



"The aim of eurhythmics is to enable pupils at the end of their courses to say, not 'I know', but 'I have experienced.'" –E. Jaques-Dalcroze.

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Through the Eyes of Canadian Musicians: The 34th International Congress Of Eurhythmics



(After the performance of *Corps d'horizons*, from left : Louise Mathieu, Marie-Claude Dumoulin, Marjorie Maltais, Thomas Hodgson, and Jean-Philippe Lavoie from Faculté de Musique de l'Université Laval)

This past July the 34th International Congress of Dalcroze Eurhythmics took place at l'Institut Jaques-Dalcroze in Geneva, Switzerland; this event happens every four years. It was exciting to meet teachers and colleagues from around the world. Each day we enjoyed three classes, a mixture of mini sessions, lectures, and demonstrations. Every evening (except one night) training institutes from different countries presented concerts featuring movement improvisation, choreography, plastique animée, and

instrumental ensembles. The course offering covered a wide range of subjects. It was an enticing list and some titles were: Eurhythmics and Solfège for Professional Music School, Improvisation Pedagogy, Eurhythmics for Senior Citizens, Eurhythmics for Young Children, Dalcroze Solfège, Choreography, Creation of Eurhythmics Exercises, and so forth. Some Canadian musicians who attended share their experience in the following articles.

|La Rythmique Jaques-Dalcroze au Service du Musicien

-JEAN-PHILIPPE LAVOIE

J'ai eu la chance de participer au 34^e Congrès International de la Rythmique. Les rencontres nombreuses entre élèves et professeurs de divers pays qu'a suscitées l'événement valaient le détour. En effet, un enseignement chaleureux de qualité nous a été prodigué pendant cinq jours inoubliables. D'abord, je suis d'avis que les cours de mouvement de Mme Gaby Malher nous donnaient d'excellentes pistes de travail pour favoriser une meilleure conscience corporelle qui est essentielle au musicien selon moi. Son travail était tout en progression et surtout axé sur l'ouverture du corps, sur la conscience des assises et sur la légèreté du mouvement. À travers des exercices originaux sur des musiques des plus variées, elle nous menait vers l'improvisation corporelle d'une manière naturelle et fluide.

Ensuite, les cours de rythmique de Mme Karen Greenhead étaient, eux-aussi, forts passionnants. Son exposé a touché le musicien en quête de sens que je suis. Le travail effectué avait pour but de nous faire réaliser l'importance du mouvement pour le développement du sens du phrasé. Les divers exercices, soit dans l'espace, avec un objet ou avec un ou plusieurs collègues, s'enchaînaient d'une manière logique et sentie. Il s'agissait, en résumé, de bien comprendre les facteurs temps, espace et énergie. C'est sans doute les deux professeurs qui m'ont le plus marqué.

J'ai également apprécié l'intervention de Kurt Dreyer lors de la seule de ses leçons à laquelle j'ai pu assister. Il nous a fait comprendre, d'une manière simple, l'importance de rester égal à nous même avec la présence ou l'absence de l'auditoire. De savoir demeurer authentique sur scène comme on l'est dans la salle ou dans la rue ou dans nos occupations quotidiennes.

Puis, du point de vue social, le congrès était l'endroit idéal pour échanger avec des gens d'un peu partout. Pour ma part, j'ai surtout côtoyé des personnes de la Suisse, de

l'Espagne, des U.S.A. et du Canada. Enfin, j'ai beaucoup apprécié le fait de présenter un spectacle là-bas avec trois de mes collègues. En tout et partout, une expérience enrichissante à revivre.

