

# Exploring lived experiences of spirituality amongst five Dalcroze teachers

Psychology of Music

1–19

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DOI: 10.1177/0305735618785011

journals.sagepub.com/home/pom



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## Abstract

This article presents an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the lived spiritual experiences of five Dalcroze teachers while teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics. It responds to a recent expansion of research into spirituality within music education and also in relation to Dalcroze Eurhythmics. However, there is no study on the lived spiritual experiences of Dalcroze practitioners. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to understand how five Dalcroze teachers make sense of their spiritual experiences while teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics. After semi-structured interviews, we interpreted the experiences of each individual participant separately before doing a cross-case analysis. A six-step, iterative, and inductive data analysis cycle was followed. The superordinate themes that emerged are: Breathing is essential; Giving and receiving energy (physical and emotional); Creating connections through sound and movement; Awareness of self, other, environment, and music; Growth and learning; Meaning and holism; Wellbeing; and Precious moments of transcending time and space. Participants' spiritual experiences are discussed against the background of "A conceptual model of spirituality in music education" as well as "A conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze." Music educators' awareness of spirituality while teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics could be heightened to increase their "pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact."

## Keywords

*Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Dalcroze teachers, I poems, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), lived experience, spirituality*

This article presents an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the lived spiritual experiences of five Dalcroze teachers while teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics. For the purposes of this article spirituality is not defined, but rather viewed against the theoretical background of

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Van der Merwe and Habron's (2015) conceptual model for spirituality in music education. Dalcroze Eurhythmics is an approach to music education, general education, and wellbeing that has its roots in the reform pedagogy movements of *fin-de-siècle* Europe, which championed child-led, exploratory learning. It is now practiced the world over, across the lifespan, in educational, therapeutic, and performing arts settings (Habron, 2016; Juntunen, 2016).

The Dalcroze approach emphasizes the bodily and social bases of musical knowing and communication. It is an active, music-centred pedagogy with rhythmic, expressive movement, singing, and improvisation at its core. Dalcroze Eurhythmics aims to develop not only musical skills, but also the whole person, as a moving, feeling, thinking and interacting agent. It has been defined recently by Juntunen (2015) as:

a metanarrative that legitimizes a particular version of "educational truths" suggesting a direction of musical growth, a practical vision that points to the role and relevance of the body and body movement in musical action and learning, and a philosophic approach that draws attention to the holistic view of the human being and embodiment in music education. (p. 11)

Van der Merwe and Habron's (2015) model is a document analysis, responding to the absence of a hermeneutic phenomenological model of spirituality in music education. Previously, the only related model was Boyce-Tillman's (2007, p. 1415), but this was not data based. In Van der Merwe and Habron's (2015) model, spirituality is viewed in terms of Van Manen's (1990) four lifeworld existentials (relationality, spatiality, temporality, and corporeality). These are phenomenological constructs which describe the different (but related) ways we are in the world. Therefore, they can be applied to the experiences of Dalcroze practitioners. The core concepts of Van der Merwe and Habron's (2015) model are holistic experience and sacred body, time, space, and relationships. When this model was applied to selected writings by Jaques-Dalcroze, it was found that a "strong seam of spiritual awareness ... runs through his writings" (Habron & Van der Merwe, 2017, p. 180). In Habron and Van der Merwe's (2017) conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, this spiritual awareness becomes clear in the core concepts: holism, balance, aesthetic experience, and movement through time, space, and with energy. These two models were created from analyzing the literature. Our aim is now to explore to what extent these two models help to explain the lived experiences of five Dalcroze teachers.

The problem we are faced with is that, although Jaques-Dalcroze articulated spirituality in writing about his approach, the practice is passed on from teacher to teacher and therefore lives in the teachers' thinking, actions, and experiences (Juntunen, 2002). Consequently, we do not know whether or how Jaques-Dalcroze's ideas about spirituality relate to current practice or the lived experiences of Dalcroze teachers, nor how these experiences relate to spirituality in music education theory.

Although there are no studies on the lived spiritual experiences of Dalcroze teachers, three studies are particularly relevant to this article. In Alpersen's (1995) qualitative study of Dalcroze Eurhythmics classes for adults, four master Dalcroze teachers participated. She reports on the teachers' perspective and themes include observation, improvisation, process, and internalization. In Viola's class, Alpersen observed that the connection with others changed the dynamic of the movement and made people respond to one another. Jon noticed that students were "entering through empathy" (p. 252). Hilary emphasized "self-awareness of experience" (Alpersen, 1995, p. 256), and Kate said "We're not teaching facts ... we're teaching ways of being" (Alpersen, 1995, p. 218).

In another related study, Juntunen (2002) narrates how seven master Dalcroze teachers articulate their pedagogical content knowledge. These teachers are convinced that the Dalcroze approach “engage[s] the student’s whole self (the mind, body, and emotions)” (Juntunen, 2004, p. 54) and can therefore promote personal growth, self-knowledge, communication, imagination, and creativity (Juntunen, 2004).

