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Integration of Dalcroze method into the musical education of high school performers

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INTEGRATION OF DALCROZE METHOD INTO THE MUSICAL EDUCATION OF HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMERS

by

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An Independent Study

Submitted to Dr. Anne Christopherson

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This independent study, submitted by Ryan King in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Music from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This independent study is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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Ryan King
June 22nd, 2020

ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study:

Past work with young people in the creative arts led me to notice that it can be difficult for them to tap into the core physicality of musical expression necessary for effective performance. It has been noted that earlier onset of puberty and the mass adoption of technology has weakened kinesthetic awareness and, consequently, decreased ability to express musical ideas within their bodies.

During the early twentieth century, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze developed a method of teaching musicality via physical means: Dalcroze Eurhythmics. This method teaches the musical concepts of tempo, duration, dynamics, and articulation by attaching them to physical gestures, energy, and improvisation to create kinesthetic connections to musical ideas in the mind of the student. The purpose of this literature review is to identify and synthesize existing research to facilitate better integration of Dalcroze into music training and theatrical performance for high-schoolers, both in the voice studio and on the stage.

Methodology:

I will first research what the Dalcroze Method is and how its concepts could conceptually fit into the education of high-school performers in music. Then, I will analyze literature about the use of the Dalcroze Method in music education, music theatre performance, and voice lessons. Finally, where gaps in the literature are identified, inferences will be made about how existing ideas could be combined to fill those gaps.

Anticipated Results:

Through a review of the available literature, the first steps will be taken toward a synthesis of disparate ideas into a cohesive methodology for applying the Dalcroze Method to work with high-school performers of music, both on the stage and in the voice studio. The goal, by introducing musical concepts through physiological experience, rather than technical explanation, is that musical concepts will be internalized more deeply and be more readily accessible in performance. At the very least, this experience will build a vocabulary both lexical and physical with which students can navigate musical and theatrical performance choices, as well as pursue future artistic growth.

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I. Background and Significance

In 1892, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze began teaching at the Geneva Conservatory, and was faced with a problem that still plagues teachers of music today – namely, an incongruence between what the student performs and their perception of what their body is actually doing.[1] Dalcroze attributed this problem, mainly, to the idea that students had been taught mechanically, rather than musically.[2] That is, students had the intellectual capacity to understand the structure and theory behind the music, but lacked the kinesthetic experiences that characterized the material performed. He set to work on remedying this discrepancy by introducing students to musical concepts through kinesthetic activities targeting specific skills, and discovered that

> "... while with older students acoustic sensations were hindered by futile intellectual preconceptions, children appreciated them quite spontaneously, proceeding in due course quite naturally to their analysis".

This simple idea -- that students would develop a stronger grasp of musical concepts if those concepts were introduced through physiological exercise at an early age, and allowed to digest the technicalities of analysis later on -- served as the seed that has developed into Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a branch of pedagogy that has had its place in early music education in the United States for some time with a concerted effort put in place by the Dalcroze Society of America in 1959[3]. Eurhythmics has later been defined as follows:

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[1] J. Timothy Caldwell, *Expressive Singing: Dalcroze Eurhythmics for Voice* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995), 12.
[2] Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Rhythm, Music and Education*, trans. Harold F. Rubinstein (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons,1976), 5.
[3] Butera, Kathy. "What Is the Dalcroze Teaching Method?" San Francisco Classical Voice, January 5, 2012. https://www.sfcv.org/tips-advice/what-is-the-dalcroze-teaching-method.

> "Eurhythmics… is… based on the premise that rhythm is the primary element of music, and that the source for all musical rhythm may be found in the natural rhythms of the body".[4]

Dalcroze believed that his method would revolutionize the way music would be taught, and in many ways he was correct. He pioneered early experimentation with solfège, play-based improvisations, and the use of "eurhythmics"-- his term for the coordinated state of being achieved when the natural rhythms of the human body are brought into equilibrium with the musical ideas those bodies are attempting to express. Dalcroze's influence has spread beyond the boundaries of music into dance, theatre, and scenic design, and the elements of his teaching are still found in schools today; however, the majority of their applications seem to only have wide-spread use in the elementary school classroom.

In the modern era, teenagers are woefully out of touch with the natural rhythms of their bodies. The advent of social media has only exacerbated the problem, as less and less emphasis is placed upon an individual's ability to communicate face to face. Adding in the factors of an ever increasing number of things to do inside in a seated position, it is no wonder that students face difficulties of physical coordination and verbal/musical expression. However, though the gap between the verbal and physical worlds of these students may be greater than in past generations, the problem is really not so different from what Dalcroze encountered when he developed his method. At first encounter with students who possessed what he called "a-rhythm" (as a direct antagonist to *eurhythm*), he attempted smaller fixes targeting individual symptoms, but soon realized that the scope of the problem required a systematic approach instead. Dalcroze responded thusly:

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[4] Lois Choksy et al., *Teaching Music in the Twentieth Century* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1986), 26.

