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Dalcroze Eurhythmics: Discovering the Nuance of Music through Movement

Plastique animée is the craft of representing the music in movement. This session will provide strategies that will help students discover aesthetic movement vocabulary and how to apply it to music. Activities include flocking, statues, shadowing, and tension & relaxation. A list of potential recordings will be provided in the handouts.

Focus: “September” Earth, Wind, and Fire

- Students are in self-space
- Students walk 8 beats, then stop and tap a shoulder of someone nearby 8 times (beats)
- Continue to walk 8, tap 8
- Add tapping two shoulders.

Mixed Meter: Philip Glass: “Knee” from Einstein on the Beach

- Students stand in pairs
- Student "A" creates a four-beat gesture, such as lifting an elbow
- Student "B" expands the gesture to six beats, using more space
- Student "A" expands the gesture to twice the number of beats of the original gesture
- Student "B" begins a new four-beat gesture. Continue the sequence
- Students remember who their partners are, but walk away from them
- Students turn towards their partners and repeat the ||: 4 | 6 | 8 :|| sequence from a distance
- *Plastique Animée*: Students create an A-B-A form
- For the A section, students step on beat one of each measure in the ||: 4 | 6 | 8 :|| sequence and flow through the rest of the measure
- After approximately eight sequences, the teacher calls out "partner." Students stop where they are and visually locate their partners. Students stand in place and create expanded gestures with their partners, still following the ||: 4 | 6 | 8 :|| pattern.
- After approximately eight sequences, teacher cues "on your own," and students resume stepping on beat one of each measure in the sequence and flowing through the rest of the measure.

Statues: “Gabriel’s Oboe” from The Mission

- Students stand in circles of five or six
- One student is in the middle of the circle and creates a pose. The teacher begins the music "Gabriel's Oboe" by Morricone
- Teacher plays finger cymbals and another student joins the circle, striking a pose that is complementary to the first pose
- The process continues until all students are part of the statue
- When the teacher says "flow," the students slowly flow to another position

- When the teacher says "freeze," the students stop flowing
- The process continues to the end of the piece

Shadowing: “Song for Viola”

- In groups of four, students stand in a diamond shape facing one direction
- Person in front reacts with non-locomotor movement; others shadow from behind
- When the phrase ends, the lead turns to the left & gives eye contact with the next leader—passing it off
- The diamond shifts to a new direction
- Repeat

Philosophy of a Dalcroze-based lesson:

- The human body is the first instrument
- Rhythm bridges what we hear with what we do
- Lessons integrate rhythmic skills with ear-training and improvisation
- Music is abstract—we hear it moving through time
- Movement is concrete—we see it moving through space
- Rhythmic movement manipulates time, space, and energy
- Movement generates feelings, which form emotions
- All lessons develop listening skills, reaction, focus, self-control, coordination cooperation, self-expression, imagination, and creativity

The Flow of Dalcroze Learning:

- Hearing to Moving
- Moving to Feeling
- Feeling to Sensing
- Sensing to Analyzing
- Analyzing to Reading
- Reading to Writing
- Writing to Improvising
- Improvising to Performance

Further reading:

Butke, M., & Frego, (2016). *Meaningful Movement: A Music Teacher’s Guide to Dalcroze Eurhythmics*. Cleveland, Music is Elementary. ISBN 978-0-9910656-7-7

American Eurhythmics Society:
<http://www.americaneurhythmics.org/>

Alliance for Active Music Making: <http://www.allianceamm.org/>