

Miles Douglas Wilcox

San Diego, CA

John Myers

Music & Performance Studies

An Exploration of Dalcroze Eurhythmics with Students at Simon's Rock



For my senior thesis I will explore Emile Jaques-Dalcroze's pedagogical ideas of eurhythmics, and apply his methods to working with students here at Simon's Rock. Through dance- and theatre-inspired movement exercises, I will research and explore Dalcroze's teaching practices. While teaching at the Conservatory of Geneva in the early 20th century, Dalcroze found that even his most advanced students lacked "knowledge of sound" and "sense of rhythm," and aimed to develop a method to change this.

Dalcroze's educational ideas stemmed from his realization that very few pedagogical methodologies have a strong focus on rhythm, without which there is no music (especially using the working definition of music I use, "organized sound"). I find Dalcroze's brand of intuitive music-learning quite interesting, especially its contrast to my classical training and subsequent focus on technique-heavy music education. With Dalcroze's eurhythmics method, frequently used by Steiner schools through

eurhythmics classes, I have found a school of study that perfectly represents my ideas on how music ought to be taught: through concepts of intuition, with the notion in mind that the process of education shouldn't be focused on teaching completely new ideas, but rather building on and expanding areas of previous knowledge & experience. We all possess innate musical building blocks. I would like to include those who consider themselves to be "poor musicians," and work to extract and build on those innate musical inclinations.

I am going to be working with a small group of Simon's Rock students, those whose musical training is limited and also musicians looking to further their musical understanding. Through exercises of rhythm, solfege, improvisation and creative movement, I hope to discover more about how this particular kind of education creates musicians with a deeper understanding of the intuitive nature of music that is contained within us all.