> "I saw the lack of musical rhythm to be the result of a general "a-rhythm," whose cure appeared to depend on a special training designed to regulate nervous reactions and effect a co-ordination of muscles and nerves; in short, to harmonise mind and body. And so I came to regard musical perception, which is entirely auditive as incomplete, and to seek the connection between instincts for pitch and movement, harmonies of tone and time-periods, time and energy, dynamics and space, music and character, music and temperament, finally the art of music and the art of dancing."[5]

Dalcroze prescribed guiding principles that may remedy the "a-rhythm" that plagues students today, just as it did in 1892**.** I have often felt ineffectual in my rehearsals when trying to inspire the physical energy I require from my students in performance, but by following these guiding principles I am hoping to help the students make their own connections between the concepts outlined above. Through rhythm they will discover movement; through dynamics, space; and through music, character**.**

Anyone who has studied music in any capacity can testify to the often strained relationship between movement and music. The performer experiences this when they bring a piece of music from the practice room to the stage and suddenly realizes they have never done anything other than sing their music standing still and staring at a wall; the choir director experiences this when they try to impress upon their singers the need for movement in the up-tempo gospel song at the end of the program; and the theatre director experiences this when they attempt to stage a chorus number and find themselves suddenly micro-managing every movement on stage to accomplish even a passing semblance of natural movement in accordance with music on stage.

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[5] Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Rhythm, Music and Education*, trans. Harold F. Rubinstein (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons,1976), 7.

It does not have to be this way, though. This problem persists because as children we are either not taught to feel rhythm in our bodies, or as adults we forget how to do so. It is only by flipping the students' perspectives on music to an expectation of fluid movement that this stagnant physicality can be abolished.

While adapting his educational method for use in British schools, Jaques-Dalcroze remarked,

> "Children are not taught to feel rhythm, but are merely told the signs that indicate it, the result being that the child becomes familiar with the effects of movement rather than with the movement itself. Children learn to classify and name the various divisions of time; they acquire no personal experience of these divisions."[6]

By bringing Dalcroze Eurhythmics into the classroom, music educators, vocal instructors and stage directors may overcome this dissonance between the rhythm seen and the rhythm felt. By integrating a student's body with their experience of music, they will have access to a wealth of new dramatic and musical choices that will enhance the experience for them, their instructor/director, and the audience. This will not come easily, though, as very few students will come into the classroom with this inclination already built into them. A teacher of Eurhythmics is fighting against long-established habits, and must infuse their teaching with a tenacity and persistence to match the deep-seated nature that they seek to undo.

Adaptations for an Older Audience

At face value, Eurhythmics and musical theatre seem to be uniquely suited to each other. Because of the innate physical nature of both Dalcroze's pedagogy and musical theatre they truly

[6] Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, *Eurhythmics, Art, and Education*, trans. Cynthia Cox (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972), 109.

are an auspicious fit, but some adaptations will need to be made in order to maximize their impact on the students. It is helpful to think of Dalcroze's methodology as an inherently introductory approach to teaching. He thought that students did their best when introductions to musical concepts came in the form of physiological experience, rather than technical instruction. For my purposes, though, this will not be an option as nearly all of the students will be coming into the room with preconceived notions of what music is. Additionally, many of the exercises devised for use in the classroom are directed towards a younger audience. The skills taught in these exercises may still be valuable to the high-school classroom, but I submit that a change in tone is needed to ensure the students feel comfortable performing these exercises. My adapted methodology, therefore, will have to take the preconceived notions of my students into account, while also being sure to present the information in a form appropriate to my audience that will not push my students out of their comfort zone too far or too quickly.

By the time students reach high-school, most have had opportunities to experience the way their voices function. Adolescence is a time marked by self-discovery and, unfortunately, a high level of self-consciousness. Students have decided what kind of a performer they are by this point, they have decided whether or not they are good singers or actors, good at memorizing, or any of the other myriad skills musical theatre calls for. Eurhythmics does not assume these judgements. The Dalcroze Society of America defines this sort of education as "a process for awakening, developing, and refining ***innate*** [emphasis mine] musicality through rhythmic movement (often called eurhythmics), ear-training, and improvisation."[7] The assumption Dalcroze education makes is that music originates from the human experience and that all

[7] "What Is Dalcroze?," *Dalcroze Society of America* (blog), accessed December 18, 2019, https://dalcrozeusa.org/about-dalcroze/what-is-dalcroze/.

humans have innate musicality that can be accessed. These are not the presumptions that many high-school students will already possess, but it is the job of the Dalcrozian teacher to instill that belief in them.

Many of the ideas Dalcroze espoused have not been widely adopted, but understanding them is instrumental in understanding the underlying method. Dalcroze advocated for many radical changes to the way we teach music, and in many ways only the most palatable have survived. One opinion that seems out of sync with music education today was his view on the talent of the student. According to Dalcroze, it was not only fruitless to try and teach those without a natural affinity for music, but actually harmful to the other students with that natural talent. In one of his regular articles where he described a faux-Socratic dialogue between himself and a recurring "Mr. So-and-So," he outlined his vision for a curriculum that correctly sorted out the "have's" from the "have-nots" in his music classroom. He described a curriculum in which students who are unable to match the expectations of the curriculum would be sequestered in a remedial class until they either caught up to the more gifted class or were removed from the music program altogether[8].

This proposal certainly feels radical in the context of modern music pedagogy, and it was controversial during its time, as well. But one does not need to look far to find examples of this philosophy in other school subjects. Anyone who has gone through the public school system in mathematics has had similar experiences to what Dalcroze recommended. The progressive difficulty in math classes is designed to give those without an affinity for math a basic introduction, and those with a natural affinity an experience working within complex systems by

[8] Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. *Rhythm, Music and Education*. Translated by Harold F. Rubinstein. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1976, 79.

the end of their education. This also regularly occurs in the language arts classroom in K-12 education. So why is a system of progressively culling the participants in a subject encouraged within some subjects but not within music?