Jean-Philippe Lavoie has just completed a Bachelor of Music at Université Laval, where he will soon pursue a Master's in Instrumental Teaching in the fall of 2007. While flute is his main instrument, he also likes to explore with the recorder and the human voice. His passion for sacred music has brought him to take part in many projects in the diocese of Québec. Through the practice of Eurhythmics, Mr. Lavoie has learned to include movement as a natural part of his instrumental and pedagogical undertakings.

|Ma Participation au 34^{ème} Congrès International de Rythmique

-MARJORIE MALTAIS

Ma participation au 34^{ème} congrès international de rythmique a été une expérience très enrichissante tant sur le plan humain que musical. À travers ce congrès, j'ai eu la possibilité d'explorer différentes méthodes d'enseignement de la rythmique. Certains professeurs l'intégrait à l'improvisation, d'autres à l'expression corporelle ou à l'écoute. C'est d'ailleurs, à mon avis, ce qui rend la rythmique si accessible et intéressante : la possibilité de l'adapter à plusieurs facettes de la musique et de la danse.

J'ai également pu faire plusieurs rencontres avec des gens de plusieurs pays tels : la Pologne, la Thaïlande, la France, la Suisse, les Etats-Unis, etc. Tous ces gens étaient évidemment rassemblés pour une seule et unique raison : partager avec différents professeurs et étudiants leur propre conception de la rythmique. Par ailleurs, le congrès était très bien structuré. Tout d'abord, durant la journée, nous assistions à différents cours avec des enseignants passionnés. Par la suite, en soirée, nous avions la possibilité, à travers des soirées spectacles, d'observer le travaille d'autres écoles de rythmique. Mes collègues et moi avons d'ailleurs participé à l'une de ces soirées en présentant quatre pièces bien distinctes. Bref, ce séjour à

Genève fut une expérience inoubliable que je souhaite répéter dans le futur.

Marjorie Maltais, a mezzo-soprano from Charlevoix, has been studying classical singing under the guidance of Mr. Sylvain Landry for five years. She is also taking courses in musical culture at Laval University. Very active in the musical scene of her region, she has sung among others, the role of Fritzen in Offenbach's *Conversation Alsacienne*. Lately Ms. Maltais has sung opera and musical excerpts in *Domaine Forget*. She has also recently made her way to the final of the 2007 Canadian Music Competition.

|Memorable Moments at the Congress BY CHENG-FENG LIN

This is a brief journal of some daily snapshots during the congress, and I would like to share it with you.

Day 1: Karin Greenhead from England led the class "Eurhythmics for Professional Musicians." She has worked extensively with advance musicians, particularly string players, using principles of Dalcroze to help them perform with an embodied understanding. In this session, she explored ways for professional musicians to become more engaged with their bodies and their surroundings, and to become more attuned to ways of applying time/space/energy factors to enhance their solo or ensemble performances. Some meaningful questions arose concerning the direction and the energy of a phrase: where it came from and where it would lead to in a piece of music. Musical issues relating to harmony, cadence, energy and length of phrases were explored through sensitive listening and movement.

Day 2: In the evening performance, four students of Louise Mathieu from Laval University in Québec presented a mixture of *plastique animée* and *improvisation corporelle* works. They interpreted J. S. Bach's *Two-Part Invention No. 6* with a clear spatial representation to the contrapuntal writing. For the *improvisation corporelle*, they moved to the *Prelude from Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4* by Villa-Lobos. On the contemporary side, the students delivered

a compelling performance of Bjork's *Where's the Line* and Ernst Toch's *Geographical Fugue*. The performers from Québec had a wide range of movement vocabulary which enabled them to effectively express the contrast in the nuances and the dynamic energy of the four different styles of music. They moved naturally and simply, as if the movement was flowing from an organic interior within their bodies. It intrigued me. The next day we had a lovely picnic in a park looking over Lake Geneva, and I asked them about the rehearsal process in particular to *improvisation corporelle* to Villa-Lobos' work. Since it was a movement improvisation, they had only decided the beginning position—the rest varied from time to time. They rehearsed by improvising together to develop a sense of ensemble. The four humbly claimed that although they were not in a full time Dalcroze program, this work has been central to their training in Laval. This experience has enriched their understanding in music and in performing their instruments.

