



"The aim of Eurhythmic(s) is to enable pupils, at the end of their course, to say, not 'I know,' but 'I have experienced,' and so to create in them the desire to express themselves; ..."

-Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, from *Rhythm, Music and Education* (1914)

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to *BEING MUSIC*, the journal of the Canadian Dalcroze Society. After more than a decade of repose, the journal is born again in the new millennium. Inside you will find the ageless wisdom in Dalcroze teaching that prevails and the trends that Dalcroze principles have inspired. In the past 10 years new books and articles about Dalcroze studies have been written, and more exchanges are happening between institutions. And certainly new teaching ideas based on Dalcroze philosophy have been created by colleagues around the globe, due to the inventive nature of our work. After a long anacrusis for months, this journal is finally here in your hands.

We intend to keep you updated and informed through the journal, making it a wonderful space to share ideas of pedagogy and music making. We welcome your contributions and feedback to the journal. It is for everyone who is interested in the work of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and anyone who is involved in performing or teaching. Make the journal yours by reading it, by contributing articles or ideas, and by sharing it with your friends.

Happy Reading,

Cheng-Feng Lin, Editor

## Making the Musicians: The 10,000 Hours BY DONALD HIMES

As a multitude of studies suggest, excellence in practically any endeavor—be it chess, basketball, learning an instrument or even world-class criminality—requires applying oneself three-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week over a period of ten years. The 10,000 hours: a statistic to be avoided at the first piano lesson!

What does this entail for hopeful musicians, and how might they best fill the merry hours while awaiting fame and fortune to overtake them? "If you want to be more than a virtuoso", remarked Vladimir Horowitz, "first be a virtuoso!" But will the seemingly endless amount of time devoted to "getting the notes right" guarantee a result that will move an audience? What is that mysterious "more" that separates the extraordinary few from the legions of otherwise capable musicians exiting the conservatories, diplomas firmly in hand?

Perhaps one answer might be found in discovering what constitutes 'the right notes'. As we have all discovered to our dismay, what composers put down on paper is no more than a blueprint for a musical edifice patiently awaiting construction. Notation can well indicate pitch, note-length and some rather subjective 'expression' marks, but beyond that it is pretty much up to the performer. Any pianist with good aim and fast reflexes can capture our attention for a time. But how to reach beyond those non-committal black dots, to discover in ourselves the nuances matching the emotional landscape suggested by the composer, to enliven the printed page, and to go beyond the 'correct'? I fondly remember

one of our great Dalcroze teachers, Bob Abramson, remarking that "music is an art-form where even if you do everything 'correctly', it can still sound like hell!"

The voyage from the score, through our sensibilities to the far shore of performance can be fraught with danger. So what do we need to pack? The outstanding French pianist and teacher Pierre-Laurent Aimard suggests that we'd better have "a fabulous ear, total physical freedom and limitless imagination." An interesting list considering the content of most music-training programs! There are lots of ever-faster scales, chords and arpeggios, necessary to be sure, but how many of those 10,000 hours have been devoted to training the imagination? Can it be done? How to access our deepest feelings, to physically mirror them in order to render "ff" joyful, ponderous, crazed or hilarious as the music demands?

In infancy we sang before we spoke and danced before we could walk. We communicated our needs, pleasures and frustrations through movement and sound—the two inextricably linked with a single purpose. Every child is a born communicator with an awesome bundle of self-awareness knowing what it feels and how to express it. You've never seen an angry infant suffering in silence with a calm face and passive limbs! Consider the Latin root of 'emotion'—it means 'of action'. Is it any wonder that our ability to feel may be severely compromised if we neglect the stimulation of fully imagined movement, or if we have never experienced a two-note slur in any other way than that funny little curved line? As Rudolph von Laban put it "Music is movement made audible."

Enters Emile Jaques-Dalcroze who was dismayed by all those notes he heard played 'correctly' with no discernible emotional content. He was determined to find a way to reconnect his students' flying fingers with their dormant souls. What emerged was Eurhythmics, the movement-based exploration of what turns sounds into music, and musicians into artists. His procedures were not only radically different from anything that had come before but so

successful that they opened up a whole new realm of possibilities distinct from the usual 'sitting-in-a-chair' school of music education. Sometimes confused with more theatrically-focused dance, Eurhythmics shares the common denominator of movement with a much different purpose. Dalcroze is for the learner, feeding the inner necessity to make music. Pamela Brown, whose early studies in Eurhythmics helped shape her brilliant theatrical career, clarified this difference with a sharp pedagogical heads-up: "A nondescript teacher gives a child the chance to hear applause for the first time, at the local church hall. A good teacher gives the child the ability to hear music with its whole body and to give it visible form."