Perhaps we can find answers within other views Dalcroze held on music. In many of his writings we see a great optimism for the powerful ways music can influence society. Dalcroze lived and worked through two world wars, and was constantly confronted with the turmoil that the world could no longer ignore. One of the projects that brought him the most acclaim throughout his career was his students' performance of *Orfeo* at Hellerau, an early garden city in Germany. A garden city was to be a utopian project in the vein of other garden cities, and *Orfeo* seemed to be a theatrical representation of these utopian aspirations. Theatrical and musical elite from all over the western world came to view his work at Hellerau, but like many utopian aspirations all of this was shattered by the coming of the Great War. To have this musical achievement stripped from him by the ferocity of war could have turned anyone into a cynic, but instead we see writings from Dalcroze late into his career arguing for the healing powers of music.

In a short article written after the end of World War I, titled "The Future of Music Education"[9], Dalcroze proposed his vision for music educators to come. Above all else, he advocated for an education that created good people first, and that without a strong moral grounding they: "....will never be other than a poor, worthless individual, incapable either of steering his own course through life or of contributing towards the development of the race."

[9] Jaques-Dalcroze, Émile. *Eurhythmics, Art, and Education*. Translated by Cynthia Cox. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972, 176.

Core to Dalcroze's Method, especially as it pertains to eurhythmics, is the concept of central human rhythms. Our bodies contain constant rhythms that keep us alive; without our heartbeat or our constant breathing we could not exist. This is a unifying element of human life that transcends national boundaries and those of creed or color. Dalcroze believed that these rhythms were the primordial essence from which music arose, and so by incorporating them into music we are training ourselves to tap into that which makes us human, and by doing it together we are breaking down the barriers that have been constructed to separate us. Dalcroze once said that "ugliness of movement dwells in the movement itself, not in ugliness of body"[10]. Dalcroze believed that there was music inside of all of us that could be released with proper instruction, and that no one was without capability to learn how to make that music. By developing this method, Dalcroze sought to heal what was broken in society, and his work persists today in no small part because of the strong moral center that he was careful to cultivate.

Dalcroze Method in the Voice Studio

Dalcroze saw his method as something to be applied within a group context. In his writings he describes the various ways that ideas of eurhythmics, solfège, and improvisation can be applied to music classes in order to produce more finely tuned musicians. But there are also myriad ways that this method has been applied by other teachers within the private voice studio. This section examines the writings of vocal teachers on their use of Dalcroze in their one-on-one instruction. Many of these teachers have had their own experiences in updating existing exercises in order to make them more suitable for older students, but in many cases this is not necessary.

[10] Ibid, 193.

The core tenets of eurythmics are a valuable application to a musician's education regardless of their age.

In a 1998 article by Dr. Jane E. Palmquist, titled "Dalcroze Instruction: It's Not Just for General Music Teachers," she makes the case for applying Dalcroze Method to her own private strings studio. Her writing is additionally useful to voice pedagogues because of the systematic way she applies Dalcroze Method to her discipline. Because much of the application of Dalcroze Method to the voice studio is an exercise in careful adaptation of existing teaching materials, a systematic approach to that adaptation is key in identifying what is core to the exercises versus what can be freely adapted. Dr. Palmquist outlines such a process by citing the work of two prominent teachers of Dalcroze Method, Claire-Lise Dutoit and Virginia Mead.

Claire-Lise Dutoit is primarily known as a French teacher of Dalcroze Method. She published her book, *Music, Movement, Therapy*, in 1965, an oft cited text that Dr. Palmquist pulls from here to make clear three characteristics of a good Dalcroze lesson[11]:

> "[1] the vital enjoyment of rhythmic movement and the confidence that it gives; [2] the ability to hear, understand, and express music in movement; [3] and the call made on the pupil to improvise and develop freely his or her own ideas."

Dr. Palmquist goes on to cite the thoughts of Virginia Mead, author of *Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Today's Music Classroom*, a text dealing with the adaptation of Dalcroze Method to the music classroom. Professor Mead was one of the foremost Dalcroze educators of the twentieth century, and can be considered the foremost authority on adaptation of existing

[11] Jane Palmquist, "Dalcroze Instruction: It's Not Just for General Music Teachers," *American String Teacher* 48, no. 1 (1998): 59.

Dalcroze materials to fit the modern teacher's needs[12]. Mead advocates for the inclusion of three key elements:

> "[1] ear training and solfège, to develop the inner ear to hear and listen acutely; [2] eurhythmics, to train the body to feel the muscular sensations of time and energy as they are manifest in space; [3] and improvisation, to give students opportunity to express consciously, and with their own freedom of imagination, what they hear, feel and understand."