Day 3: Piano improvisation class with Anne Farber kept me on the edge of the seat, as always. But not for long; we were soon all up and moving for the person who was improvising at the piano. In this situation, the movers gave revealing comments on how it feels to move with the pianist's improvisation. This is a great advantage that one can not experience alone with a piano at home. For the pianist who improvised and watched the class simultaneously, there was instant feedback on how the students moved. This allowed musical adjustments to be made as the improvisation continued. We whipped through the basics by playing for locomotor sequences and playing for traditional Dalcroze activities, such as *follow*, *quick reaction*, *canon*, *lead the mover*, and *follow the mover*. It was fascinating to listen to a variety of styles and approaches of playing, and that opened up some new possibilities for me.

Day 4: Word soon started spreading about Mme. Christiane Montandon's Classical Improvisation session. I decided I must take part. Mme. Montandon remembered Donald Himes—the coordinator of RCM eurhythmics

program—fondly, as a student of hers some decades ago. The session was an artistic experience from start to finish. She had a way of getting everyone in the class involved as she worked with one student at a time from the piano. The rest of us would either be inventing a rhythmic phrase via singing or clapping for the pianist, or one of us would be invited to the second piano to improvise the duet part. Her ideas were endless—using a simple melody, we turned it into a march, a minuet with a walking bass line, or a waltz. (If only our fingers could keep up with the quickness of her imagination...) She asked me to improvise a melody by singing it first. So I sang. Then I taught it to the class. Soon the whole class was singing and painting the melodic shape with their hands. Then she announced that, I was in E-flat minor (she has perfect pitch). So we carried on and accompanied the melody, as another person came up to dictate it on the board. The whole process, for me, and for other people who participated, felt completely musical. There was a sense of co-creation and collaboration together. We discussed what we enjoyed and how we would like to modify a motif or an accompaniment. I felt like I was in an improvisation laboratory.

Day 5: I experienced something neat at Sylvie Morgenegg's eurhythmics class today: It was about the use of the gaze and how it related to and initiated our movement with the eyes. One of the ways we explored this was by initiating our movement from our eyes. From the focus of our gaze, we decided a point of destination for traveling in the room, and off we went towards it.

Day 6: I arrived at a wrong classroom and it could not have been any better. I was among dancers. We each found a partner and vocalized for each others' movement improvisation. It was not my first time doing this, but it still felt absolutely wild and fun. Although it was movement improvisation, some general esthetic principles still applied here. We were asked to be attentive in following to guidelines such as the use and development of a motif, the space/energy factors in movement, repetition of ideas,

being conscious of form, artful use of silence and stillness, and so forth. We also discussed what effective leadership entails in a voice/movement collaboration such as this. I paired up with a dancer from Spain, and we had enjoyed collaborating with each other. Although we could barely communicate linguistically, we had languages of music and movement in common.

Day 7: After that unforgettable experience yesterday, I stayed in the eurhythmics class for dancers. It was taught through a similar process as the previous session—but we improvised a voice/movement piece in a group of 3 or 4 people. After each group presented to the class, we did it again with a twist. Now the presenting group supplied only movement and four volunteers from class vocalize for the movers. At one point, the leadership would shift; the voice then led the movers. However, there was often a moment when the audience could no longer distinguish who the leaders were—the leaders and the followers had melted into one musical organism, co-creating this instant composition.

Day 8: Experiencing exercises in a Dalcroze class can feel like assembling pieces of musical puzzles at times. It is not until the end when everything makes sense. Sylvia Del Bianco, a teacher from the institute, constructed a class in this manner. Taking various rhythmic, harmonic, textural, and phrasing elements from a composition, we explored activities that led us to appreciate and analyze a piece of music. In today's case, we arrived at Robert Schumann's Dichterliebe No. 10 'Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen'. At the height of the class, we sang and moved to various aspects of the song. From this process, I felt my entire being in both spirit and muscular sensation united with Schumann's music while I was moving. The analysis had transcended the intellectual—my body was saturated with and had lived the song in both time and space.