Not surprisingly, what Dalcroze realized and taught a century ago and what all good Dalcroziens teach today has now been confirmed by neuroscience. The link between sound and movement is indeed hardwired in the brain, each informing and reinforcing the other. Could anyone, having witnessed an infant bouncing with his whole body to what's reached him through his ears, have ever doubted it? Merci, Monsieur Jaques!

-TEACHING IDEAS-  
BY CHENG-FENG LIN

|The Rocking Chair that Rolls Over!

For several years, this has been a favourite for my children's classes of ages 3-4. It is a great game for children to experience the weight transfer on the two sides of the body by rocking on the sitting bones, as well as to make creative shapes in place.

"Be a rocking chair—make your own shape. Rock back and forth in your space." The teacher improvises on the piano for children's rocking motion. "Roll over all the way when music tells you to." The signal could be a dissonance, a startling accent, a broken chord, or a surprise chord from a foreign key. Children develop listening and reaction skills through this game, and for the teacher it is a fun scenario to improvise for. Try it and listen for the laughter.



| Ring Those Bells...Dalcroze in Action!

BY WENDY TAXIS



Years ago I was offered a job as the director of handbells at a local church in my area. Unbeknownst to me it was the beginning of a wonderful journey through the weird and wacky world of handbells.

To begin with, I had never seen or heard a set of handbells. I had no idea how to set them up or how to play them. I'd never seen handbell music, and the idea of handbell assignments had never crossed my mind. I was promised a two-hour tutorial by an experienced handbell director if I said yes, so I decided to take the leap.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with handbells, the instrument is made up of between 2 and 7 octaves of bells. Each bell corresponds to a specific note. A three octave set contains 37 bells with the largest in the bass and getting smaller as the pitch gets higher. They are laid out on tables covered with mat. Each ringer is assigned the responsibility of a specific number of bells. A 3-octave choir would ideally have 9 to 10 ringers to play the bells, but they can also be played by smaller ensembles, quartets, trios, duets and solo ringers.

I had my tutorial and headed for my first rehearsal with one of the six choirs that I had become responsible for. I was nervous and feeling a little intimidated. But as soon as I started the rehearsal and picked up two of the bells to demonstrate a warm-up, I felt completely at home. The whole technique of ringing bells—the coordinated arm movements, the physical balance required, and the integration of mind, body and ears—reminded me of my experience in Dalcroze Eurhythmics. I had never played a bell before, but because of my training in Dalcroze everything fell in place. I still had a lot to learn, however I knew instinctively how to play those bells and what was required for proper technique. What was even better, I could develop all kinds of Dalcroze exercises specifically for my handbell ringers.

Rhythmically, playing bells can be very challenging. One uses both hands to play two completely different parts of the music, and simultaneously the hands prepare to pick up new bells within the next beat. The whole technique of playing handbells relies on time, space and energy—the three fundamental aspects of Dalcroze work. It is easy to see and feel this connection because the arm movements are so large and bells must constantly be in motion. As a solo ringer looking after 37 bells, every part of the brain and the body is in action: moving up and down the table, balancing, reaching, and exchanging bells.

Since that first rehearsal, I have learned a great deal about handbells and how much fun they can be. There is nothing like watching a really good solo ringer performing the intricate dance required to get the wonderful musical results of the handbell sound. It is magic to see and hear the connection between movement and music so fully realized, truly...Dalcroze in action.

DID YOU KNOW...?

The first Dalcroze teacher in Canada was Madeleine Boss Lasserre, who had arrived in Toronto in 1924 after studying with Jaques-Dalcroze himself in Geneva, Switzerland.



Future Issues...

- Dalcroze Application in Rehearsals
- Personal Journey with Dalcroze Work
- Reflection in Teaching
- Upcoming courses and workshops
- Book List and Useful Websites
- And Much More!

## |Walking Music Please!



BY CHENG-FENG LIN

“Let’s take a walk,” the instructor says. As students begin to walk, they discover things about this basic locomotor movement—the flow, the sensation of the inevitable transfer of weight, the steady pulse, and the tempo. Then they discover a relationship with their surroundings, the space, the way other people move, and the adjustment and maneuvering in sharing space. For most of us walking is an unconscious and natural movement in our daily lives. During the Eurhythmics classes, we make walking conscious and purposeful, using it as a tool and a springboard to learn about musical concepts.