In a recent doctoral study, Dutton (2015) explores holistic experiences in Dalcroze pedagogy. She includes two Dalcroze teachers amongst her participants, Zane and Grace. Zane’s themes relate to spirituality namely, serendipitous connections, experiencing transformational learning, experiencing interpersonal growth and awareness, bonding and trust, somatic empathy, self-acceptance, and emotional release and “letting go.” Grace shares her experiences of dance and spirituality.

Although these studies touch on spiritual experiences, none focuses specifically on the lived spiritual experiences of Dalcroze teachers. Nor did they discuss their findings in relation to spirituality in music education theory or spirituality in Jaques-Dalcroze’s writings. Therefore, the purpose of this interpretative phenomenological analysis is to understand how five Dalcroze teachers make sense of their spiritual experiences while teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Our two research questions were:

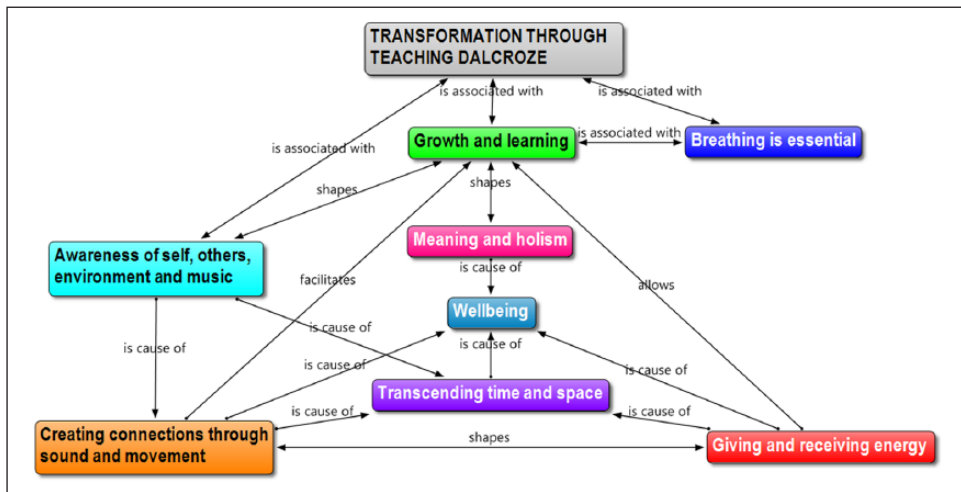
- How do Dalcroze teachers make sense of their spiritual experiences while teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics?
- To what extent can Dalcroze teachers’ accounts of spiritual experiences be explained by “A conceptual model of spirituality in music education” and “A conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze”?

This study is relevant to Dalcroze students and teachers, and any music, dance or somatic educators interested in spiritual experiences that might arise in educational contexts, where music and movement are the means of learning and teaching.

## Method

This study is an IPA, the main concern of which is to give an individual account of lived experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 51). It does not aim to be representative of a population, but samples participants purposively because “they can offer a research project insight into a particular experience” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 48). Therefore this study benefits from a small sample, chosen because of their various cultural backgrounds, different perspectives, and types of experience in teaching Dalcroze. The five participants are Dalcroze teachers, two male and three female, from five different countries in Europe, North America, and Asia.<sup>1</sup> Anna, Emily, Rose, Ethan, and Henry gave their informed consent, after ethical approval was granted by Coventry University, UK (18 November 2015). Data were collected during in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face and Skype interviews. Only transcribed interviews were analyzed and not other non-verbal cues. We acknowledge that spirituality is “ec-static, not static, un-stable, enduringly moving” (Cobussen, 2008, p. 77) and that, as in other fields, language can only partially capture the lived spiritual experiences of the participants.

Since IPA is hermeneutic, idiographic and phenomenological, we interpreted the experiences of each participant separately before doing a cross-case analysis. ATLAS.ti 7 was used to organize the data, and to facilitate the data analysis and the creation of the network view (Figure 1). We followed the six steps of IPA data analysis suggested by Smith, Flowers, and



**Figure 1.** Superordinate themes from the Dalcroze teachers' lived experiences.

Larkin (2009) and added our own step by including I poems (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003, p. 157) for each participant:

- (i) Reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews of the five Dalcroze teachers.
- (ii) Initial noting and adding of exploratory, descriptive, and conceptual comments.
- (iii) Developing emergent subordinate themes of each Dalcroze teacher separately.
- (iv) Searching for connections, links and patterns across emergent subordinate themes in a single teacher's narrative.
- (v) Writing an I poem to capture a teacher's essential lived experiences.
- (vi) Moving to the next Dalcroze teacher's narrative.
- (vii) Looking for patterns across cases and describing emergent superordinate themes and the links between them.

The two authors co-coded the data and interrogated each other's analyses. We each did a cross-case analysis before comparing our emergent superordinate themes (Table 1). After constructive debate and negotiation, we agreed on eight superordinate themes (Figure 1). Due to the restricted scope of an article, we only report on steps (v) and (vii) (the I poems and superordinate themes) in the following section.

## Findings

Figure 1 shows the eight superordinate themes, that emerged from the cross-case analysis, and their interrelationships, whereas Table 1 shows our cross-case analysis, with the superordinate themes, each participant's subordinate themes and a representative quote.