There are a few common themes in these two citations. The idea of proper application of Dalcroze Method is founded in student experience-- after all, Dalcroze developed his method as a reaction to the deficits he perceived in his conservatory students, deficits that he attached to the students' understanding music not through experience but through an academic and abstract inculcation. Core to the Dalcroze Method is the idea of students learning through their bodily experience, and these tenets proposed by Mead and Dutoit reinforce this idea. Mead supplies us with an echo of the three pillars of the Dalcroze Method that Dalcroze originally advocated, while Dutoit envisions the ideal end-results that the teacher and student should aspire towards. By synthesizing these ideas, we can start to imagine the pillars of Dalcroze Method not only as a starting place, but as clear paths which lead to student participatory experiences. This means that solfège is not merely a way to introduce students to melodic and harmonic ideas, but, also, a means to sharpen their listening skills so that they can feel and perform music more fully. Improvisation is not a simple mechanical exercise, but a way for students to develop a freedom

[12] Bill Bauer, "Remembering Virginia Hoge Mead," *Dalcroze Society of America* (blog), April 21, 2020, https://dalcrozeusa.org/remembering-virginia-hoge-mead/.

of expression that becomes part of every other musical experience they have. Eurhythmics, music through movement, by Dutoit's description is performing a vital role in the student's musical experience, and cannot be understated.

Dr. Palmquist's juxtaposition of these two practitioners of Dalcroze Method provides a powerful touchstone for the adaptation of existing exercises into new contexts. So long as these principles are upheld, the underlying methodology of adapted exercises should be sound. This is especially relevant for application of Dalcroze Method to high-school performers as so much of existing literature exists for those younger than high school age.

The History of Dalcroze Method on Stage

Directors and instructors will find that much of their attention will be focused on the stage. In a 2012 study by the Education Theatre Association and Utah State University, a survey of public schools showed a sharp increase in the availability of theatre programs, both within the curriculum and in the form of after-school programs[13]. This availability shows high student demand for such programs, and this means that if one is teaching students in one's private voice studio, there is a good chance those students may seek to take advantage of the strides they make in vocal lessons in their group performance environment. Additionally, the study showed that these extracurricular theatre positions typically hire directors based on perceived capability, rather than specific degree requirements[14]. If one is passionate about teaching performers as well as singers, then theatre offers an excellent opportunity, both as a creative outlet and a source of income.

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[13] Matt Omasta, "A Survey of School Theatre," *Teaching Theatre* 24, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 10.
[14] Ibid, 18.

The Dalcroze Method has much to offer to this field as well, and in fact there is precedent for Jacques-Dalcroze using his method in order to further theatrical ventures. This section will examine some of the writings on the use of Dalcroze Method within the theatrical side of performance. By integrating this method in both the private studio and on the stage, there is an opportunity to create a physical vocabulary for one's students that can be used across disciplines, resulting in well-rounded performers and people.

Émile Jaques-Dalcroze considered himself a dramatic man, and had originally planned to become an actor[15]. It was only due to his failures to be accepted to a suitable theatre school that he ended up pursuing music. However, this early interest in theatre provided him with the strong physical sense that he would carry over to his pedagogical theories. Dalcroze had many opinions on theatre productions of the time (mostly negative), but it took him quite a while to mount a full production with the use of his method. His first full production, and the most high-profile work he would do during his career, came during his time at Hellerau.

Hellerau was the first German Garden City built by Karl Schmidt in 1909[16]. Garden cities were an early modernist idea for a city of utopian design, crafted to supply its community with a curated and improved urban lifestyle. As part of the design for this garden city, Schmidt wanted to attract artists to produce in his population artistic sentiment. He had heard of Jacque-Dalcroze's method over the past decade and invited him to stay in Hellerau and oversee musical ventures in the city. It was during this time, in 1913, that Dalcroze produced a grand performance of *Orfeo ed Euridice* by Christoph Willibald von Gluck.

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[15] James W. Lee, "Dalcroze by Any Other Name: Eurhythmics in Early Modern Theatre and Dance," August 2003, https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/handle/2346/15905, 94.
[16] "History of Hellerau," hellerau, accessed June 23, 2020, https://www.hellerau.org/en/history/.

The production was an adaptation of the original work, with a few minor alterations, and is described in great detail in James W. Lee's dissertation: *Dalcroze by Any Other Name*. A short summary of his description is given here, in order to highlight key steps that were taken in the original application of Dalcroze Method to the stage.

Dalcroze took a surprising number of opportunities to rework the orchestration and ordering of musical moments in order to emphasize rhythmic aspects of the work. This resulted in a performance that had little historical integrity, but a strong rhythmic center that captivated audiences[17]. The bold decision for the time to place the audience on the same plane as the performers was made in order to bring the audience into the performance. If the kinesthetic experience of rhythm is core to the theory of Dalcroze Method, then a performance meant to portray that to an audience should do as much as possible to bring these rhythmic sensations across the audience/performer barrier. Instead of scenery, lighting and leveled platforms or stairs were used to create a sense of place. The lighting design was created by the great stage-artist, Adolph Appia[18], who was quite taken with Dalcroze's work and sought to collaborate with him whenever possible. Again, the barrier between audience and performers was blurred as lighting was not contained simply to the performance space, but instead was used to totally embrace the room at certain points of the opera. The character of Amor was played from offstage, and its presence in the scene was represented by intensely bright lights that pulsed with the music, meant to give the impression of blinding love on stage. When the chorus arrived on stage, they performed a physical interpretation of the music being sung in the opening lament. Later, when this lament is remembered, characters echo the movements found in this chorus.

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[17] Lee, "Dalcroze by Any Other Name", 136.
[18] Ibid, 137.

