The Jaques-Dalcroze approach can be a valuable addition to any music teacher's method. Monica Dale Johnson outlines the main tenets of this approach.

The method of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze cannot be found in books. There are no specific song materials, lesson plans, or exercises that truly define this approach. Instead, the method is embodied in the teacher through a unique combination of musical and pedagogical skills.

The three branches of Jaques-Dalcroze studies—eurhythmics, solfège, and improvisation—stand on their own to make up a complete music education program. For teachers who use other methods, however, the skills of Jaques-Dalcroze teacher training can open new possibilities for depth, creativity, and interaction in the classroom by augmenting the repertoire of successful teaching techniques.

Just as the Jaques-Dalcroze method is found in teachers' skills rather than books, it is passed on from person to person rather than through print materials. Although Jaques-Dalcroze teacher-training institutes vary because of the personal nature of the teaching involved, one should expect certain skills to be developed in a Jaques-Dalcroze Studies Institute.

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Movement through Eurhythmics

Movement Technique. The study of eurhythmics gives teachers a good foundation in the theory and practice of movement. Eurhythmics teaches the concepts of space, time, direction, level, and shape. Teachers who study eurhythmics also gain skill in the execution of movement, including strength, flexibility, coordination, alignment, balance, articulation, and the dynamics of energy or effort. Developing and refining spa...
Jaques-Dalcroze education allows the teacher to similarly expand and clarify students’ movement in the classroom. The teacher becomes able to observe the students’ movement more clearly, identify any need for correction or development, and provide effective, appropriate physical solutions.

Movement Improvisation. While many methods use songs with predetermined movement accompaniment, Jaques-Dalcroze education allows the teacher to expand on such material. The range of vocabulary developed by the teacher and students allows for a creative, flexible, improvisational use of kinesthetic and musical elements. The teacher can extend beyond the basic suggestions found in books on the subject to guide, focus, develop, and synthesize students’ improvisational movement toward a musical purpose.

Movement as Music. The relationship between movement and music is a crucial part of the Jaques-Dalcroze method and is studied continuously. The physical experience in Jaques-Dalcroze education goes beyond the role of song or chant accompaniment—it becomes a vehicle for music concept development. Because the movement is not limited to fixed choreography and remains open to variation, manipulation, and alternation of ideas, the teacher can use movement as a flexible tool toward various goals. The movement in a eurhythmics class represents the students’ solutions to a dynamic and infinite array of musical puzzles posed by the teacher—puzzles designed to educate musical skills and insights.

For example, Dalcrozan quick-reaction exercises demonstrate one way that movement is employed pedagogically in the eurhythmics class. These exercises require the class to respond to a musical or verbal signal with an immediate change of activity. On a physical level, such challenges develop control and facilitate coordination of the ear, mind, and body. Most important, however, these kinetic exercises link music concepts with physical sensation to clarify relationships between musical ideas—such as various tempos, durations, pitches, rhythms, and tonalities—and provide students with their own working knowledge and vocabulary of these ideas. Jaques-Dalcroze techniques that use movement to teach music provide a flexible means of guiding students sequentially toward the perception, performance, and understanding of music.

The Scale. While some methods limit music materials to specific songs, Jaques-Dalcroze education gives teachers skills to use any music material, adapting it as needed. Moreover, teachers develop skills to invent new songs, even on the spur of the moment. This training also provides teaching strategies to enable students to create melodies in singing, for example, by improvising on rhythm patterns studied in movement.

Summer Programs

The following Jaques-Dalcroze teacher-training programs are for the summer of 1993.

- Institute for Jaques-Dalcroze Education, Department of Music Education, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030; Contact: Monica Dale Johnson, 703-768-7661; June 28–July 16.
- Summer Dalcroze Program, Longy School of Music, #1 Follen Street, Cambridge, MA 0213; Contact: Lisa Parker, 617-489-3010; June 28–July 16.
- Office of Continuing Education, Box 132, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027; Contact: Robert Abramson, 212-678-3000; July 18–August 6.
- The University of Washington, 3871 45th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98105; Contact: Julia Schnebly-Black, 206-527-7034; June 28–July 16.
- Dalcroze Training Center, Music Department, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213; Contact: Marta Sanchez, 412-268-2391; June 21–July 9.
- Dalcroze School of New York, 161 East 73rd Street, New York, NY 10021; Contact: Hilda Schuster, 212-879-0316; July 5–August 14.
Students using Dalcroze techniques to rehearse choral music at West Potomac High School (Fairfax County, Virginia).

by. Intervals are studied within the context of the scale through singing, a further boon to both ear training and music reading.