Day 9: I joined Louise Mathieu's improvisation class. It was about playing for movement. I had a similar lesson with her in the past, but I have always made new discoveries each time. I really enjoyed how

she was guiding us so patiently to pay attention to details, such as breathing, sensation, space between movements, and other subtle energy shadings. Once we “got it” on the piano, she would develop it into a sequence, an ABA form, or as a quick-reaction game. It became instant paintings of music and movement. Ideas of ‘silence’ arose as the class progressed. We experimented with the attitudes of silence and how it could be translated in improvisation and movement. We found out that a quick release of sound, with a small gap of silence in between, was an effective way to help the movers to shift energy and their breathing.

Day 10: Solfège Rhythmique is an approach to study pitch relationships that involves the whole body, usage of rhythmic play, and improvisation. The body movement in this context often serves as a tangible tool for analysis and as a link between the abstract sound and our intellect. The final session with Gabi Christman was a big treat. We explored her curriculum in Solfège Rhythmique of the school-aged children classes at the institute. These children meet twice a week over a span of several years. At that moment we were no longer adults. We were individual pitches in a major scale. We were listening and responding to what the piano gave us, and we re-arranged ourselves accordingly in the order where half steps and whole steps were in a given melody. We also sang the scales using one rhythm pattern while clapping the other. Upon a vocal signal, ‘HOPP,’ we switched the two. We then improvised with our own rhythm by singing a major scale in 4/4, ascending in 2 measures and descending in 2 measures. Suddenly, a plain scale became interesting melodies enlivened by inventive rhythmic gestures.

I left Geneva inspired, exhausted, and even more intrigued with the depth of Dalcroze work. I also left feeling that there was more to be discovered, though it was at the same time comforting to consolidate and deepen what I had already integrated over the years with other like-minded people from around the world. Nothing is like meeting positive mirrors in life. What a relief to know that, another Dalcrozien in Australia would

understand the significance if I was seen stepping a rhythm pattern while conducting arm beats in the living room at the magic hour of midnight!

Cheng-Feng Lin teaches Dalcroze classes at the Classical Music Conservatory and Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. He also runs a private piano studio. In his spare time, he enjoys taking modern dance classes and improvising with other musicians.

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~FALL WORKSHOP~

10 AM – 3:45 PM Sunday Nov. 11, 2007

The Ontario Chapter of Canadian
Dalcroze Society
Proudly Presents

LISA PARKER

As a master teacher, Lisa has trained and mentored many generations of Dalcroze teachers. She is the founder/director of the Certificate/License and Masters Degree programs of the Dalcroze Department, as well as the director of Summer Dalcroze Institute at Longy School of Music in Cambridge MA. In 2003 Lisa received the first George Seaman Excellence in Teaching Award at Longy. She holds the Diplome from l’Institut Jaques-Dalcroze in Geneva, Switzerland, Dalcroze License from Dalcroze School of New York, and M.M. in Conducting from New England Conservatory. Lisa is the past president of Dalcroze Society of America, and the past editor of the American Dalcroze Journal. She has conducted workshops worldwide, including Australia, England, Japan, Taiwan, Switzerland, Israel, Canada, Spain, Russia, Armenia, France and Germany.

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Can you use a hand...?
BY DONALD HIMES



“We could all be good musicians if it weren’t for the fact that we have to play instruments.” - Gyorgy Sebok, a renowned pianist and a former professor at Indiana University.

Anyone involved in Dalcroze studies will recognize the truth behind Mr. Sebok’s amusing observation. Music indeed lives deep within us independent of the need for any man-made tool for its expression. To communicate our musical thoughts to others though, or to reveal what we hope Mozart had intended, we must turn to an instrument. Significantly, every musical instrument except the human voice depends in some way on our hands to make it speak. These marvelous appendages are so much a part of everyday use that we tend to take them for granted. But if our careers depend on our hands, how we use them for making music surely demands serious attention.

We know from the rather upsetting statistics that the majority of orchestral members suffer from some degree of playing related pain on a regular basis. A considerable number of students also experience what can only be viewed as pedagogically instituted damage during their formative years. To examine the causes for this unfortunate state of affairs, we need to go far beyond what we all learned about lines and spaces.