This idea of a physical echo, created by one character (or group of characters), and passed on to another is especially enticing. In Caldwell's, *Expressive Singing*, *Dalcroze Eurhythmics for Voice*, he emphasizes the key aspect that repetition and expectation plays in expressive singing and performance. Clever composers and performers subvert musical patterns to create tension against expectations, producing a compelling performance for an audience. Adding an extra level of physical vocabulary, explored through Dalcroze Method, the performer creates possibilities for further subversion of expectations. Even more so, as this level of physical interpretation is not the norm on stage. If the expectation for a character is to emote from their own personal physical vocabulary of gesture, and they suddenly incorporate an element that has been introduced by another character, the audience instinctively attaches that memory of the movement to its new usage. This allows for new avenues of expressivity to be explored and shared by the performers and directors.

This production garnered international attention and attracted the attendance of such famous artists as Sergei Rachmaninoff, George Bernhard Shaw, Upton Sinclair, and Constantin Stanislavski[19], to name a few. It was an unmitigated success, and the impact it had on the theatrical, musical, and artistic spheres of early twentieth century Europe cannot be understated.

The attendance of Stanislavski at this performance is especially significant. There has been an air of conjecture surrounding how taken Stanislavski actually was with the Dalcroze Method, but recent translations of letters sent by him and curriculum from his school have shown that Dalcroze Eurhythmics classes were soon added to the curriculum of his theatre school. He

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[19] Tamara Levitz, "In the Footsteps of Eurydice: Gluck's *Orpheus Und Eurydice* in Hellerau 1913," *Echo: A Music-Centered Journal* 15, no. 1 (2019), http://www.echo.ucla.edu/article-in-the-footsteps-of-eurydice-glucks-orpheus-und-eurydice-in-hellerau-1913-by-tamara-levitz/.

had sought out a school in Dresden for its Dalcroze classes, and then took the curriculum he observed and applied it to his own school. This implies a great amount of belief that one of the foremost minds in theatre placed in Dalcroze's work.

Collections of Exercises

Dalcroze and most practitioners of his method advocate for devising one's own exercises when practicing eurhythmics. That said, many collections of exercises are available for classroom use. These foundational texts serve teachers seeking to develop their own use of Dalcroze Method in their private voice studio, classroom, and personal performance. Most of these resources can be categorized by a specific audience. While most resources are directed towards grade school teachers, and although their material may be constructed with younger minds than high school students, the foundational elements of the exercises are sound.

A useful collection of exercises for use with high-school students is found within the second section of J. Timothy Caldwell's *Expressive Singing*. Caldwell first goes through a series of introductory exercises that each address a different element of what he calls, "The Dalcroze Equation[20]". These elements are space, time, energy, weight, balance, plasticity, and gravity. He took these elements from Dalcroze's original writings, and stated that when they are in balance with each other, *eurhythmia* will be achieved. Caldwell defines this state of *eurhythmia* by breaking it into its Greek roots, *eu* and *rhythm*, meaning good and flow respectively. This state of *eurhythmia* is the target of Dalcroze Method.

[20] Caldwell, *Expressive Singing*, 21.

In this introductory chapter, Caldwell outlines a curriculum of basic exercises meant to draw the attention of students to these elemental aspects of rhythm. Once these elements have been identified, students can experiment with different combinations to facilitate a feeling of musical integration.

One such activity introduces the concepts of *crusis*, *metacrusis*, and *anacrusis*[21].

- *Crusis* comes from the Greek word meaning strike. He models this concept by having the student(s) mime the swing of a baseball bat. The moment the ball comes in contact with the bat we experience *crusis*.
- *Anacrusis* refers to the time before the strike. He highlights this concept by pointing out the wind-up to the swing carries forward its own unique energy.
- *Metacrusis* refers to the time after the strike. Finally, in the recovery period after the swing the batter comes to a state of *anacrusis*, or the moments after the strike.

This simple exercise is rich with material for discussing how music works, and it arrives at these lessons in a purely experiential way. Caldwell goes on to explain that in a musical phrase there exist high points and low points. The highest point of the phrase marks the point of *crusis*, where the wind up arrives at an explosive point of energy that punctuates the entire musical moment. Surrounding this climax of the phrase is music that either anticipates that striking point or reacts to it. Caldwell has the students repeat the exercise, and note that the moments of *metacrusis* and *anacrusis* directly reflect the amount of force delivered at the point of *crusis*. When a performer reaches high school most are well equipped but ill-prepared to start thinking about musical

[21] Ibid, 32.

phrasing. However, this exercise gives them a concrete experience to feel the functions of these abstract ideas.

In a eurhythmics classroom, the act of pursuing this state of *eurhythmia* is the entire focus of each session. However, instructors/directors may find it difficult to gather high-schoolers around such a singular goal. Today, as a teacher in the arts, one is most likely to have time working with high-school performers either on the stage in the setting of a play or musical, or in the private voice studio. In both of these settings, *eurhythmia* can be seen as more of a means to end. Regardless, in this pursuit of *eurhythmia* students become more expressive, vibrant performers. Caldwell recognizes this well, (hence the title of his book), and caters to this need by moving on to more complicated lessons in the following chapter, "Understanding Movement Through Kinesthetics".