### Transformation

The eight superordinate themes all relate to transformation (Figure 1). All participants said they had been transformed through the experience of teaching Dalcroze. To introduce our

**Table 1.** Cross-case analysis.

| Themes                             | Rose's categories                             | Quotes   | Henry's categories                              | Quotes   | Emily's categories          | Quotes  | Anna's categories   | Quotes  | Ethan's categories                  | Quotes  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Breathing is essential</b>      | <i>Needs reminding</i>                        | "I find myself commenting to people to keep breathing. I remind my students to breathe quite a lot. [Why?] because they hold their breath." [6:24] | <i>Spiritual listening</i>                      | "there is a spiritual aspect in every lesson to some part, and we want also to make people breathe naturally so this already is a spiritual effect which takes place hopefully in every lesson." [14:138]                                | <i>Conscious relaxation</i> | "So, breathing for me ... breathing is a very conscious thing, when I do it. And there's relaxation stuff I can do ... that helps me just to relax the spasms that happen in my throat, that make me cough." [15:402] | <i>Lead by example, training ourselves</i>                | "But also we are very aware of breathing a lot of time when I feel like people who are not used to they hold their breath I've tried to say please breathe through." [2:145]  | <i>Connect inner and outer body</i> | "breath is another essential thing like space for me because everything is a connection between our outside body and inner body." [13:177]                                      |
| <b>Giving and receiving energy</b> | <i>Costly, music shapes energy, energizes</i> | "it's something that is never stagnant it's constantly moving changing the music can have a big effect on changing of energy ..." [6:21]           | <i>Give a lot, lessons have energy, freedom</i> | "Yes, on one hand there is this flow of ideas and movements in the classroom, that's an energy, energy is going up, normally the energy is going up and of course it has to go down, there's always this rhythm of energy too." [14:281] | <i>Tiring</i>               | "Doing the classroom work can be tiring, because I do it all day long." [15:383]  | <i>Feels alive and creative, interaction gives energy</i> | "afterwards I get another kind of energy so I feel like going into I do most of my planning and write it out I always write down good ideas after class because I feel very creative I can be tired like a bodily tired and feeling to I need to just sit down and have a drink but my mind is clear." [2:30] | <i>Delivering energy exhausted</i>  | "the strong relationships between you and music first as a teacher and the repertoire or the improvisations and then it's a way to deliver the energy to the students." [13:49] |

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

| Themes   | Rose's categories                                 | Quotes   | Henry's categories  | Quotes  | Emily's categories   | Quotes   | Anna's categories                                   | Quotes  | Ethan's categories   | Quotes   |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Creating connections through sound and movement</b> | <i>Equalizing power relations, engineering</i>    | "In particular through improvisation the teacher can do a lot of engineering just by how long you play for or how short you play for and you can stop the music when the person is completely in the other end of the room to the other person so they wouldn't be their partner you know so it's a big responsibility and quite a controlling role so there's a responsibility with that with not using it to harm." [5:36] | <i>Communications, acceptance, cohesion</i>                           | "Yes because I like when there's this connection, I like when the music leads but I like also when the music follows, I like the group being creative, there's so much going on, yes, in the lesson. And normally I like every step so I experience a lot of joy during teaching." [14:258] | <i>Equitable education, conflict resolution, self</i>                | "... is peace education, equity, anti-racism, anti-everything, very feminist, in a way that means we're going to work on this together. So it was an easy fit, in a way, because that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to say, Peter, this is what I'm doing in Dalcroze, everybody's doing in equitable education." [15:241–243] | <i>Leadership, equality, God, environment</i>       | "We are equal I should be able to work with anyone I should judge it makes a better group atmosphere and it strengthens them to be able to work with different people." [2:161] | <i>Respect and trust, music is a sonority drama, self-acceptance</i> | "I have to accept the more I see I learn to accept you know so that also helps me to become more open and maybe sometimes to respect the students to encourage them to trust themselves" [13:60] |
| <b>Awareness of self, other, environment and music</b> | <i>In the moment, vulnerabilities, musicality</i> | "you have to have all those needs and be watching and being 100 per cent present." [5:5]   | <i>Intuitive listening, silent tension, sound touches bones, self</i> | "they improvised like 20 minutes without anything, you know, it was a very high level of listening. And after that there was also really like a minute of not talking and I think that's some, that's a spiritual moment." [14:165]   | <i>Interactive sense, others, self, music, engaged in the moment</i> | "Their bodies are aware of everybody else moving in the room at the same time. And I get that going and as soon as I see that counter-clockwise circle going, I know that we're in a mode; we're in a state of mind where we're listening to the music because it's unconscious." [15:541]                                       | <i>Body language, conflict, mood, relationships</i> | "When I go into a room and I see how they interact I can see what's going on from the body language." [2:117]   | <i>Space, inner rhythm, subtleties, space between sounds</i>         | "I can feel the space I created between each sound." [13:109]  |

