

## “KEYBOARD IMPROVISATION FOR PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT”

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*“Joy arises in the child the moment his faculties are liberated from any restraint, and he becomes conscious of his control over them, and decides on the direction in which that control shall be exercised. The joy is the product of a joint sense of emancipation and responsibility.”*

*- Jaques-Dalcroze*

### Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and his approach

- born in 1865 to Swiss parents (died 1950)
- was appointed Professor of harmony, *solfège*, and composition at the Geneva Conservatory, careful observation of his students showed him that while the students could be good musical technicians, they often did not hear or feel the nuances of the music
- the approach involves the whole body, mind, and emotions by representing an integrated physical, intellectual, and emotional experience
- three components of this approach are eurhythmics, *solfège*, and improvisation
- special emphasis on child-centered learning
- the body is the first instrument of expression

### Objectives of the Approach

- Focus/Concentration
- Teaching of the music elements through movement, rhythm being the most important
- Solfège
- Expression
  - *Plastique animée* - "An artistic and creative embodiment of music through individual or group movement" (Butke/Frego). It is a combination of improvisation and choreography, a physicalization of the music, and an expressive visualization of the music in an artistic and meaningful way.

Participants will experience approaches to use the keyboard to inspire purposeful movement with students in a general music class setting. Many of the activities may also be used in remote teaching situations.

### Activities Presented

#### 1. **Swaying in Dorian**

- Students stand in self-space and sway to the improvisation
- Teacher places left hand on D & C in the bass; right hand on D through A in treble
- In meter of three, give a four-measure intro with the left hand; ||: D 2 3 | C 2 3 :||
- Add right hand and improvise on the five pitches using antecedent and consequent phrases
- Add more pitch choices in the left hand, such as Bb (aeolian)

#### 2. **Basic Movements:**

- Walking (M)
- Running (D)
- Gliding (M)
- Skipping (D)
- Jumping (D)

### 3. Chord Progressions:

- Students stand in self-space
- Teacher plays a series of chord progressions and students walk to what they hear
- Students change direction at the start of each progression

### 4. Walk Bass/Clap Treble:

- Students stand in self-space
- Teacher plays a continuous melody in the left hand (i.e. all quarter notes)
- Students step the continuous notes through the space
- Teacher plays continuous melody in the right hand
- Students stand in place and lightly tap the continuous notes
- Teacher plays continuous melody in left hand (i.e. quarter notes) and a different subdivision in the right hand (i.e eighth notes)
- Students walk the quarter notes and tap the eighth notes.

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### What is the American Eurhythmics Society?

Established by Dr. David Frego, Dr. Marla Butke, and Dr. Kathy Thomsen, the American Eurhythmics Society seeks to continue the work of Dalcroze by providing training opportunities in Eurhythmics for music educators who practice their craft in the classroom or in the private teaching studio. The AES serves those teachers looking for meaningful ways to include movement rooted in the philosophy of Dalcroze to meet national and state education standards, and to provide authentic assessment opportunities. The AES teaches personal musicianship along with pedagogy and applications of Eurhythmics.

Check out the website at <http://www.americaneurhythmics.org/>. If you become a member you will have access to lesson plans, videos of lessons, piano improvisation ideas, and *plastique animée* examples with children and adults, a bibliography, blogs, and an extensive recording list with concepts to be taught.