As Dalcroze teachers, we often use the piano, our voice, or the percussion instruments to improvise for students’ movement. Improvisation enables us to convey the spontaneous and natural quality in both children’s and adults’ movement. When the improvised music fits the tempo, nuances, and the character of the movement—be it as simple as a walk or a run—we deliver a delightful and satisfying musical experience to the movers.

Walking to music is one of the basic activities in Dalcroze classes. Each person’s walk is unique, and so is the way each one of us improvises. However, there are some helpful guidelines for improvising a walking tune that can help inspire the students to move.

A Satisfying Accompaniment for Walking Begins by Watching the Mover Closely  
Observe the quality of walking, its mood, the weight, and the pulse. Do a quick character study and scan: look at where the mover’s eyes are gazing. Find some words to describe the mood of the walk, and observe how the hands are moving. They may be naturally swaying on the side, or bounded with slight rigidity. Examine the foot work. The foot steps indicate not only the pulse, but also convey the quality and the weight of the step: Is it light on the toes or weighty on the heels?

Are the steps bouncy or quiet and smooth? As we observe and start to feel every part of the walking from the mover, let a tune emerge.

A Convincing Melody for Walking Has a Musical Frame Based on the Observation of the Mover

Upon collecting all the data of movement qualities from the mover, we translate the data into musical decisions. Those musical decisions serve as our frame work of improvisation. What are the types of musical decisions? Certainly we need to get the tempo established from the pulse of the foot steps. Decide upon the articulation: a legato walk, a staccato walk, or a mélange of different touches that supports the mover. What is the tonality that effectively conveys the overall mood—atonal, major, minor or modal? Consider the register that helps to portray the character. And which meter best fits the walk? If we see a walk that sways from side to side with a lilt, 6/8 would be fitting; if we see a calm walk with a linear pathway, 4/4 might do the job; if the walk feels sprightly and bouncy, with the elbows energized on the side, 2/4 might fit. I have broken down the procedures in fragments, but as teachers we really make all the decisions in a few seconds intuitively on the spot, trusting our instinct and training. However when practicing this skill with a colleague, it is worthwhile to take all the time one needs for a thoughtful rendition.

Movers respond to a tune that projects clarity and simplicity

People often approach playing the piano with more effort than needed, and as a result they create something over-complicated. However, we communicate more effectively to our movers through the clarity in our music and through continual observation—that means our eyes are on the movers, not on our hands (perhaps a glance or two, no more). I remind myself whenever I teach, and it is easier said than done. If our music had got in the way and required us to look at our hands instead of the students, we would have missed the game: to see how the students respond to music and therefore provide any necessary adjustments from our improvisation. We may be pleasantly surprised that a single-hand melody on the piano well played would be

enough to portray the tempo, the character, and the nuances of a walk.

Walking music with a clear melody energizes the mover

A clear melody helps the mover travel forward. Improvisers benefit tremendously through singing for the movement before re-creating the melody on the piano. When we sing, a melody emerges naturally. After that, we can transfer that singing melody into our “singing fingers” and create a more authentic melody. Through singing, we discover that a melody for walking consists not only of the sound that marks the “beat”; we naturally sing the subdivisions between the beat at various points. This creates a forward motion for the melody.

Music without clear phrasing sounds like a run-on sentence; it loses its power to engage the mover and the listener. A supportive melody for the movers has clear cues for the beginning and the ending, namely the phrasing and the cadence. Before the movers make the first step, they need to transfer the weight forward to be ready for that first step. As improvisers we also need this anacrusis sound gesture to cue the movers to begin—this indicates the tempo of the phrase.

Similarly towards the ending of a phrase, the melody gives clues of a cadence approaching, so students can feel and anticipate the ending of a journey. Children, as young as two years old, can start walking and stop in time with music by listening after a few classes of training.

#### Learn from the Repertoire

When we browse through songs, symphonic themes, and arias of great composers, we can find melodies to accompany walking. It is helpful to take a piece of music as a model and examine how and why it is suitable. We can also study how the melody is constructed and play with it in different ways. Using the same rhythm, we can improvise a new melody on top of it. Or take the beginning of the melody, and create a new piece by improvising. This process will enrich our ideas and expand our skills.