**Table 1.** (Continued)

| Themes                     | Rose's categories                        | Quotes   | Henry's categories                                | Quotes  | Emily's categories  | Quotes  | Anna's categories   | Quotes   | Ethan's categories  | Quotes   |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Growth and learning</b> | <i>Costly, challenge, transformation</i> | "it's made me more effective person and made me aware of the vulnerability of the learner cause I had to go through that process myself." [5:59]   | <i>Life-long growth, aha moments, challenging</i> | "And you know sometimes there's always this ah a effect yes, when we do an exercise for example ... and all of a sudden this student says, oh yes the rhythm and the melody and that, oh now I understand how it's all related together." [14:122]      | <i>Breakthrough learning, challenging, cognitive sense, spiritual awareness</i> | "rhythmic flexibility also develops our cognitive sense and our spiritual awareness as well." [15:080]  | <i>Striving to improve, self-confidence, self-knowledge</i> | "because you develop all as a teacher all the time. I can say that I'm much better now than when I was graduating because if you're aware of what's happening you get input from your teaching from what's happening in the groups you learn from the students." [2:141] | <i>Cure problematic habits, challenging, space, depth</i> | "I'm there to solve the problem to cure the problematic habit inside of the student." [13:57]                  |
| <b>Meaning and holism</b>  | <i>Enable people</i>                     | "I'm also a part of enabling people to reach the creative potential in themselves so that's all part of the same spiritual story so you can kind of see somebody in a particular state that through I think through the Dalcroze lesson they can change." [5:71] | <i>Connected to everything</i>                    | "every breathing and every living thing on earth so it's not for me who like ... I'm so much a believer in God or something, it's more ... Yes I was raised Catholic and it's still there but it's more like the connectedness to everything." [14:290] | <i>Great turning</i>  | "I do, the toy store, the plastique animée, the ball bouncing, whatever, but also knowing that that is connecting us in that way, to the great turning. It gives me a great sense of calm, I think, and being able to relate to people." [15:129] | <i>Helping people, communication, cooperation</i>           | "my brother became a doctor so we actually have discussed this and when I see his work I'm actually happy I did it this way. Because I think I'm helping people from another direction." [2:049]   | <i>Harmony, subtleties, affect, God</i>                   | "music is for me is something I connected with myself and I feel I'm living because I'm doing music." [13:205] |

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

| Themes   | Rose's categories             | Quotes   | Henry's categories                               | Quotes   | Emily's categories                                       | Quotes  | Anna's categories  | Quotes  | Ethan's categories                                       | Quotes  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Wellbeing</b>                                       | <i>Transformation of mood</i> | "Teachers come into a room with folded arms sitting on a bench looking at the floor ... and then 2 hours later going out smiling and talking with each other ... and then to look at the transformative journey of the people." [5:71] | <i>Healed, calmness, transformed way of life</i> | "also that somebody really feels healed after the musical experience, after listening to the music. And if there is this calmness and silence after this music for example, I think that could be a spiritual experience." [14:138]  | <i>Confused and neurotic without it, love, calm, joy</i> | "feeling love in a very deep way, in a joyful way." [15:288]                      | <i>Release stress, clears mind, health, secure in body</i> | "I'm more relaxed ... I feel more secure in my body even though I'm older now." [2:165]   | <i>Cure myself, positive attitudes, joy, comfortable</i> | "Eurhythmics gives my way to kind of sometimes cure myself in certain way and also help me to be more conscious about my body and also my temper and also myself with the environment." [13:193]  |
| <b>Precious moments of transcending time and space</b> | <i>Body</i>                   | "Yeah with my playing I've actually almost been somebody else looking on or hearing on going, that sounds beautiful, I've had that." [6:31]  | <i>Space, time</i>                               | "And if you are feeling very, very well, if you are here, in the present, at this moment and if you are listening to yourself and to the others, and this is what one person said, just at a little talk after this, you can, you don't, time is getting very short for you." [14:210] | <i>Time, in the moment, imagination</i>                  | "sometimes you forget about the time because you get into the activity." [15:332] | <i>Time, in the moment, flow</i>                           | "sometimes the time is just flying when there is flow and we are just happening and we are in the music and in the moment and we're enjoying working together." [2:129] | <i>Space wider, dramatic harmonic climax</i>             | "this kind of dramatic power put myself into kind of spiritual state while teach because I strongly believe this word affection ... they were changing so they're doing the same movement but the quality is not the same ... for me that kind of process was very spiritual because we're talking about something very deep about humanity." [13:67] |



participants and the transformation they experienced we would like to present their own “I statements” in the form of “I poems” as an opportunity for the reader to listen to the voices of the five Dalcroze teachers and adhere to the idiographic nature of IPA. The “I poem” is introduced as a step in a data analysis method called “Listening guide” (Gilligan et al., 2003, p. 157). We decided to choose two sections of each participant’s interview to create the poems, namely how they describe their first encounters with Dalcroze and then a section illustrating the main theme of their narrative.

