in 1950, and died at Benalla, a nearby town, twenty years later. There were no children and no next of kin have been located.

One of the surprises, given so few Dalcroze graduates in Australia in the 1930s, is the lack of correspondence or communication between Heather Gell and George beyond the previously noted 1933 Vacation Course in Melbourne. In an article written in the early 1970s, Gell notes that Jean Wilson, Thelma George and Marjorie Bonnin were teaching in Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide' during 1928 -1930 and that, 'later Thelma George and Jean Wilson both married and gradually gave up teaching'. The name Thelma St John George is inscribed in a pleasantly flowing style, on a copy of the Jaques-Dalcroze publication of Rhythmic exercises found in Gell's material, and that is the only surviving record of her handwriting, or evidence of contact between them.

For at least a decade between 1928 and 1938, Thelma St John George practised her craft with enthusiasm and singular success sharing her knowledge in several fields of education and the arts. She may well have influenced a number of people in Melbourne and contributed to a greater appreciation of the benefits of music through movement, poetry and literature. Further information would be welcomed from any reader.

Joan Pope 2010

For this article, the surname 'George' was used although the 'St John" (pronounced 'sinjen) was used in formal documents by Thelma and her mother.

For the purposes of space in HOPP this article has not included the many references and additional footnotes. If any reader wishes to enquire further please contact Joan at popejoan@westnet.com.au or write to 36 Reserve Street Claremont. 6010 Western Australia

Overseas News

Major award for Japanese colleague.

Yuri Ishimaru, immediate past-president of the Dalcroze Society of Japan, has recently been honoured by the International Association of Early Childhood Education, a group of professors mainly from famous Japanese public universities. The members of the association are from the United States of America, Canada, Taiwan, China, Korea, India, and Japan. The conference is held alternately in Japan and another country.

While Yuri is not a university professor, her career achievements in music education for young children have been acknowledged by the members of the Association. Yuri's school in Kunitachi celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, and she is also well known throughout Japan for her television programs for children. Her music publications for children have sold widely in Japan and China. Under her presidency of the Dalcroze Society of Japan, two major conferences were held in Japan in 2004 and 2008. These were the biggest Eurhythmics gatherings ever held, surpassing even those held in Geneva. Under Yuri's leadership, the community of Dalcroze teachers in Japan has now created its own professional training course, which is an outstanding achievement.

Yuri studied in London with Elizabeth Vanderspar at the same time as me in the 1970s, and our friendship has endured. She attended our first Dalcroze International Summer School held at the University of NSW in 1994. On behalf of our Australian members, we extend our warmest congratulations to Yuri for her dedication in bringing Dalcroze music education to so many people in Japan. She is a remarkable woman – a gracious, thoughtful and gifted teacher, and a brilliant administrator.

Sandra Nash

Geneva

Mary Brice, now teaching at the International School in Geneva, writes:

I've had a very rich and fulfilling year: a group of my students recorded a CD of 12 French songs last December - this CD is destined for English speaking schools who want to introduce French as a second language, but it would also be useful for any language teachers teaching French. Since the songs use limited vocabulary, they are accessible to many children, but also the songs are not "babyish" so they could appeal even to children in Year 6. The quality of the singing is exceptional and I am very proud of my kids! If you are interested it is called "Chantons Tous les Jours" and the website is outofthearkmusic.com. As well, lots of other interesting projects, plus my doctorate, plus recitals, plus a new instrument. I have started learning the cello and I love it! So lots going on here!

Members might care to visit the website: http://www.outoftheark.com.au/?dest=AU

Generous Gift

Joanne Callinan-Robinson has not only been a gifted Dalcroze teacher, she has always been a most generous supporter of the work in Australia. Earlier this year she gave Dalcroze Australia a great many books and other resources. These include much music suitable for movement, Dalcroze'sLa Musique et Nous, Laban's Principles of Dance and Movement and a great deal of equipment. Thank you, Joanne!

Kodaly Conference

The Kodaly people (OK, if you think that is too informal -- the Kodaly Music Education Institute of Australia) are holding their national music education conference at Caufield Grammer in East St Kilda in Victoria from 26th to 29th September. They will have an emphasis on string teaching and the guest teacher, Geza Szilvay, will conduct the student orchestras each day.

For full information go to:
www.kodaly.org.au