Learning to improvise for movement is fun. The process is challenging, interactive, and invigorating, and along the path there are

plenty of surprises and delights. The more we practice improvisation, the more we become in tune with our own inner resources from which we draw upon when playing for our students to move. During the Dalcroze Eurhythmics International Conference in Japan 2004, Ruth Alperson, a great Dalcroze teacher, offers an insight on improvising for children’s movement in an interview. Inspired by her mentor, Francis Aronoff, Ruth comments, “If you can play just the right music for the child’s walk, with each step that child feels, I’m right, I’m right, I’m right. When you play the correct music for the child’s walk, the child feels the teacher is really observing him and feels understood.” Ruth further explains, “When I play the correct music for the child’s walk, I am teaching that child something. And one of the very important things I am teaching the child is that the music can do what the child is doing. And then later I will ask the child, ‘listen to my music, can you walk this way?’” And from there, it is a two-way flow between the improviser and the mover, the leader and the follower as the interchangeable roles. Let us keep the dialogue open between our music and our students’ movement!

Resources and references:

[Twenty Rhythmicians Worldwide Speak the essence of Dalcroze Eurhythmics Vol. 2.](#) DVD. Jaques-Dalcroze Society of Japan, 2004.



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 the materials by email. [dalcrozejournalcanada@yahoo.ca](mailto:dalcrozejournalcanada@yahoo.ca)

This journal has been the collaborative effort of these Dalcroze teachers in the Toronto area. Thanks to Wendy Taxis who passed on her wisdom guidance as the past editor, and to Marianna who offered her assistance in the process of editing and publicity.

Who We Are...

Ilona Bocian holds an M.A. in Eurhythmics from Poznan, Poland, specializing in the methods of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. She also earned a Dalcroze Certificate through the Carnegie Mellon University. In addition, she is certified through the Royal Conservatory of Music and Ryerson University as an Early Childhood Music Education instructor. For more than 28 years Ilona has been sharing her love of movement and using it creatively in many areas of her teaching. Currently she teaches adults and children at the Royal Conservatory of Music and other music schools in Toronto.

Donald Himes, graduate of L'Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, Geneva Switzerland, is currently the coordinator of the Dalcroze program at The Royal Conservatory of Music. He has enjoyed a long history in the world of music and movement. He was, for thirty-two years, pianist and composer for 'Mr. Dressup'. As a member of Toronto Dance Theatre he created the long-running production of 'Babar, the Little Elephant', a dance piece to the music of Francis Poulenc. He has taught at The National Ballet School, the Opera School of the University of Toronto, at York University, Queen's University and internationally for various Dalcroze societies. Also a Feldenkrais practitioner, Mr. Himes leads classes at the Feldenkrais Centre in Toronto and teaches piano privately, guiding performers to an easier relationship with their instrument.

Marianna Kotyk pursued her certified training in Dalcroze Eurhythmics at Laval University's Bachelor of Music program, and continued studies at Longy School of Music and Carnegie Mellon University. Teaching in English and French, she enjoys adapting Dalcroze work to various settings, such as daycare centres, a Montessori preschool, Moms and Babies classes, and dance schools.

Her interest in poetry has led her to incorporate this art form into her classes. She has accompanied dance with the 'cello, sung with the Niagara Chorus and danced in the SGI Chinese Dance group. Besides polishing her French to be ready for Paris, attending Yoga and Qi-gong classes, Marianna is exploring writing as an expressive means to health and healing. Currently she teaches adults at the Royal Conservatory of Music Community School in the ECME certificate program, children in the RCM Outreach classes, and Suzuki Strings enrichment program.

Cheng-Feng Lin currently teaches Dalcroze classes at the Classical Music Conservatory in Toronto, and piano privately. Initially he studied piano in Montreal, where he completed a B.Mus. at McGill. When he discovered Dalcroze Eurhythmics, his musical journey took a sharp turn. He completed his Dalcroze studies at the Longy School of Music in Boston USA, with an M.Mus., the Dalcroze License and Certificate. Prior moving to Toronto in July 2006, he has spent several years in Boston teaching Dalcroze classes and piano lessons. He was formerly on the faculties of the New England Conservatory of Music, Winchester Community Music School, and the Powers Music School. In his spare time, he enjoys improvising with other musicians.

Wendy Taxis has been teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics at the Royal Conservatory of Music for the past 26 years and was the Director of Handbells at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Cobourg for 12 years. She was the editor of the Canadian Dalcroze Journal. Currently she is the past president of the Ontario Guild of English Handbell Ringers, as well as the president of the Dalcroze Society of Canada. She has given numerous handbell workshops with a Dalcroze twist throughout Ontario.

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