### *Rose*

I wasn’t particularly enjoying my work

I was really searching I didn’t know what it was  
I thought of leaving music as a career  
I wasn’t being fulfilled

I found the class challenging  
I thought great  
I can walk  
I know what a trill is  
I can walk backwards so it shouldn’t be a problem  
I couldn’t do it

I became really angry with myself I wanted to know more  
I knew that it was going to be costly I didn’t even know I was keeping hidden

I love teaching  
I compare playing music and teaching music  
I have to use a different part of my brain or different parts of me  
I have to unravel the puzzle

I studied Dalcroze  
When I’m teaching instrumentally, one to one, it’s kind of an intrigue and a fascination  
I like that anything can happen any moment  
I have to think quickly and adapting and being flexible  
I like all those things

I didn’t feel that when I was playing an instrument  
I should have, but I didn’t  
I love it  
It feels a complete experience, not just one bit of me

### *Henry*

I studied music, there was an assignment which was called eurhythmics  
I was very excited  
I then elected to study this  
I move when I listen to music  
I remember I still did that somehow when I was a young boy  
I really move  
I still do some little movements

I think I'm listening to movements in music  
 I'm listening to emotions in music  
 I'm trying to see what is there  
 I'm trying to develop I can see  
 I perceive  
 I think that's my philosophy

I don't know

I did this exercise  
 I think that's some, that's a spiritual moment

I am a very intuitive perceiver  
 I listen with my eyes

I'm a little scared  
 I don't know  
 I have very unsafe situations too

I'm together with my students  
 I get some sense

### *Emily*

I'm pretty sure the first Dalcroze encounter was at a workshop  
 I was doing my Bachelor of Music programme to become a teacher  
 I was really impressed  
 I thought it was brilliant

I think I'm giving them a very holistic experience in music  
 I could do my own thing here  
 I'm not having to play anything in the way that I was used to learning

I dedicated a lot of time and money  
 I wanted to do that for Dalcroze  
 I didn't have to  
 I'm going to do this  
 I'm going to have to go  
 I guess my mission seems to be  
 I'm going to do this  
 I've got to go there

I spend all my spare time on Dalcroze work  
 I'm happy to do it  
 I thought it would be great to be a Dalcroze teacher

I come up with lots of ideas  
 I don't want to give all my ideas to them  
 I'm helping them with those plastiques animées<sup>2</sup>

When I'm teaching, I'm not with the group  
 I'm usually at the piano I know they're in that zone I mean, the beauty of what happens in Dalcroze  
 I mean, we're part of that

I think to get that sense of wellness  
I've experienced that  
It gives me a great sense of calm, I think

I'm here for you  
I'm doing this role for you  
I've got this knowledge  
I've got this connection here  
I know that I'm in the right place

I mean, it's brilliant  
I mean, when you relate to the profundity of an open fifth  
I know it's all about the galaxy

### *Anna*

I was hooked  
I understood  
I felt so whole when we combined the singing with the movements I never understood then what it was, it was just pleasure  
I love it, it is a very important part of my life

I feel very alive after giving a class  
I need to be prepared and so it takes a lot of time  
I don't always stick to my teaching plan  
I can improvise  
I always want to know what is the purpose  
I want to be linking the chain

I can be tired  
I can be stressed  
I have so much other things to do  
I'm very much in it, in the moment  
I am less tired after class I get it back

I kind of love doing simple rhythms  
I do it in the body  
I see the others when it's with many senses  
I can see how well it works  
I can see what it gives to the students

I wanted to become a doctor to actually work with people or help them  
I first started in a natural science class  
I quit after two months  
I met Dalcroze as a subject  
I didn't even ... it was just so natural

I see it now  
I'm doing from another angle what I always wanted to do as a doctor  
I'm helping people to feel better  
I say to be healthy and happy  
I'm actually happy I did it this way  
I think I'm helping people from another direction

*Ethan*

I felt kind of shy  
 I moved my body, but not seriously  
 I felt moving in the space was kind of difficult

I remember a song we learned  
 I can remember a lot of images I really kind of perceived movement very seriously I want to learn this thing and I want to teach

I use a lot of Dalcroze principles  
 I try to adjust my attitude as a music teacher  
 I want to build a personal relationship with each of them

I have to really not train  
 I have to encourage them  
 I tell them my personal feelings about why I learn Eurhythmics

I call these kinds of processes cultivating  
 I always discuss with them, asking them how they feel  
 I call this process cultivating, it's not training

I will change  
 I strongly believe I can use my instinct to teach this  
 I build a strong connection with the student  
 I sort of like it, they sort of follow me and they trust me  
 I really enjoy that feeling

I have to accept  
 The more I see, I learn to accept

I have the strong connection about these colours, emotions  
 I play that harmony  
 I will encourage them

I care so much about the space thing  
 I think that Dalcroze really talked about that  
 I also care about their eyes by observing the space

I want to communicate more through the music, not through the verbal

It changes the way I feel about my inner rhythm  
 I think Eurhythmics helps me to feel more comfortable about myself and music

The eight superordinate themes that emerged from the data analysis are now presented with corresponding quotes from the five participants.

*Breathing is essential*

All participants said breathing was important (Figure 1). For Ethan, "breath is the most important thing in Dalcroze teaching ... the Dalcroze teacher has to play the piano in a breathing way ... and ... has to show the student ... how to breathe with their movement." Remembering that Jaques-Dalcroze's earliest books included breathing exercises, Henry says: "there is a spiritual

aspect in every lesson ... and we want also to make people breathe naturally, so this is already a spiritual effect which takes place hopefully in every lesson."