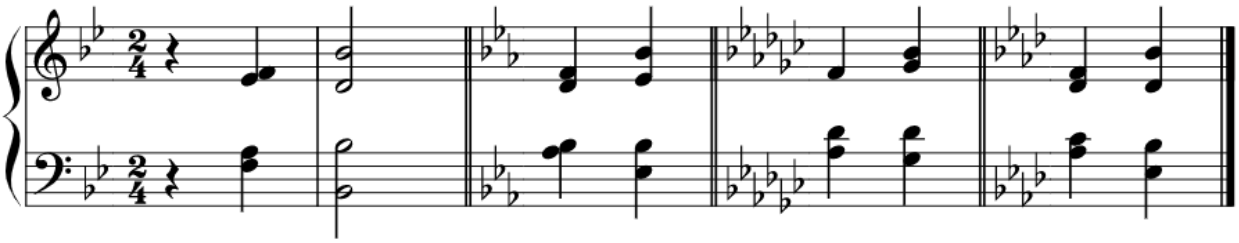
Here, Caldwell takes focus away from the individual and centers it within group activities. These activities range in number of participants between two, (i.e. teacher and student), and a full classroom size. Paradoxically, as the size of the group grows, the complexity of the activities diminishes. A group format is a core aspect of the Dalcroze Method (Dalcroze conducted all of his classes in groups) and could be easy to neglect within the voice studio. Prescribed activities can often feel intimidating for students, as suddenly they are "trapped in the spotlight," and are expected to add a physical aspect to their performance in addition to the musical aspects already required. Dalcroze did not want these activities to feel tedious, though; he wanted an element of play to be ever present. Caldwell's group activities promote play and encourage students to interact with each other and their teacher, providing effective outlets for individual creativity. Each exercise calls on the student to practice a plasticity of movement and

flexibility of temperament; the end goals of what Dalcroze demanded of his method: the essence of *eurhythmia*.

Exercises specified for teacher assistance will provide the more difficult aspects of Dalcroze Method. They call on the student to be ready to switch between rhythmic improvisation, melodic improvisation, verbal improvisation, and more upon a moment's notice from the teacher. The student achieves success when they feel as though they are improvising even though they read music from the page. These exercises are a true test of the improvisational skills of the student and teacher. Of the three skills Dalcroze seeks to address through his method, improvisation seems to be the most neglected skill in American schools today and students seem to struggle with these exercises the most.

In the final chapter of this section, "Rhythmic Solfège," Caldwell addresses the integration of solfège into the voice studio. Solfège is the third pillar of Dalcroze method. It is the element most students may be familiar with, for this is the one that has been most fully integrated into the American education system. Dalcroze proposed that the core human element of music is rhythm, but even he would have to concede that pitch plays a heavy role in the whole affair as well. Solfège is a systematic approach to teaching the element and context of pitch. Dalcroze's use of rhythmic solfège enables the teacher to seamlessly integrate eurhythmic elements with elements of pitch.

Caldwell is careful to differentiate the rhythmic solfège used within Dalcroze Method and the standard, Germanic influenced solfège most Americans and Europeans are taught in school. He outlines this difference with a short and clear example that is easily explained to students.



In this example[22], he illustrates how the interval of a perfect fourth is received differently by our brain depending on the harmonic context. Singing an ascending fourth interval while playing different harmonies underneath, the student begins to understand that not all intervals should be sung the same even if they are spelled the same, because from a listener's perspective they will be perceived differently. This belief in a more nuanced harmonic language provides context for his staunch support of solfège. The next step adds the rhythmic elements that make up rhythmic solfège.

Rhythmic Solfège

In these examples, Caldwell directs the teacher to assign different durations of pitch to a major scale and have the singer perform it. ("Perform" is used rather than recite, because the intention here is for the student to understand that even in such a simple exercise, rhythm provides character to music.) A major scale that supplies the tonic with a triumphant half note at the height of a phrase has a far different character than one that relegates this important pitch to a tossed off eighth note in the middle of a phrase. The lesson Caldwell is attempting to teach here is that pitch itself has strong character when supplied with rhythm. By having this discussion using only simple solfège and major scales, the student is able to make secure cognitive connections to expressive ideas that they can later apply in their performance repertoire. At this

[22] Timothy J. Caldwell. *Expressive Singing: Dalcroze Eurhythmics for Voice*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1995, 58.

time in a student's artistic development, they are looking for such indicators that will allow them to exert a bit of control over the way they perform in public, and rhythmic solfège provides an excellent means to facilitate expressive performance.

Caldwell provides the most comprehensive primer for teachers of high-school performers seeking to apply Dalcroze Method to their teaching. Many other resources exist for the application of Dalcroze Method to younger students, particularly for elementary school age. Co-founder of the Institute for Jacques-Dalcroze Education, Monica Dale, has organized many exercises for these younger students in her series, "Eurhythmics for Young Children". In a series of three books, she presents seasonally-themed activities meant to capture the imagination and creative energies of children. They provide highly detailed templates to structure a class with the integration of eurhythmics. Each activity targets a specific musical skill, with different levels of coordination required at each stage of the class. At the beginning of the activity, students need only to do simple tasks such as walking around the space according to the beat of music played by the teacher. By the end of the class periods, though, students are challenged to perform complex tasks including physical integration of polyrhythms, improvisation, and applied use of solfège-- all three pillars of Dalcroze Method in a single class, and for elementary school students, no less!