Music making is an all-encompassing physical process engaged in for the purpose of turning symbol into sound. One might define good instrumental technique as the exact amount of kinetic energy being expended in order to send the suitable skeletal components to the right place at any speed. When we succeed in putting it all together, the playing would be capable of responding to our fondest musical nuances; if we fail, we are well on the road to ruin! If we’d paid attention to Frederic Chopin’s cardinal rule, “suppleness above all,”

or managed Alfred Cortot’s “complete muscular obedience to the imagination,” perhaps further discussion would be redundant.

Ease and efficiency are vital for technical fluency and a pain-free performing career but are possible only if we are constantly aware of how we feel as we play. Any awkwardness or strain signals that the problem ‘at hand’ has not yet been solved. Our sensory feedback system will tell us if we have achieved that consistent note-to-note balance which is the most dependable sign of well organized functioning—only if we have been taught to pay attention!

How many of us have been taught this? Fertilized by misconceptions, difficulties propagate like weeds in the barren soil of mediocre teaching. Wretched are those who expect their students to “just play the notes” without offering insights as to how they might go about it! The failure to present a wide variety of informed technical solutions is unforgivable because it leaves the student prey to those patterns of inefficiency so difficult to eradicate.

Generally, when teachers are incapable of helping their students to overcome technical problems, they’ll exhort the poor souls to “work harder”, trusting that exertion will somehow mutate and emerge as skill. This never happens. Effortful playing reinforced through repetition quickly becomes habitual, a mindless activity resistant to improvement. Eventually the student will simply give up because the struggle is so disheartening and unproductive.

Is anyone thus trapped beyond help? Indeed not! As Moshe Feldenkrais observed, “The only thing permanent about our behavior is our belief that it is so.” Habits play a large part in who we are and what we do. ‘Good’ habits are usually acquired consciously: “Look both ways before you cross the street.” ‘Bad’ habits form subliminally and are mainly responsible for those physical difficulties that seemingly spring from nowhere. Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement lessons can be

enormously beneficial for anyone suffering from old restrictive patterns. As we discover what we need to do and how to do it, our ingrained limitations gradually dissolve and old effort becomes new ease!

Certainly the great French painter Henri Matisse would have made a marvelous piano teacher. He observed that “The hand is nothing more than the extension of the senses and the intelligence. The more supple it is, the more obedient. The servant must never become the master.”

Donald Himes is the coordinator of the Dalcroze Teacher-Training program at RCM and a Feldenkrais practitioner.

FROM THE EDITOR

First, we thank the writers who submitted articles for this issue. The response was enthusiastic. Several choir conductors have also expressed an interest in writing about the Dalcroze/rehearsal process. We welcome submissions with open arms.

This summer *BEING MUSIC* landed in Europe. I brought 30 copies of the first two issues, and they disappeared quickly during the meeting of F.I.E.R. (Fédération Internationale des Enseignants de Rythmique) at the congress in Geneva. Now *BEING MUSIC* reaches out to more readers from around the world after each issue becomes archived at www.fier.com – a website for an international Dalcroze community.

Please mark in your calendar the REVISED DATE of our full day Dalcroze workshop in November with Lisa Parker. It is now set on Sunday, November 11th 2007 at York University. We now have membership opportunities available for the Ontario Chapter of the Canadian Dalcroze Society. Your support is important; it is the driving force behind the flourishing field of Dalcroze work. To find out how you can contribute and what package the membership comes with, please read on. [Mail in the membership form and the workshop registration today!](#)

I hope to meet you on November 11, 2007.

Cheng-Feng Lin, Editor

Personal Reflection in Dalcroze Eurhythmics

BY STELA MARTO

Through this article, I express my appreciation for my Dalcroze teachers and those who made the Madame Lasserre Scholarship available for me.