He connects breathing to other fundamental elements of learning through Dalcroze, such as awareness and the ability to respond: "When you breathe you can listen, when you listen you get information, then you can react. When you do not listen because you do not breathe ... there is no information, there's no reaction, there is no feedback."

Rose says, "I remind my students to breathe ... because they hold their breath ... particularly in the movement aspect of it they will do something and they won't keep on breathing or if they are concentrating on stepping and beating ... they are not breathing." Anna notes how breath sometimes relates to particular types of movement: "so when there is a ... tension or a ... strong movement or explosive movement or heavy movement, we breathe out." For Emily, breathing was connected to her own ability to relax. "Breathing for me ... is a very conscious thing ... and there's relaxation stuff I can do that I've had to get training for that helps me just to relax."

### *Giving and receiving energy*

All participants talked about energy and related it to the notion of giving and receiving (Figure 1). The teachers were aware of how much they gave. Rose comments:

Teaching is costly ... I can give out quite a lot ... if I've been away and done a whole weekend of training ... I could feel on top of the world, but I can't speak to anybody for a while afterwards ... I've given out so much in that context ... I'm absolutely spent.

Henry says, "I'm always concerned, especially [if] I'm ... tired or ... not to be able to give everything ... My philosophy is trying to give as much as possible, trying to get this connection to people and try to make them understand." Emily expresses it concisely: "The energy for Dalcroze ... it's a very demanding job." On the other hand, Anna describes teaching Dalcroze as simultaneously tiring and restorative: "I feel very alive after giving a class ... less tired after class than before ... It takes a lot of energy ... but ... I get it back ... from the people ... the interaction and from the music ... even if it's just simple rhythms."

Ethan considers the Dalcroze teacher's piano improvisation as a way to channel energy: "it's a kind of way to deliver the energy to the students." This transfer is experienced as a loss, but the student's gain: "when you give ... some energy you ... reduce in the teaching process, but some energy grows stronger in some individuals and that's pretty amazing."

In the group experience, the students can also influence each other's energy levels. Anna prefers teaching groups: "because there is more energy in the room ... they are helping each other and what's happening in-between people makes ... the group is more than the sum of the individuals ... something is happening in there."

From the data it becomes clear that the interaction between people shapes the energy in the classroom and that the energy shapes the connections between people.

### *Creating connections through sound and movement*

Anna describes how Dalcroze prepared her own cohort for leadership and notes the role of awareness in creating connections (Figure 1):

[Seven of us] studied together for three years ... three of them are now principals ... I was head of department, but he worked as a principal for a music school and then he was headhunted from a company working for conflict resolution because he was so aware of what happened [between people].

Rose creates pair exercises where the students travel with the music and “accidentally end up with somebody different ... engineering a social situation rather than telling.” This can be fun, as Henry says: “I try to make them react and communicate and have a good time together.” The relationships created are very meaningful for Anna: “I can see really spiritual things happening in class with people or with themselves and connection with others, sometimes it’s holy, isn’t it?”

Emily recounts wider impacts of Dalcroze:

After experiencing Dalcroze full-time, all day, for one solid week, I found that all of my relationships were suddenly better ... But I know that it was also there with, you know, animals, trees, lakes, rivers and air and all of that was just like a lot more important.

Her openness helps her perceive connections: “I’m open to profundity in the first place, being able to see past or be aware of [things], you know, like the relationships with the group in Dalcroze.”

For Ethan, building a strong connection to students is important. Using piano improvisation helps him to develop the students’ use of space: “space for me means connecting people ... and communicating with people.” He notes how some students are less connected to music as an unfolding, sensory experience: “they are moving too fast ... without knowing music as a sound and as a sonority drama...that’s a very essential thing in music.”

Dalcroze helps Rose to be more trusting, vulnerable and accepting:

I don’t have everything ... if I’m hoping to serve the people in particular because it is a creative process, if I believe I am a created being with creative potential, then I recognize my part in ... enabling people to reach the creative potential in themselves, so that’s all part of the same spiritual story.

All five teachers reported spiritual experiences of connection. Ethan finds meaning in the subtleties, harmony and affect of the music. For him music “comes from the God but I don’t know what God is ... maybe music itself is the God.” Rose has a spiritual relationship that she can call on while teaching. Henry finds spirituality in the “calmness and silence after the music” has stopped in the “open space” that is similar to that before the applause at a concert. These connections the five teachers create through sound and movement make them more aware of themselves and others.

### *Awareness of self, other, environment and music*

All participants report being self-aware and aware of the students somatically and emotionally (Figure 1). For Henry this is multisensory experience: “You get very deep impressions ... you perceive how they breathe or they feel somehow ... I listen with my eyes ... The touch is also a listening ... and sometimes also a sound encourages your self-awareness of your body.”