In each example, Dale emphasizes the ritualistic aspects of the class. Each meeting begins in a circle sitting on the floor, where rhythmic concepts are introduced in the form of a game-like activity using just the students' hands. Once these concepts have been established, such as a triple or duple rhythm, she asks the students to get on their feet and introduces a fictional or storytelling element. In one exercise, snowmen represent duple rhythms, and

gingerbread men represent triplets. One example shows a set of three different melodic figures for piano that emphasize the rhythmic elements addressed in the class. She selects an example at random and the students must react to the music by portraying the correct character. She tries out these rhythms with the class as a whole, then splits them into smaller groups. Each student fully experiences these rhythms while also being engaged in play, an important factor for Dalcroze. Each class concludes with some element of performance where the students take the characters they have experimented with so far and develop some sort of narrative to contain these ideas. This is classic Dalcroze Method, where musical knowledge is inculcated not simply through dictation but through experience. It also conveys the idea that music has inherent character which should always be a part of performance.

Dale does an excellent job outlining this lesson for younger schoolchildren, but what about for high-schoolers? It is difficult to imagine the willingness of high-school students to roll around on the floor and pretend to be snowmen, but this does not mean that resources such as this have no place on the shelf of the high-school voice teacher seeking to integrate eurhythmics into their teaching. The most striking element about the way Dale organizes lessons is the thematic elements at play. Each activity is firmly rooted within a fiction that the teacher and students are constructing together. This theme is based upon the importance of shared experiences, and turns the very act of making music into an exercise in storytelling.

This storytelling, then, has clear applications for a theatrical rehearsal, as the characters come provided in the material for the instructor. In a competently composed musical, these rhythmic elements, too, will already exist within the world of its narrative. It is up to the teacher to simply make the students aware of them.

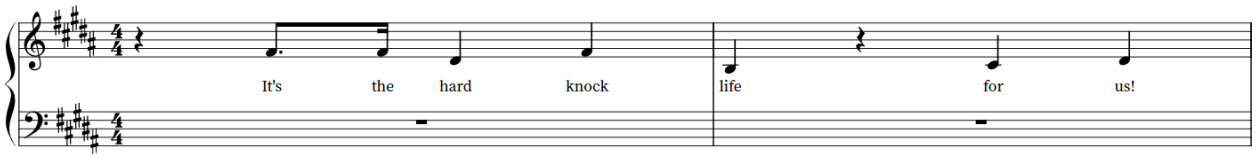
An Example from a Rehearsal of *Annie*:

Annie, the classic musical by Charles Strouse and Thomas Meehan, contains many such characters and elements. Taking one of Monica Dale's lesson plans as an example, I have updated it to fit with a high school musical rehearsal of *Annie*. I have selected the song, "Hard-Knock Life," as an example as it showcases a few strong rhythmic motifs and clear character. In this song, the orphans take a sardonic stance on their lot in life as they are tasked with cleaning the orphanage as punishment by their abusive caretaker, Miss Hannigan. Throughout the song, they show that they are still children underneath all the hardships they face. Their playful spirit is shown often through the rhythmic ideas that this class will seek to bring to the forefront.

Warm-Up

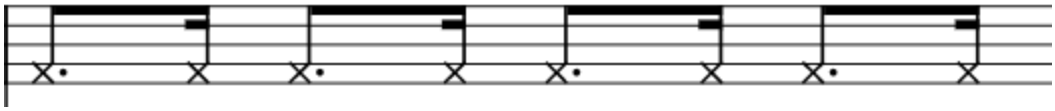
Dale begins each lesson with a warm-up, which fits well into the structure of a typical musical rehearsal. High-school students have so many distracting influences in their lives, and a warm-up that focuses their brains and bodies and brings them "into the space" is key. Dale tries to attach the warm-up to whatever rhythmic motifs will be examined during class that day. So in this example, the cast will experience two contrasting rhythmic ideas.

Example 1:



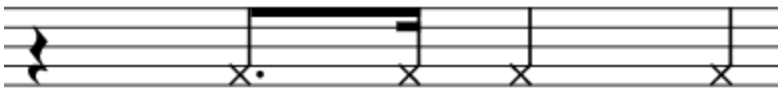
Looking at the opening phrase we identify a few key rhythmic ideas. In the first measure there is a contrast between long-short rhythms and straight quarter note rhythms. This is a common theme throughout the song, so it makes sense to incorporate it into a warm-up idea. There is a rest on beat two of the second measure of the vocal line creating rhythmic tension, so this can be incorporated as well. In a lesson making use of the eurhythmics pillar of the Dalcroze Method, we are seeking to draw student attention to the rhythmic aspects of the music, so these simple elements will suffice. Dale starts each lesson as simply as possible, so here we will only incorporate voice and hands.

Ask the students to stand in a circle and have them copy you. A common theatre game consists of having one student be the leader and initiate a pattern, and having everyone else in the circle copy them. This is similar to that. Start with the long-short rhythm, tap the floor of the stage with your fingers in a long-short rhythm that is light and playful.



Now add in the strong quarter notes in random places by hitting the floor with the bottom of your fist, keeping the exercise in repetitions of 4/4 measures so the students have time to react and understand the pattern. For this rhythm have the students slap the floor with an open hand. This exercise may seem simple, and that is because it is designed to be. This learning experience immediately brings the students into a music-making mindset with a failure-free method that allows the students to feel comfortable to create from the beginning of rehearsal.

Now to add in the rests, for this have the students do a sharp intake of breath in rhythm with the rest.