Movement is life and life is movement. We live in time, move in space and every motion we do takes effort. Therefore the harmonious relationship of Time-Space-Energy gives us efficiency in our motions. Exploration in time-space-energy relationship in music and movement is central to Dalcroze study. Classes in eurhythmics generate a feeling of joy and satisfaction in letting the body respond immediately to what it hears. Derived from the Greek word ‘eurhythmy’, eurhythmics means to be in good flow. When flow is present, music and our movement express each other in harmony.

In the first class we began with a warm up. We moved in different positions. As a result our spines became elongated with the shoulders relaxed, knees bent slightly, and our senses heightened. The weight-bearing leg moved slightly while the other foot touched the floor. Another interesting activity that followed was walking to the teacher’s improvisation on the piano. At that moment I felt the connection that music had become movement, and there was a sense of transformation happening within me. There were other activities that developed coordination and listening –the two essential skills any musicians need. While walking, we threw a ball in the air and kept walking after the ball landed on our hands. It was a repeating sequence of coordination. To me, it felt as if a scale had gone up and down as the ball was tossed upwards and landed back to my hands.

At times we were given a rhythmic pattern to step or clap in various tempi, and very often the activity came with a quick reaction component where we had to shift from doing one motion to another upon a signal. All had to be done in time. I had to make instant adjustments to how much space that would

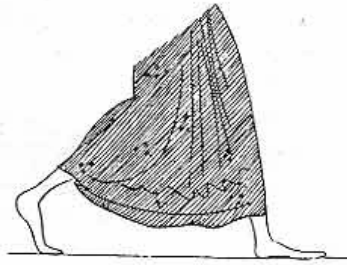
take, how much time I would use, and how much energy it required to get there.

Through eurhythmics we learn to regulate the flow of musical information and to refine our ability to focus. That is a different kind of concentration that comes along with this work –one has to focus and remain open at the same time. It is a state of being ready for anything to happen as we stay alert and aware. Before these ideas became real to me, I would often solve problems head-on and tackle the difficulties. Sometimes when I began one exercise I felt insecure. But as I continued, I learned to trust my body and its intelligence. Overall, my experience in eurhythmics gives me tools to know internally whether or not something fits. It is a physical knowing.

'Beyond the physical' touches the heart of Dalcroze work, and from attentive listening we express music through natural movement that fits. I have come to this revelation from simple motions such as clapping. It is not just moving the hands apart and back together in one position with one level of energy. Clapping that is musical and communicative needs motions that vary in size according to tempi and dynamics. This way of clapping involves the attention and movement from our whole selves. It brings forth a feeling of flexibility and a flow through space, and it expresses the natural buoyancy and elasticity of a series of beats. I found out that we could also play with the shaping of the beats and as a result interesting phrasing and dynamics took place.

I have enjoyed my Dalcroze classes very much. Through what I have experienced in my body, I would further explore using my violin to play for children's movement. And I hope they would love the variety of expression I improvise on the violin. It was a wonderful initiation for me and I will continue to take other classes in Dalcroze in the future. Stela Marto currently enrolls in the ECME certificate program at RCM and has been studying violin since age six back in Albania and Greece. Presently she gives private violin lessons for children and performs for the church and in various venues.

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A New Group For Plastique Animée

Facilitated by Marianna Kotyk and other Toronto area Dalcroze teachers, this working group will meet at RCM Community School on Monday evenings from the first week of October. It is open for anybody who has been through some Dalcroze training in RCM (people who have done Level 2) or training elsewhere in U.S. or in Europe. At this weekly gathering we shall collaborate through improvisation and create with movement, voice, instruments and other artistic means to different types of music. We give many thanks to Stephen Green and the RCM for their support of this endeavour. For more information and reserve your spot, contact Marianna at marianna.kotyk@gmail.com.

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The journal publishes three times a year. Deadlines for submissions are: December 15 for the winter issue; March 31 for the spring issue; and August 15 for the fall issue. Views and opinions expressed in the journal do not necessarily represent those of the Dalcroze Society of Canada. The content of the articles are subject to approval and editing. Please send submissions by email.

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