Anna says she is very much aware of “the participants and how they feel and also their relations in between them.” For Ethan, learning through Dalcroze has sharpened his spatial awareness and ability to respond to his environment:

I can ... transfer from ... narrow concentration to wide concentration more easily than before ... I can feel that I react to things, especially in front of the red light and the green light, I react very fast, faster than other people I saw in the street.

Emily notes how Dalcroze has helped in “becoming more in tune with the music that I’m using,” whilst Rose describes an occasion when she made a split second decision to change her lesson plan as a result of heightened awareness:

The whole lesson took a different tack and I felt very in tune with intuition, spirituality, something beyond the tactile present, if you like ... I was allowing myself to ... go with what was there rather than being controlling ... I was ... trusting myself to be, to connect, with what was happening in the space.

### *Growth and learning*

Teaching Dalcroze is hard because the Dalcroze teacher is engaged with processes of growth and learning (Figure 1) and “is working with very many levels at the same time” (Henry). Rose says she knew training to become a Dalcroze teacher “was going to be costly, because it was going to unveil lots of things that perhaps I didn’t even know I was keeping hidden.” She goes on: “many people can have a honeymoon period when in Dalcroze and ... at a certain time after regular training there comes a dip where people have to make a choice of walking away or walking on.” When students are brave enough “those people go far.” These students grow throughout their lives. Henry uses a tree metaphor to illustrate this: “even after their studies it’s like a tree, you know, you plant a tree and then sometimes it is big after five years, sometimes it needs more years and it’s, it’s an oak tree or it’s a little tree.” Ethan helps his students in this growing process: “my philosophy is I’m there to solve the problem, to cure the problematic habit inside of the student.” When teachers notice that their students grow “then it makes it worth it” (Emily). The Dalcroze teachers also grow. Anna says “after meeting more students more situations I’m not as nervous now as I was in the beginning because I have developed as a person, I’m more secure ... I’m more relaxed in myself.” This growth that the teachers experience in themselves and their students is a meaningful and holistic experience.

### *Meaning and holism*

All five Dalcroze teachers agree that teaching Dalcroze is holistic and gives meaning to their lives (Figure 1). Anna finds the connection she witnesses between people meaningful.

that was a very big experience for me, it was the day before the elections ...when I saw the people there communicating and cooperate and to complete each other, that was a very good experience and like a spiritual thing.

For Henry, being connected to everything is meaningful. He felt this when he was a Dalcroze student:

It was this moment that she started and also the whole improvisation that I felt the music going through my whole body and the body was like one with the whole space. It touched me entirely and also my emotions, it was really like ... Yes also somehow like really being connected like being in the womb of the mother or being also just reborn and it was like everything for me.

Emily also feels connected to the greater good through aesthetic experiences: “that profundity, being part of the great turning, is very much a spiritual experience that is being aware of God in the manifestation of the universe. I mean, we’re part of that.”

Rose finds it meaningful when she can enable her students to become the best they can possibly be, especially in a special needs context. Here, the students may sometimes not experience self-esteem, but in the Dalcroze class:

they have a way of learning through their body or through movement and suddenly they are the star of the class and seeing that person take pride in wow I did it and the [class] teacher, if they are humble enough to be able to go, oh you know he is not all bad.

For Ethan the Dalcroze approach is meaningful because “Dalcroze is a kind of dialogue” and a multiple way to sense the music. It is also very much part of his life purpose and who he is. He explains “I feel I’m living because I’m doing music.” When teachers have these meaningful experiences it contributes to their wellbeing.

### *Wellbeing*

Anna and Henry believe that Dalcroze teaching promotes students’ wellbeing (Figure 1). Anna feels “I’m doing from another angle what I ... wanted to do as a doctor because I’m helping people to feel better ... to be healthy, happy and to develop.” Henry describes it as a spiritual experience when “somebody really feels healed after the musical experience, after listening to the music.” Rose noticed a transformation of her students’ mood and attitude: “Teachers come into a room with folded arms sitting on a bench looking at the floor because they’ve been told they must have the workshop with me and then 2 hours later going out smiling and talking with each other.” Not only do students benefit from the Dalcroze lesson, but teachers also say teaching Dalcroze promotes their wellbeing. Emily’s connection to the cosmos and others is nourished by her Dalcroze teaching: “the toy store, the plastique animée, the ball bouncing, whatever, but also knowing that that is connecting us in that way, to the great turning. It gives me a great sense of calm, I think, and being able to relate to people.” Ethan feels Dalcroze is healing because:

it changes my way I feel about my inner rhythm like what I imagine before and also Eurhythmics gives my way to kind of sometimes cure myself in certain way and also help me to be more conscious about my body and also my temper and also myself with the environment.

Not only meaningful experiences contribute to Dalcroze teachers’ wellbeing, but also peak experiences of transcending time and space.

### *Precious moments of transcending time and space*

The five Dalcroze teachers all report experiences of transcendence (Figure 1). Anna, Henry and Emily give accounts of transcending time. Anna says, “sometimes the time is just flying when there is flow and we are just happening and we are in the music and in the moment and we’re enjoying working together.” Henry said to his students: “you played 20 minutes, and they said, wow I didn’t realize for me it was very short.” Ethan experienced transcending space:

we’ll feel very happy you know because we feel the same harmonic color or same phrase like what I feel and in that moment I really feel the time become larger and I’m waiting for the affection you know and when the affection finally explode you will feel the space become wide.

