

JAQUES-DALCROZE STUDIES
An Integrated Pedagogical Philosophy
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The following is an excerpt from a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of a Master's degree in Music Performance with the Jaques-Dalcroze License at Ithaca College School of Music as a student of John R. Stevenson, DJD. Since that time, Ms. Dobrea has earned the Diplôme Superior Jaques-Dalcroze at the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze in Geneva, Switzerland, and has been granted tenure as a professor at Baldwin-Wallace College near Cleveland, Ohio.

The greatest gift Emile Jaques-Dalcroze offered to music educators upon developing his method was to provide them with a means of teaching the many parameters of music, through the study of Jaques-Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Solfege, and Improvisation. Inherent in Jaques-Dalcroze's philosophy is a multi-faceted approach to music learning which integrates the three branches of a Jaques-Dalcroze Education, furnishing the student with an experience in one branch which always includes aspects of the other two, thereby strengthening his or her skills and knowledge in all three areas simultaneously. This process, in conjunction with a pedagogical philosophy emphasizing the theory of a spiral curriculum, heightens the student's awareness of music concepts, and enables him or her to rely on this new-found knowledge and experience when studying repertoire. The result is a more fulfilling interpretation of music: one which is based on the student's own self-discovery, and, most importantly, always derived from the human spirit.

The question often arises as to what aspects of a Jaques-Dalcroze Education set it so dramatically apart from other music education methods. The answer is not as simple as one might imagine. Perhaps the most predominant differentiating characteristic is that Jaques-Dalcroze Studies is not a standardized method per se - it is an educational process that student and teacher alike experience, and, as a result, grow both musically and personally. Jaques-Dalcroze did not leave us with specific writings on how or when to teach any given music subject. What he did, in effect, was to develop a philosophy of music education, which describes a number of principles and ideals that should be included in any Jaques-Dalcroze lesson; be it Eurhythmics, Solfege, or improvisation. It is the responsibility of the teacher to take these principles and apply them to each class or student as he or she sees fit. Herein lies one of the greatest beauties of the Dalcroze experience, since each educator can

bring to the classroom not only a valid musical experience, but one which allows him or her to share with the class the human being they truly are. Emile Jaques-Dalcroze may have described this process best when he wrote, "We cannot teach what we wish, we cannot teach what we know, we can only teach what we are." (1907)

Another distinguishing characteristic of a Jaques-Dalcroze Education is that it is a life-long process, not a method that is concluded after the study of a series of books, graded material, or tapes. The student learns in any Jaques-Dalcroze class through active rather than passive participation, so after formal study ends, there is always a wealth of musical, aural, and physical experiences which can be recalled to enrich the study of virtually any art form. If an individual chooses to become a Jaques-Dalcroze educator, it becomes even more apparent what a life-long process this work really is. The teacher brings his or her own experiences into every Jaques-Dalcroze lesson, and these experiences should allow them to interact constantly with the instincts, perceptions, and experience of the students. This way, an open line of communication and trust is established, and student and teacher alike will continually develop and learn. This is a vital part of any educational process, be it in Eurhythmics or mathematics, for the teacher who ceases to grow, ceases to educate.

Finally, Jaques-Dalcroze Studies differs from other methods because it provides the student with a true Gestalt education. A Gestalt education has been described as, "the response of an organism to a situation as a complete whole, rather than the sum of the responses to specific elements in the situation." This is seen on two different levels in Jaques-Dalcroze Studies. First, in an individual class, the learning that takes place is the result of the culmination of the total experience, not by a student's examination of each single event within the lesson. The second way a Gestalt experience is seen in a Jaques-Dalcroze Education is through the result of studies in Eurhythmics, Solfege, and improvisation. A single music subject is explored and analyzed from different angles in each branch. At the conclusion of this work, the student understands the subject as a whole because he or she has been given the opportunity to relate it to each parameter of music. This process and its result is one of the greatest differences between a Jaques-Dalcroze Education and other methods. Students do not learn something for the sake of just one piece of music, nor do they study only ear-training or only improvisation. Because they understand all the parameters of a given music concept, it is knowledge that can be applied to any piece of music throughout a lifetime.