From here, it is fairly easy to iterate the process. Mix and match the different rhythmic ideas throughout the measure and then pass the leader role onto one of the students and have them take charge of the group. Once it seems the exercise has run its course, move on to the next section.

Adding Movement

Now that the rhythmic ideas are established, character motivated movements can attach to these rhythmic ideas. It is important to remember that the specific connections that the teacher and students draw to each rhythmic idea is less important than the actual process itself. When students begin to see musical ideas as opportunities for expression, you have succeeded as a teacher.

- Long-short rhythm: I want to emphasize the playful aspect of the children in this song. Perhaps this is how the children behave when Miss Hannigan is out of the room. Have the students gallop around to the rhythm as you accompany them either on whatever instrument you have at your disposal. Emphasize that this is an improvisation activity as much as it is a musical one, and that they should feel encouraged to try and develop their playful child characters during this time.

- Straight quarter notes: I want to emphasize the indignant side of a punished child. They will do as they are asked, but they will stomp the whole way there. Have the students stomp their way across the stage as they begrudgingly go through the motions of their chores. Emphasize that this is a different side of the playful orphans from before, but it is still the same character.
- Rests: I want to create a point where the contrast between the two previously identified rhythmic ideas exchange places. This can be achieved by children stopping and gasping as they get caught in the act of play. Start with the playful, long-short rhythm and tell the students that when they hear the music stop, they should stop and gasp before continuing back to play as the beat/music resumes. One of the motivations for this movement could be Miss Hannigan's movements.

At this point, time can be spent on mixing and matching these rhythms, preferably with the only direction being from the instrument played by the teacher. The intention is to create subconscious associations with different rhythmic ideas that are experienced internally by the student when the auditory stimulus is heard. Encourage the students to make their own observations on the character of the rhythm and try to bring those ideas into the exercise as well. This should feel like a collaborative and playful exploration, not like a typical rehearsal that needs to produce a finished product by the end of a two hour period.

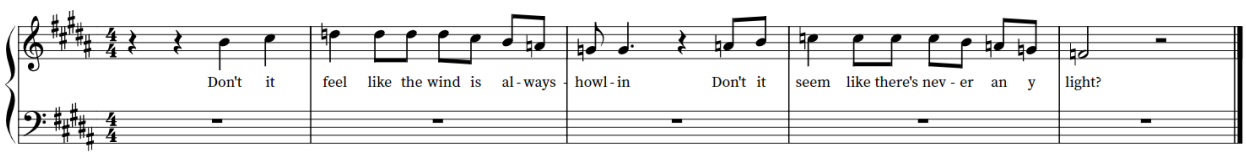
Applying it to the music

It is only at this point that Dale starts showing her students notation on paper. Before this point, all the musical ideas have been taught orally with assistance of physical components. For

our musical rehearsal, then, it makes sense for this to be the point at which we learn the score. This upends the classic, musical rehearsal format of learning music in a separate space before bringing it to the theatre for staging, but by doing so it focuses the students on a search for rhythmic significance and creativity. After focusing the students' attention, it is time to learn the music. Extra attention should be paid towards rhythmic accuracy as, from my personal experience, it is easy for rhythmic patterns to lack energy during a music learning rehearsal, to which I attribute the lack of focus given to the accuracy of these rhythms. Oftentimes, the struggle for young students at this level is not a matter of having the capability to focus their abilities, but being unsure of what to focus their attention on. With eurhythmics, the target of their attention is clear and provides the young singer with a clear outlet for where the most useful improvement can be made in the vocal rehearsal.

When it is time for choreography, it is important that the musical director and the choreographer be on the same page when it comes to these rhythmic elements. Whenever one of the three rhythmic elements identified in the warm-up appear, there should be some unifying element to the movement enacted in that moment. Sections like what is seen in Example 1 (p.29) contain all of these rhythmic ideas, and should emphasize the contrast between them. This can be achieved by aggressive, sharp and small movements. Contrasting sections as seen in example two should emphasize a different kind of movement. For example, here, in Example 2, we see a more legato line than is present in the A section of the song.

Example 2



A continuous physical movement could accentuate this connected, legato quality. It will present a rhythmic idea that was not present in the warmup, but now that the students have started building their rhythmic vocabulary it provides a great opportunity for a discussion about how this rhythm can be interpreted by the performer. If uneven rhythms present a more playful character and strong sharp rhythms present the more rebellious side, then the question becomes how to fit this new idea next to that which has already been established. The resulting answer is unimportant, but the process of turning one's students into rhythmic sleuths, intent on discovering the meaning that lies behind each rhythm in a song, will at the very least produce more focused and alert performers.

Conclusions

The Dalcroze Method has been applied in myriad ways over the past one hundred years and deserves to see continued application throughout the next century. It can have special significance in the development of high-school performers because of its ability to focus the student on the movement of their bodies and the musical expression that exists and springs forth from it. Through the application of Dalcroze Method on stage and in the private voice studio, there is the opportunity for student and teacher to develop a rhythmic vocabulary that allows for far greater levels of expressivity than simple rote dictation of musical ideas. Though much of the existing literature for application of Dalcroze Method is directed towards elementary school music education, not much effort needs to be exerted in order to apply the principles contained therein to older performers. The Dalcroze Method is solid and its continued application is something from which many high-school students and their teachers would benefit.

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