

THE EURHYTHMICS OF JAQUES-DALCROZE

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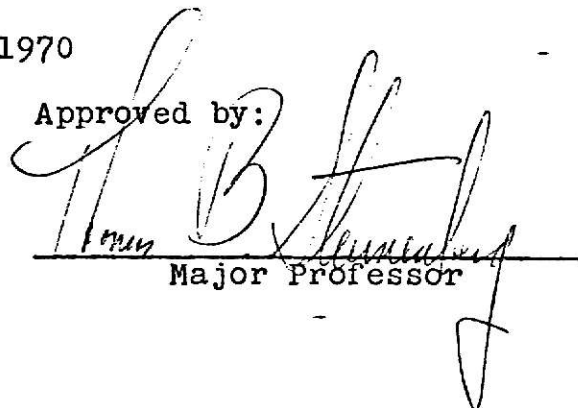
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To the early Greeks rhythmic movement of the body was an important part of education, but when the teachings of that ancient nation became extinct, bodily expression, with the exception of the dance, became a lost art. Not until 1897, when Emile Jaques-Dalcroze gave the world his work in eurhythmics, did physical response again become an element in education.¹

It is the purpose of this paper to give a comprehensive review of the man and his method. The fundamental objective of the Jaques-Dalcroze system is, in the words of its inventor, "to create by the help of rhythm a rapid and regular current of communication between brain and body, and to make feeling for rhythm a physical experience."² Thus, the system is more than a method teaching rhythm, being rather a system of education whose broad objective is the achievement of balance in the

1. Grace V. Wilson, "A Rhythmic Program in Elementary Schools," Music Educators National Conference Yearbook, (1937), p. 158.

2. Karl Gehrkens, "Rhythm Training and Dalcroze Eurhythmics," Music Supervisors National Conference Yearbook, (1932), p. 307.

whole individual, including mind, body and feelings.³ The complete system includes many other phases of study, but only the rhythmic aspects were treated in this paper.

The author's sources of information include books and articles by Jaques-Dalcroze, as they appear in English translation, and numerous articles by music educators and exponents of the method.

The methods of many music educators seem to be based upon the same basic principles as Jaques-Dalcroze's system of Eurhythmics. A Dalcrozian influence seems particularly evident in the methods of such educators as Marguerite Hood, Ann Driver and Madeliene Carabo-Cone, although they have not given Jaques-Dalcroze any acknowledgement.

3. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze is a monumental character in the history of music education. Seldom has an educator in the field of music achieved such eminence. The method evolved by this man was so significant that some of its principles have become universal.

He was born in Vienna of Swiss parentage on July 6, 1865. When he was eight, his family returned to his father's native city of Geneva, Switzerland, where he received his conventional education. As he grew older, the general course at the college and university was a background for his main interest--the study of music, particularly music composition. In his school days he was known for his questioning attitude toward accepted traditions of musical instruction and his love for practical jokes.

After receiving his university and conservatory degrees, he went to Paris for further study in musical composition with Leo Delibes. In addition to his work with Delibes, he began investigation of a subject little explored by the musicians for the 1880's, the problem of the means of musical expression.

Emile Jaques then put himself under the tutelage of Mathis Lussy, a Swiss musician and aesthetician living in Paris. Lussy