Music Reading and Writing

Theory Follows Practice. Training in the Jaques-Dalcroze method helps teachers approach music concepts through experience, rather than by teaching the terms of music alone. Because the musical experience is a conceptually focused sequence of activity rather than a general aesthetic experience, there is certain to be a corresponding representation in notation for each sequence of activity. This makes it easy for teachers to follow class activity with reading and writing. The abstract symbols represent real physical and aural experiences, so notation makes sense to the student immediately.

Creative Reinforcement. In the application of the musical, pedagogical, and improvisational skills from Jaques-Dalcroze education, teachers can be inventive in reinforcing learning. Various games and activities can be created to refine and reinforce reading and writing skills while consistently maintaining the link with aural music. This ability is a valuable complement to any method.

Rhythmic Patterns. Beyond the benefit of eurhythmic activity, the Jaques-Dalcroze method facilitates the perception, performance, and notation of rhythm by identifying five essential patterns derived from the ancient Greek rhythmic modes. Use of these modes does not preclude working with rhythm by other methods, but rather enhances those methods by providing a way to group note values together. By perceiving patterns rather than counting individual note values, students can conceptualize their movement experience more clearly and transfer that experience to music reading and writing.

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Rhythmic Syllables. The Jaques-Dalcroze approach does not mandate fixed rhythmic syllables; it allows students to articulate various improvised sounds according to musical instinct. For teachers who do employ specific rhythmic syllables, Jaques-Dalcroze skills and principles will enrich rather than prevent the use of such syllables in movement, singing, and notation.

Pitch Literacy. In keeping with the method’s premise that theory follows practice, guided experience in singing is easily followed with notational representation. The interval approach of Jaques-Dalcroze solfege is a valuable tool for teaching pitch relationships and note names on the staves in a logical progression, eliminating the need for tedious drill and mnemonic devices.

Jaques-Dalcroze Improvisation

Improvisation is a crucial element of Jaques-Dalcroze education and an invaluable resource for all teachers. Many of the pedagogical skills of the Jaques-Dalcroze method are founded upon musical abilities. This is particularly true in Jaques-Dalcroze improvisation—a musical skill and a powerful pedagogical tool.

Piano Improvisation. Through Jaques-Dalcroze studies, teachers learn to invent music on the spur of the moment and to develop spontaneous musicianship in the students. At the piano, teachers become able to create music for any situation or requirement (perhaps in response to a student’s remark). The piano may be used as a pedagogical resource to create new approaches in response to the needs of students having difficulty in mastering a skill or understanding an idea. Even teachers without previous experience can often gain skills in piano improvisation to heighten their effectiveness in the classroom.

Student Improvisation. When students improvise, they are manipulating music concepts creatively, enhancing as well as demonstrating their understanding. For the teacher, student improvisation is a valuable tool both to increase learning and to evaluate it. Jaques-Dalcroze education includes student improvisation in all modes of learning: movement, singing, and instrumental improvisation.

The Jaques-Dalcroze approach to instrumental improvisation gives the teacher a means of allowing students to
play music that is more educational than ostinato patterns. Students work improvisationally to explore various music parameters (intervals, meter, rhythm, phrasing, chords, and so on), returning to concepts already studied through movement and singing. (Moreover, because common problems such as keeping a steady tempo find a remedy in musically focused movement exercises, the teacher is relieved of trying to solve these problems at the instrument.) Improvisation is another way of allowing students to manipulate musical material and ideas to gain their own working knowledge of music concepts.

Pedagogical Improvisation. Above all, Jaques-Dalcroze studies develop the pedagogical and musical skills to apply improvisation to all areas—movement, singing, instrumental study, and notation. Rather than rigidly applying fixed plans, songs, and activities to all classes regardless of the students' requirements or responses, the teacher gains the flexibility to elaborate spontaneously upon lesson plans as needed.

Finally, the musical and pedagogical skills acquired through Jaques-Dalcroze education enable the teacher to be flexible and creative in working with students in a two-sided communication, promoting a process of give and take important to any method.

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Philosophy

Above all, Jaques-Dalcroze training gives teachers a working knowledge of a sound educational philosophy coordinating all of the skills and strategies described. In the Swiss tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, this philosophy emphasizes the natural development of the child, adaptation of the curriculum to the individual, a sequential progression of instruction, and a learning process involving direct sensorial experience.

Especially when musical experience is multifaceted—involving movement, singing, improvisation, reading, writing, and playing instruments—a central philosophy is essential. A clear rationale for each activity focuses day-to-day classroom work and results in an effective long-term program of instruction.

It takes time and effort to develop the musical and pedagogical skills of Jaques-Dalcroze education and to use them effectively. Teacher-training institutes in the method require intensive study over a period of weeks or even years. Teachers are not merely given exercises to apply quickly; they gain their own experience first, and then learn why, when, and how to implement various techniques effectively and flexibly. Therein lies the beauty and value of the Jaques-Dalcroze approach: it is always alive, fresh, and adaptable in response to any class.

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