Rose is the only teacher who experienced transcending her body especially when she plays piano “I’ve certainly have times when I’m playing piano when things flow and it almost feels like the hands of somebody else that the music just comes through me.”



Transcendence also becomes possible when students are in the moment. Emily says, “I know that they’re having that experience because I can see these little dinosaurs, you know, tramping about the room. They don’t care. The bell could go, they might not even notice, because they’re really into it.”

## Discussion and conclusion

Two previous conceptual models of spirituality in music education (Van der Merwe & Habron, 2015) and spirituality in selected works by Jaques-Dalcroze (Habron & Van der Merwe, 2017) both used the four lifeworld existentials (Van Manen, 1990) to organize themes and therefore we will organize and discuss the eight superordinate themes in these four groups—lived body, time, space and relationships.

### *Corporeality*

The themes “Breathing is essential” and “Giving and receiving energy” both relate to lived body. The word spirituality comes from the Latin word *spiritus* meaning breath (Williamson, 2010). It comes as no surprise that all the Dalcroze teachers speak about breathing. Jaques-Dalcroze (1921/1967, p. 164) himself said that “the most important and common instigator of all movements is the breathing.” Breathing is essential because, like the spirit, it keeps us alive (Freeman, 2002) and it helps us to be present (Grise-Owens, 2011). Slow breathing and body movements can cultivate energy (Matsunobu, 2011). Jaques-Dalcroze (1921/1967) said that “all the nuances of energy—*forte*, *piano*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*—can be ‘realised’ by our bodies, and the acuteness of our musical feeling will depend on the acuteness of our bodily sensations.” (p. 60) Not only do we feel musical energy in our bodies, but movement with others in the Dalcroze class also incites energy.

### *Relationality*

The themes “Creating connections through sound and movement,” “Awareness of self, other, environment and music,” “Meaning and holism,” and “Wellbeing” relate to lived relationship. “The relational understanding of spirituality in terms of connectedness to self, others, the world or universe, and to the Transcendent [is] outlined in much of the contemporary literature” (Hyde, 2005, p. 33). Jaques-Dalcroze (1930, p. 13) explained that “Rhythmic movement is a very focus of energy and joy, and all who study it are upheld by the consciousness that they are aiming at the same goal and are linked to one another by bonds of solid affection which give them renewed strength, security and courage.” All five Dalcroze teachers testify that Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a relational practice that increases one’s awareness of relationships. The teachers experience this relational nature of Dalcroze as being very meaningful. Being able to help students and watch their transformation and growth contributes to the teachers’ health and wellbeing.

### *Temporality*

“Growth and learning” is a theme that relates to lived time, as it implies processes of change and development. Responding to challenges, growth, or processes of self-transformation are important aspects of spirituality that are often overlooked in the literature. However, it is defined in a discussion paper of the UK’s National Curriculum Council as:

something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity—with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It has to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live. (National Curriculum Council, 1993, p. 2)

It may be surprising to find very little mention of suffering or responding to challenges in Jaques-Dalcroze's writing. However, the Dalcroze teachers all explain that they are constantly in a process of self-transformation, growing, and learning, and through overcoming their own challenges they are able to facilitate growth in their students. Sometimes students have breakthroughs in their learning, "aha" moments, and then they experience precious moments of transcending time and space.

### **Spatiality**

"Precious moments of transcending time and space" is a theme that overlaps with temporality and spatiality. Schoonmaker (2009) argues for the classroom as a spiritual space because "Teachers need to recognize that ... spirituality is part of ... being in the world, and honoring it in the classroom requires providing opportunities for its expression within the ordinary events of classroom life" (p. 2713). According to Jaques-Dalcroze (1921/1967) these opportunities can be created through collective movement where a student can feel free from physical embarrassment and self-criticism to experience "a profound joy of an elevated character, a new factor in ethical progress, a new stimulus to will power" (Jaques-Dalcroze, 1921/1967, p. 98). The Dalcroze teachers also describe precious moments of being very mindful of the space, being completely present as well as transcending space, from the womb of the mother to being part of the whole universe.

Dalcroze and spirituality is still a developing area of study and we suggest further research could investigate the lived experiences of Dalcroze students in order to include their narratives. The links, patterns, and causal relationships between the concepts in the findings could also be explored in a future conceptual study. Looking more broadly, this research also offers the field of music psychology new insights into the connection between spirituality and embodiment in music education. With this study we hope to have created a heightened awareness of the spiritual potential in the Dalcroze class and communicated the pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact (Van Manen, 1990), witnessed in these five Dalcroze teachers' experiences, that is required when teaching using the Dalcroze approach.

### **Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### **Notes**

1. Two hold the Diplôme Supérieur Jaques-Dalcroze, two a License and one a Certificate.
2. *Plastique animée* is part of the Dalcroze approach. It is a choreographed response to music and has been described as a "kind of living analysis in real time" (Greenhead, 2009, p. 39).

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